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# Citizens' Master Plan



## ***District Redevelopment Plan Adopted August 16, 2011***

Prepared with the help of Charlotte County Government  
Building and Growth Management Department

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All Maps, Figures, Tables, and plan data are the product of Charlotte County Building and Growth Management Department, 2011, unless otherwise indicated.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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On September 21, 2010, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) unanimously approved the Medical District area as a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). This action demonstrated recognition of the need to revitalize the CRA area and the will to positively impact the historic residential and business center of Charlotte County.

Through the CRA process, the Board established a means by which revitalization of and reinvestment in the area would occur. Key to this process was the Board's wish to see a private/public partnership formed in which the public would share in the development and implementation of the Citizen's Master Plan (Plan). Citizens responded individually and collectively. For example, an effective district partner formed in TEAM Port Charlotte, a not-for-profit 501(c)3. They have offered tremendous leadership and assistance in making improvements in a variety of areas in service to the district. In all, over 300 private citizens have participated and contributed to the Plan's development. Public participation involved a robust series of public meetings, citizen and business surveys, and one-on-one stakeholder interviews, concluding with a series of well-attended public charrettes.

The Plan is written in conformity with §163.360, Florida Statute, as the district's Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Plan. As such, it serves three main purposes:

- The Plan prescribes the actions that will be taken to revitalize the area.
- The Plan provides guidance regarding when and how the Plan initiatives will be funded.
- The Plan serves as support for grant applications to help future partners choose to fund the district's improvements.

In its 50<sup>th</sup> year, it is fitting that the district receives attention and reinvestment. The 1,100 acre area has served as the center or heart of Charlotte County's commerce for a large portion of the County's history. The district is home to approximately 8,000 residents, 800 businesses (including two of the County's three major hospitals, a prominent mall, and a large automobile dealership) and many medical, financial, office, institutional and commercial retail businesses. Almost every County resident has relied on the businesses and services within the district at one time or another.

The district's development pattern is unique for Charlotte County, rivaled only by the City of Punta Gorda. The area contains a strong mix of commercial and low-, medium-, and high-density residential dwellings. The area, often thought of as a center for senior citizens actually represents all age groups, with approximately one-third youth, one-third senior and one-third young to middle age adults. The area also possesses a strong mix of social and cultural assets which, properly reconfigured, would transform this area from simply serving as a place to go for a doctor's visit to an active and bustling pedestrian-oriented community area with attractive and inviting commercial, cultural, recreation and public open spaces. The district will be looked at as, *"A Great Destination; a Great Place to Live, Work and Play."*

The Plan is comprehensive in nature, offering solutions not only to current critical problems such as higher than average crime and property maintenance violations within the district, but more importantly, it establishes a long-term vision and defines the actions that will prevent the decline from continuing and ultimately lead to renewal.

In order to accomplish this, the Plan is divided into four sections. Section 1 describes the purposes of the plan and the study area. Section 2 provides background on the conditions of the area. Section 3 provides the Plan initiatives and policies that will lead to renewal. Section 4 provides the funding plan, which includes Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

It is important to note that no single suggested improvement will not mend the district; it will take time and the full list of Plan recommendations to fully transform the area. Each piece of this Plan is a critical building block for revitalizing the district as a healthy community area. It is important that work commence immediately to build upon the momentum and support of the residents and business owners.



# 1 PURPOSE

The Citizens' Master Plan (hereafter referred to as the "Plan") meets the requirements of and serves as a "*Community Redevelopment Plan*," as required by §163.360, Florida Statutes. As such, the Plan serves three main purposes:

- The Plan prescribes the actions that will be taken to revitalize the district. These actions, written as goals, objectives and policies, guide the public/private partnership's investment that brings about revitalization of the district area;
- The Plan offers the methods that will be employed to finance the district's improvements, which will include the establishment of Tax Increment Financing (TIF); and
- The Plan is written to help granting agencies understand the challenges and the excellent opportunities that exist in transforming the lives and fortunes of the residents and business owners within and surrounding the district.

## 1.1 STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION

The district, identified in Map 1, is the land located northeast of US 41, south of Midway Boulevard and Morningstar Waterway, and northwest of Fordham and Yale waterways in the Port Charlotte area. Appendix A contains the legal description of the area.

The entire revitalization area consists of approximately 1,100 acres. The boundaries of the district were selected because of the uniformity of conditions within the area, the location and distance of residential property from the commercial core and because the major roadways and canals that surround the area provide a natural boundary.



## 1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

### 1.2.1 Laying the Groundwork

In 2008, Charlotte County began rewriting its Comprehensive Plan, known as the "Smart Charlotte 2050 Plan" or "Smart Charlotte". Smart Charlotte categorized development patterns into a prescriptive "Framework," based upon the type, format, age of neighborhood, and the percent of build-out. Through this Framework, the Medical District area was identified as a "Revitalizing Neighborhood." Preliminary public meetings, stakeholder interviews and surveys performed by staff and representatives of the County's planning consultant concluded that the Medical District should be the County's first candidate for revitalization. After careful review of the *Finding of Necessity Report*, the Board unanimously approved the district as a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA).

### 1.2.2 Citizen Leadership

Per the direction of the Board, staff began developing a citizen-based master plan. Staff's role was to facilitate plan development and to ensure conformity with State statutes and the County's Comprehensive Plan. On February 3, 2011, the first in a series of public charrettes was held to formally develop the Plan's content. The first charrette built upon previous citizen work. Citizens formally identified opportunities and challenges within the district and laid the groundwork for development of the district's vision. In the second meeting, occurring February 17, 2011, citizens identified specific strategies that should be implemented to eliminate the district's challenges and to capitalize on its assets to transform the area. The final public charrette was held on March 24, 2011. In this meeting citizens reviewed their previous work and verified plan content with staff. Ideas and concepts were validated through a number of county-wide business and citizen surveys performed throughout the charrette process. Parallel to the charrette process, a grass-roots citizens group formed and organized itself into a 501(c)3 organization called TEAM Port Charlotte. This group worked collaboratively with County staff in support of the charrette process, organized community clean-up activities, spurred development of Neighborhood Watch Committees and is working hand-in-hand with Code Compliance staff to address home maintenance issues.

### 1.2.3 Comprehensive Plan Consistency

On August 8, 2011, the County's local planning agency found the plan in conformity with the County's Comprehensive Plan and its Revitalization Goals. The Citizens' Master Plan recommends future changes to land development regulations; however, proposed changes are consistent with Smart Charlotte.

Smart Charlotte includes a Revitalization component, which complements the Citizens' Master Plan's redevelopment goals. It is envisioned that as the redevelopment of the district area occurs, the Citizens' Master Plan will serve as a framework for any future Revitalization Plans under the County's Comprehensive Plan.

## 1.3 SUCCESS

### 1.3.1 Plan Horizon

Though all good plans must be flexible to meet ever-changing conditions, this plan is intended to be implemented in its entirety within 20 years of the adoption of the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Trust Fund. The quicker each plan action is implemented, the more rapid the overall transformation will be.

### 1.3.2 Measures

Some indicators of the Plan's success will include:

- Crime statistics that are comparable to or better than the rest of the County as a whole,
- Reinvestment in existing businesses in the district,
- A demand for commercial and residential property surpassing availability,
- A high percent of owner-occupied dwellings,
- Return of commercial and residential property values to levels comparable to or surpassing other areas of the County,
- And the development of a district that is recognized as a desirable destination: a great place to live, work and play. This concept is not a slogan but is, rather, the core goal of the district plan.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND CONDITIONS

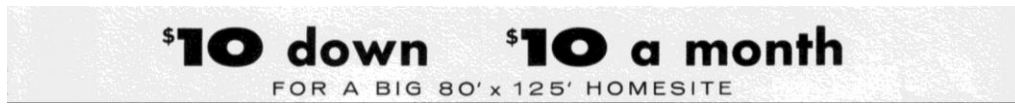
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### 2.1 HISTORY

#### 2.1.1 County and District Area

Charlotte County was established in 1921. Through the 1940's the County was primarily an agricultural community; however, in the 1950's, General Development Corporation ("GDC") identified the County as a good area for residential development. GDC and the Mackle Brothers became the primary developers of Port Charlotte. These developers began building in the Conway/Easy Street area. *"Ten dollars down and Ten Dollars a month"* would buy you an 80' by 125' lot in sunny Port Charlotte, Florida (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Part of Early Advertisement**



The successful marketing of Port Charlotte made it the County's most populated area. As residential demand increased, GDC set aside land to provide a central location for commerce, culture and education in the Promenades Mall area.

#### 2.1.2 Promenades Mall

The Port Charlotte Plaza, now known as the Promenades Mall, was the County's first mall. Having been built in the 1959, it contained the area's major food store, a pharmacy and other stores (see Figure 2). A post office was also located in the core district area.

**Figure 2: Promenades Mall**



In 2011, the mall was purchased; the new owners are working to improve the traffic patterns, configuration and visibility of the site. Additionally, one of the mall's anchors, Winn Dixie Food Stores, is investing \$6.7 million to completely remodel its store.

### 2.1.3 Cultural Center of Charlotte County

In 1961, the Cultural Center of Charlotte County was established to provide education, recreation, and cultural pursuits. Originally, the facility contained a library, theatre, and classrooms (see Figure 3). A large conference center and public cafeteria addition made it a tremendous resource for County citizens. This is the Center's 50<sup>th</sup> year of service to the public. Currently, it serves as a meeting center for numerous civic organizations from throughout the county, a source for ongoing adult education and health activities and as a social hub for many older adults who live around the Center. One initiative the Cultural Center is undertaking is to secure a grant to create a second, complimentary entrance on the north side of its property to open access to an already available, but inaccessible, onsite parking lot.

**Figure 3: Cultural Center of Charlotte County**



### 2.1.4 Growth of the Medical Profession in the District

In 1962, a group of area doctors desiring to serve the medical needs of Port Charlotte residents established the then 50-bed hospital, called St. Joseph's Hospital (see Figure 4). The facility has since been renamed the Peace River Regional Medical Center, and now offers 219 beds. In 2011, Peace River Regional Medical Center is expanding its services by opening a \$25 million Heart Center.



**Figure 4: Peace River Hospital**

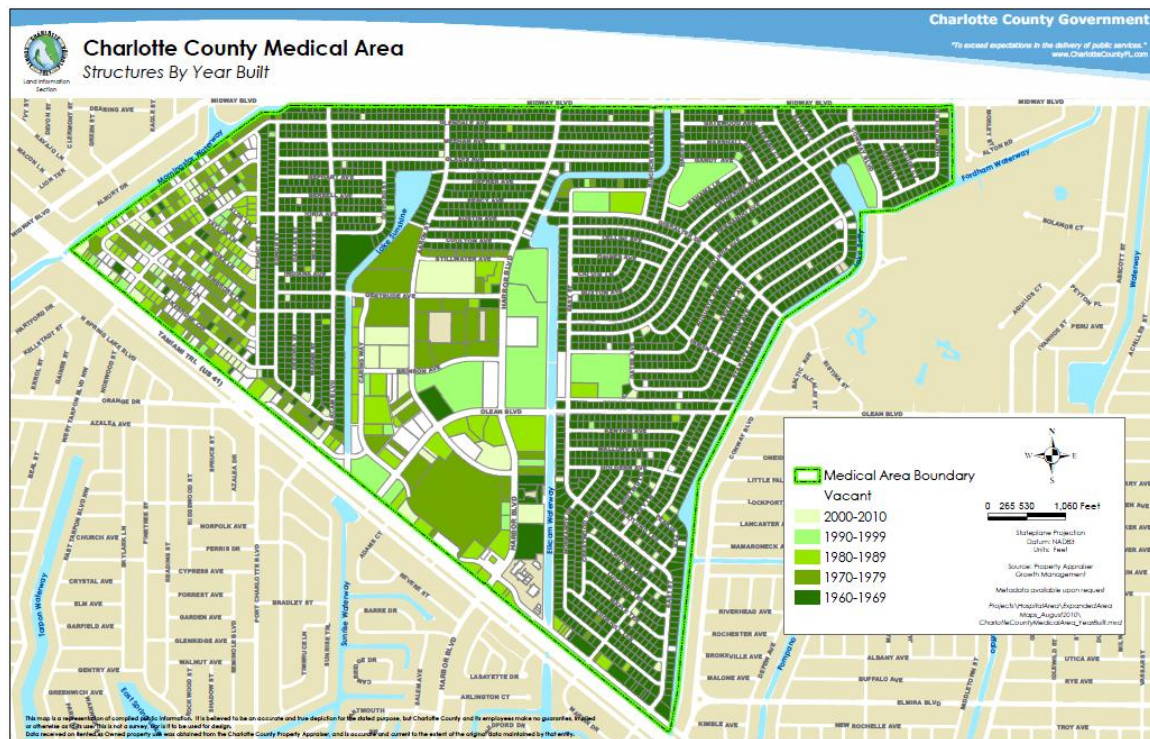


In 1975, the Chapel Manor Nursing Home was transformed into Fawcett Memorial Hospital. The hospital started as a 95-bed, acute care general medical/surgical center. Today, it is a 238-bed, full-service facility (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Fawcett Memorial Hospital**



Many doctors found it beneficial to locate near the two district hospitals. The presence of Peace River Regional and Fawcett Memorial hospitals, with their large base of employees and volunteers, many physician and other types of medical offices, and the pharmacy within the district makes healthcare the district's number one economic driver.



**Map 2: Building Age**

By the late 1960's most residential lands, and by the 1980's and 1990's most commercial lands, were occupied. The district was a success (see Map 2). What had begun as a convenient stop for shopping and medical uses had grown to an 800-plus business and commercial center with an equally successful mix of low-, medium- and high-density residential dwellings. The Cultural Center and Promenades Mall were primary destinations and the medical community was firmly established.

### 2.1.5 District Decline

As few recognized the district's growth to success, so, too, few noticed the area's slow but steady decline.

Decline first became evident in the residential neighborhoods. Though GDC and the Mackle Brother's built strong poured-concrete and cinderblock homes, most were developed in the 1960's with what by today's standard would be considered inadequate floor plans and out-of-date features such as louvered windows and other 1960's-style amenities.

The Commercial district experienced its first major decline in 1989, when the new and larger Port Charlotte Town Center mall opened just north of the district, in the Murdock area. This larger mall quickly gained prominence over the Promenades. By 2011, because of the inability of the Promenades to successfully lease space, the owners divested themselves of the property. Many other businesses followed in the move to the new commercial center.

Changes in the medical profession had also taken place. Technology now allowed smaller medical practices to perform complex procedures that once were confined to the hospital environment. Since clinics no longer required the support of hospitals for these procedures, it was no longer necessary to locate near them.

In 2004, Hurricane Charley made landfall in Charlotte Harbor. The storm was devastating to the homes in the area not only in the destruction of rooftops, but also because storm reconstruction and lack of loan-financing regulations fueled an ever-spiraling housing boom that would later prove unsupportable. Private and public investment was directed to previously undeveloped areas of the County. Reinvestment, expansion or redevelopment of existing homes and businesses was passed over when it became easier to secure financing for new construction on raw land. A ready market of laborers moved in to temporarily rent or own the existing housing stock.

#### 2.1.6 Mismatch - An Urban Center Configured as a Suburb

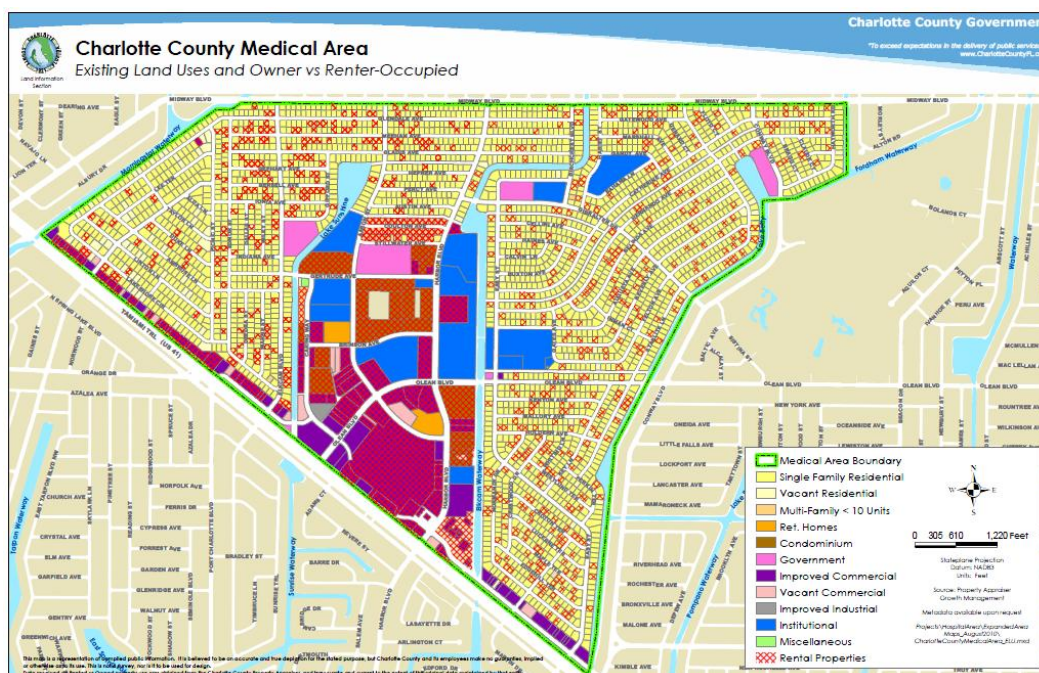
Another district challenge is its thin, suburban-style infrastructure that includes narrow and incomplete sidewalks and paths, a lack of connection between single-family residential and commercial areas, the lack of even a single gateway entry feature pointing to or identifying the district, the lack of wayfinding signs to navigate by once you are in the district, the existence of swales and rural style street lights, a lack of street trees, parks with minimal and out-of-date features, and poor pedestrian and automobile site access to businesses.

It cannot be overstated that the outmoded suburban-style infrastructure, deteriorating parks, automobile-oriented residential and commercial development have contributed to the district's decline and will remain a problem until sufficient dollars are invested in the area.

The result of these conditions is that residents and business owners are in a "chicken and egg" situation in which the problem is so systemic that few are willing to risk investment in district property. The notable exceptions are those businesses that have too great an investment in the area to leave (e.g., the hospitals and Winn Dixie).

The question for existing and potential future district property owners is "*Would it better to invest (or reinvest) in a property within the Medical District or to build or relocate elsewhere?*" Many people have decided it is best to avoid investment in this area. More and more homes and businesses have been emptied. Many homes are being purchased at low prices by landlords for use as rentals (see Map 3 and Table 1). The quality of these homes is poor and the rents are so low that many rental units are barely returning enough money to pay bills, so property upkeep and improvement are not often the highest priority.



**Map 3: Rental and Leased Properties****Table 1: Current Occupancy Type and Number**

	Rented	Owned	Totals	Owner Occupied
<b>Businesses</b>	368	431	799	54%
<b>Residences</b>	1,844	2,342	4,186	56%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,212</b>	<b>2,773</b>	<b>4,985</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2.1.7 County Findings - First Step to Renewal

As part of the Smart Charlotte process, citizens began focusing their attention on the district's problems. Florida Statute 163.340 outlines conditions from which a community may evaluate an area's health. A finding of only two of the conditions listed in this statute is sufficient to warrant intervention. The district's assessment, called its "Finding of Necessity," identified eight conditions of decline existing in the district that are detrimental to the area's long-term vitality and sustainability. Conditions identified were:

1. Incidence of crime in the area higher than in the remainder of the county.
2. Fire and emergency medical calls to the area proportionately higher than the remainder of the County.
3. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.
4. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout.
5. Deterioration of site or other improvements.
6. Inadequate and outdated building patterns.
7. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility and usefulness.
8. A greater number of violations of the Florida Building Code in the area than the number of violations recorded in the remainder of the County.

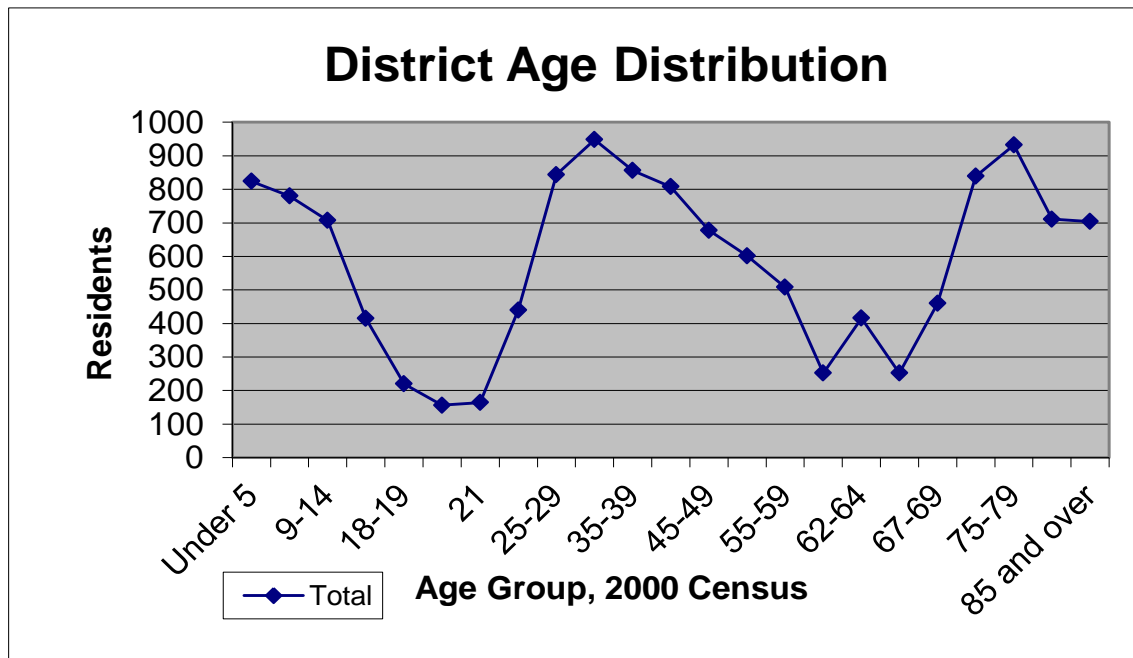
### 2.1.8 Board of County Commissioners Begins Renewal

On September 21, 2010, the Board unanimously approved the Finding of Necessity to revitalize the district (Resolution 2010-082), and in Ordinance 2010-054 the Board established the Medical District CRA. A complete description of conditions warranting the CRA are available in the *Finding of Necessity Report*, dated August 21, 2010, which is on file with the Clerk's office as an attachment to the Ordinance. Charlotte County's Board of County Commissioners recognized the district is in a great location and has a bright future if reinvestment is made.

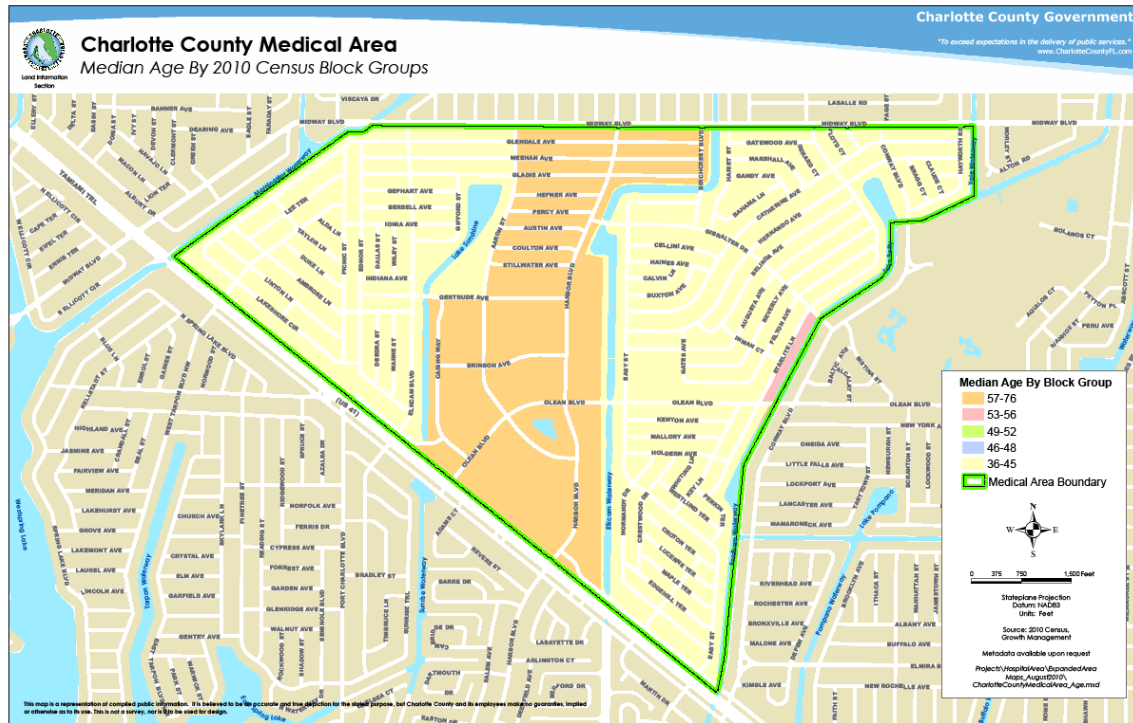
## 2.2 STATISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### 2.2.1 District Resident Age Distribution

It became apparent during the Plan development process that it is a common misconception that the district area is almost exclusively populated by senior citizens; however, the population is in fact fairly evenly distributed between youth, young to middle-aged adults, and seniors (see Figure 6: District Age Distribution).



**Figure 6: District Age Distribution**



**Map 4: Median Age by Census Block, 2010 Census, CCBGM**

The perception of the area as populated mainly by a senior population is in fact due to home location factors. A high percentage of the district's senior population live in the high and medium density multi-family housing areas immediately surrounding the district's core commercial area (see Map 4, pale orange area and Map 8).

### 2.2.2 Building Age

The average age of commercial structures in the district is approximately 30 years, with a majority of the commercial structures having been constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. The average age of the residential structures in the area is approximately 40 years, with a majority of the residential structures having been constructed in the 1960's (see Map 2).

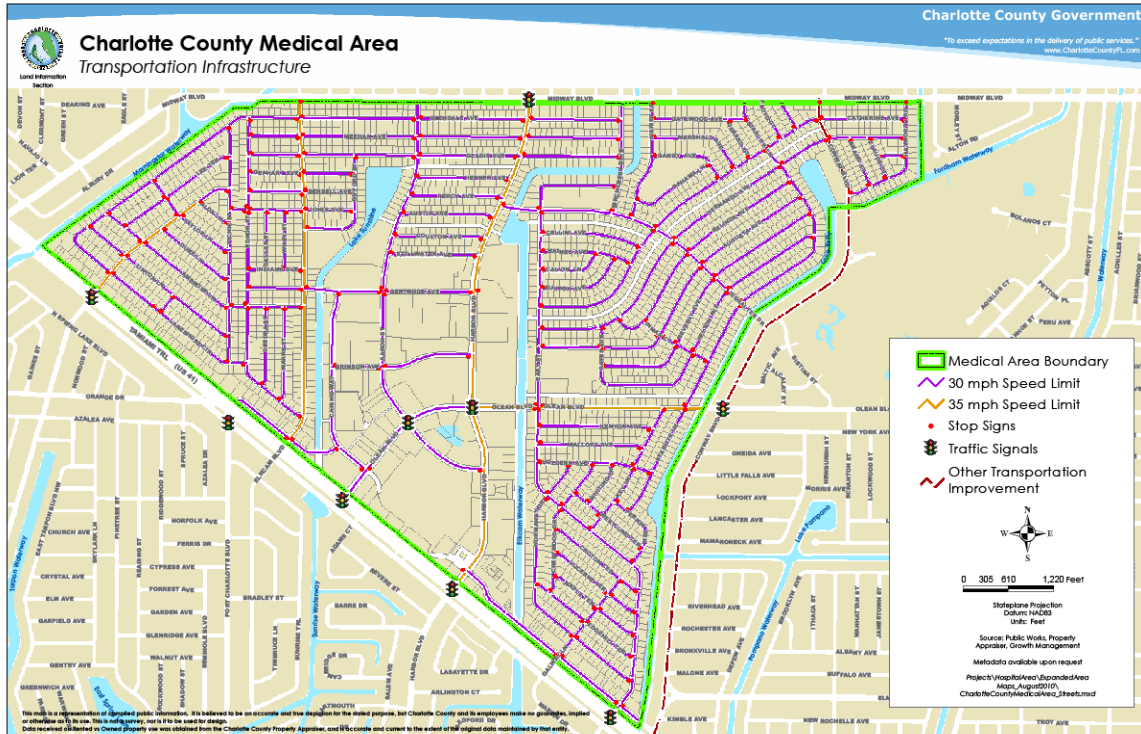
### 2.2.3 Housing Characteristics

Currently, just over half of the homes and businesses are owner occupied (see Table 1). Map 3 shows a snapshot of the number of rental units in the Area.

### 2.2.4 Transportation

The street network within the district has a strong grid structure; however, the canal locations impede the street pattern (see Map 5), making non-motorized trips difficult. The street network, which includes many long blocks, is an automobile-oriented, sub-urban design which is no longer in demand in urban centers such as this district has become. Additionally, there are key sections of area sidewalks that are missing; for instance, Aaron

Street and Brinson Avenue are missing sidewalks adjacent to medium density condominiums. Sidewalks are altogether absent east of West Tarpon Boulevard. Though most of the district contains sidewalks, these paths are inadequate to meet the demands of the diverse population that has come to reside, work and shop in the District.



**Map 5: Existing Transportation Infrastructure**

### 2.2.5 Parks and Open Space

The district has about 62.15 acres of lands designated as “Public Lands and Facilities.” About 26.95 acres of property within the district is vacant at this time. The 2030 Future Land Use Map currently lists 10.16 acres of “Parks and Recreation” lands in the area (see Map 7). Currently, two parks - McGuire and Lake Betty - are within the district. They are configured as individual, isolated neighborhood parks. McGuire has large tennis courts, basketball, horseshoes, playground equipment, a Girl Scout facility, and public restrooms. Most of these features are old and broken. There is very poor line-of-sight visibility into the park, so it is very comfortable and convenient for groups of homeless people to spend their day sitting, drinking in the park. Poor line-of-sight visibility also makes this park a magnet for criminal activity. Lake Betty has a basketball court, picnic facilities, a small children’s playground, and fishing. The district also contains several canals as open space. These facilities, particularly the Sunshine waterway and Sunshine Lake, are in need of dredging to enhance both the drainage control function and aesthetic appearance.



## 2.2.6 Public Facilities

The existing utility infrastructure within the Medical District dates back to the early 1960s as part of the area's original construction. These facilities have provided water and sanitary sewer service to this area for 50 years. The presence of this infrastructure contributes to redevelopment by reducing infill and redevelopment costs.

## 2.2.7 Law Enforcement

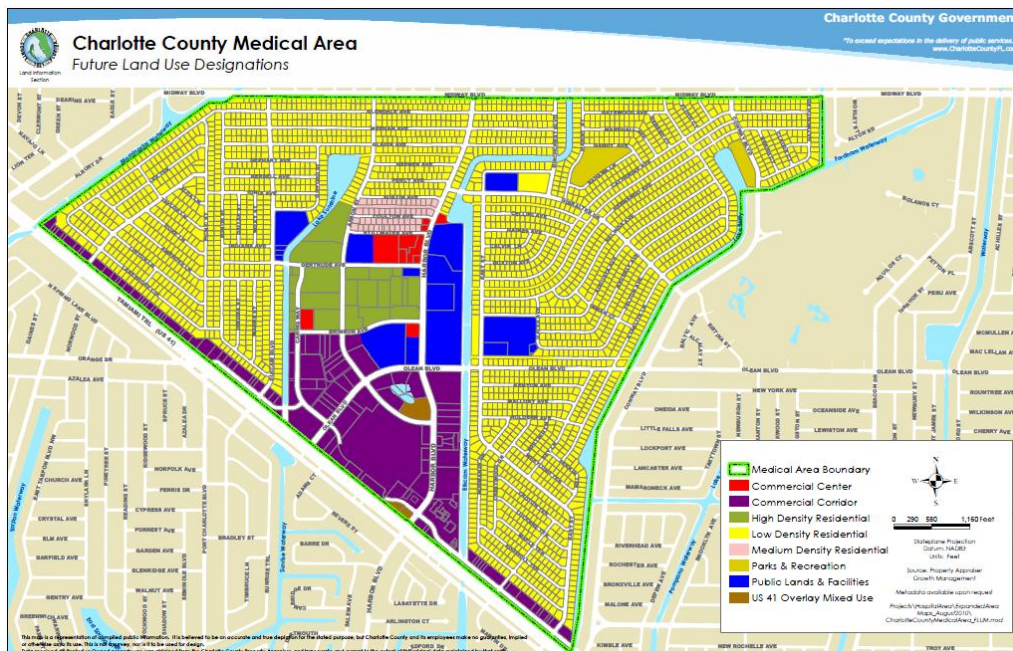
The County Sheriff's Office is involved in crime and drug interdiction in the district. It is believed that an officer's fulltime presence would significantly impact crime in the district; however, the Sheriff's Office does not believe it can meet its current service demands if it reassigns an officer to the district fulltime. TEAM Port Charlotte has sparked development of Neighborhood Watch committees throughout the district as an adjunct to what is hoped will be an expanded presence by the Sheriff's Office.

## 2.2.8 Affordable Housing

Due to the age and quality of existing housing stock, the availability of affordable housing is not an issue within the District. Current efforts are focused on the County's participation in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP-III). Clearly, maintaining a healthy mix of housing stock is a key to fostering a vibrant Medical District. As infill and redevelopment occur within the district the County will continue to ensure an appropriate level of workforce and affordable housing.

## 2.3 ZONING AND LAND USE

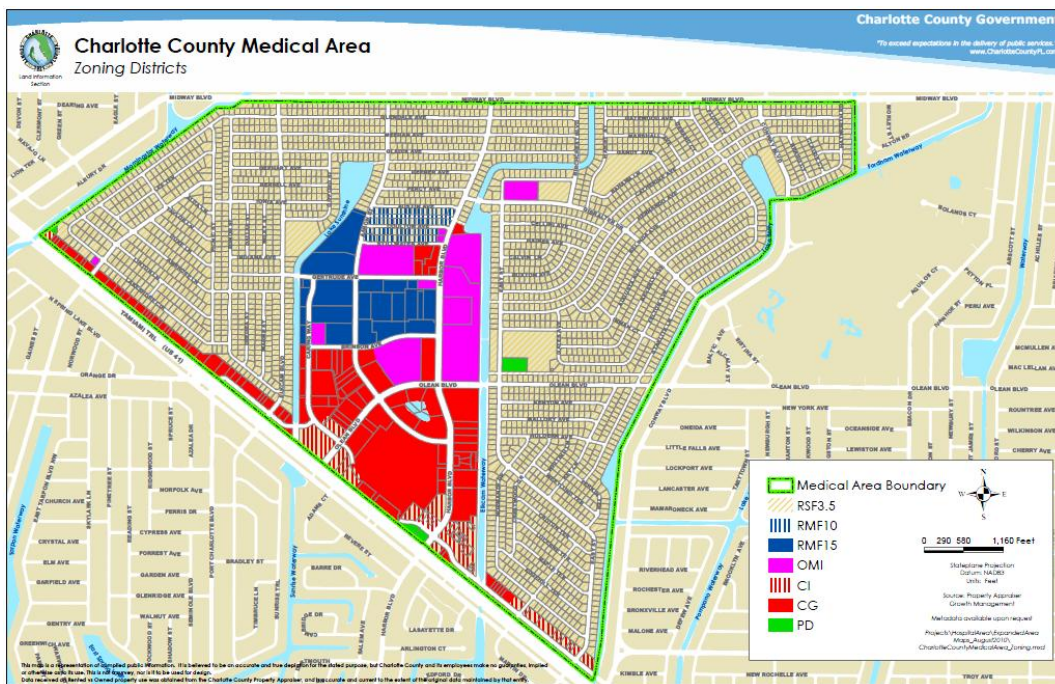
### 2.3.1 Future Land Use, Zoning and Housing Density



Map 6: Future Land Use Designation

The Smart Charlotte Plan took effect June 15, 2011. The study area contains six categories defined in the 2030 Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Residential areas include Low Density Residential (LDR) in the area surrounding the core commercial area and Medium Density Residential (MDR) and High Density Residential (HDR) within the core commercial area. The commercial areas consist of Commercial (COM), Public Lands and Facilities (PL), and US 41 Mixed Use (41MU). The 41MU designation also allows for the development of mixed-use buildings in the downtown area (see Map 6).

The zoning designations within the core business district allow a variety of primary uses, such as commercial, residential, hospitality and government buildings, as well as other types of accessory and conditional uses (see Map 7).



**Map 7: Zoning Map**

The CRA is currently composed of seven zoning designations (Residential Single-family 3.5 (RSF-3.5), Residential Multi-family 10 (RMF-10), Residential Multi-family 15 (RMF-15), Office, Medical, and Institutional (OMI), Commercial Intensive (CI), Commercial General (CG), and Planned Development (PD). The largest portion of residential property is RSF-3.5 the largest category in the core commercial area is CG.

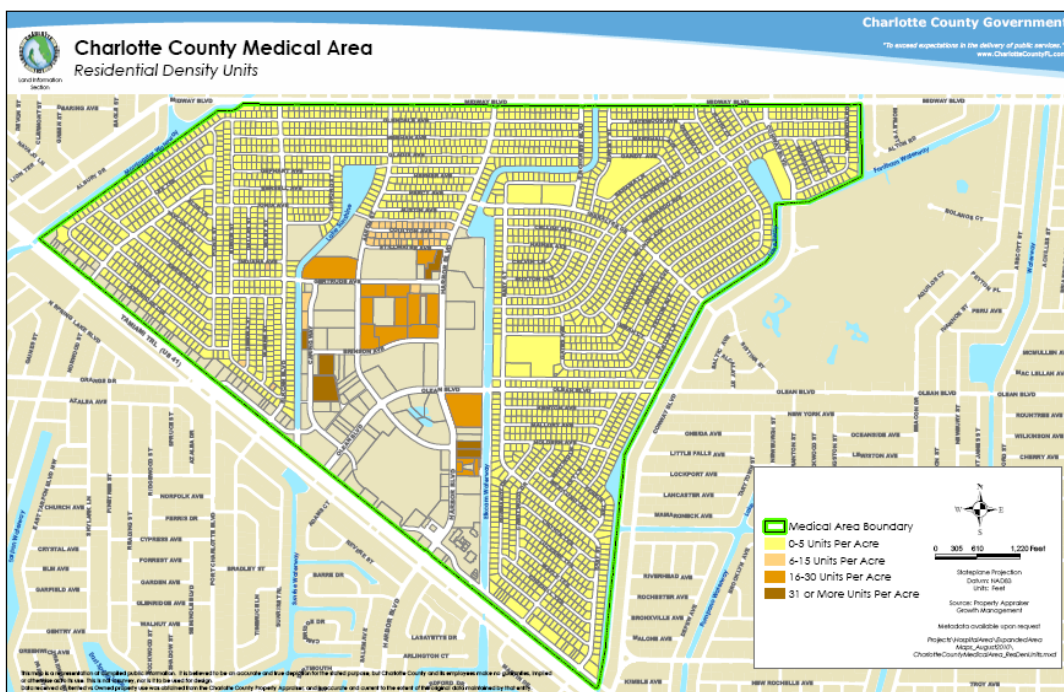
Within the core business district:

- Half of the properties located along US 41 are designated as Commercial with CG zoning. Some of these properties are also located within the boundary of the US 41 Zoning District Overlay, which includes regulations intended to enhance the

appearance of businesses along the US 41 corridor. These properties have a potential for higher density and intensity development and redevelopment.

- Peace River Hospital is designated as Public Lands and Facilities with OMI zoning.
- Fawcett Memorial Hospital is designated as Commercial and Public Lands and Facilities with OMI and CG zoning.
- Properties located in the northern portion of this area are designated as High Density Residential with RMF-15 zoning, which allows for multi-family development with a minimum density of 10 units per acre and a maximum density of 15 units per acre.
- Further north, platted lots are designated as Medium Density Residential with RMF-10 zoning, which allows for multi-family development with a minimum density of 5 units per acre and a maximum density of 10 units per acre.

Outside this core area, the majority of the area contains platted lots designated as Low Density Residential with RSF-3.5 zoning; allowing single-family homes with a maximum density of up to 3.5 units per acre (see Map 8).



**Map 8: Residential Density**

### 2.3.2 Property Values

Property values have been in steep decline in the district. Within the last twelve months, a modest home on a canal could be purchased for as low as \$19,000. A group of single family homes was sold at a price of \$9,000 each.



## 3 THE PLAN

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### 3.1 CITIZEN VISION / GOAL

The Medical District area is a community that celebrates and promotes active, healthy living throughout all of life's stages. It is a place that promotes a sense of community and celebration. It is a great destination; a great place to live, work and play.

The following *objectives* will help to make this vision real. The district is to be:

- Safe and Attractive
- Known for Great Public Spaces
- Livable and Walkable
- An Identifiable Destination
- Urban in Character
- Fostering Community
- Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth

One of the great features about the improvements adopted in this Plan is that almost all of them positively impact multiple district objectives. For example, rebuilding Harbor and Olean Boulevards will improve the attractiveness of the district, help establish great public spaces, promote the walkability and enjoyment of the area, promote the area's identity as an accessible destination for business and recreation purposes, foster a sense of community, and the improvements support sustainable economic growth. However, for ease of reading, policies only appear once in the most prominent category for that idea.

The goals, objectives and policies contained within this document are tailored to the needs of the district.

### 3.2 SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE

The Plan offers a variety of strategies to improve the district's safety and attractiveness. Though the most pressing problems in the near term are crime and property maintenance, the Plan works to change the underlying character of the district. This should result in not only a quick fix, but also a lasting transformation.

The short-term district strategy is to enhance crime prevention and property maintenance code enforcement. The investment in new and improved infrastructure and the partnership between local residents and business owners and the County will result in the long-term transformation of the area. The following are the strategies intended to ensure that the district is safe and attractive.

#### 3.2.1 Establish District Weed and Seed Program

*The County shall establish a District Weed and Seed program to reduce crime, drug use, property maintenance violations, and to promote economic opportunity.*

The County Sheriff, Code Enforcement, Human Services, Economic Development, and other agencies, citizens and private business partners shall develop a team to achieve the district objective. Program strategies that could be developed might include enhanced



enforcement, innovative community policing, partnerships in job training and other strategies.

### 3.2.2 Enhance Law Enforcement

*The County shall encourage the Sheriff's office to provide a dedicated Community Oriented Police Officer who will be present full-time within the district until crime statistics are reduced to levels equivalent to the County's best statistics; alternatively, the County may fund such a position if it chooses to do so.*

The area is experiencing a crime rate that is higher than most of the County. It is believed that the district would benefit by having a visible, fulltime police presence. That perceived benefit would be that a district officer would be able to:

- Get to know the citizens and trouble spots in the area first hand,
- Coordinate law enforcement activities in the district, and
- Monitor the area on a daily basis.

Part of the incentive package for such an officer could be to provide housing within the district, thereby ensuring that the officer is vested in the safety of this area.

### 3.2.3 Enhance Code Enforcement

*The County shall establish a program that provides proactive property maintenance enforcement within the district so that the violations district-wide are reduced to levels equivalent with the County's best neighborhoods. The County shall consider dedicating a fulltime officer to the district, and because of citizen request, it shall consider developing a program to assist citizens to become involved in identifying and reporting code violations.*

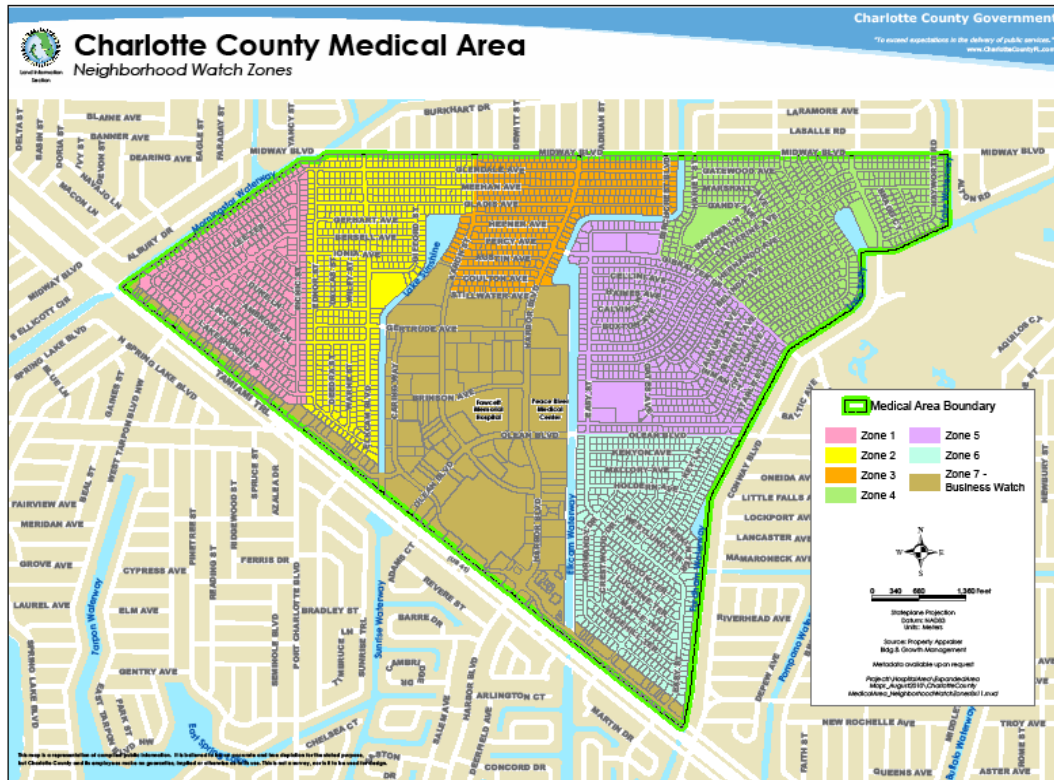
The district code enforcement program shall include development of a procedure that ensures proactive and sufficient enforcement in the district to eliminate blight condition. Strategies may include dedicating or hiring an officer for the district and may involve use of citizen and business owner/operator volunteers.

### 3.2.4 Enhance Law Enforcement and Property Maintenance Regulations

*The district shall serve as a model and test location for community policing, code enforcement, and other innovative practices. The County, working with its staff, Sheriff and other agency representatives, citizens and business owners/operators shall review property maintenance and County criminal code regulations to determine if these regulations should be enhanced for the district. The County shall consider adopting improvements that they determine appropriate and may also consider hiring a special magistrate to remedy property maintenance case backlog, if a significant backlogs develops.*

### 3.2.5 Implement Neighborhood Watch Program

*The County, in cooperation with the County Sheriff's Office, shall help facilitate district Neighborhood Watch (see Map 9).*



**Map 9: Neighborhood and Business Watch Zones**

### 3.2.6 Implement Business Watch Program

*The County, in cooperation with the County Sheriff's Office, shall help facilitate district Business Watch (see Map 9).*

### 3.2.7 Implement Park Watch Program

*The County, in cooperation with the County Sheriff's Office, shall help facilitate a district Park Watch Program to promote "eyes on parks."*

### 3.2.8 Regulate Alcohol and Tobacco Use in District Parks

*The County shall consider prohibiting alcohol consumption at McGuire and the district's Pocket Parks. The County shall evaluate similar regulations for alcohol at other district parks as well, and may choose to prohibit alcohol consumption or to allow it by permit in designated areas. The County shall consider prohibiting smoking at McGuire youth park and may consider making all the District's parks smoke-free areas.*

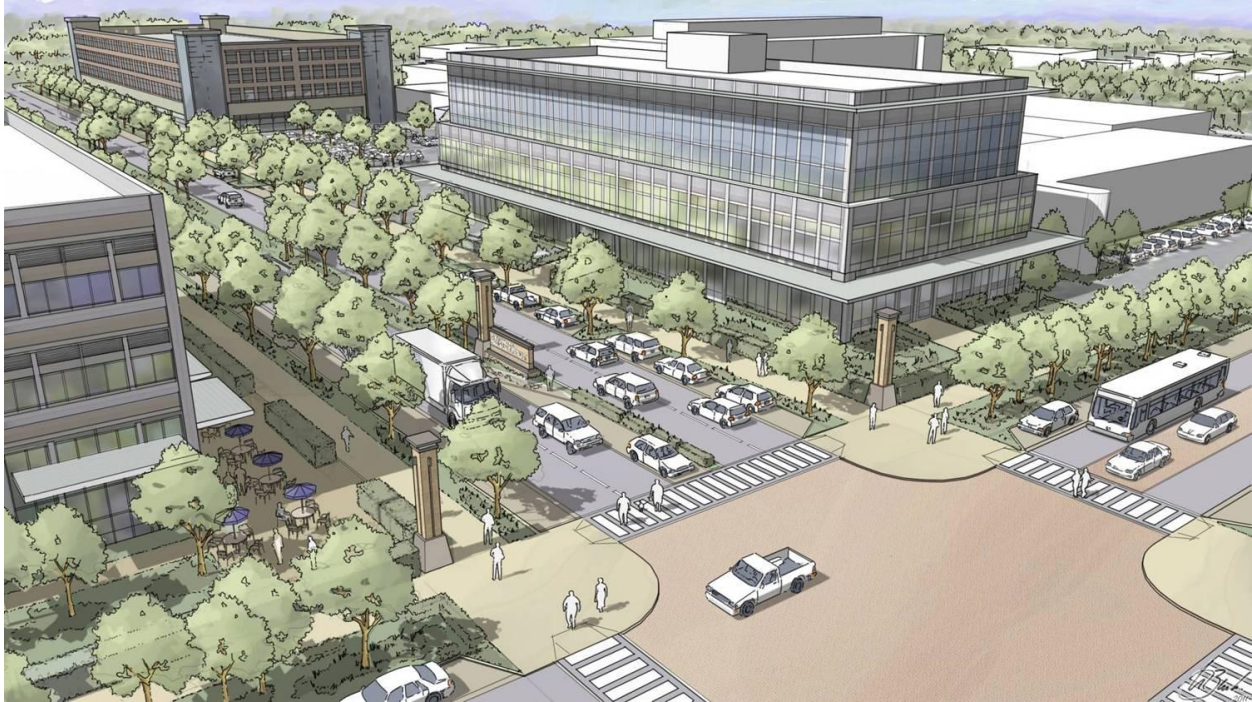
## 3.3 KNOWN FOR GREAT PUBLIC SPACES

The Plan proposes extensive public investment in parks, roadways, and about 6 miles of multi-use bicycle pedestrian facilities connecting people and places. Together these

improvements will substantially transform the district into a great public space. Some of the activities that will accomplish this objective include the following:

### 3.3.1 Transform Harbor and Olean Roadways into Grand Urban Boulevards

*The County shall reconstruct Harbor and Olean roadways from suburban-style automobile-oriented streets into grand, multi-modal, urban, bicycle and pedestrian-oriented boulevards (see Figure 7).*



**Figure 7: Improved Harbor and Olean Boulevards**

### 3.3.2 Transform McGuire and Lake Betty Parks into Destination Attractions

*The County shall reconstruct McGuire and Lake Betty Parks. McGuire shall focus primarily on providing facilities for children ages 12 and under. Lake Betty shall focus on 13 to college age (see Figure 8).*





**Figure 8: Gateway to McGuire Park**

### 3.3.3 Acquire and Construct New Events Square as Destination

*The County shall acquire land and develop a central event/outdoor performance area within the district to include a stage, a boardwalk surrounding the area's lake and connecting to the main district trails, a gazebo and other fitting amenities. This area shall focus on outdoor musical events, farmer's markets and other similar community events.*

### 3.3.4 Establish Pocket Parks and Waypoint

*The County shall develop nine pocket parks within the district providing an active venue for recreation and attractive waypoints between district parks and other destinations (see Figure 9 and Map 10). The County shall develop a pocket park on the south side of the Cultural Center of Port Charlotte as a bocce ball court and shall develop a checker/game board park near the corner of Aaron Street and Brinson Avenue. Other park themes are yet to be determined. Pocket parks shall have active features within them to promote healthy living. The County shall consider providing benches every one-eighth of a mile between pocket parks within the core commercial area and in other locations, as it determines appropriate.*



**Figure 9: Sample Pocket Park, Bocce Ball at Cultural Center**

Parks, and benches if desired, are intended to serve as active play areas and temporary respites for people who wish to walk from place to place, but may require shorter intervals between trips.

### 3.3.5 Facilitate Design Charrettes for Parks and Pocket Parks

*The County shall facilitate a park planning process that supports a District Park System concept. The design process will work to transform district neighborhood parks into an integrated district park system.*

One prominent theme heard at the district charrettes was that the area should become a destination for more than just a medical appointment. An integrated, multi-theme park system is one of several key features to make the area a great destination.

### 3.3.6 Consider Dedicating Park in Memory of “Younique” Miller

*The County shall consider naming one of its district parks “Younique” and consider representing his art in that park or in another area in the district.*

Younique Miller was one of many students from the Charlotte County Public School system who participated in the district Art Contest. Students were asked to draw their vision for the district. Younique drew a picture of a fountain in his district Vision. Tragically, Younique died after being struck by a vehicle while riding his bicycle in a parking lot five days before



the pictures were presented to the public. The County benefits when it engages the imaginations of its citizens – both young and old (see Figure 10).



**Figure 10: Yonique Miller's Art for District Art Contest**

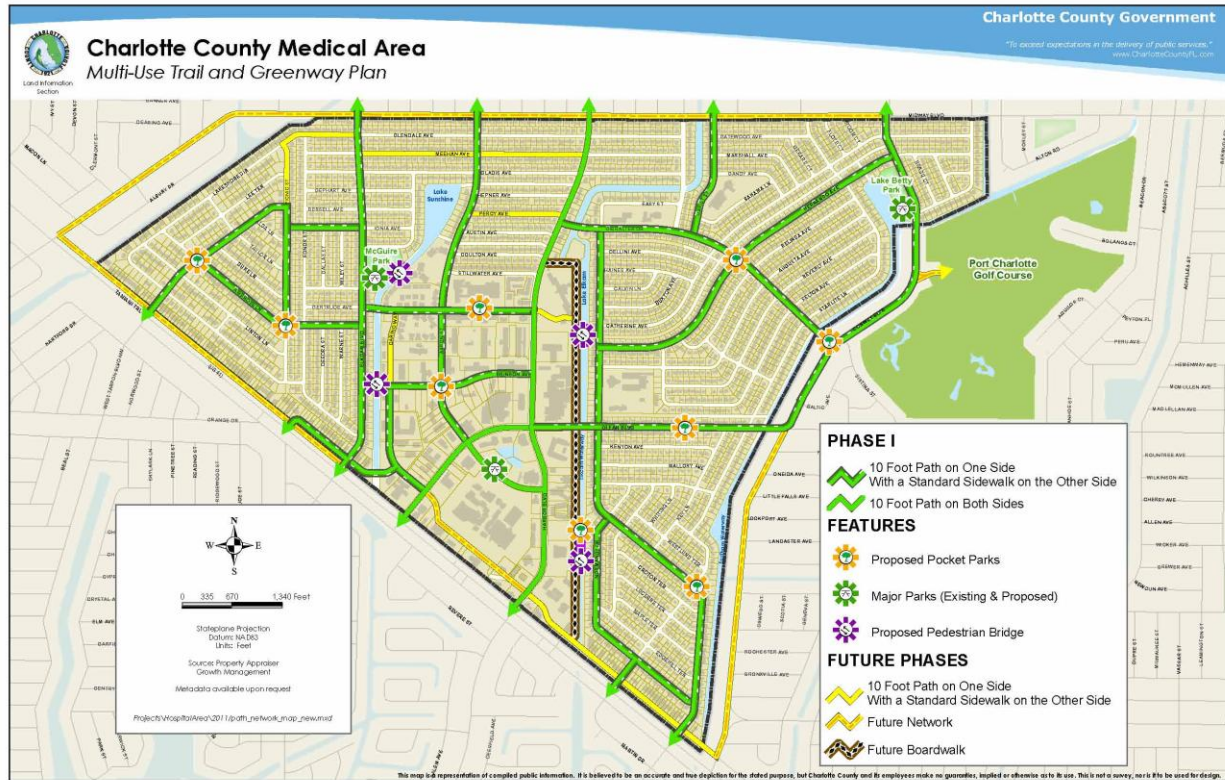
### 3.4 LIVABLE AND WALKABLE

The Plan proposes a number of initiatives to make the district a pleasant place. Initiatives include installation of approximately six miles of canopy tree-lined trails, lighting enhancements, a number of new bicycle/pedestrian bridges, and allowing golf carts within the district. The multi-use trails will reduce automobile dependence while promoting pedestrian and bicycle traffic. They will also help individuals dependent upon mobility-aiding vehicles gain greater freedom.

#### 3.4.1 Install Interconnecting Multi-use Trails

*The County shall work to establish an integrated, multi-use trail system, with minimum 10-foot widths for key trails throughout the district. The trail system shall be configured to encourage pedestrian, bicycle and other non-combustion engine vehicular travel throughout the year.*

The purpose of paths is to encourage walking and use of alternatives to the automobile (see Map 10).



**Map 10: Multi-Use Trail and Greenway Plan**

### 3.4.2 Authorize Use of Golf Carts

*The County shall permit the use of golf carts within the district on trails and roadways.*

### 3.4.3 Connect District Areas with Multi-use Bridges

*The County shall construct bridges in four areas to connect outlying residential areas with the district's commercial center to promote bicycle, pedestrian and other modes of travel throughout the district (see Map 10 and Figure 11).*

Though it is not anticipated that any families will be displaced through the district's revitalization, it is a statutory requirement that a CRA plan provide its policy for displaced families. Our policy is as follows: *Should the County cause families to be displaced, it shall provide for decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling accommodations within their means and without undue hardship.*



**Figure 11: Sample District Bridge**

#### 3.4.4 Update Lighting Standards

*The County shall install decorative lighting and enhance the intensity of existing lighting to improve the aesthetics, safety and security throughout the district.*

#### 3.4.5 Establish Tree Canopy and Other Features to Cool District Area

*The County shall install and promote the use of canopy trees and other cover to encourage the use of trails throughout the summer and to reduce the sun's heating effect within the area.*

#### 3.4.6 Evaluate Transit Options

*The County shall evaluate or participate in an evaluation of transit options to support the district's goal and objectives.*

Significant interest for transit within the district was expressed by citizens. Some mentioned a circulator route, others a full-fledge fixed route, while others discussed investigating private systems. The district will participate in and may facilitate a future study on this topic.

#### 3.4.7 Develop Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Options

*The County shall help develop new partnerships and opportunities to improve the energy efficiency and long-term sustainability of homes and businesses within the district.*



For example, the County is working with Florida Power and Light, while evaluating the current Weatherization program in order to provide low- and no-cost reductions in energy use.

### 3.5 AN IDENTIFIABLE DESTINATION

The district will have signature features such as well-identified gateways, lighting, wayfinding signs and landscaping.

#### 3.5.1 Install Signature Gateways, Wayfinding and Lighting Features

*The County shall install signature gateway, wayfinding, and lighting features to help establish a unique identity for the district (see Figure 12).*



**Figure 12: Signature Gateway at US 41 and Harbor Boulevard**

#### 3.5.2 Beautify the District with Trees, Landscaping and Decorative Art

*The County shall install trees, landscaping and decorative art in the district. If funding is received through Tree City or other similar programs, the County may offer trees to private property owners.*

### 3.6 URBAN IN CHARACTER

It is interesting that one of the most intensely-used commercial districts in the County is very definitely suburban in character. To attract more businesses to the district, it will be given a face-lift, including replacing rural features such as swales and highway lighting standards with attractive, modern infrastructure features, including curb and gutter, decorative lighting and wayfinding signage. To meet citizen and business needs, the district may become a WIFI hotspot with custom internet applications.

### 3.6.1 Investigate Pedestrian Oriented Design Standards

*The County shall investigate and adopt, as appropriate, design standards that promote pedestrian oriented development throughout the district and which help reestablish this area as an attractive, vibrant urban center (see Figure 13).*



**Figure 13: Street View of Gateway at US 41 and Harbor Boulevard**

Examples of standards contemplated through the charrette process were new height standards for hospitals to meet hospital facility needs, ensuring the viability of these facilities, coupled with additional design standards to ensure that the increased height allowance becomes an attractive feature of the district; pedestrian/street-oriented porches to promote sense of community; subject to district US 41 business approval, design standards to enhance the uniqueness of the corridor; voluntary standards to encourage universal design in new construction and remodels to promote Aging-in-Place.

### 3.6.2 Install District WIFI

*The County shall investigate and, if feasible, establish the district as a WIFI hotspot.*

The County is currently investigating the feasibility of creating a district WIFI hotspot. The intent is to make the system pay for itself through a public/private partnership.

### 3.6.3 Cleanup Sunshine Lake

*The County shall investigate and, if practical, dredge Sunshine Lake and evaluate resetting the canal weir to improve the lake depth, water quality, canal flow and aesthetics.*

### 3.6.4 Develop District Parking Strategy

*The County shall incorporate on-street parking into its designs for Harbor and Olean Boulevards. As development returns to the district, the County shall investigate and assist private businesses to develop strategies to address parking and to facilitate development of dedicated parking structures in the district.*

## 3.7 FOSTERING COMMUNITY

*The County shall promote community events and encourage community gatherings within the district.*

Examples of events that may occur in the district might include a Farmer's Market, a "Healthy Place Race," Big Band or Jazz concerts. Events might take advantage of the close proximity of amenities, for instance, the Cultural Center of Port Charlotte might serve as the host site for a family conference with McGuire and Lake Betty Parks offered as areas in which to take a break from learning.

## 3.8 SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

The quality of amenities anticipated in the district must be appropriate to attract and encourage land development by technology companies and new medical, professional, and financial service offices, and other quality employers.

### 3.8.1 Focus District Strategy

*The County, through its Economic Development Department, shall establish a strategy of sustainable economic development and job growth within the district.*

### 3.8.2 Provide Business Improvement Incentives

*The County may consider developing and implementing business improvement grant and loan programs, such as business façade improvement programs.*

### 3.8.3 Support Construction Trades

*The County shall help facilitate opportunities for the construction trades within the district by helping promote remodeling, County Weatherization Programs, site demolition and reconstruction, Neighborhood Stabilization Programs (NSP monies), and other programs.*

### 3.8.4 Provide Incentives for Redevelopment of Properties throughout the District

*The County shall develop a program of density and other incentives to promote redevelopment and sustainable economic growth.*

The purpose of such incentives is to promote greater economic viability of projects. Density incentives are intended to add density to the district. They are intended to be provided on properties that are within walking distance of future transit stops at the Cultural Center, Promenades Mall and the corner of Harbor and Olean Boulevard.

## 4 FUNDING

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### 4.1 SOURCES

*The plan shall rely on a variety of funding sources to accomplish the redevelopment effort.*

Improving the district will be the result of a cooperative partnership between the private and public sector. In order to carry out redevelopment, the CRA must also look for partnerships through a variety of sources to achieve its objectives. Funding opportunities that the district may use include actions to:

#### 4.1.1 Secure Federal and State Funding

*The County shall explore Federal and State funding opportunities to offset other sources to the maximum extent possible.*

Examples of monies that may be sought include, but are not limited to, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Federal transportation funds, environmental funding, SWFWMD, and Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP).

#### 4.1.2 Secure Private Corporate and Individual Sponsorship

*The County shall seek opportunities for sponsorship of park and all other district improvements to promote speedy implementation of the district plan.*

#### 4.1.3 Secure Grant Funding

*The County shall seek any applicable private and public sector grant funding and shall use its citizen partnerships to assist in securing grant funding to the maximum extent possible.*

#### 4.1.4 Retain Option to Use Local Funds.

*The County may use General, Capital, Native Tree and other County revenues to finance redevelopment activities.*

#### 4.1.5 Seek One-Cent Sales Tax Funding

*The County shall consider seeking one-cent sale tax support for Plan implementation during the next sales tax referendum.*

#### 4.1.6 Seek Impact Fee Funding

*The County shall consider directing the use of impact fees towards new capacity projects.*

Impact fees cannot be used for maintenance projects. However, since the district Plan adds new capacity to parks and transportation systems, fees can be used for these projects.

#### 4.1.7 Seek State Enterprise Zone Tax Credits

*The County shall seek Enterprise Zone status for the district to support businesses that locate and hire residents of designated zones within the County.*



#### 4.1.8 Establish TIF Funding

*The County shall establish Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as one of many sources of revenue for the district.*

#### 4.1.9 Retain Right to Use Revenue Bonds

*The County may issue bonds to finance public improvements within the project area. Eligible projects may include parking and utility improvements.*

#### 4.1.10 Establish Tax Redevelopment Trust Fund

*The County shall seek to adopt an ordinance establishing a Redevelopment Trust Fund for this area in accordance with state statutory requirements. Per Florida Statute §163.387, a trust fund shall be established to finance or refinance community redevelopment activities pursuant to this approved plan.*

The cost of such redevelopment activities may include the professional service fees associated with redevelopment activities, including but not limited to design, planning, engineering, architecture, legal, any and all administrative fees associated with such redevelopment activities, all soft costs and other programmatic expenditures associated with implementing capital-based community redevelopment plan activities.

#### 4.1.11 Restrict Resale

*The County shall restrict the resale of any property it acquires in accordance with statutory requirements.*

### 4.2 DESCRIPTION OF TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

In 1977, the Florida Legislature authorized the use of Tax Increment Financing as a method to pay for redevelopment within CRAs. The regulation is §163.387, Florida Statutes.

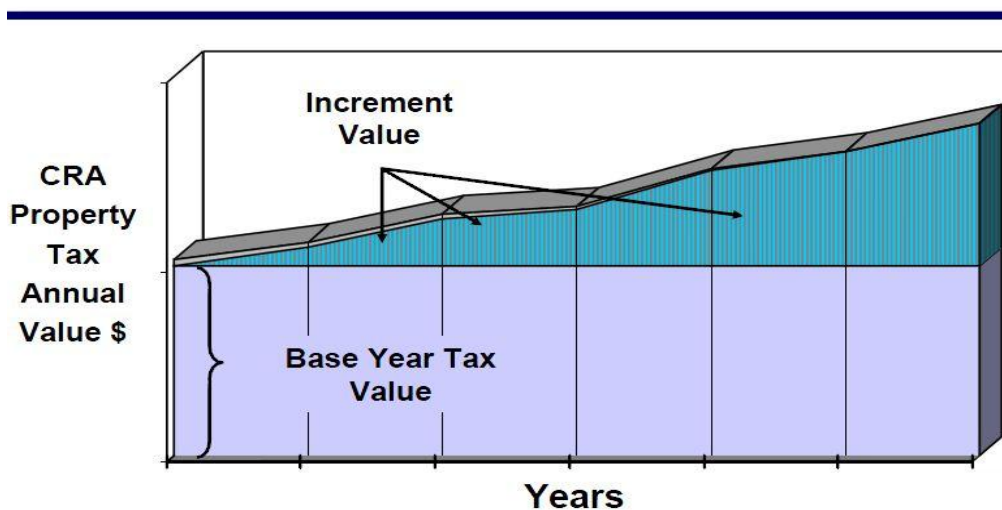
TIF is a tool that uses future tax revenues generated in excess of the base tax existing at the time the TIF is formed to fund district improvements. The assumption is that, as public projects within the district (e.g., the reconstruction of McGuire and Lake Betty Park, the reconstruction of Harbor and Olean Boulevards, the construction of a multi-use trail throughout the district) are completed, there will be an increase in the value of surrounding real estate. New investments (e.g., new and rehabilitated buildings) are also expected to have this effect on property valuations. The increased site values and investments generate increased tax revenues, known as the "tax increment" (see Figure 14).

Tax Increment Financing dedicates that CRA's tax increment generated within the district back into the area to help pay for Plan improvements. Without these revenues, full implementation of the Citizens' Master Plan might not be possible.

Often TIF revenues are bonded in anticipation of receiving them, so that revitalization may occur more swiftly and TIF revenues may begin to grow more rapidly. Any funds received from a Tax Increment Financing area must be used for specific redevelopment purposes

within the targeted area, and not for general government purposes. Since there are many factors that affect TIF revenue generation, Appendix B provides examples of a conservative and a more aggressive revenue scenario. The "Aggressive Projection" shows how early investment in district can impact future revenues (\$20 million in revenue versus \$9 million in revenue).

## Tax Increment Financing (TIF)



$$\text{Annual TIF Contribution} = \text{Increment Value} \times \text{Millage Rates}$$

Figure 14: Tax Increment Financing.

### 4.3 TIMING OF DEVELOPMENT

Table 2: Capital Spending Plan

Improvement (\$ millions)	0-5 Years Construction	5-20 Years Construction	Totals
Roads		18.0	<b>18.0</b>
US41 Gateways		.4	<b>.4</b>
Trails & Bridges		10.0	<b>10.0</b>
Park Improvements		3.5	<b>3.5</b>
Route Activity Parks		.9	<b>.9</b>
Events Square	2.2		<b>2.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>2.2</u></b>	<b><u>32.8</u></b>	<b><u>35.0</u></b>

The timing of redevelopment is totally dependent upon the availability of funds to implement the plan. The positive impacts on quality of life, the elimination of blight conditions, the transformation of the district into a great destination, and the success in ensuring that this area is self-supporting through future tax revenues is completely dependent upon the speed with which the Citizens' Master Plan is implemented. Table 2 presents the currently proposed timing for investment and transformation of the district.

#### 4.3.1 Fund Project in Current CIP Plan

*As of the fiscal year 2012 CIP plan, the County shall fund the acquisition and development of the Events Square area within the district.*

### 4.4 PROPERTY REHABILITATION (STATUTE REQUIRES DISCUSSION)

The County shall follow statutory requirements related to rehabilitation within the district.

#### 4.4.1 Private Land Acquisition, Land Assembly, Redevelopment and Rehabilitation

*The County shall rely primarily upon private sector investment to perform property rehabilitation, redevelopment, land assembly and land acquisition for development purposes; however, the County may purchase and redevelop lots through programs such as the National Stabilization Program (NSP-III) or similar programs.*

The district project is one that will depend almost exclusively on private investment for site redevelopment.

#### 4.4.2 County Land Acquisition

*The County shall use existing rights-of-way for improvements wherever possible; however, the County may purchase a small number of sites to accommodate the district's proposed interconnected trails and bridges, Concert Square, and to provide sufficient space for pocket parks.*

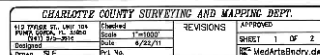
#### 4.4.3 Demolition and Removal of Structures

*The County may remove structures on property acquired for trails, parks or other park amenities. The County may also demolish, remove and reconstruct homes through its existing housing programs.*

#### 4.4.4 Public Improvements

The Citizens' Master Plan contemplates an ambitious investment in the district. Land and construction projects include:

- Redevelopment of Harbor and Olean Boulevards,
- Reconstruction of McGuire and Lake Betty Parks,
- The acquisition and construction of a new Event Square,
- Construction of approximately six miles of trails,
- The construction of nine pocket parks,
- The possibility of some sort of transit option,
- The possibility of business improvement grants and loans, and
- The addition of gateway and wayfinding signs.



See Sheet 1 of 2 for Sketch. Not valid without both sheets

CHARLOTTE COUNTY SURVEYING AND MAPPING DEPT.			
410 THUNDER ST., UNIT 104 PUNTA GORDA, FL 33906 (888) 215-3818	Checked Scale	REVISIONS	APPROVED
Designed	Date 6/22/11		SHEET 2 OF 2
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## 6 APPENDIX B: TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) REVENUE ESTIMATES

### Conservative Projection

	Residential			Commercial		
	Taxable Value	% Valuation Change	Taxable Value	% Valuation Change	Ad Valorem Revenue	Ad Valorem Growth
2010	101,965,975		193,090,115		2,432,531	
2011	97,887,336	-4.0%	196,951,917	2.0%	2,430,743	-
2012	97,887,336	0.0%	200,890,956	2.0%	2,463,218	30,687
2013	98,866,209	1.0%	204,908,775	2.0%	2,504,412	71,881
2014	100,843,534	2.0%	209,006,950	2.0%	2,554,500	121,969
2015	102,860,404	2.0%	213,187,089	2.0%	2,605,590	173,059
2016	104,917,612	2.0%	217,450,831	2.0%	2,657,702	225,171
2017	107,015,965	2.0%	221,799,848	2.0%	2,710,856	278,325
2018	109,156,284	2.0%	226,235,845	2.0%	2,765,073	332,542
2019	111,339,410	2.0%	230,760,562	2.0%	2,820,375	387,844
2020	113,566,198	2.0%	235,375,773	2.0%	2,876,782	444,251
2021	115,837,522	2.0%	240,083,288	2.0%	2,934,318	501,787
2022	118,154,272	2.0%	244,884,954	2.0%	2,993,004	560,473
2023	120,517,358	2.0%	249,782,653	2.0%	3,052,864	620,333
2024	122,927,705	2.0%	254,778,306	2.0%	3,113,922	681,391
2025	125,386,259	2.0%	259,873,872	2.0%	3,176,200	743,669
2026	127,893,984	2.0%	265,071,350	2.0%	3,239,724	807,193
2027	130,451,864	2.0%	270,372,777	2.0%	3,304,519	871,988
2028	133,060,901	2.0%	275,780,232	2.0%	3,370,609	938,078
2029	135,722,119	2.0%	281,295,837	2.0%	3,438,021	1,005,490
						8,796,134

### Aggressive Projection

	Residential			Commercial		
	Taxable Value	% Valuation Change	Taxable Value	% Valuation Change	Ad Valorem Revenue	Ad Valorem Growth
2010	101,965,975		193,090,115		2,432,531	
2011	97,887,336	-4.0%	196,951,917	2.0%	2,430,743	-
2012	97,887,336	0.0%	216,890,956 *	2.0%	2,595,127	162,596
2013	98,866,209	1.0%	225,566,594	4.0%	2,674,721	242,190
2014	100,843,534	2.0%	234,589,258	4.0%	2,765,409	332,878
2015	103,868,840	3.0%	243,972,828	4.0%	2,867,711	435,180
2016	106,984,905	3.0%	253,731,741	4.0%	2,973,856	541,325
2017	111,264,301	4.0%	263,881,011	4.0%	3,092,810	660,280
2018	115,714,873	4.0%	274,436,251	4.0%	3,216,523	783,992
2019	120,343,468	4.0%	285,413,701	4.0%	3,345,184	912,653
2020	125,157,207	4.0%	296,830,249	4.0%	3,478,991	1,046,460
2021	130,163,495	4.0%	308,703,459	4.0%	3,618,151	1,185,620
2022	135,370,035	4.0%	321,051,598	4.0%	3,762,877	1,330,346
2023	140,784,836	4.0%	333,893,661	4.0%	3,913,392	1,480,861
2024	145,008,381	3.0%	347,249,408	4.0%	4,058,321	1,625,790
2025	149,358,633	3.0%	361,139,384	4.0%	4,208,699	1,776,168
2026	153,839,392	3.0%	375,584,960	4.0%	4,364,733	1,932,202
2027	158,454,573	3.0%	390,608,358	4.0%	4,526,640	2,094,109
2028	163,208,210	3.0%	406,232,692	4.0%	4,694,642	2,262,111
2029	168,104,457	3.0%	422,482,000	4.0%	4,868,972	2,436,441
						21,241,201

\* Includes \$16 million in new construct for projects in process.