



# PASCO COUNTY, FLORIDA

*"Bringing Opportunities Home"*

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**Date:** 03/28/2015

**To:** Christopher Zimmerman, Vice President for Economic Development  
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Smart Growth America

**From:** Richard E. Gehring, Planning and Development Administrator  
Matthew J. Armstrong, Executive Planner  
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**Re: Smart Growth America Workshop  
Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health  
Six (6) Month Progress Report**

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Pasco County is actively working to incorporate the recommendations from the Smart Growth Technical Assistance Workshop into its redevelopment efforts. Given below is a brief outline of the work that has been completed or is currently underway since the workshop (July 30th and 31st, 2014).

**1. Increase inter-jurisdictional cooperation.**

*The County and the two Cities need to work in concert. It is vitally important that their efforts be coordinated. This provides direct benefits (more efficient operations, eliminating destructive competition, etc.) but even more importantly, communicates an important message to the business community.*

**6 Month Progress Report - Increase Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation.**

- The County has established a quarterly meet up with the cities of New Port Richey and Port Richey. Planners from both the County and Cities are scheduled to meet the 2nd Wednesday of every 3rd month to discuss potential developments of relevance, policy changes and concerns as well as current and future planning projects in which we can collaborate on or impact our jurisdictions. By no means will this limit our communications but is instead a minimum level of communication between the three jurisdictions.

*"Pasco County—Florida's premier county for balanced economic growth, environmental sustainability, and first-class services."*

- In December of 2014 the County hosted another Harbors open house which was attended by over 40 participants and covered similar topics detailed in our first open house. The topics discussed included updates concerning the FSU redevelopment study and the Retail, Office, Market Analysis being performed by our consultant, Cardno. The open house continued to bring the three jurisdictions together to share ideas and concepts that would complement the Harbors redevelopment efforts.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Month Progress Report - Increase Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation.

- The recommendations from smart growth technical assistance emphasized the need for facilitating cooperation among the jurisdictions both in formal and informal ways. In line with this, the County recently organized an open house that brought together the residents, businesses, local leadership and government officials from all three jurisdictions – the cities of New Port Richey, Port Richey and Pasco County.
- The purpose of the open house was to share information about the progress on the redevelopment efforts for the Harbors. The format of the event involved presentations, one-on-one discussions and displays. Topics discussed included the recommendations from the smart growth workshop, findings from the Phase I and II work with the Florida State University (FSU) Planning and Development Lab, and the retail, office, market analysis and positioning strategy, scheduled to commence at the end of October.
- The open house was well-attended by over 60 participants and proved to be a critical step in bringing the three jurisdictions together to share ideas and concepts that would complement the Harbors redevelopment efforts.
- As a follow up to this event, with help from the cities, individual formal presentations will be made at the council meetings for both the city of New Port Richey and Port Richey.
- This open house is the first of a series of informal meetings that will be conducted to increase public outreach and to enhance interjurisdictional cooperation and communication. The next open house is scheduled for December 2014.

## **2. Work for broad collaboration.**

*To work towards success, there is a need to foster partnership across government, business, land owners, and citizens. It may be worthwhile to consider whether new partnership institutions should be established that would bring together business and government, private agencies and nonprofits, and citizen representatives.*

## 6 Month Progress Report - Broad Collaboration.

- The County will be attending regularly the West Pasco Chamber of Commerce, Government Affairs meeting held the second Tuesday of every third month. Planners will be available to the local business community through the West Pasco Chamber of Commerce. County planners will communicate and collaborate with the Chamber concerning development, policy, and events. As with the Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation section this by no means the limits our communications but is instead a minimum level of communication between the Chamber and County.  
<http://www.westpasco.com>
- The County is currently working with the Bayou Business Association of Port Richey on promoting a pedestrian footpath using Tactical Urbanism principles. The temporary foot path is scheduled to be installed before Pasco Paddlepalooza event in April and will provide a pedestrian trail to move pedestrians north and south along Millers Bayou. Both the Bayou Business Association and the FSU Redevelopment project have emphasized the need for a north south pedestrian trail along Millers Bayou.  
<http://www.bayoubusinessdistrict.com>
- In March of 2015 Commissioner Starkey held her periodic Town Hall Meeting in Holiday, FL. As a public engagement venue Commissioner Starkey had multiple County departments' present projects that impact her political district. The Harbors plan was presented by the Long Range Department of Pasco County. Citizens and city officials alike were updated on implementation efforts related to the Harbors plan.
- Florida State University has submitted all phases of their redevelopment plan for final review. County review of plan was completed and returned to Florida State University March 24<sup>th</sup>.
- The Historic Hacienda Hotel located in New Port Richey as of February of 2015 is part of a public/private partnership between the City of New Port Richey and Florida Motel Incorporated. The Hacienda which was part of the Smart Growth Workshop tour will become a boutique hotel centered in the heart of New Port Richey.  
<http://www.fivay.org/hacienda.html>
- The City of New Port Richey has moved forward with redevelopment of Sims Park and Orange Lake on the northern edge of its downtown area, connecting pedestrians from the river walk to the lake and downtown. New mixed use, vertically integrated commercial and residential project is planned for the eastern side of Orange Lake.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Month Progress Report - Broad Collaboration.

Following the recommendations received from the smart growth technical assistance, Pasco County is currently in the process of establishing partnerships that will be crucial for redevelopment implementation. Some of these efforts include, increasing public outreach for the Harbors redevelopment efforts; reaching out to new partners and engaging them in the ongoing redevelopment efforts; and redefining the scope of the current efforts to meet the goals of various stakeholders.

Steps that have been taken towards this goal are outlined below:

- A website was created for the smart growth technical assistance. <http://www.pascocountyfl.net/index.aspx?NID=2069>
- A press release was done to announce the receipt of the smart growth recommendations and the Harbors Open House.
- An information brochure was created summarizing the smart growth effort. This brochure was distributed through various channels, and can be viewed at the following link: <http://www.pascocountyfl.net/index.aspx?NID=2069>
- Case examples mentioned in the smart growth recommendations are currently being studied and analyzed to identify an appropriate formal organizational structure that could be adopted to coordinate local redevelopment efforts.
- The Phase II study of the Harbors implementation efforts, which is being completed in collaboration with the Florida State University (FSU) Planning and Development team, is focused on targeted areas within both New Port Richey and Port Richey. Redevelopment initiatives proposed by this study will benefit and require collaboration between stakeholders, municipalities and the County.
- Past and current redevelopment efforts such as the My US-19 improvements by the Department of Transportation, the waterfront Overlay District and Pithlachascotee River dredging by the City of Port Richey, the main street improvements in the City of New Port Richey, and the West Pasco Trails study by the Metropolitan Planning Association are all opportunities to collaborate and refine redevelopment ideas.

### 3. **Focus your effort.**

*Work to make one small area (not more than 25-75 acres) a success. Pick an area with promise, create a development program using some of the actions discussed and start working on its implementation.*

## 6 Month Progress Report – Focus Your Effort.

- FSU – Phase II has been submitted and reviewed by County staff. FSU will make their final updates and should submit the final report by the end of April. The vision statements proposed for each development programs are provided below.
  - **Millers Bayou Small Area Plan** - By 2025, Millers Bayou will become the Harbors' premier marine destination that will foster a safe, active community grounded in coastal recreation, local retail and entertainment, accessible to all ages, and offer a casual atmosphere with drink and dining options.
  - **Main Street** - The Main Street node will be a resource-efficient, historic community that empowers people to access places in which they can create, innovate, and interact at a human scale.
  
- Cardno ROMA & Design: A consulting firm contracted to assist Pasco County to produce a Catalyst Redevelopment Strategy for the Harbors market area. Three catalyst sites are under review. Three stakeholder meetings have been held, with final design targeted for April 30, 2015.
  - **Hwy 19 and Grand (Millers Bayou Area)**
  - **Hwy 19 and Main (Main Street NPR)**
  - **Hwy 19 and Moog**

## 1<sup>st</sup> Month Progress Report – Focus Your Effort.

- Pasco County has recently collaborated with the Florida State University (FSU) to implement the ideas identified within the Harbors Plan and the County's Economic Development Plan. This implementation effort is split into two phases - Phase I and Phase II that are focused on identifying specific catalyst projects and development programs.
  
- In line with the smart growth recommendations, the phase II efforts for the project looks at two smaller implementation areas within the Harbors – the Millers Bayou and the Main Street area. These two areas were specifically selected with the intention of concentrating and integrating all ongoing redevelopment efforts by the two cities and the County. These smaller areas are adequately sized to allow the on-ground execution of the redevelopment actions and potential projects that are highlighted at the smart growth workshop. They are also appropriately located to complement adjacent redevelopment efforts and attain mutually beneficial goals.

**4. Consider changes to local development codes and related ordinances.  
Compact walkable**

**6 Month Progress Report – Changes to LDC and related ordinances**

- Mixed Use Trip Reduction Measures (MUTRM) was approved by the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014. With MUTRM the County has an additional tool within its development tool kit to promote compact walkable communities within the West Market Area. In addition MUTRM was recognized in local planning circles by the Tampa Bay Planning Association when it took first place in the development and infrastructure category at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Future of the Regions Award.
- Staff members within the Long Range Planning Department are working to establish a Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC) which will advise the Pasco County BCC on outdated and exclusionary Land Development Code (LDC) policies that hinder urban agriculture. The first presentation on the formation of this group is expected to take place April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015. The FPAC whether publically chartered or as a non-profit will consist of members from public health, the County school board, UF-Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences extension office, a higher educational institution, a local farmer, a local grocer, and a non-profit member.
- Staff members within the Long Range Planning Department are working to establish a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) element to the LDC. The County is in the beginning stages of identifying TOD locations and the wording needed within this element.

**1<sup>st</sup> Month Progress Report – Changes to LDC and related ordinances**

- Some of the inadequacies of the current regulations and broad areas that require change to support a healthy, economically efficient and walkable environment were highlighted during the smart growth workshop. Keeping these end goals in mind, the County has been currently involved in developing an ordinance that supports a compact, pedestrian oriented environment. Using basic urban design standards and principles, this ordinance (known as MUTRM - Mixed Use Trip Reduction Measures) aims to create a development pattern that offers multiple options for biking, walking and vehicular movement within developments. Although applicable to the entire County, this new set of regulations would be critical in converting the suburban development pattern within the Harbors redevelopment area into a more compact, healthy and cost-effective environment.

**5. Leverage existing assets, make better use of the water and take better advantage of events.**

**6 Month Progress Report – Take Better Advantage of Events**

- Pasco Paddlepalooza – The County is working in conjunction with the City of Port Richey on a temporary foot path to be installed before Paddlepalooza event in April which will provide a pedestrian trail to move pedestrians north and south along Millers Bayou. Both the Bayou Business Association and the FSU Redevelopment project have emphasized the need for a north south pedestrian trail along Millers Bayou. Pasco Tourism has sponsored this event as well as Chasco Fiesta, Taste of Pasco and the Loquat Festival, with informational booths at each.
- The Pasco County Office of Tourism currently sponsor events within the targeted areas: Chasco Fiesta, Paddlepalooza, Loquat Festival

**1<sup>st</sup> Month Progress Report – Take Better Advantage of Events**

- The Phase I and Phase II efforts by the FSU team are focused on identifying specific catalyst projects and redevelopment actions that will help capitalize on existing assets, water resources and local events. The phase II efforts for the Harbors project that started in August this year, are concentrated on two key nodes – City of Port Richey's Miller Bayou area and the City of New Port Richey's Main Street. The project is aimed at identifying redevelopment scenarios and specific on-ground actions that best utilize the local assets within these two areas. The overall theme of the project is centered on the existing local assets and coastal resources such as Main Street, Orange Lake, Cotee River, Millers Bayou and Waterfront Park.

**6. Create a real downtown.**

**6 Month Progress Report – Create a Real Downtown**

- The Historic Hacienda Hotel located in New Port Richey as of February of 2015 is part of a public/private partnership between the City of New Port Richey and Florida Motel Incorporated. The Hacienda which was part of the Smart Growth Workshop tour will become a boutique hotel centered in the heart of New Port Richey.  
<http://www.fivay.org/hacienda.html>

## 1<sup>st</sup> Month Progress Report – Create a Real Downtown

- As a part of the downtown revitalization efforts, the City of New Port Richey is currently working on reutilizing the Hacienda Hotel and redeveloping the area around Orange Lake.

In addition, a part of the Phase II effort for the FSU project is focused on the Main Street Node within New Port Richey. The project aims to strategically place catalyst developments along the U.S. 19 corridor that will in turn create a distinct entrance to the City of New Port Richey's Main Street area as well as generate footfalls necessary to revitalize its downtown.