

# Assignment

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEM**

From 2000 to 2006, Pasco County experienced unprecedented high levels of growth, primarily in the residential sector; since then, growth has stagnated, unemployment has climbed above state averages, and the property tax base has eroded by nearly \$9 Billion. In 2008, Pasco County recognized the changing conditions of the economy and the need to increase employment in the County to provide a balanced long term mix of uses, a healthier tax base, and a more efficient transportation system. Pasco County and Pasco Economic Development Council (PEDC) jointly funded the Advisory Services Panel from the Urban Land Institute to study the County's Development processes. The panel was charged with studying six major questions:

1. In order for Pasco County to be economically competitive, how do we define the optimal array of industries to recruit, that will contribute positively by creating value-added jobs; diversify our economy; and ultimately shift the tax burden away from residential uses?
2. How should the Pasco County Land Development Code best be structured to enable the County to address desirable market based housing and commercial development over the next decade?
3. What alternative organizational structures or processes are available for consideration by Pasco County to create state of the art approaches to meet the County's commitment to responsible, fair and efficient governance?
4. What alternative organizational structures or processes are available for consideration by the PEDC to create state of the art approaches to meet the PEDC's commitment to competing at the highest level possible for economic development opportunities?
5. How do we balance the cost of bringing past development impacts into compliance while addressing the policy issues of assuring the necessary infrastructure to serve our newest and future residents?

6. How can Pasco County best preserve and sustain its cultural, environmental and social quality of life during the next 20 years of inevitable growth.

The panel issued a report with a comprehensive set of recommendations addressing these questions. The County and PEDC took the report from the ULI Panel seriously and for the past five years have been busy implementing its recommendations, plus other initiatives that resulted indirectly from it. These include:

1. Reorganization of Planning and Growth Management into the Planning and Development, combining Zoning and Intake, Current Planning, Long Range Planning, and Code Compliance and simplifying County development review processes.
2. Adopted revisions, and still revising the Land Development Code.
3. Creation of and Comprehensive Plan Adoption of 5 Market Areas and an Urban Service Area.
4. Elimination of Concurrency (Transportation Impact Fees) and replacement with Mobility Fees, utilizing a form of tax increment financing to reduce as low a zero fees to encourage targeted development in the USA.
5. Implemented a County-wide Capital Improvement Program Budget.
6. Creation and adoption of a Board of County Commission Strategic Plan
7. Creation and adoption of a county-wide Economic Development Plan.
8. Creation and adoption of the Harbors West Market Area Redevelopment Plan.
9. Revised the County's Job Creation Incentives.
10. Reorganization of the Pasco Economic Development Council.
11. Passage of the renewal of the Penny for Pasco sales tax, with an estimated \$45 Million earmarked for the implementation of the Economic Development plan.

Now it is time to assess progress, celebrate successes, and look to the future for the next steps to become Florida's Premier County for new businesses and quality job creation.

### **General Scoping Focus Areas to be Addressed by the ULI Panel**

For the purposes of the 2013 ULI Advisory Panel, the problem statement and questions that will be developed are categorized under two different headings and multiple topics as follows:

1. Evaluation of Progress to Date – Last five Years 2009-20013 (20% of Panel's Efforts)
  - a. Review actions and results addressing the recommendations of the original panel report.
  - b. Recommendations and conclusions should be in the prescriptive style of panel reports recognizing strengths and prescribing areas of improvement and best practices needed.
  
2. Focus areas or topics for setting a direction for the next five years 2014-2018 (80% of Panel's Efforts – focused on the ULI "What's Next?" format for action in the recovery cycle):
  - a. Balanced Economic Growth and Competitiveness – Pasco's Regional Economic Role
  - b. Place Making – Improving Pasco's Quality of Life
  - c. Creating Thriving Communities – Pasco's Residential Growth Dynamics
  - d. Organizational Performance --Workforce Development and Talent Attraction
  - e. Investment Tools- Public-Private Partnerships
  - f. Movement and Connectivity – Multi-modal Transportation Systems
  - g. Balance with Nature, Agriculture and Tourism
  - h. Sustainable Local Economy in Revenue and Capital Investment
  - i. Governance – Models and structures for Leadership and Management Focus

## **QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE PANEL**

### **Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary document guiding the future of the County. As Planning and Development staff directs planning and development decisions toward the vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, other departments and divisions can also contribute to that vision through their own programs, policies and capital improvement plans, thus amplifying efforts, pooling resources, and enabling Pasco to attain that vision faster. If we plan to attain a more 'sustainable' future for Pasco, this is extremely essential as

sustainability entails focusing on more than just the physical/economic aspects of a development, but holistically looking at how we address water, open spaces, natural systems, energy, food, health, revenues, resilience etc. as the largest green field county in the Tampa Bay Region.

- ***How can a sustainable vision be better incorporated and facilitated across all departments and divisions within the County to enhance intra-agency collaboration?***

## **Land Development Code**

Within the initial ULI Report of 2008, recommendations were made concerning restructuring the Pasco County's development review processes. One recommendation concerned changing the composition and responsibilities of the existing Development Review Committee (DRC). The County has made some adjustments to the development review permitting processes that involve review and recommendation by County Planning and Development staff, followed by recommendation by the DRC, and finally approval, denial or modification by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in certain circumstances. This places most planning and development approval decisions with the BCC where they are forced into the role of arbitrator between its professional staff and the applicant/developer.

Planning and Development Staff are in the process of supplementing its current Euclidean zoning and land development code with Urban Design Standards that are form based, tied to roadway streetscape typologies and consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan Policies. Staff believes that a migration away from Euclidean zoning to a form based code will help by permitting greater flexibility to negotiate creative design solutions which incorporate urban components.

- ***What are the key elements on how to proceed?***
- ***How should the Pasco County Land Development Code best be structured to enable the county to address desirable market based housing and commercial development over the next decade?***
- ***What are the industry benchmarks and standards in time, quality plane, and costs for the review and approval of site development and building construction plans?***

## **Market Areas**

In response to the ULI recommendation the County adopted in the Comprehensive Plan five market areas (see map given below), with modifications. The Coastal and Inland West Areas were combined, and the Central, East and Rural areas were redefined into the following areas:

***Market Area I – West - The Harbors (Coastal/ Inland West)***

***Market Area II – South - Gateway Crossings (South Market)***

***Market Area III – Central - The Midlands (Central)***

***Market Area IV – East - The Highlands (East)***

***Market Area V – North - The Countryside (Central/ East)***

## **The Harbors**

The US 19 corridor within The Harbors Market has historically been and remains the principal north-south arterial roadway within this market area. Vehicle trips per day average over 66,000 in the south, 55,000 throughout most of the corridor, to a low of 35,000 as US 19 enters Hernando County to the north. Land use patterns along US 19 are predominantly “classic” strip commercial development, characterized by low value, aging, poorly designed commercial uses.

Property currently developed commercially along the US 19 corridor totals 1,620 acres and has an appraised land value of \$ 255,000,000. Total building area located on these commercial parcels totals 7.6 million square feet and has an appraised improvement value of \$ 172,000,000.

The above referenced commercial acreage and building square footage far exceeds market needs for the residents located within reasonable travel times from US 19. The West market area has very limited greenfield development opportunities and is primarily supported by a declining residential socio-economic base. New commercial development appears to be gravitating toward the more affluent inland residential areas primarily located along SR 54 and Little Road (CR 1).

In addition, in Pasco’s 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, it is noted that the Florida Department of Transportation is currently considering three grade separated crossings on US Highway 19 similar to what has been done in Pinellas County at three primary intersections. In order to prevent further decline to this

area, Pasco must be proactive and potentially identify alternative land uses or configurations to maintain or improve existing land values.

Can the ULI Panel address the following questions regarding the redevelopment of the Harbors Area (West Market Area) and the US Highway 19 Corridor?

***Based on the Harbors Plan, how should the County proceed with:***

- ***Prioritization of the implementation strategies presented within the Harbors Redevelopment Plan; and***
- ***Prioritization of investment within the West Market Area sub-districts; and***
- ***Identification of benchmark communities who have created successful incentive mechanisms to encourage private rehabilitation investment; and***
- ***Aggregation of smaller parcels to create more opportunity for planned development while achieving customer buy-in?***

## **Gateway Crossings**

A study is currently being performed along the State Road 54/56 Corridor for an elevated, managed toll facility and a recent private developer has approached the Florida DOT to lease the right-of-way, design, build, operate and maintain this facility. With the anticipated growth of population and employment opportunities within this corridor, Pasco County has revised its Comprehensive Plan to incentivize and encourage higher density and more intense urban growth patterns in a designated Urban Service Area as recommended by the ULI Advisory Panel in 2008. These incentives include:

Zero mobility fees for office, hotel, and industrial development

A less restrictive transportation related level of service standard for more urban development referred to as MUTRM (Mixed Use Trip Reduction Measures) , which promotes a shorter, walkable grid network, mixed uses, pedestrian & bicycle connectivity and local serving retail.

These measures have helped; however, the County is still confronted with the difficulties transitioning from a historically suburban style development/ bedroom community to a more urbanized area with a balanced employment pattern. The County is in the process of drafting Urban Design Guidelines for the Gateway

Crossings Market Area (as required by the Comprehensive Plan establishing the vision for the Urban Service Area - USA).

*Can the ULI Panel address the following questions regarding the development of the State Road 54/56 Corridor?*

- ***What model(s) should the County benchmark to support urbanization of the South (Gateway Crossings) Market Area for:***
  - ***Evolving from a suburban bedroom community to incorporate verticality, density and urban form; and***
  - ***Best practices for a county to operate area in a municipal manner as it relates to governance and financing mechanisms?***
- ***How can the County raise awareness and educate the development community to achieve more buy-in about the benefits of urban design to a market that has traditionally developed suburban prototypes?***

## **Urban Service Area (USA)**

Pasco County is sensitive to the needs of the existing, aging condition of the US Highway 19 Corridor and the demands and needs of the high growth State Road 54/56 Corridor. In the adopted Urban Service Area, Pasco recognizes that these two market areas contain 2/3 of the County's tax base and a majority of the population within the County.

Created after the recommendations of the 2008 Advisory Services Panel and reinforced by the mobility fee structure, an Urban Services Area was established to encourage growth in the West and South Market Areas.

Can the ULI Panel address the following questions regarding the varying needs of the Urban Service Area:

- ***How do we balance and/or prioritize the new and high growth demand of the State Road 54/56 greenfield corridor with the redevelopment of the US Highway 19 corridor in the Harbors in a supportive manner?***
- ***As development opportunities begin recovering from the Great Recession, how does Pasco preserve high-access nodes for***

***targeted industry development opportunities for high employment generating uses?***

**Governance**

In April, 2013 Pasco County saw the retirement of many administrative leaders, including the Budget Director and the County Administrator, after over 30 years of employment within the County. In addition, other primary leadership positions have retired, including multiple Assistant County Administrators and other mid and upper management positions. As Pasco adapts to the changing leadership roles, the adoption of a new Board of County Commissioners Strategic Plan, the restructuring of the State of Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity division, and the market beginning to recover, Pasco needs to address "What's Next" from what has changed in the regulatory and political environment.

The Board has recently adopted its second strategic plan with the following four Strategic Objectives designed to achieve Pasco's vision of being "**Florida's Premier County**:"

**"Create a Thriving Community"** by proactively pursuing opportunities with public and private partners for growth and redevelopment through integrated land use and long-range planning, while enhancing, managing and maintaining current resources, services and infrastructure; and

**"Enhance Quality of Life"** by create a community people want to call home that provides and promotes safety and security; essential health and human services; social, cultural, and recreational opportunities; and preserves and protects natural resources; and

**"Stimulate Economic Growth"** by supporting a sustainable increase in community income and investment, economic diversification, and expanded opportunities for all; and

**"Improve Organizational Performance"** by providing the processes, procedures, and necessary resources (physical, human, and financial) to efficiently and effectively deliver services in a culture of continual improvement.

- ***What alternative organizational structures or processes are available for consideration by Pasco County to create state of the art and innovative approaches to meet the County's commitment to responsible, fair and efficient governance?***
- ***What metrics should Pasco be monitoring as part of the continual process improvements to determine if Pasco is on the right path with the adopted BCC Strategic Plan?***

## **Revenue**

Similar to many counties and cities throughout the nation, Pasco County has been significantly affected by the economic recession as demonstrated by a 24.9% decline in its tax base since 2008. This has resulted in revenue shortfalls that have necessitated (limiting certain public services) the closing of some community facilities (parks, libraries, etc.) and increased deferred maintenance for public infrastructure such as roadways.

Of Florida's 67 counties, Pasco County ranks 62nd in government revenue tax per capita (\$1,525.06) and 62nd in government expenditures per capita (\$1508.90). Our neighboring and competitor counties to the south both receive government revenues per capita that are more than double Pasco County, with Hillsborough County and Pinellas County, ranking 16th (\$3,390.15) and 9th (\$3,846.71), respectively. Since both new development and county infrastructure is primarily being directed to these market areas a disproportionate share of County tax revenue is being expended in these areas.

- ***Should the County be considering alternative revenue generating methods to more equitably assign costs for urban vs. rural areas? If so, what alternative methods or mechanisms have been successfully used by other jurisdictions to deal with this issue?***

## **Economic Development**

Pasco County developed and adopted a robust Economic Development Plan (EDP) in May, 2013 to guide policy and programming decisions as a key implementation tool for the Comprehensive Plan and County Strategic Plan. The

EDP was developed consistent with many of the 2008 ULI Advisory Panel recommendations, including integration with the market area concept; including specific projects identified in the completed West Market Area “Harbors” Plan. The EDP addresses “What’s Next” with not only a road map for each of the market areas, but recognizes the importance of organizational performance, and incorporates many strategies as a critical component of stimulating economic growth. It also looks externally beyond the County at regional collaboration through public-private partnerships across regulatory agencies, educational institutions, and the private sector. In November 2012, Pasco County voters overwhelmingly approved the renewal of the Penny for Pasco sales tax, with an estimated \$45 Million earmarked specifically to implement the EDP for economic development opportunities.

- ***How should the County prioritize the strategies presented in the Economic Development Plan in moving forward and as we posture the implementation of the Penny for Pasco revenues?***
- ***How should the County encourage proximity of mixed income housing and jobs to reduce commuter impact on the road infrastructure in the region without expending valuable office and industrial lands in potential super employment zones?***
- ***What standards of assistance, education and advocacy should Pasco County and the Pasco Economic Development Council encourage our community partners to provide to be considered “Best in Class” to prospects and incoming and expanding companies?***
- ***What cultural amenities for a community growing from 500,000 to 1,000,000 in population are required to implement the vision of “A Premier County” and to create a thriving community?***