



ESTERO COUNCIL OF
COMMUNITY LEADERS

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FEATURE: THE HISTORY OF HOUSING IN ESTERO: 2000-2016

The Village of Estero had about 22,403 residences at the end of 2016. Here's a look at the history and demographics of housing in Estero.

Prologue

In 1997, the Estero Fire District conducted a survey of all structures in Estero and found about 4,600 housing units of all types, many of them mobile homes. The building boom started in 1998, as the airport, Florida Gulf Coast University and Miromar Outlets began attracting residential development to the area. There were 550 housing units built in 1998; the following year, 1999, that number more than doubled to 1,150. By the end of the 20th century, the total number of housing units in Estero was about 6,300.

Boom Time: The Early 2000s

Since 2000, Estero has added 16,467 housing units, most of them during the building boom which lasted through early 2007, when the recession began to hit Southwest Florida. In 2000 and 2001, about 2,100 housing units were built each year! Almost three-fourths of the 5,700 housing units permitted in 2000-2002 were for three communities: The Brooks, Stoneybrook and Pelican Sound. At that time, The Brooks was ranked among the 15 fastest growing residential communities in the nation. Most of the development of this period was in southern Estero, south of Corkscrew Road.

With the attack of 9/11 in 2001, housing permits slowed down during the next three years to the 1,400-1,600 range, before peaking in 2005 with a whopping 2,833 housing permits in one calendar year. During this time, many Estero communities commenced construction, filling in much of the area north of Corkscrew Road. Sizable communities developed during this period include Grandezza, Bella Terra, The Cascades, Villagio, The Colony in Pelican Landing, Rookery Pointe, Bella Lago, Rapallo, The Reserve of Estero, West Bay Club, Meadows of Estero and Osprey Cove.

Recession and Recovery

In 2006, the number of housing permits halved, but still remained high at 1,310 units. Then, in 2007, the slow-down really began, with just 432 housing units permitted — less

than the 550 units permitted in 1998 at the start of the boom nine years earlier.

For each of the next four years, from 2008-2011, Estero saw less than 200 annual housing permits. The recovery began in 2012, with 341 housing units, followed by 448 in 2013 and 351 in 2014. Much of this development was in eastern Estero, along Corkscrew Road. Also notable during this time, Mirasol at Coconut Point brought upscale, urban condominium living to Coconut Point Mall. The concept initially struggled to sell, with the units fluctuating between rental and ownership.

2015 & 2016: A Contrast in Housing Types

2015 brought a spike in housing — 749 units — but the increase was not in single-family homes; the vast majority of permits (82%) were issued for multifamily units due to an increase in both apartments and senior living units. This was something new for the Estero market. Springs at Estero, the Village's first apartment complex not marketed to students, opened in October 2015 with 260 luxury, townhouse-style apartments at the entrance to Germain Arena. Other apartments permitted in 2015 were Copper Oaks (50), Courtyards at Estero (136) and The Reef (168). An additional 24 units were permitted in March 2017 for The Reef II, which is designed exclusively for FGCU students. Just outside Estero's boundary to the north, Estero Oaks luxury apartments has 280 units. There is also an older

student housing complex, Coastal Village, on Three Oaks Parkway north of Estero Parkway, which permitted 200 units in 2004 and later expanded to 364 units. Currently, Miromar Development Corp. is building University Village on Ben Hill Griffin Parkway south of FGCU (outside Estero's boundary). This development will have 1,400 beds in 17 buildings for student housing, along with retail shops.



The building value for 2015 housing permits was about \$90 million, the highest dollar value since 2007. Commercial building value was bolstered by more than \$20 million in senior living facilities. The only senior care facility in Estero built prior to 2015 is Life Care Center of Estero on Williams

Road. American House Coconut Point opened in September 2016 with 194 rental units just south of Coconut Point Mall, and Autumn Leaves — dedicated exclusively to memory care — soon followed with 50 units. Additionally, Volunteers of America has been approved by the Village to build a 340-unit senior housing facility at the northeast corner of Corkscrew Road and Sandy Lane.



By contrast to the 2015 trend toward multifamily units, there were zero apartment permits issued in 2016. Last year, the total number of permitted housing units fell back to 170 — comprised exclusively of single-family homes and duplexes. Tidewater by Del Webb, at Estero Parkway and Ben Hill Griffin, was the only major development active in 2016, pulling 100 permits. The total building value added in 2016

was about \$53.9 million. This was the lowest dollar value since 2011.

Estero’s Shifting Demographics

Of the 16,467 housing units built since 2000, nearly half (48%) have been single-family homes, with the remaining being multifamily units of various types: duplexes, condos and apartments.

The early years of the boom brought mainly condos and single-family homes. A sizable share of the units were purchased by “snowbirds.” According to the 2000 U.S. Census data, 29% of all Estero housing units were owned by non-residents. By 2010, the “snowbird” population had declined slightly to 26% of all the greatly expanded number of Estero housing units. Estero’s total population also more than doubled during this decade, from 8,850 to 20,830. During this time, the median age of Estero residents remained fairly constant with about half of the population age 62 or older. According to the U.S. Census’ 2015 American Community Survey, Estero’s population may be shifting slightly younger, with about 44% of the population now age 62+. The median age has also shifted from 62 to 58, while Estero’s year-round population has grown to more than 30,000.

The recent growth of the rental housing market, including some student housing, no doubt assisted this shift in the age

distribution of Estero’s population; however, these changes are somewhat offset by the growing number of senior living communities at the opposite end of age distribution.

The Numbers

The ECCL has tracked housing data in Estero since 2000. The following table shows the total number and types of housing units permitted each year.

Year	Housing Units Permitted	% Single Family Homes	# Single Family Homes	# of Condos	# of Rental Apartments	# of Senior Housing units*
2000	2088	41%	863	1235	0	0
2001	2104	47%	982	1112	0	0
2002	1500	51%	764	736	0	0
2003	1425	47%	667	758	0	0
2004	1646	60%	980	666	200**	0
2005	2833	46%	1302	1531	0	0
2006	1310	39%	511	799	0	0
2007	432	38%	163	269	0	0
2008	167	81%	135	32	0	0
2009	164	76%	124	40	0	0
2010	194	79%	154	40	0	0
2011	181	84%	151	30	164**	0
2012	341	75%	256	85	0	0
2013	448	75%	336	112	0	0
2014	351	67%	236	115	0	0
2015	749	16%	119	16	614	244
2016	170	71%	120	50	0	0
Totals	16467	48%	7863	7626	978	244*

* Senior Housing units are not included in total Housing Units Permitted. These projects are permitted as commercial development, not residential units. Also note: Volunteers of America has been approved to build 340 senior housing units but the developer had not pulled any permits by the end of 2016.

** Coastal Village built 364 student housing units in two phases in approximately 2004 and 2011. ECCL’s historical data does not include the years these units were permitted; therefore, they are not included in the Housing Units Permitted figures but are included in the Total # of Rental Apartments (in blue).

APRIL 2017: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SUMMARY

NCH EMERGENCY ROOM PROPOSAL & POTENTIAL VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP WITH LEE SCHOOLS

Several Estero residents, including representatives from the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL), spoke in opposition to NCH Healthcare’s proposed Estero campus on U.S. 41 across from Coconut Point Mall during an informational public presentation to the Estero Design Review Board (DRB) April 26. Village Hall was packed out for the meeting, as NCH representatives presented their plans for a two-story medical center with a 24/7 Emergency Room.

Phil Douglas, a member of the Joint Hospital Committee effort which started years ago, characterized NCH’s leadership as “obstructionists.” Douglas recounted NCH’s history of blocking multiple Lee Memorial efforts to improve healthcare access in Estero, including thwarting plans for a hospital. Now, as Lee Health Coconut Point is under construction, NCH is proposing a redundant emergency room across the street.

“I am insulted that NCH would try to undermine the efforts of Lee Health when they’re in the process of building a \$140 million facility,” Douglas said. “Why are they here? Greed, profit, and they’re afraid of competition.”



Eight out of nine members of the public who spoke — many of them from neighboring Marsh Landing — opposed NCH’s proposal. The public hearing is the first step in the development process. Village of Estero staff will now review NCH’s application to determine compliance with the Land Development Code, said Estero Community Development Director Mary Gibbs. Several speakers questioned whether a 24/7 Emergency Room should be allowed under the existing commercial zoning. Staff will determine if NCH will be required to go before the Planning and Zoning Board at a later date, Gibbs said. Read more comments from the April 26 DRB meeting below.

Earlier in the day on April 26, the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) heard public comments on the Village of Estero Comprehensive Plan. This session focused on what Estero residents desire for future parks and recreational facilities and services in the Village. The Lee County School Board suggested the Village consider an interlocal agreement to build adult/youth multi-use fields and an aquatic center in Estero. The School District is planning to build a new elementary and a middle school in Estero and is seeking a partnership with the Village for many shared community amenities. The Village is required to complete

its first Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2017. The next public forum for the Estero Comprehensive Plan will be May 16 with a focus on Conservation and Coastal Issues.

On April 19, Village Council interviewed seven applicants to fill the vacancy on the Planning & Zoning Board and selected Robert King to serve the term ending March 31, 2018. Bob also serves as Transportation Director for the ECCL.

The next Design Review Board meeting will be May 10 at 5:30 p.m. The next Planning and Zoning Board meeting will be May 16 at 5:30 p.m.

NCH EMERGENCY ROOM

Representatives for NCH Healthcare System presented their application for a Development Order on less than four acres on Lyden Drive, on the west side of U.S. 41 across from Coconut Point Mall. NCH is proposing to build a two-story, 40,000 square foot medical center. The building will include an Emergency Room, two surgical suites and support services for outpatient care on the first floor. The second floor will have medical offices.

ECCL Interim Chairman Don Eslick urged board members to use their influence to stop NCH’s proposal from going forward. If NCH is allowed to open a competing Emergency Room across the street from Lee Health, it would undermine Lee Health’s ability to prove the need for a future 80-bed hospital on its Estero health and wellness campus, Eslick said.

Members of the Design Review Board (DRB) questioned placement and landscaping of a generator box along U.S. 41, among other design elements. The DRB has no authority to determine zoning issues. NCH has not filed an application for zoning changes because the current Commercial zoning allows medical offices.

“Marsh Landing does not want 24/7 operation there,” said Joyce Johnson. She cited traffic issues for residents trying to exit their neighborhood. She also questioned why NCH did not schedule meetings with Marsh Landing and other neighboring communities to educate them on the NCH proposal prior to the April 26 DRB public hearing. Staff will review NCH’s application before any additional public meetings are scheduled.



MEDEXPRESS ESTERO

Another medical office, MedExpress, is preparing to build an Urgent Care facility at the northeast corner of US 41 and Estero Parkway, adjacent to Walmart. MedExpress asked the DRB for a continuance until the May 10 meeting due to several changes in the building design. MedExpress is planning to build a 5,007-

square-foot urgent care center, which would likely operate from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

ESTERO GRANDE

Also at the April 26 DRB meeting, Estero Grande presented its revised Pattern Book for architectural design elements and received DRB approval to proceed to Village Council, with the stipulation that the developer add pedestrian connectivity. DRB also approved a Development Order which will allow site work to begin. This is a 30-acre development located west of the intersection of Estero Parkway and U.S. 41, across the street from Walmart. Estero Grande is planning to build 285 multifamily units and up to 100,000 square feet of commercial/retail space.



FLORIDA VETERINARY REFERRAL CENTER

Construction is approved to begin for the Veterinary Referral Center to be located at 10100 Arcos Avenue in the Plaza Del Sol center on the northeast corner of Three Oaks Parkway and Corkscrew Road. Florida Veterinary Referral Center is planning to build a two-story, 16,000-square-foot animal clinic to provide 24/7 critical care and emergency services, radiology, internal

medicine, surgery and oncology. Plans also include an enclosed courtyard for animals on the north side of the building.

SPRINGS AT ESTERO

Springs at Estero made an informational presentation April 12 at the DRB meeting. The neighboring community of Grandezza previously had asked the developer to enhance the buffer along Ben Hill Griffin Parkway. This is an apartment project that was approved by Lee County before Estero's incorporation for the property north of Miromar Outlets Drive. The developer will plant additional trees and shrubs to provide an aesthetically pleasing view along Ben Hill Griffin Parkway. The Board will review the developer's application and schedule another meeting at a later date.



VILLAGE OF ESTERO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan will define how Estero will continue to grow during the next 10 to 20 years. The Planning & Zoning Board took suggestions for Estero's future land use, historic resources and transportation on April 6 as part of the public input process.

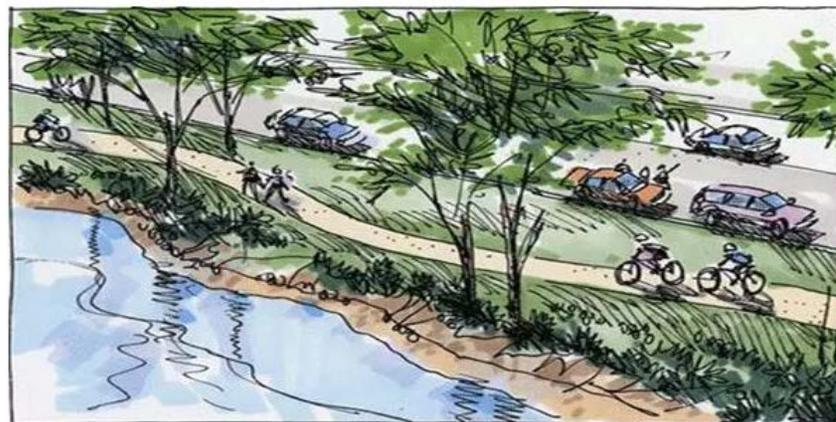
Public comments included:

- Bike/pedestrian paths should include historical trees
- Property at the intersection of U.S. 41 and Corkscrew Road should be purchased for a park
- Unique small businesses, like art galleries and music shops, should be incentivized
- Roundabouts should be considered for traffic calming
- "Complete Streets" should be included in the Village Center
- The railroad corridor should be used for future commuter transportation

The April 26 public input meeting focused on Parks, Recreation and Open Space. The consultant, LaRue Planning, opened with a presentation summarizing public input received on this topic to date. Suggestions have included:

- Expand access to public-owned property including the Boomer Property north of Koreshan Park
- Encourage state/county land purchases outside of Estero (ie. Edison Farms)

- Protect the Estero River, Estero Bay and creeks; provide public access points and walkways along the water
- Establish greenway links between Koreshan, Happehatchee, historic sites and community parks
- Build a bike/pedestrian trail in the CSX Railroad right-of-way
- Acquire the Estero Recreation Center from Lee County



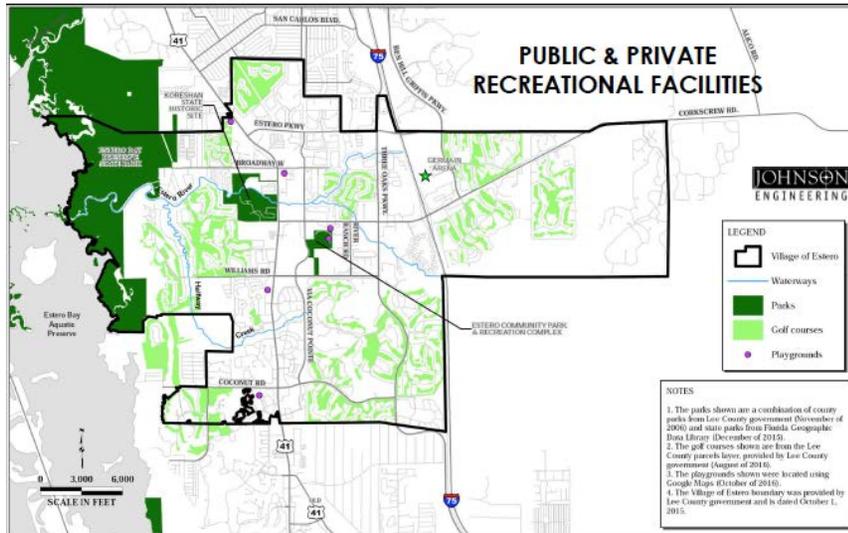
A presentation was also made by the Coalition for Parks/Recreation/Education, which includes parents of local students, administration from Estero High School, representatives from ECCL, local professionals, teachers and coaches. Based on the 2016 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Field Report, the Coalition asserted that the Village is short 26 acres of park land, fields and recreation facilities. Currently, Estero does not have fields for local league play or sports camps. Coalition suggestions included:

- Aquatic Center
- Multipurpose fields for lacrosse/soccer/flag football, etc.
- Youth baseball fields
- More sports courts with a gym and rehab center
- Open facilities at Estero High School for use by all residents

open school facilities for community events, youth sports camps, athletic competitions, continuing education and wellness programming. Shared resources could include recreational and athletic facilities, pools, libraries and community centers.

Links to all three presentations may be found on the Village of Estero website [here](#).

The consultant, LaRue Planning, has set up a webpage to help keep Estero citizens informed at www.larueplanning.com/projects.html. The next Comprehensive Plan meeting will be May 16 with a focus on Conservation and Coastal Issues.



Additionally, representatives from the School District of Lee County made a presentation showing enrollment growth in the Village of Estero and plans for a new elementary and middle school to open for the 2021-2022 school year. A potential site for both schools is 70 acres on Arcos Avenue (northeast of the intersection of Corkscrew Road and Three Oaks Parkway). The School District also owns 10 acres adjacent to Estero High School. A potential municipal partnership with the Village of Estero would

ESTERO'S FIRST QUARTER PERMITS DOMINATED BY APARTMENTS ONE OF THE BEST FIRST QUARTERS IN A DECADE

During the first quarter of 2017, permits for two hundred seventy-three (273) residential units were issued in Estero, including thirty-one (31) single family homes, twelve (12) duplexes and two hundred-thirty (230) apartments. The apartments included two hundred-six (206) at the Springs at Gulf Coast on Highland Oaks Dr., and twenty-four (24) at the Reef (Phase II) on Ben Hill Griffin. The non-apartment permits were issued for three ongoing developments: Tidewater, Estero Place and Pebble Pointe. The total value of all residential permits issued during the quarter was \$26,976,081, making the first quarter one of the best first quarters in the last ten years.

The table below compares 2017 year-to-date figures with those of the previous 17 years.

Year	Year-to-Date Housing Units	Building Value	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	506	\$68,142,696	\$134,669	41%
2001	584	88,114,145	150,880	42
2002	292	55,956,255	191,631	60
2003	532	77,905,904	146,440	32
2004	371	74,011,015	199,491	73
2005	883	168,168,623	190,451	37
2006	569	119,676,682	210,328	15
2007	218	56,648,641	259,856	33
2008	40	13,791,205	344,780	90
2009	36	14,016,521	389,348	78
2010	58	11,319,925	195,171	79
2011	36	5,837,350	162,149	78
2012	64	9,885,403	156,459	84
2013	98	17,537,359	178,953	100
2014	106	15,979,517	150,750	72
2015	484	46,549,016	96,176	9
2016	44	11,054,831	251,246	45
2017	273	26,976,081	98,813	16

Note: The building values above exclude the value of the underlying land.

Sources: For 2016 and 2017, see Village of Estero Community Development: <https://estero-fl.gov/monthly-building-reports/>

For prior years, see Lee County Permit Reports for the “Village of Estero”: <http://www.leegov.com/dcd/reports>

ESTERO FIRST QUARTER COMMERCIAL PERMITS PICK-UP

The value of commercial permits in Estero in the first quarter totaled \$14,001,521. The total includes \$5.3 million for the Estero Lock-Up At Half-Way Creek on U.S. 41 south of the entrance to Fountain Lakes. The quarter also benefited from a \$3.5 million renovation and addition to the Estero United Methodist Church.

This year’s first quarter compares with the robust first quarter of 2015, which included \$28.0 million for the Hertz headquarters, and the first quarter of 2016 which included the new Marriott on Via Coconut.

The table below compares 2017 year-to-date totals with those of the previous 17 years.

Year	Year-to-Date	Annual Total
2000	\$6,493,092	\$77,250,835
2001	12,714,570	44,116,526
2002	2,377,297	23,135,139
2003	3,348,635	23,234,725
2004	2,556,018	60,859,820
2005	7,209,706	111,037,977
2006	68,428,727	184,709,240
2007	49,358,941	157,614,045
2008	18,837,360	39,261,677
2009	4,575,618	9,752,556
2010	411,276	9,322,546
2011	3,877,089	11,717,593
2012	3,204,340	11,879,291
2013	1,972,724	14,656,213
2014	2,327,177	139,285,611
2015	46,549,016	68,338,852
2016	19,559,704	39,716,393
2017	14,001,521	N/A

Note: The building values above exclude the value of the underlying land.

Sources: For 2016 and 2017, see Village of Estero Community Development: see <https://estero-fl.gov/monthly-building-reports/>

For prior years, see Lee County Permit Reports for the “Village of Estero”: <http://www.leegov.com/dcd/reports>

ESTERO'S SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES

SURGE IN MARCH AND FIRST QUARTER

In March, 2017, the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) totaled seventy-three (73) single family home sales in the Village of Estero. For the first quarter, sales totaled one hundred-sixty (160) homes, a 15% increase from 2016, and the best first quarter since the ECCL began sales figures in 2010. Also significant is that active listings remain near their highest level since 2010.

Sales figures for 2017 and for each month for the previous two years are shown below:

At the end of March, there were 520 listings of currently active unsold homes (i.e., "inventory"). This equates to about an 11 month supply, unchanged from February and near the 2016 high. Often, this figure peaks in the first half of the year.

Pending sales at March 31 totaled 102 homes – one of the highest in the last two years. This suggests solid sales in the near future.

The percent of distressed sales in the quarter remained near 5% of total sales, but the percent of distressed sales in inventory at March 31 totaled just 1%, matching the lowest level since 2012.

Period	2015	2016	2017	Inc (Dec)	Inc (Dec) %
Jan	34	46	46	-	-
Feb	35	39	41	2	5
Mar	65	54	73	19	35
Qtr 1	134	139	160	21	15
Apr	69	67			
May	71	47			
June	63	66			
Qtr 2	203	180			
July	51	42			
Aug	36	57			
Sept	44	35			
Qtr 3	131	134			
Oct	41	33			
Nov	33	39			
Dec	53	65			
Qtr 4	127	137			
Yearly Totals	595	590			
Year-to-Date	134	139	160	21	15

Continued thanks to Joe Pavich, Sr. of Realty World in Estero for supplying us monthly sales and inventory figures.

Notes: 1) "Distressed sales" include short-sales and sales of bank owned property in which the bank receives less than their loan amount.

2) Figures include homes in the new Village of Estero (excluding homes in the Estero portion of Pelican Landing, which are not separately shown in the MLS). Also not included are figures for multi-family homes.