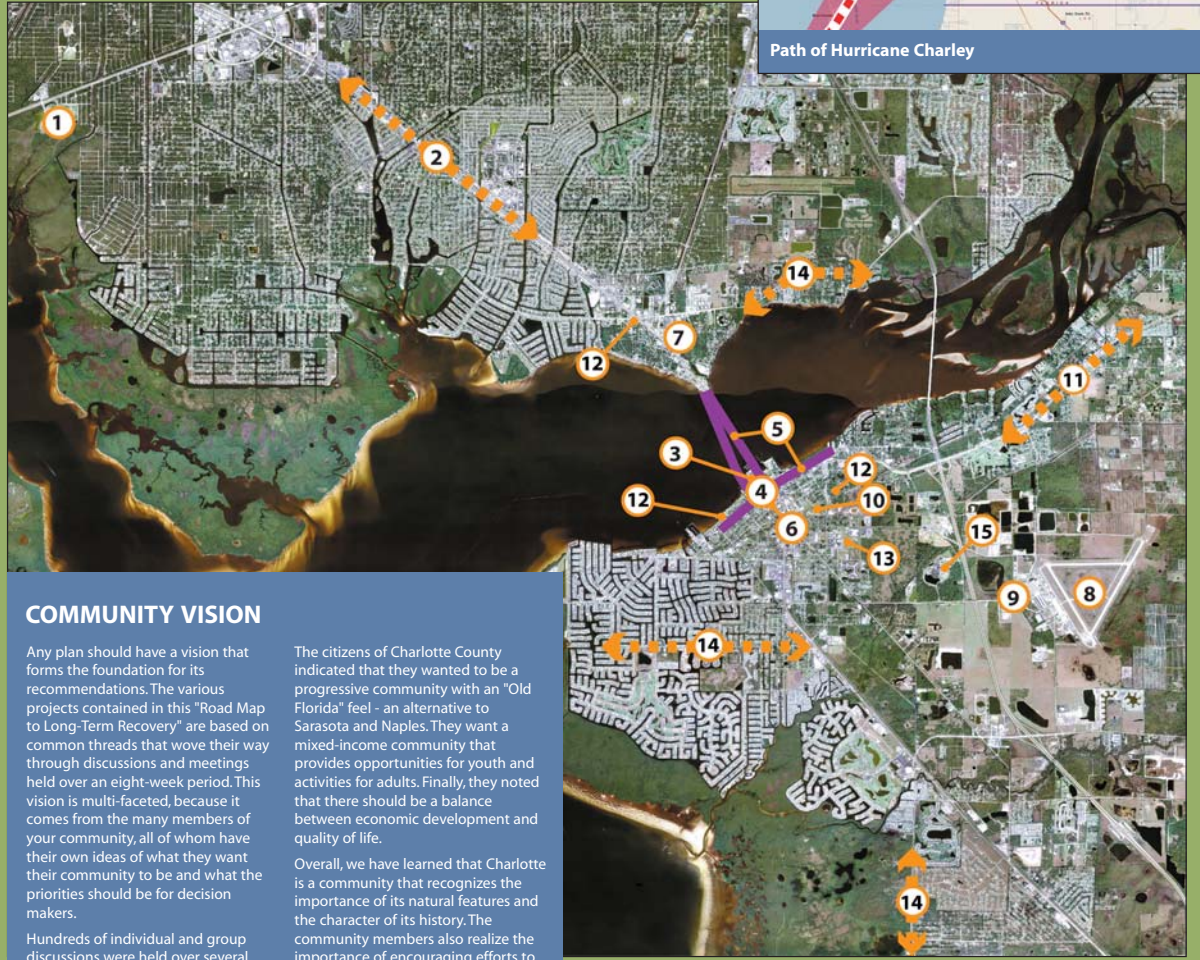


# Charlotte County Long-Term Recovery Projects



Path of Hurricane Charley



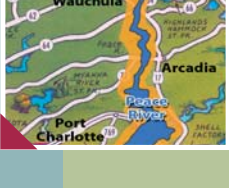
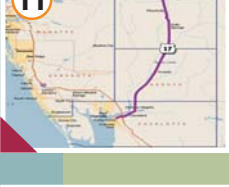
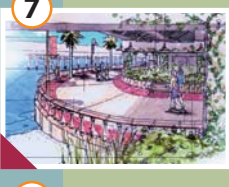
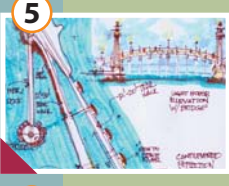
## COMMUNITY VISION

Any plan should have a vision that forms the foundation for its recommendations. The various projects contained in this "Road Map to Long-Term Recovery" are based on common threads that wove their way through discussions and meetings held over an eight-week period. This vision is multi-faceted, because it comes from the many members of your community, all of whom have their own ideas of what they want their community to be and what the priorities should be for decision makers.

Hundreds of individual and group discussions were held over several weeks, and the first community meeting brought out approximately 1,500 residents who provided their thoughts on what kind of future they wanted for Charlotte County. Among the diverse voices and priorities, some statements stood out and consensus emerged.

The citizens of Charlotte County indicated that they wanted to be a progressive community with an "Old Florida" feel - an alternative to Sarasota and Naples. They want a mixed-income community that provides opportunities for youth and activities for adults. Finally, they noted that there should be a balance between economic development and quality of life.

Overall, we have learned that Charlotte is a community that recognizes the importance of its natural features and the character of its history. The community members also realize the importance of encouraging efforts to attract new jobs, increase visitors, revitalize older commercial and residential areas, and improve the availability of housing for all segments of the community.



**1 Develop Charlotte Sports Park**  
Build a recreation facility to serve a broad range of needs. Develop other uses for the stadium so that it can support itself and generate income for the county.

**2 Revitalize US 41**  
Invest in right-of-way infrastructure improvements and beautify the Route 41 corridor to encourage business development and the repair, rebuilding, or construction of more aesthetically pleasing buildings.

**3 Redevelop Memorial Auditorium Site**  
Construct a convention/conference center or a multi-purpose facility to increase hotel occupancy, create new jobs, and increase tax revenues.

**4 Revitalize Downtown Punta Gorda**  
Revitalize downtown through a combination of key projects that will address flooding, traffic, and parking problems, as well as beautify the area and create economic development opportunities. Specific actions include the construction of a full-service marina, and the completion of the Lashley Park, City Marketplace and Herald Court projects.

**5 Improve Linkages to Downtown**  
Linkages need to be completed throughout destinations in Downtown Punta Gorda, such as sidewalks, bike paths, and trolley service. In addition, existing linkages should be improved and enhanced, such as the completion of the river walk and improvements to the Peace River Bridge.

**6 Renovate the Old Courthouse**  
Restore and rehabilitate the Old Courthouse through intergovernmental cooperation and public/private partnerships so that it can provide an attractive, useful space.

**7 Enhance and Implement Charlotte Harbor CRA Plan**  
Complete Bayshore Park and the River Walk, and rehabilitate the older residential and commercial areas to turn this critical district into a key attraction linking downtown Punta Gorda over the Peace River Bridge and north along U.S. 41.

**8 Improve the Airport and Develop the Industrial Park**  
Initiate the Piper Road project and expedite the development of a planning guide to identify and clarify the best approach to expand the Charlotte Airport and develop the industrial park.

**9 Rebuild Essential Community Facilities**  
Rebuild, expand, and harden essential facilities in order to provide adequate capacity and a high level of service to a rapidly growing community. Strategically relocate a Public Safety Complex to improve efficiency and maintain operations during emergencies.

**10 Create Mixed-Income Housing**  
Rebuild public housing in East Punta Gorda to provide for a mixed-income community and extend streets and sidewalks to better link it to the neighborhood.

**11 Provide Affordable Housing Options**  
Assist homeowners with rebuilding and replacement of damaged homes, increase affordable homeownership options for first-time homeowners, and provide mixed-income rental housing.

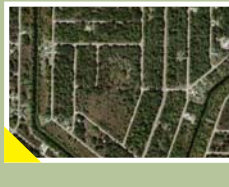
**12 Update/Develop Shelter and Evacuation Plans**  
Update and develop the existing Hurricane Evacuation Plan and Comprehensive Shelter Plan to consider recent growth and changes to infrastructure and demographics.

**13 Improve Regional Transportation Connectivity**  
Expedite completion of US 17 improvement, and create a development plan for the highway. Evaluate upgrading existing east-west highways. Create a Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RPO).

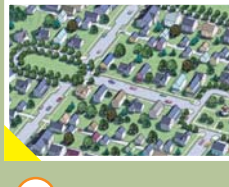
**14 Increase Tourism: Develop a Peace River Heritage Corridor**  
Develop a Peace River tourism plan and marketing strategy. Establish a Peace River Heritage Association. Enhance eco-tourism and rural tourism options with property acquisitions and facility improvements.



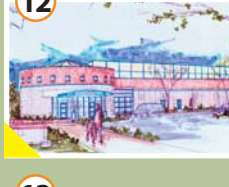
**15 Expand and Promote Higher Education and Training Opportunities**  
Identify emerging or unmet educational needs. Confirm additional courses or training programs that should be offered through high schools, technical centers, community colleges, and regional universities.



**Encourage Development of Vacant Lots**  
Extend utilities to vacant lots. Assemble vacant lots and redevelop into housing with associated parks and sidewalks for seniors, people with disabilities, and other special needs.



**Revitalize Neighborhoods**  
Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods in danger of deterioration through proper planning and neighborhood improvements. Expedite projects to quickly return at-risk neighborhoods to viability through the protection of historic resources and the building of public infrastructure such as sidewalks and streetscapes.



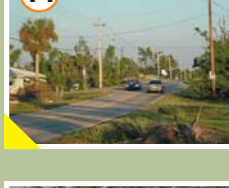
**Build and Restore Community Centers**  
Build new community centers where needed. Where possible, rebuild the existing facility so that it can be returned to service as soon as possible. Critical existing community centers include Cooper Street Recreation Center, Bayfront Center, and Edgewater Child Care Center.



**Restore and Rebuild School Facilities**  
Restore the facade of historic Charlotte High School and rebuild Baker Center to house a range of community-related programs - both are important to the revitalization of East Punta Gorda.



**Protect Natural Resources**  
Actions are needed to preserve the quality of the existing natural resources in Charlotte County, including acquiring Babcock Ranch, assuring access through canals, and maintaining the quality of beaches.



**Upgrade Local Transportation Infrastructure**  
Improve Charlotte County's transportation infrastructure by reducing congestion and the flooding of evacuation routes, expanding vital roadways, and augmenting public transportation services through an updated Transit Development Plan.



**Manage Water Effectively**  
Plan, improve infrastructure, and make capital projects to extend, expand, and manage water, wastewater, stormwater, and flood control capabilities.



**Respond to Employment Needs**  
Develop and implement additional programs, conduct outreach efforts, and ensure funding and participation for key new programs. Establish a communications link between Edison Community College campus and the Airport Industrial Park.



**Update Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS)**  
Update LMS to identify potential hazards, analyze vulnerabilities, and specify mitigation measures to reduce future losses. Reach out to community members, groups, and government agencies to find new projects for the LMS.



**Improve Telecommunications and Internet Access**  
Develop a Telecommunication Plan and Implementation Strategy. Improve links within Florida's High Technology Corridor. Work with government agencies, utilities, and local businesses to identify appropriate telecommunications upgrades.

**Assess Water Quality and Environmental Issues**  
Undertake an environmental assessment of the tri-county area to examine water quality, the potential environmental impact of significant projects in the region, and other key environmental issues.

**Reduce Wildfire Risks**  
Use proven mitigation techniques, developed in coordination with the Florida Department of Forestry and other partners, to reduce overall wildland fire risks and vulnerabilities to people and property.

**Promote Arts and Culture**  
Launch a marketing strategy to promote local artists and cultural events and seek funding to restore murals and other artwork damaged or lost in the disaster.

**"Re-Green" the City and County**  
Restore and improve upon streetscapes and landscaping in the community. Identify and develop community gateways throughout Charlotte County and for the city of Punta Gorda.

**Enhance Health Services**  
Develop a behavioral health care center and provide improved facilities for the Health and Human Services Department to respond to community's growing needs for critical services.

**Reinstate Tri-County Mobile Health Clinic**  
Reinstate Care-A-Van through a collaborative partnership with county health departments, hospitals, physicians, dentists, optometrists, volunteers, and social service agencies.

**Launch 2-1-1 Helpline, Website, and Volunteer Resource Center**  
Create a 2-1-1 Helpline and Web site to provide a point of contact for needed services. Establish a comprehensive Community Volunteer Center to match volunteers and donations with appropriate agencies.

## Recovery Value Indicators

High Moderate Community Interest