

Downtown Master Plan

Downtown Punta Gorda is the center of gravity of the whole region. In its current state, however, the downtown is not conducive to a good pedestrian experience. It suffers from what is known in urban design as the “Missing Tooth Syndrome”. This so-called “MTS syndrome” is found in cities where the relationship between building frontages and continuity of sidewalks is not parallel or concurrent. In theory, the more continuous the building frontages along uninterrupted sidewalks, the more energy, livability, and aliveness the retail place will have; and vice versa,

the less continuous the building frontages along interrupted sidewalks, the more lethargic, dead, and ungraceful it will be.

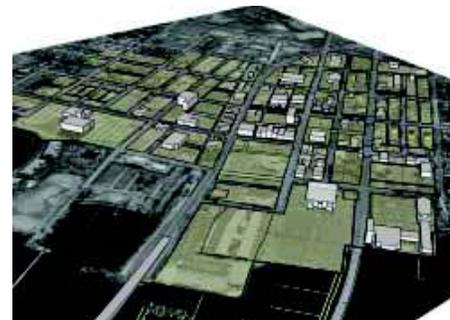
In Punta Gorda, an empirical observation of this relationship proves to be quiet disturbing. The lack of continuity of the downtown building frontages must be reconstituted. Supportive land development regulations (LDR's) and architectural guidelines could encourage the production of pedestrian friendly urban buildings of the highest design quality.



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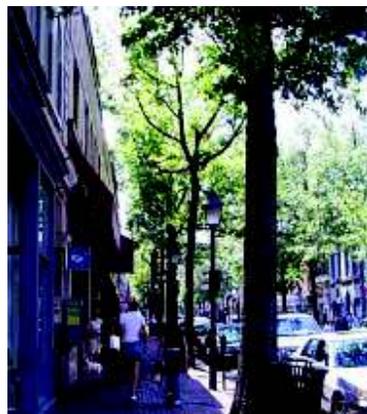
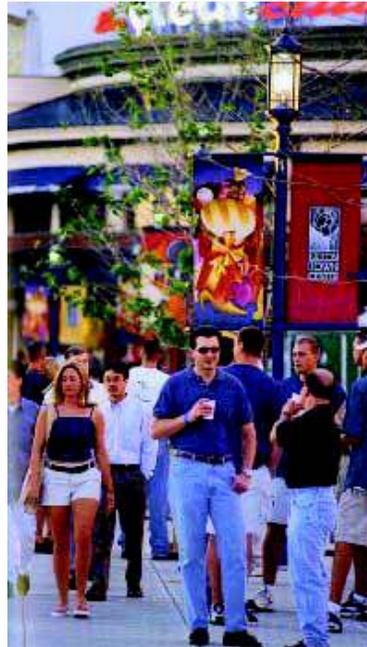
- A. Downtown Master Plan
- B. Downtown region
- C. “Missing teeth” diagram

A. Place making examples

Retail Development as Place Making:

Downtown retail development is not about making shopping centers but about life and place-making –creating spaces with attractive destinations for time well spent. In general, people do not come to downtown areas for everyday shopping needs; they come looking for an urban experience including: entertainment, an attractive waterfront, a variety of historic and contemporary architecture, pedestrian friendly areas, lots of things to do, see, explore, meet, etc.; most importantly, a downtown is NOT an artificial environment but, a friendly public stage where people go to see and be seen by other people.

People come to downtowns to have the Communal Experience they cannot find in a mall or in a strip center. For Downtown Punta Gorda to be successful, it must deliver this Experience.



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Downtown Character and Composition:

The residents of Punta Gorda do not want suburban-style shopping centers, big box retail stores or a large number of chain stores and franchises in their downtown area. In fact, the location of businesses in the downtown area carries definite clues on the character and development strategies necessary for a successful downtown. By pure observation, the downtown area has four niches and retail development strategies that can be used for a successful redevelopment: dining, entertainment, waterfront businesses, and arts and culture.

The future of any retail strategy must focus on the continuation of: core galleries, cafes, restaurants, and businesses geared towards



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the arts and culture. Moreover, the addition of key underserved market niches would highly complement such a retail mix including home furnishing and design-related facilities.

The historic character of downtown Punta Gorda is the foundation for vibrant retail. Therefore, historic preservation efforts and the development of compatible land development regulations are essential for the success of any development endeavor. Upon a pre-application interview, every potential developer, architectural designer, interior designer, or landscape specialist must be given copies of old photos, postcards, and historic information regarding the character of old downtown Punta Gorda. New buildings, with contemporary uses, must create life, must be compatible with its neighbors, and must bring back the most beloved elements of the old downtown.

- B. Examples of Punta Gorda's historic character
- C. Proposed character of the historic center

A. Example of a downtown center of gravity

Coordinated Leasing, Management, and Marketing:

Although downtowns are not shopping centers, they do need to adopt the coordinated leasing, management, and marketing practices that make shopping centers successful. These practices have been translated and adapted by the National Main Street Program to serve downtowns where there are multiple property owners and merchants. The existing merchants associations, the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Punta Gorda should seriously consider creating a Main Street Program (MSP) and hiring a Manager to implement it.



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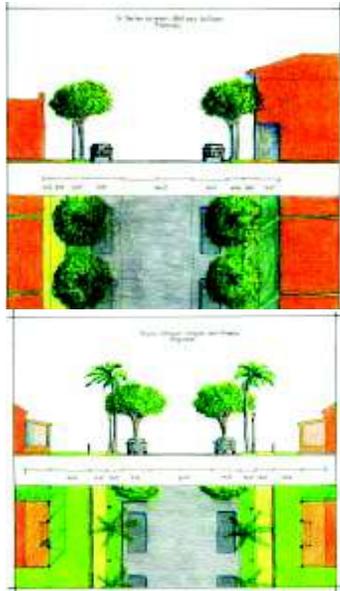
Downtown Critical Mass of Retail and Center of Gravity:

The more retail assembled in one place, the more attractive a destination becomes. This rule is the same for shopping centers, strip centers, and downtown areas. The greater the variety and concentration of retail, the larger the trade area becomes – the greater the distances people are willing to travel.

Larger trade areas bring more customers and create more successful retail. Fisherman's

Village, for instance, has succeeded because it has a concentration of retail shops and restaurants, a relatively attractive location, and a “brand name” image that lends itself to marketing. Many downtowns, however, do not take advantage of these opportunities. As a retail destination, downtown Punta Gorda could grow stronger with the addition, in quantity and quality, of: shops, restaurants, arts and cultural activities, etc.

The first order of business should be the



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creation of a core destination within the downtown area—a center of gravity; a place where a critical mass of shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues would complement the creation of public space. In terms of place-making, this requires completing the two sides of the street or the four sides of an open public space (i.e.: proposed plaza at Marion Avenue and Taylor) with retail activity. Vacant lots, empty window fronts, parking lot frontages, drive-in tellers, and crossing fast one-way streets are not pedestrian friendly or conducive to retail activities.



C.

Taylor and Marion Avenues

The new restaurants on Marion Avenue between SR-41 and Taylor (River City, the Turtle Club, etc.) are becoming a key attraction for this sector of downtown. Moreover, the corner of Taylor and Marion must be understood as the center of the downtown area—what is typically known in retail circles as the “100% street”.

Traffic calming and re-design are essential to the future success of Marion Avenue. As

originally designed, Marion Avenue was meant to be a true urban retail center, flanked with shops on both sides of the street. Wide sidewalks and a two-way street system complemented the friendliness of this magnificent pedestrian environment. The existing situation, however, is dismaying. A one-way street is robbing energy from the northern side of the street. The reconstitution of the historic two-way street system is fundamental for the livability of all the shops along Marion Avenue. Moreover, the planting of trees shall be done strategically to avoid blocking main retail entrances and signage.

Taylor should also be designed as a high quality pedestrian-friendly street. From the Sacred Heart Church to the waterfront, Taylor should have wide sidewalks, parallel parking for the protection of pedestrians, and at least two lanes of traffic; the rest could be continued as an attractive tree-lined boulevard thoroughfare connecting the downtown with the I-75 interchange.

- B. Proposed Street Sections
(Top: Marion Ave.)
(Bottom: Taylor St.)
- C. Marion Avenue

A. View of proposed waterfront market

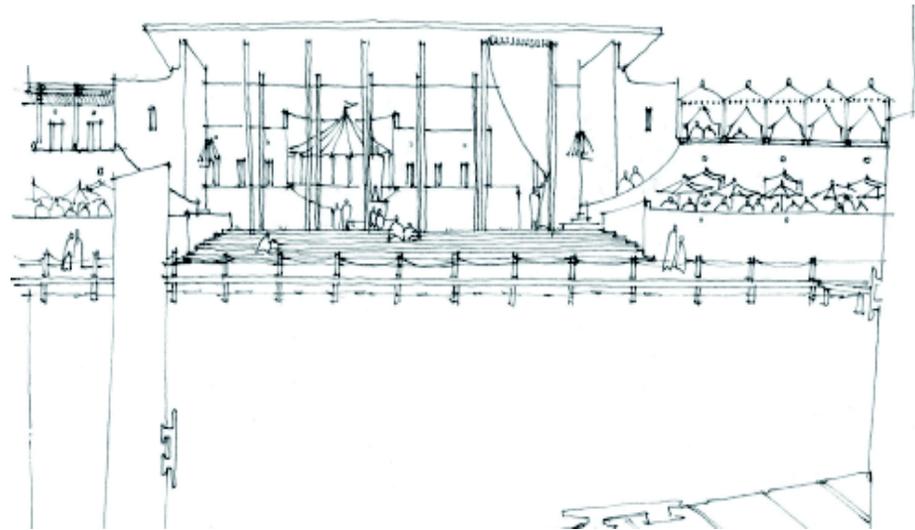
Downtown Clusters and Branding

Themes:

Great downtown areas are characterized by many distinctive streets and public spaces - each with its own character and combination of activities. In addition to Fisherman's Village, the new Citizens Master Plan for downtown Punta Gorda proposes five clusters of activity with individual identities and character.

1. The Waterfront Market

The proposed space by the new Auditorium building recalls elements from the old Punta Gorda Hotel: a great lawn and an abundance of fountains and pavilions. The Citizens Master Plan also proposes a waterfront loggia that will add a distinctive architectural element to the park and to the public face of downtown Punta Gorda. This loggia will terminate the vistas along State Road 41 South and will provide an ideal venue for an open-air market.



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Open-air markets may be programmed to suit the preferences of downtown merchants associations and residents. Typical activities may include: farmer's markets (fresh produce), arts and crafts, antiques, flowers and other nursery items. The goal should be to establish a regular market that is professionally managed with a strict screening of tenants, programming of special events and entertainment, and marketing much like the Main Street Program practices for a downtown.

Open-air markets also provide an inexpensive way to jump-start potential downtown businesses – freestanding, open-air colonnades are much cheaper to build and cost nothing to operate compared to air-conditioned buildings.

Open-air markets create terrific business incubators. They provide new merchants with an inexpensive way to try out small business concepts without purchasing property or leasing more expensive interior



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space. The managing organization should work carefully to support tenants, provide small business advisory services, and help successful merchants transition into permanent space in existing and proposed buildings within the downtown area.

A long-term objective could be to have a continuously operating open-air market. As



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one downtown merchant pointed out “...*this would give people a good reason to visit downtown Punta Gorda*”.

For further information, please consult an excellent resource on creating, managing, marketing and programming public markets: the Project for Public Spaces (www.pps.org/PublicMarkets).

2. Restaurant Row

This center, focused along Marion Avenue between Taylor Street and State Road 41 North, builds on the core of existing restaurants on the south side of Marion Avenue. This is the place where Punta Gorda comes to eat. New town centers and main streets have learned from the “restaurant rows” forming naturally in cities; by concentrating restaurants on a single street, a few blocks, or around an attractive public space a dramatic increase of customers may happen –in general, the density of restaurants is correlated to the attractiveness of a place as a dining destination. For instance, in the Mizner Park project, in Boca Raton, shops and restaurants surround an attractive public space and people stroll and shop all around the boulevard plaza, underneath a proportional arcade, while waiting for a restaurant table.

- B. Examples of outdoor markets
- C. Proposed building across restaurant row
- D. Example of outdoor restaurant

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Examples of outdoor reading room (Bryant Park, NY)

The downtown Restaurant Row in the Citizens Master Plan proposes a conglomeration of high canopy trees and an open space (central plaza) to accommodate large areas for outdoor dining. The Citizens Master Plan envisions a distinctive bistro building set in the middle of the plaza space; this bistro would be surrounded by outdoor dining as a focal point (the Brio's in Easton Town Center is a good example). Restaurant Row requires parallel or angled parking around the plaza space, as well as a central valet station that would serve all of the restaurants.

Complementary shops and businesses akin to Williams and Sonoma (or a local independent version of this), floral shops, wine bars, cigar stores and other complementary businesses could occupy retail space. This is a lively part of town and upper floor space would become an attractive residential location for people who enjoy living close to the urban action or to their own offices (Mizner Park has both).



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3. Punta Gorda's Reading Room and Gallery

A third gathering place and cluster of synergetic businesses is envisioned for a public space in front of the old courthouse, which could be rehabbed and used for a library or some combination of center for arts and culture. The park is located near existing galleries and art-related businesses on Sullivan and Taylor near Olympia. It is planned as a central gathering place for the artistic and cultural lives of the residents of Punta Gorda.

The character of this park is envisioned with similar elements to those of Jackson Square in New Orleans, Ruskin Place in Seaside, Florida, or Bryant Park in Manhattan. The square is proposed with a more residential character; a quieter and less commercial area with arts- and culture-related commercial space.



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4. Retail Center at Marion Avenue and Wood Street

Another cluster of existing retail businesses is established across from the Justice Center and includes the Plaza Camille, the Clock Tower Building, and the Tiki apparel store. This center provides more everyday retail goods and services, some associated with the Justice Center, and could be connected to the downtown core by continuing to reintroduce retail along Marion and extending the high quality pedestrian character of Marion east to this cluster.

The raised storefronts and parking in front of these buildings is not ideal for downtown retail; the huge gaps created by the parking lots in front of the post office and Justice Center would need to be remedied to truly make this an attractive pedestrian extension from the downtown core. Short-term solutions may include very thin Liner Buildings along the north side of Marion to screen the parking lots. Long-term solutions may include the construction of a parking garage to free up land for more substantial infill. In fact, a parking garage could create an opportunity

for shared parking arrangements between the public uses, active during the weekday work hours, and types of retail uses that might be more active on evenings and weekends.

These public gathering places and retail clusters should be linked together by high quality pedestrian-friendly streets leading back to the center of gravity at Taylor and Marion.

A network of high-quality pedestrian streets can be staged starting at Marion and Taylor; and then, by reclaiming Olympia, Sullivan, and Esplanade Way or other streets adjacent to the Taylor-Marion core -working outwards to the State Road 41 pair. These gathering places, viewed collectively, form a much richer downtown than could possibly be achieved by any one of them individually.

- B. Picture of Tiki Apparel store
- C. Marion Ave. & Wood St.

- A. The two US 41's through downtown
- B. US 41 South proposed off-peak street section

5. The Two 41's: Retail Boulevards – Designer Row

It is not a secret that both sides of State Road 41 North and South will change radically within the next decade. This fact presents an opportunity to completely revamp the character of these two critical thoroughfares cutting through (almost severing and dividing) the downtown.

These two roads will probably have to remain one-way for the foreseeable future. Therefore traffic calming and redesign become fundamental. A lot of it may be accomplished simply by pulling buildings close to the street and by improving sidewalks and lining these with trees in planting strips. The addition of lighting on the bridge and two towers on either side (see State Road 41 South Gateway below) announcing arrival into the downtown will tell drivers they are entering a place and buildings; street trees will cause them to slow down.

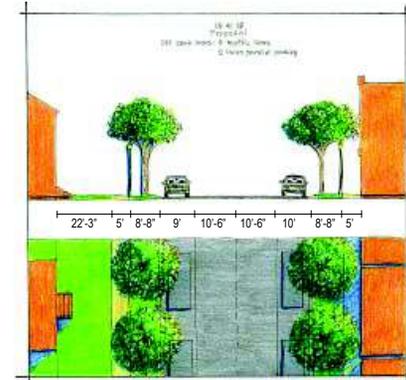
Additional traffic calming can be



A. accomplished through the resurfacing of intersections with pavers and through the provision of parallel parking at off-peak hours. Both of these two alternatives provide cues as to the pedestrian-oriented character of this area; plus, it would force drivers to slow down.

Within the downtown, both legs of State Road 41 should be redesigned as urban boulevards where pedestrians feel safe walking, where traffic slows down a bit for the few blocks of the downtown, and that present attractive, tree-lined streets through the downtown.

In terms of retail along these corridors, the market is wide-open for home furnishings



B. and interior design-related businesses; it is clear that the entire region is rebuilding homes, stores, and offices and replacing interiors. These types of businesses as well as good antique shops could add a core retail sector to the downtown -concentrated along the State Road 41 north and south corridors. The Citizens Master Plan proposed a concept similar to that of the restaurants. But, in this case, it would be a “Designer Row” with parking accommodated to the rear of buildings.

Some development along the “Designer Row” corridor could also go to 2-3 stories and incorporate housing to calm traffic even further and to bring permanent residents to the downtown.



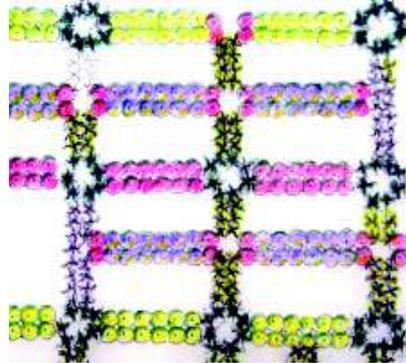
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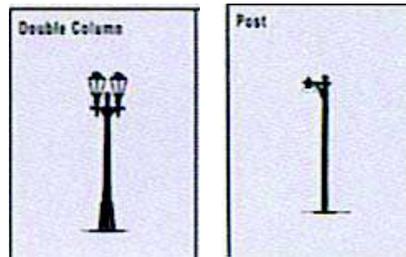
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Materials, Signage, Lighting, and Landscaping

The environmentally conscious move to purchase benches and garbage cans made from recycled plastic materials became a failed experiment. According to the citizens, this kind of street landscape had an impermanent appearance and a degree of kitsch associated with today's suburban America.



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For the short term, the City of Punta Gorda should focus its street landscaping expenditures on installing durable street lamps, benches, tree wells, manhole covers, garbage cans and planters (hanging or ground-based). Durable items made from high-quality and structurally sound materials—even when it means to postpone some resurfacing of streets and planting strips with pavers. The existing exception is Herald Court, which is already in process,

with dedicated funds, and which may become the initial center of gravity while awaiting redevelopment of the City Market Place.

The downtown street trees should be carefully replanted with a caliper of no less than 8 inches and a height, at planting time, of no less than 8 feet. Moreover, these trees must be carefully selected in consultation with a historian and an arborist to ensure that the trees will create a canopy where desired and not obstruct views of the storefront displays, signage, awnings or lighting that represents the visual merchandising so essential to successful main streets.

It is important to understand that trees must be placed strategically, rather than uniformly spaced, in order to locate them where the walls of two buildings meet and to avoid placement in front of window displays.

Finally, street trees can create landscape themes along particular streets—royal palms on the waterfront, flowering trees around the arts-related park, canopy trees around

- C. Example of Signage
- D. Proposed Street Landscaping
- E. Punta Gorda Bench
- F. Examples of street lamps

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Marion Ave. as a two-way street, c. 1925

the dining park – that give each street and park a distinctive identity (Coral Gables, FL. is a prime example of this type of development).

In general, store front display, signage, lighting, and landscape standards should be appropriate to a downtown main street environment providing appropriate standards and guidelines without preventing creativity, flexibility and expressiveness. Eclectic mixtures are the norm for main streets; therefore, a lot of care must be imposed to avoid uniformity of standards. Uniformity of standards may make the downtown main street look too much like a commercial strip center. Suburban landscape treatments such as hedges, boulders, berms, “ground cover” plantings, post-and-beam fences and railroad ties should be

prohibited, as should suburban street lighting such as cobra heads lighting, commonly found on arterial roadways and shopping center parking lots. All standards should conform to the very best elements of landscaping, lighting, signage and street furnishings found on great main streets, urban parks and plazas or, at least, the minimum standards found in historic photographs of the old downtown.

Revert Marion and Olympia Back to Two-Way Streets

Marion Avenue and Olympia Avenue must be converted back to their original two-way designs. Pedestrians tend to avoid the efficiency of one-way traffic; they are generally hard to navigate, provide great difficulties for way finding, and tend to promote one side of the street more than the other (generally the side of the driver). One-way streets speed traffic *through* the



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downtown rather than bring people *to* the downtown and do not provide opportunities to slow down and look around.

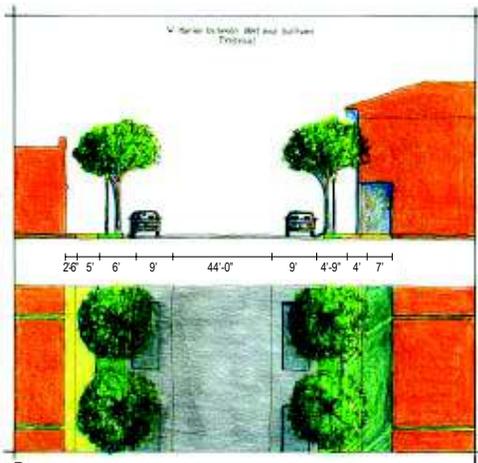
To avoid the fragmentation of the downtown, to slow down the automobile traffic, and to decrease the pedestrian barriers caused by the one-way system, Marion Avenue and Olympia Avenue must be converted back to their original two-way designs.

State Road 41 South Gateway

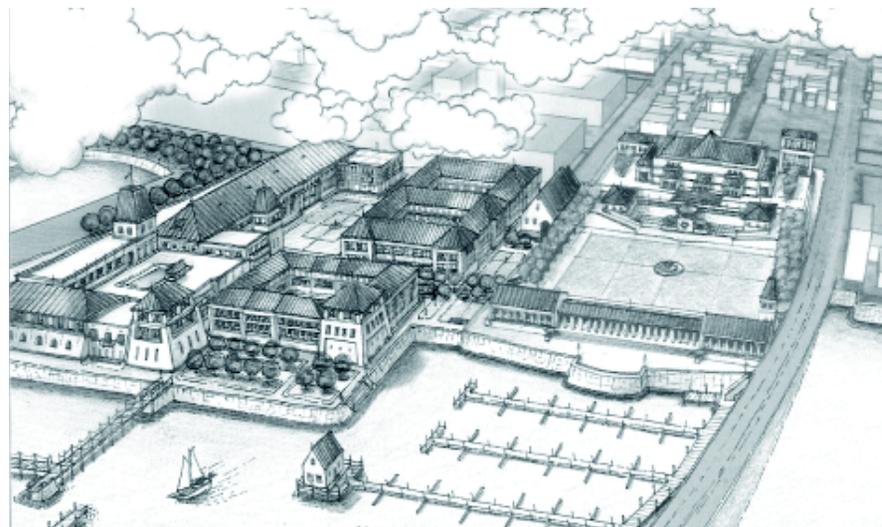
The principal gateway into the downtown area of the City of Punta Gorda is State Road 41 South. The proposed central plaza, the multiple fountains, the arcades, the sequence of plazoletas (small public spaces on one side of a block), and the pergola with its open air market around the new auditorium building will create a striking and very inviting public face for the downtown.

This sequence of spaces should also be accentuated with distinctive light posts along both sides of the bridge and with two or three (strategically located) tall towers – creating a wholesome event of a simple entry point. These towers should have a distinctive architecture and should not be placed on the same building but at various locations –in accordance with a study of potential perspectives and terminations of vistas.

- B. Marion Ave. proposed street section
- C. Gateway view from US 41 southbound



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Master Plan Parking Diagram Key

-  Continuous Parallel Parking
-  Off-Peak Parallel Parking
-  Proposed Parking Structure
-  Proposed Ground Level Parking



Downtown Parking

The repertoire of parking options should include: diagonal and/or parallel parking around open spaces, on-street parallel parking, parking courtyards inside blocks, or parking garages protected with liner buildings and not visible from the streets.

Surface parking lots should be acceptable over the short-term; but, ideally all parking surfaces should be located within the interior of blocks and should be sized appropriately to convert to parking garages lined with shops, offices and residences -as soon as the land values and the market dictate.

Parking garages will be required for the new Auditorium building and the proposed waterfront hotel. These garages, also known as a Park One Shared System, could

assign a portion of their capacity to supply the requirements of the rest of the downtown area.

The City Market Place site requires its own parking garage. Nevertheless, parking should always be contained within the interior of the blocks and should never be visible from the street.

The city should also adopt a long-term “Park Once” strategy for the downtown planning for adequate parking within a 5-minute walk of each major center and destination within the downtown. As lots redevelop along State Road 41 North and South plans should be made for parking lots and structures behind these buildings at strategic locations. The Citizens Master Plan

has allocated sites behind the proposed library and in some other locations (please refer to attached drawing).

A park-in-lieu system shall also be implemented. These system will allow developers and property owners to contribute to a pre-arranged parking fund which will subsidize the construction of parking garages and parking courts rather than forcing individual property owners to provide all parking on or near their buildings.

Finally, the City of Punta Gorda should keep the maximum amount of on-street parking in place and should count these spaces as part of the on-site required parking –this is an essential pool of parking for the downtown. It will provide a convenience for shops and restaurants during off-peak hours.

A. Parking diagram

- A. Blending civic and commercial uses (CityPlace, FL)
- B. View of proposed green in front of the old courthouse
- C. Blending civic, cultural and commercial uses

Blending Civic, Cultural, and Commercial Activities:

The City of Punta Gorda should not force all of its civic buildings, parks and waterfront areas to be single-use islands. Urban retail place-making relies on the synergy of people going to libraries, concerts, art shows, and waterfront recreation in conjunction with dining, shopping, and commercial entertainment. For instance, the bistros and restaurants along one of the sides of the Mediterranean revival church in City Place, or Bryant Park in New York City could be understood as two analogical paradigms. In these two cases, there is a good synergy amongst civic/cultural buildings, dining, and great public spaces.

In the City of Punta Gorda, the old courthouse, the auditorium, and other of its quasi-civic uses should blend with the arts, culture, entertainment, dining, the cafes and the shops. Under all circumstances, the City shall avoid single-use islands with very limited hours of operation. Never assume

that it cannot be done; many other cities have already figured out how to make it work. Think “CAN DO” and research what legal and intergovernmental arrangements are required.

Don't accept “NO” for an answer.



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Movies on the Green and Youth Center

During one of the public workshops, a group of teenagers articulated their concerns regarding the downtown area. They expressed their desire for things to do and mentioned a Drive-in Movie Theater and a Teen Center. The lawn proposed in the rear of the new Auditorium would provide an exciting setting for families, teens and movie fans; they could sit on the lawn and watch movies on a gigantic temporary movie screen. In fact, this could become a weekly event; a combination of classic films, art films, and contemporary

movies could be managed by a cultural organization or by a small art house movie theater located in one of the new buildings within the City Marketplace, the new Auditorium, or one of the nearby sites. This type of activity is not unusual; there is a successful model in the village center of Southern Village in Chapel Hill, North Carolina -where a small cinema house manages the weekend movie night on the green.

The teen center concept was translated into its downtown equivalent. The design team proposed a large coffee house with flexible

space for musical performances and dances, and with enough wall space to display student art at either the historic Ice House or at one of the warehouse locations nearby. This establishment could be run as a co-op where students would donate time to help run and staff a coffee-pastry shop and where they could also program their own events and learn business and management skills from retired business people managing the whole operation.

The City of Punta Gorda could also exercise the option of asking any large scale development to provide for a small community-teen coffee shop.

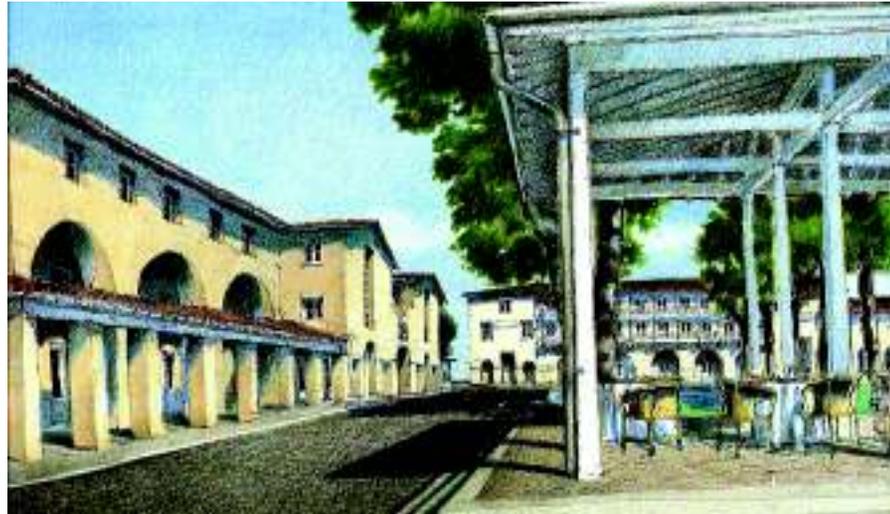
D. Example of movies in the park (Bryant Park, NY)

A. View of a potential retail center

Avoid Retail Sprawl

There are growing pressures for large-scale retail development at the southern and eastern edges of the city, primarily in areas controlled by the County. Residential growth, demographic trends, higher income households, tourism, and growth pressures -in other parts of the Gulf Coast, will turn the Punta Gorda region into attractive locations for big box retail development and shopping centers.

The citizens of Punta Gorda must decide how much and what type of commercial development they would prefer outside of the downtown. Unless the City of Punta Gorda creates a coordinated and complementary approach to growth management with Charlotte County or, unless it pursues outright annexation of some of the areas along this corridor, it will have very limited ability to control its sprawling growth.

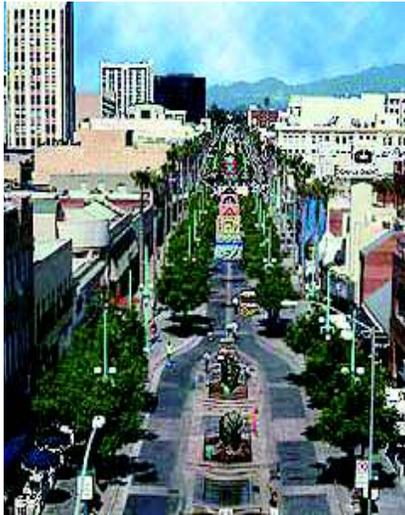


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Punta Gorda and Charlotte County residents are expected to welcome some types of larger format retail but it must be well planned to satisfy long-term needs. For instance, there is an unmet need for home improvement goods (hence the arrival of Home Depot), home furnishings, discount retail (as Walmart's arrival reveals), and many other types of goods and services; and, this might just be the beginning of what will be a much larger influx in the coming decade. The areas outside of the downtown should

be planned to include concentrated neighborhood, village, and town centers to accommodate retail that does not compete with the downtown and that provides a configuration different to the sprawling retail in "suburban *Genericana*". Today, dozens of examples of Town Center projects might serve as paradigms for new land development regulations.

For instance, limiting the amount, quality, and type of development has been a



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successful strategy to complement existing and proposed uses in downtown areas. This type of strategy has been successfully used in the revitalization of the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica as well as in Reston Town Center in Virginia. The only caveat is that this type of strategy requires a proactive approach to growth management on the part of Punta Gorda's leadership.

Time is of the essence.



C.

Colonnades and Porches:

In an attempt to restore the pedestrian friendly image of the downtown, the 2005 Citizens Master Plan calls for the reconstitution of public colonnades (arcades) along sections of Olympia and State Road 41 (particularly around the Old Courthouse and in the arts district). The colonnades shall be

incorporated into the new Land Development Regulations as allowed encroachments on the public right of way (ROW). These encroachments should be no less than 10 feet deep and shall have a minimum frontage of 80%.

The disappearance of the porch as a semi-public space may have come from many sources, including the invention of

- B. Example of retail town center (Santa Monica, CA)
- C. Proposed arcade building

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

- A. Historic arcaded bank in downtown
- B. Arcades throughout Downtown
- C. Porches and arcades in downtown, c.1920



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residential air conditioning, but its consequences have been devastating for the social structure of our communities. The 2005 Citizens Master Plan calls for the re-introduction of porches into residential and live/work units. Porches must be incorporated into the new Land Development Regulations as allowed encroachments into the front and corner setbacks. These encroachments shall be no less than 8 ft. and shall occupy a minimum frontage of 50%.



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Branch Library and Historic Archives:

A portion of the old County Courthouse could be restored to keep an archival collection of historic maps, photographs, and documents concerning the long-standing traditions of the City of Punta Gorda and its environs. The rest of the building could be used as a local County Branch Library facing a new public space. The branch library could be run as a pure volunteer effort by citizens concerned with

the preservation of American culture, the dissemination of knowledge, and the achievements of education.

The 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes a small arboretum (a collection of local landscape specimens) as part of the new public space. A parking garage in the rear of the building would take care of the library parking as well as some of the overflow downtown parking.



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- D. Pictures of the old courthouse
- E. View of the proposed library
- F. Site plan for the proposed library



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A. Plan of proposed event center (Auditorium)

New Auditorium and Event Center:

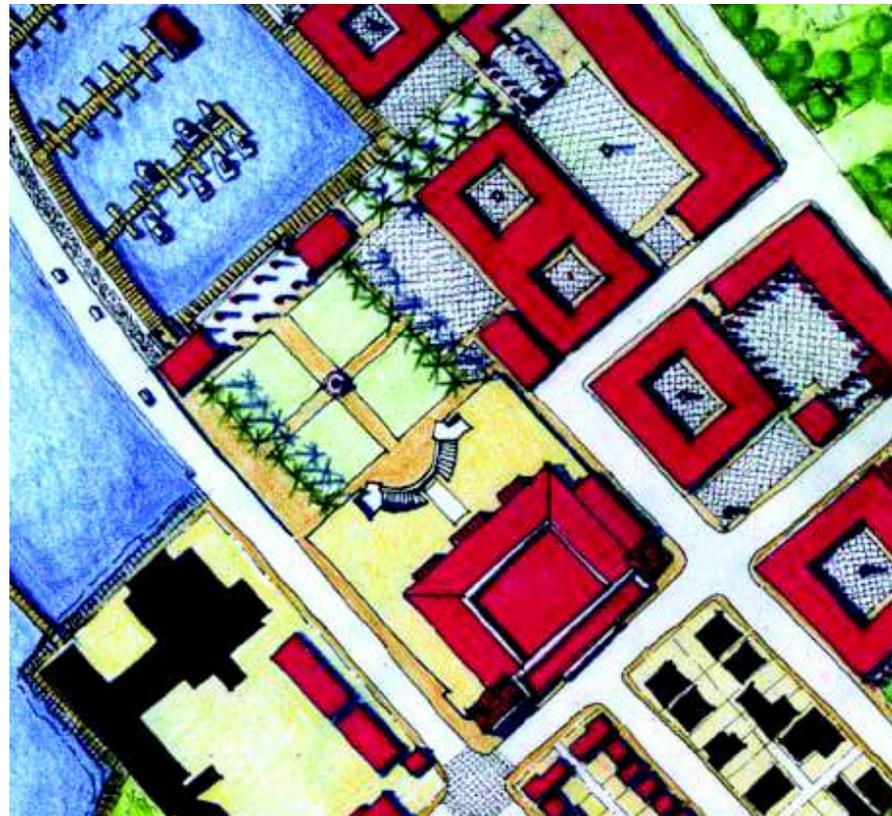
The New Auditorium building must be designed as a contributing structure to the rest of the downtown area. For instance, the 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes a sequence of public spaces delivering pedestrians from the central plaza on Taylor and Marion to a city-scaled green in the rear of the New Auditorium building. The idea of the rear green is nothing but a reconstitution of the same kind of space in the old Hotel Punta Gorda. This new green would be used for scheduled activities such as: block parties, theater on the green, movies on the green, political events and rallies, fresh produce open-air market, etc.

The parking requirements for the Auditorium building must be solved out of public sight and preferably on a podium lined by commercial uses or convention center facilities. A parking podium would liberate the rear of the building and could

be shared, as overflow parking, with the rest of the downtown –as a part of the Park Once system.

In the rear of the Auditorium property,

the 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes an open-air loggia. This loggia faces a new marina for small sail boats and could be used for open-air seafood and fresh produce markets.



A.

Open Space:

The master plan includes a variety of vehicular thoroughfares as well as a network of green spaces for the livelihood of the regional natural ecology. It shall be understood that open space provides the greater part of the public realm at all scales, from the region to the lot; and that it includes a wide range of types, from

thoroughfares or roof gardens to greenbelts and farmlands.

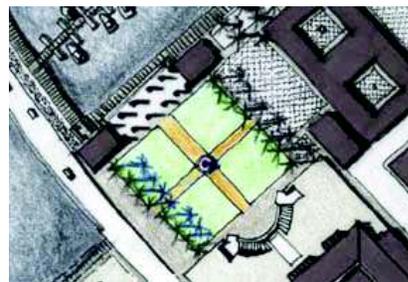
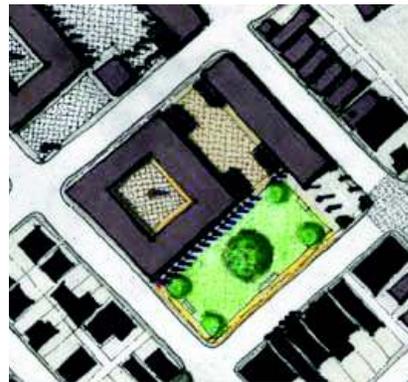
In conventional development systems, open space is typically expressed as a ratio of some function, such as population or land area. This practice may result in large, misplaced open areas, which are

underutilized by the community. In fact, in conventional development systems, the only types of open space which are carefully considered are determined by either environmental regulations or by parking requirements.

Open spaces, to be effective at an environmental scale (including human beings), must be specialized in function, distinguished by size, landscaping characteristics, frontage requirements, equipment, and should be located in appropriate sites. Open spaces range from rural to urban and from watershed to patches.

Moreover, to be truly public, open spaces must be fronted by building facades, which is to say, circumscribed by thoroughfares. To be fully used, open spaces should straddle pedestrian and natural trajectories (including natural migratory patterns, nesting locations, etc.) or be adjacent to meaningful destinations.

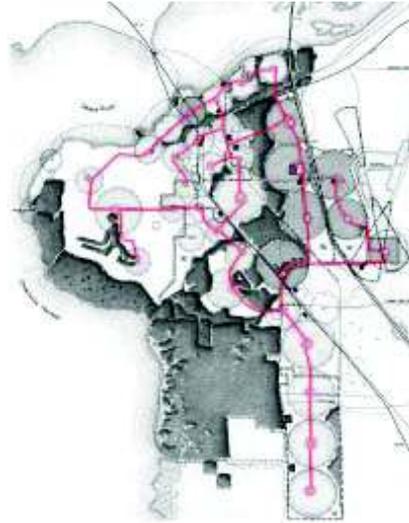
B. Examples of open space from the master plan



B.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

- A. Trolley routes
- B. Parks and recreation diagram



A.

The Trolley Routes:

The tourism industry and the residents of the City of Punta Gorda would benefit immensely with the implementation of a historic trolley route. This trolley could initially cover the downtown and its surrounding historic areas and could eventually expand its routes to the various City neighborhood centers.

Waterfront Parks and Recreation:

With the help of the various Garden Clubs, the 2005 Citizens Master Plan calls for a network of waterfront parks, green spaces, buffer zones, protection and conservation areas, plazas, greens, pocket parks, waterfront piers, and other defined public spaces—including boulevards and streets.

The waterfront along Gilchrist Park is understood as a passive area with possibilities for small piers dedicated to kayaks or sailing boats—as part of a small Sailing School for children and the handicapped. In addition to the existing services, the park will contain facilities associated with these functions.

The Master Plan calls for a mooring ball



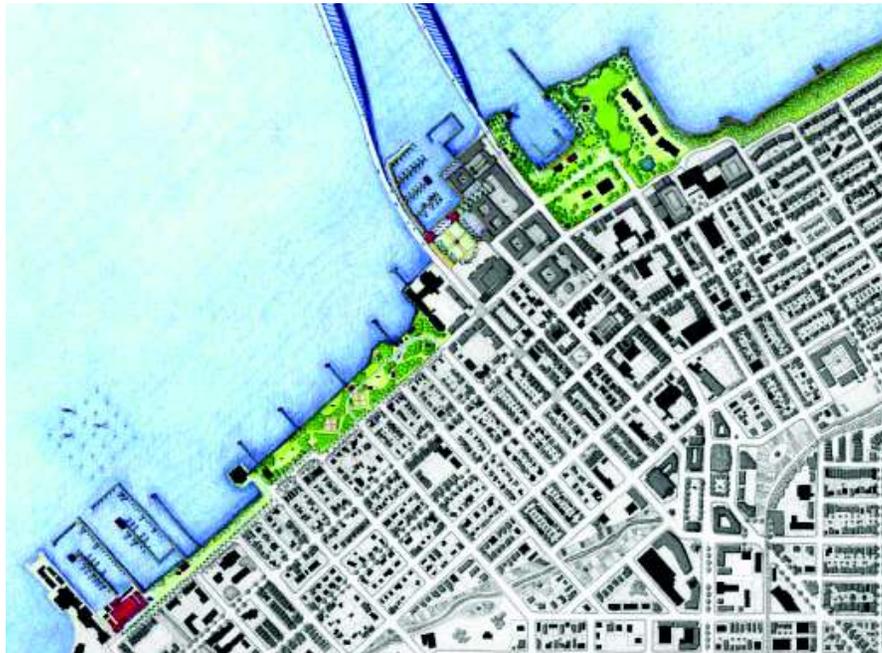
B.

field between Alice Pitman and Shreve Park and the Fisherman's Village Municipal Pier –with a new dingy boat pier somewhere within this location. In addition to this, the park shall be enhanced with shower, laundry and bathroom facilities. A small gas dispensing facility may be provided at the location of the existing Nautical Club.

Another marina is proposed on the East side

of the South State Road 41 Bridge, in front of the proposed Auditorium building. This marina would complement the existing hotel marina at the tip of this location.

Reconstruction and up-dating of existing marinas is essential to the success of downtown Punta Gorda. Particular attention must be paid to the marinas in Fisherman's village and Laishley Park.



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Community Gardens:

The Citizens Master Plan calls for a grouping of garden plots available for small-scale cultivation, to residents of historic houses, downtown apartments or other types of dwellings without private gardens. These community gardens, located in the Linear Park along the old railroad tracks and extending to the Martin Luther King area, shall accommodate individual storage sheds and be valuable for their recreational and communal role, similar to that of a club.

- C. Waterfront amenities diagram
- D. Plan of garden plots
- E. Example of community garden

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

A. Historic District

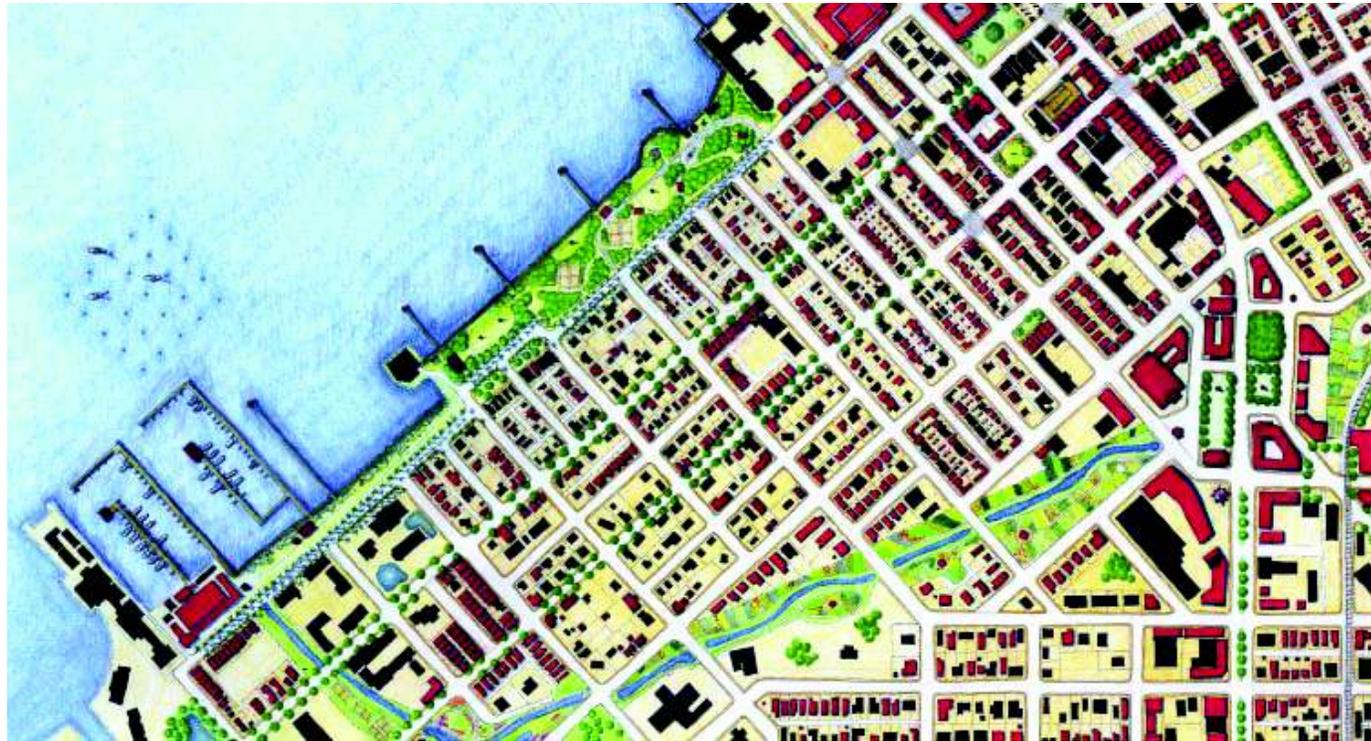
Historic District:

The City of Punta Gorda has one of the most eclectic historic districts in Central Florida. Its historic importance encompasses more than one hundred years

of residential and civic experience. Nevertheless, the historic district is under severe stress of new construction incompatibility.

Under FEMA flood regulations, new

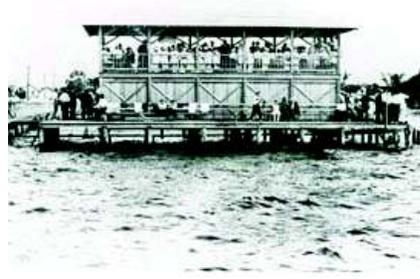
buildings must be raised to comply with Federal policies within flood areas. Therefore, the new Land Development Regulations must include design guidelines to avoid the production of the typical “mega-mansion on concrete poles” with



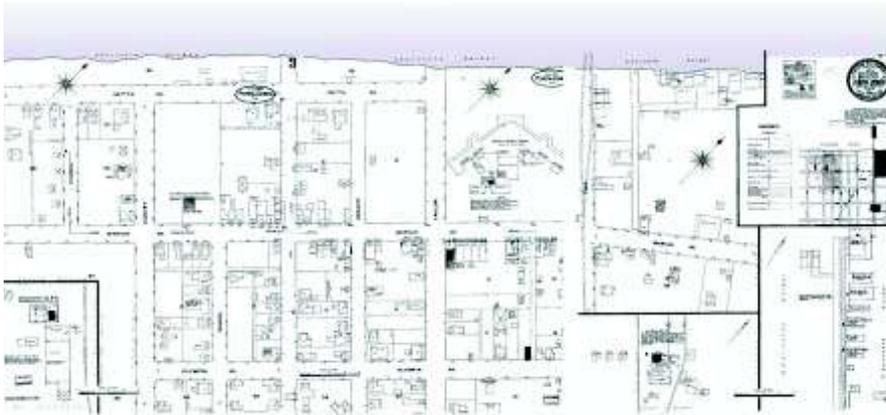
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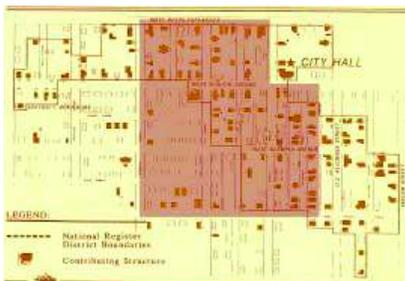
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- B. Historic Punta Gorda buildings
- C. Sanborn Map, c. 1925
- D. Residential historic district boundaries
- E. Sanborn map, c. 1909



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parking underneath. The new LDR's must emphasize the gradual raising of the houses by means of porches, terraces, loggias, courtyards, and other similar design devices.

Strong remains of a traditional landscape scheme are still evident within the public grounds of the historic district. The 2005 Citizens Master Plan suggests the over-stressing of these archaeological remains (i.e.: lighting fixtures, benches, planters, etc.) and the production of inventive landscape schemes with an emphasis in color, paving materials, texture, tree spacing, and similarities/idiosyncrasies (see proposed landscape scheme here depicted).

A. Historic park area



A.

History Park Neighborhood:

The neighborhood around History Park has the potential to become one of the most desirable communities within the downtown area. The 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes: compatible infill housing,

the reconfiguration of streets and street-landscape, the relocation of historic buildings into the fabric of the neighborhood, the encroachment of residential porches and other semi-public

spaces into the front lot setbacks, and the endorsement of live/work units to attract professional activities and residential variety.



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B. Community Garden

Landscape Standards:

Twentieth century modernism has attempted to reinvent the city, its architecture, and its urban landscape. Nevertheless, in Punta Gorda the notions of rational planning and functionalism, by themselves, have proven inadequate to suppress historical associations, regional eclecticism, ecological appropriateness, and beauty. The Citizens of Punta Gorda desire a new landscape narrative based on historic models and the manifestation of what is appropriate to the climate and to this part of the world. In a constant search for appropriateness, the 2005 Citizens Master

Plan proposes the following general landscape standards:

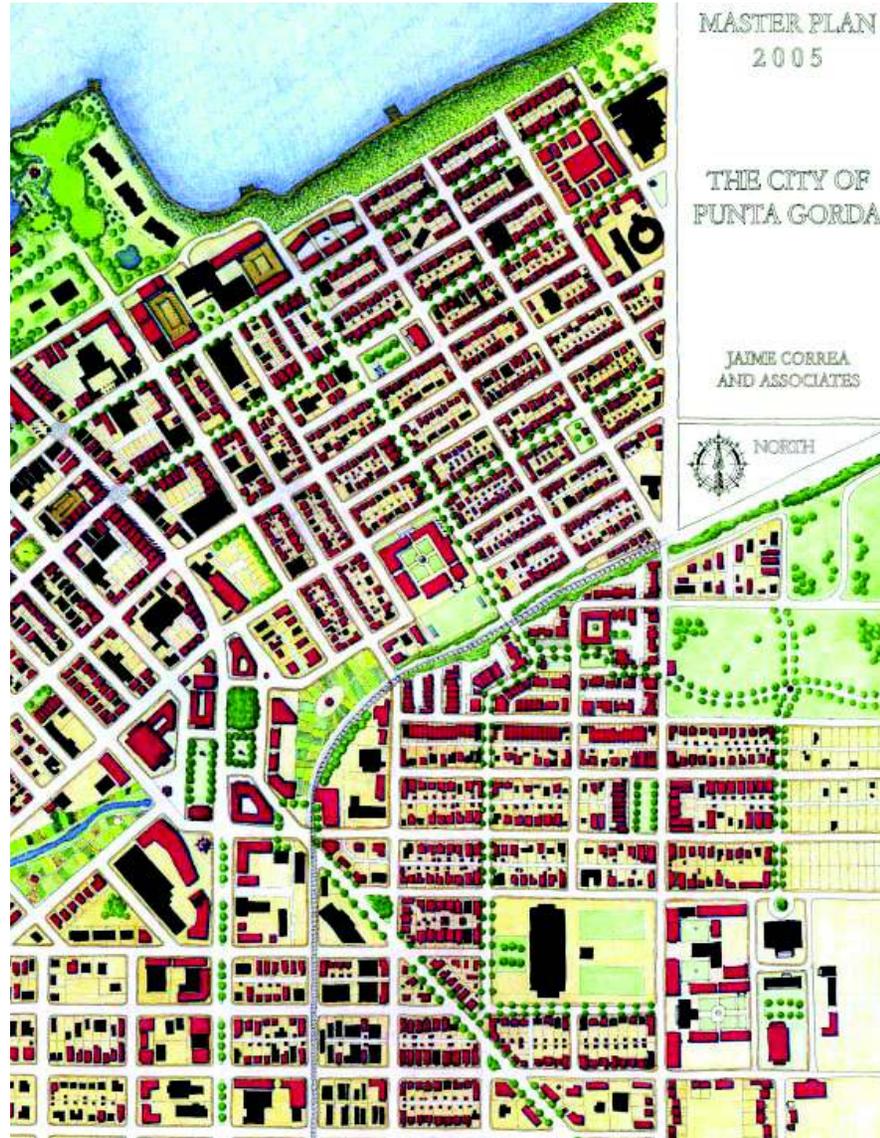
1. All shade trees and flowering trees located on the right of way must be planted at 25 -30 feet on center; all palm trees shall be planted at 15 – 20 feet on center.
2. All trees must have a minimum height of 8 feet and 3-6 inch caliper at time of planting; hedges shall have a minimum of 3 feet in height.
3. The following flowering trees are suggested: Red silk cotton, Wild cinnamon, Buttercup tree, Green

buttonwood, Guiana chestnut, Jamaica Dogwood, and Golden Tabebuia.

4. The following shade trees are suggested: Black ironwood, Wild tamarind, West Indian cherry, Live oaks, Mahogany, Bald cypress, and Pond cypress.
5. The following palm trees would be appropriate: Alexandra palm, Coconut palm, Silver palm, Cabbage palm, Florida Thatch palm, and Royal palms.

The Citizens' Master Plan 2005

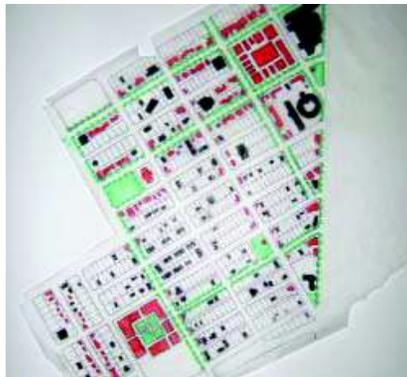
- A. East Punta Gorda
- B. Preliminary sketches of Trabue Woods



B.

Eastern Neighborhoods (Trabue Woods and More):

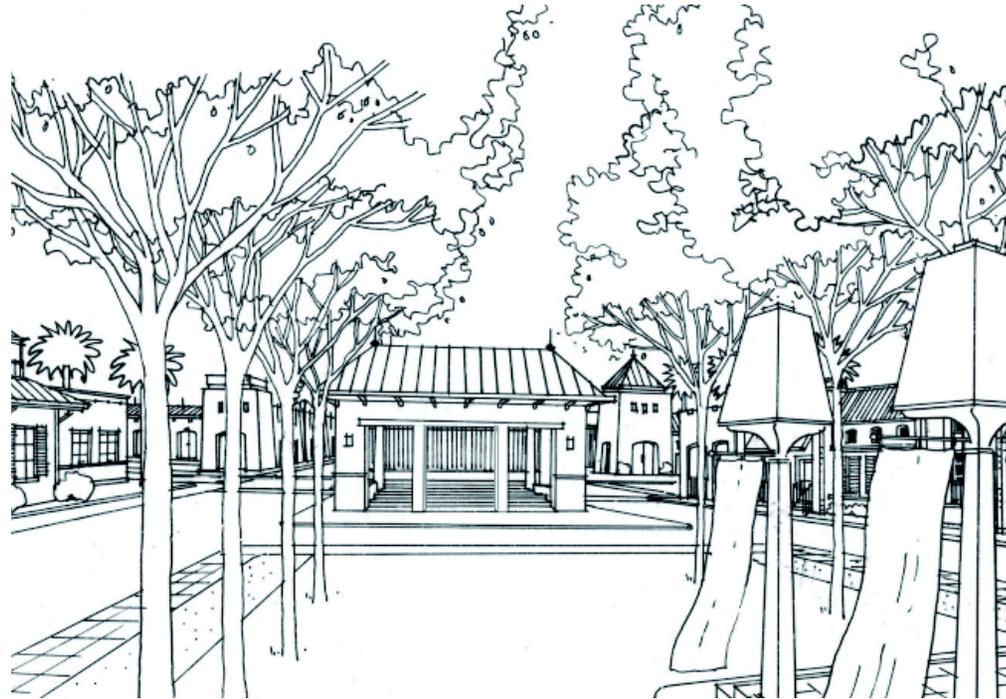
Walking downtowns with a variety of mixed-use buildings and flats over businesses are a rarity these days. The City of Punta Gorda is fortunate to have a unique collection of residential neighborhoods at no more than 2,600 feet (10 minutes walking distance) from the center of its downtown area. In fact, the



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charm and beauty of its downtown and the eclecticism of its residential neighborhoods are placing the City of Punta Gorda amongst the most livable cities on the West Coast of Florida.

The City of Punta Gorda must create an incentive program for residents and developers of new and existing projects (i.e.: Downtown Delray Beach affordable



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housing programs). For residents, it should implement programs to subsidize down payments and promote residential ownership –to increase the level of maintenance and pride. For developers, it should help them reduce their cost of construction by allowing them to have density bonuses based on specific performance criteria; and, it should also establish public/private partnerships with

the existing Housing Agencies and with other City Agencies that could benefit with the existing real estate boom.

The 2005 Citizens Master Plan proposes infill and new development compatible with the type of traditional housing increments that have characterized the City of Punta Gorda during its long history.

C. Preliminary sketches of East Punta Gorda area
D. View of proposed green on MLK Dr.

- A. Proposed public housing project
- B. Existing public housing project

Affordable Housing:

Affordable housing shall be integrated seamlessly into the neighborhoods. Small projects tend to be more successful than projects with large concentrations of units; the latter tending to become ghettos with various degrees of inconsistencies and safety problems.

The project here depicted (counterproposal to Trabue Woods) attempts to restore the fabric of the traditional city with a combination of apartments, town houses, detached houses, live/work units, communal amenities, and neighborhood commercial uses located around a central public space.

Contrast this project with the existing neighborhoods on adjacent areas: one with only apartment buildings (100%) and the other with multi-family units or duplexes and apartments (65%). It is obvious that, the degree of aliveness of the proposed incremental project is greater than



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the apparent life of the two other projects.

This project provides approximately 200 units on the 13 acre site –where only 154 units need to be replaced. Therefore, the Housing Authority could use its powers to sell the remaining 46 units at market rate; the result of this new cash flow could be used to finance better infrastructure, more trees, or other affordable housing projects.

The City of Punta Gorda must be flexible in zoning and concentrate on design issues. Once developers experience the quality of the first two or three projects, others will certainly follow. But, the toughest part is to enforce a desire for quality at the very beginning.



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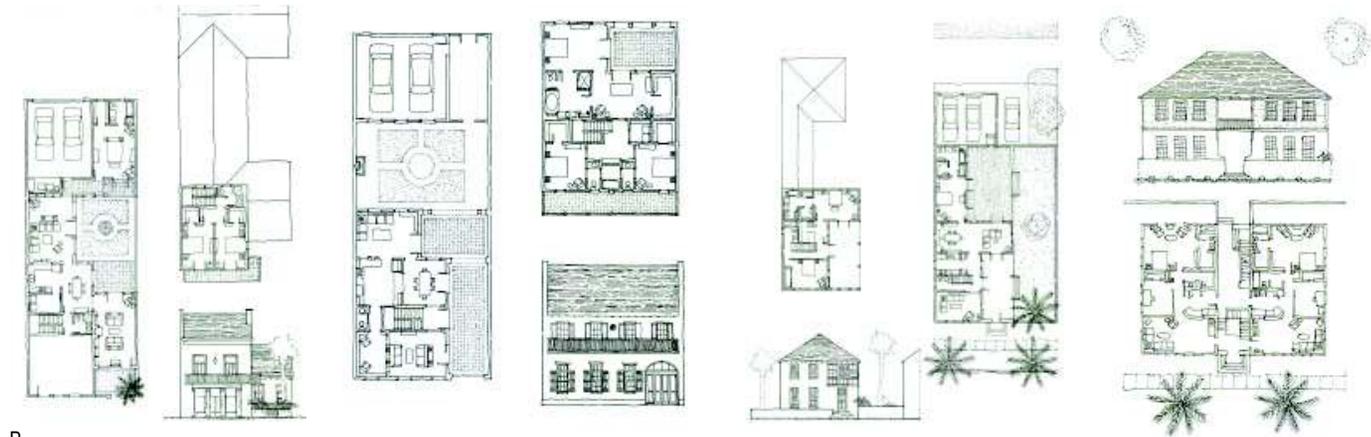
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- C. View of proposed housing
- D. Aerial view of proposed project

- A. Architectural syntax
- B. Examples of housing types



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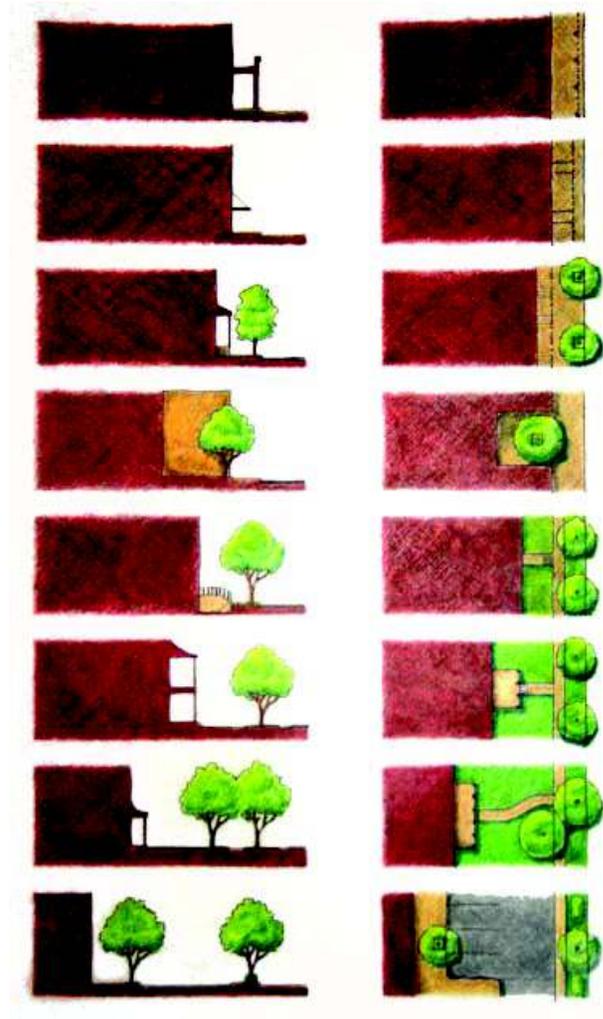
Residential Building Types and Open Spaces:

A repertoire of building types is here provided including: townhouses, courtyard buildings, side-yard houses, patio houses, detached houses, apartment buildings, etc. A similar architectural syntax of its elements (windows, doors, balconies, roofs, etc.) and its proportions (including building heights) produces a certain degree of economy, propriety, and general efficiency.

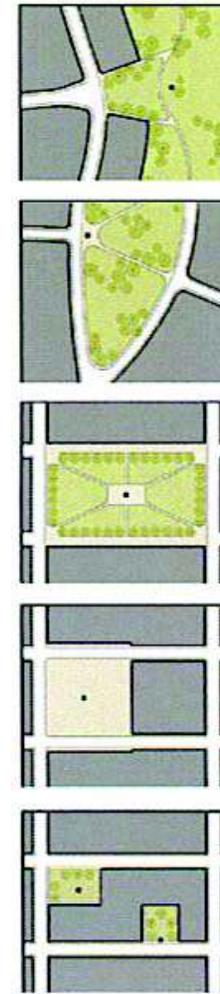


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In a similar fashion, a series of public spaces (from the most urban to the most rural) have been identified. These public spaces include: front/rear/side yards, courtyards, plazoletas, plazas, greens, parks, etc. More importantly, the Master Plan assumes a correlation between the open space / street type and the type of building frontage (within the same gradient – from urban to rural). Buildings which are more rural in character require larger front and lateral setbacks; more urban buildings assume smaller front setbacks and very small or null lateral setbacks.



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- C. Public space syntax
- D. Building frontage transect
- E. Examples of public space

Master Plan Traffic Study Key

-  Two-Way Traffic
-  Off-Peak Street Parking
-  Reconfigured Intersection

