

Winter Garden FL, A Quintessential Character Town.

Settled in the 1850s, Incorporated in 1908, City 2021 Population 46,502.

LINK: <https://www.cwgd.com/>

Winter Garden is a centennial town found within the aura of the Orlando Region. Since 2000, the population has more than tripled. Amidst this stupendous growth, the City has become evermore the quintessential character town. The origin story for *CharacterTowns.org* owes much to the City of Winter Garden.



Character. Winter Garden is an interesting, pleasant and prosperous City renowned for its social and economic success based on a progressive city government that promotes high standards and infrastructure improvements such as the West Orange Trail, the Garden Theater and multiple enhancements in their Historic Downtown.

Economic Base. The history of the City is based in the citrus industry with orange groves, processing plants and railroads. The two local history museums celebrate this founding economy. With the great freezes of the 1990s, the citrus groves moved south, the processing plants closed as did the railroad. Now proximate to Florida’s largest employer, Disney World, and to the regional employment centers in Downtown Orlando and the industrial centers on the south side of the Region, Winter Garden residents have great access to regional jobs.

[The West Orange Trail](#) changed the economic and character trajectory of the City. Orange County partnered with the City on a “rails-to-trails” opportunity in 1999 that converted the neglected citrus industry rail line into a 22-mile urban trail traversing the entirety of West Orange County. The Trail runs through the middle of Downtown Winter Garden and has prompted new investments, visitors and businesses taking advantage of the tremendous popularity of the Trail that contributes to the inherent character of the Town. Restaurants, bike stores and retail shops are flourishing. A new book store has recently joined the fray.



The Rail Line ran in the Middle of Plant St. Now it's the West Orange Trail.

History and Philanthropy are part of the mix producing economic, social and civic success. The 1927 Edgewater Hotel is back in business. Many folks, including Humphrey Bogart, Errol Flynn and Clark Gable, are said to have stayed there for the great fishing on Lake Apopka. The 1935 Garden Theater, <https://www.gardentheatre.org/>, re-opened in 2008 as the result of local resident philanthropy and now provides top-rate shows. New downtown apartments and condos are housing a growing number of downtown residents. New small business are moving to town, taking advantage of the “small town” lifestyle that offers a full range of urban amenities and infrastructure.

