

# COMPACT WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

## General Information

February 2014

### 1. Why is the County promoting Compact Walkable Communities in Pasco County?

According to the County Comprehensive Plan the South Market Area “is envisioned as an urban gateway opportunity area with intensification supported by transit opportunities in a manner which will enhance energy efficiency and conservation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This area has a distinct dual role as a gateway to and from Pasco County and shall serve as a premier location for employers in Pasco County. This area shall be characterized by dense, vertical nonresidential development with quality design, intensity, and density necessary to support transit opportunities.”

It is the mission of the South Market Area to be “a high density, compact, and mixed-use location with maximized transportation opportunities that attracts a broad spectrum of employers and businesses.” This area encourages mixed-use communities that maximize mobility and provide multiple opportunities for living, working and recreation, within safe and comfortable walking distances.

The demographic and socio-economic profile of residential buyers and renters is changing rapidly. This shift is in response to both economic belt-tightening and more interestingly, in their preferences to live, and possibly also work, within communities enriched by: 1) a variety of housing choices; 2) energy efficient homes with easy access to parks; 3) neighborhood shopping, 4) local schools; and 5) cultural and recreational amenities within walking distance.

Many online real estate resources recognize the importance of walkability to homebuyers and provide a tool that ranks the walkability of a community. One such tool is provided by Walk Score. (<http://www.walkscore.com>) According the Walk Score Website “walkable neighborhoods with access to public transit, better commutes, and proximity to the people and places you love are the key to a happier, healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.”

### 2. What makes a community “walkable”?

While there are many factors that promote walkability, the County has identified nine essential elements that support compact walkable neighborhoods. These components include: limited block size; interconnected roadway networks; neighborhood centers; sustainable population density; mixed-use and varied socio-economic mix; parks and public spaces; pedestrian-friendly design; workplaces and schools; and complete streets.

**3. Is the County going to adopt “urban design standards” that are applicable across the entire urban service area?**

We do not believe that “urban design standards” will be necessary. In May 2011, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the County’s Urban Service Area, which is largely consistent with the boundaries of the West and South Market Areas. While it is understood that an urban service area boundary defines that area that is appropriate for a higher concentration of development, (in accordance with infrastructure current or planned availability), it is the County’s position that a blanket urban standard requirement is not necessarily appropriate for the entirety of the urban service area.

As such, the County has outlined a process by which certain optional standards that promote compact walkable communities will be adopted [i.e., Mixed-Use Trip Reduction Measures (MUTRM); modified Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND); etc.] To ensure that the County will reach a density level that will support transit services as part of a multi-modal transportation system, the County intends to identify those key locations (or nodes) that will require development standards that support increased density and intensity.

The County recognizes the importance of community involvement in this process. As such, County Staff will continue to meet with Interested Parties through informational meetings and technical workgroups as the planning process continues. In addition, information will be made available through the County Website.

**4. Is the County going to address the needs of both the West and South Market Areas?**

Yes. While the Compact Walkable Community process will concentrate its efforts on the South Market Area, there is an on-going implementation effort in the West Market Area following the recommendations of the Harbors Plan.

**5. What is the general process for adopting Compact Walkable Community criteria?**

The plan for adopting Compact Walkable Community criteria consists of multiple phases. The current schedule is somewhat aggressive with several milestones identified over the next 12-18 months. While it may be necessary to adjust the schedule at times, it is the intent to stay as close to the overall 12-18 month timeframe as possible.

There have been approximately seven key topics of discussion identified that will be addressed as part of technical workgroups. These issues include: 1) codifying MUTRM; 2) modifying the Land Development Code (LDC) Section 601 TND; 3) examining/modifying large-scale commercial requirements outlined in the LDC; 4) creating Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) criteria; 5) reviewing the LDC for compact walkable consistency; 6) reviewing/amending Employment

Center MPUD standards; and 7) identifying development intensity nodes along the SR 54/56 corridor.

It is anticipated that each of these issues would be the subject of one to two technical meetings; although, some of these issues may cross-over and not have independent meetings. Staff will provide an overview of the subject issue at the initial meeting and provide information and/or draft language for review by the interested parties. After participants have had the opportunity to review this information and comment, a second meeting will address any changes. If it is determined that a second meeting is not necessary, summary information will be made available to the interested parties.

**6. Who should I contact if I have additional questions?**

Please direct all questions to Rebecca Stonefield, Planner II via e-mail at [rstonefield@pascocountyfl.net](mailto:rstonefield@pascocountyfl.net) or by phone at 727-847-2411x7891. Additional information will be made available through the County Website.