



PASCO COUNTY, FLORIDA

"Bringing Opportunities Home"

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Smart Growth America

From: Richard E. Gehring, Planning and Development Administrator
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**Re: Smart Growth America Workshop - Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health
1 Month Progress Report**

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 interjurisdictional 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.

- 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, and 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 cities 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.

- 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 all stakeholders within the two municipalities and the County.

- Past and current redevelopment efforts such as the 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.

- 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.

- 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 Methodology) 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.*

- 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 New Port Richey Main Street, Orange Lake, Cotee River, Millers Bayou and the Port Richey Waterfront Park.

6. *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 City of New Port Richey’s Main Street area as well as generate footfalls necessary to revitalize its downtown.