



# Smart Growth America

Making Neighborhoods Great Together

**Technical Assistance for Sustainable Communities:**  
Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health

## FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS



Pasco County, FL



City of New Port Richey, FL



City of Port Richey, FL



# Acknowledgements

**Pasco County's Planning and Development Department would like to thank all who contributed.**

Thanks to the many residents and local businesses that contributed and took an active part in planning for a better Harbors - West Market Area!

## **Pasco County Board of Commissioners**

- Honorable Ted Schrader
- Honorable Pat Mulieri Ed.D.
- Honorable Kathryn Starkey
- Honorable Henry Wilson
- Honorable Jack Mariano

## **County Administrator**

- Michele Baker

## **County Departments**

- Code Enforcement
- Community Development
- Emergency Management (EMO)
- Environmental Lands Division
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Libraries
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Transportation (PCPT)
- Real Estate
- Sheriff's Department
- Storm Water Management (SWM)
- Tourism Development
- Utilities
- Zoning and Site Development

## **Other Public or Private Assistance**

- District School Board of Pasco County
- Greater New Port Richey Main Street
- Pasco Alliance of Community Associations (PACA)
- Pasco Economic Development Council (PEDC)
- RESTORE Act Advisory Committee
- West Pasco Board of Realtors
- West Pasco Chamber of Commerce

## **Planning Organizations**

- Smart Growth America (SGA)
- Sun Coast - American Planning Association (APA)
- Urban Land Institute (ULI), Tampa Bay

## **Special Thanks to:**

- Douglas Tobin, County Public Information Officer
- County Commissioners' Staff

## **City of New Port Richey**

- Rob Marlowe, Mayor
- Bill Phillips, Councilman
- Chopper Davis, Councilman
- Jeff Starkey, Councilman
- Judy DeBella Thomas, Deputy Mayor
- City Staff

## **City of Port Richey**

- Eloise Taylor, Mayor
- Steve O'Neill, Councilman
- Terrance Rowe, Councilman
- Nancy Britton, Councilwoman
- Bill Colombo, Vice Mayor
- City Staff

## **Regional Agencies**

- Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) District 7
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- South West Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD)
- Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC)

## **State Agencies**

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Florida Department of Health

## **Non-Profit Organizations**

- 1000 Friends of Florida
- Coalition for the Homeless for Pasco County
- Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA)

## **Media Outlets**

- Suncoast News
- Tampa Bay Times
- The Tampa Tribune

## **Universities**

- Florida State University Planning and Development Lab (FPDL)
- Pasco Hernando State College
- University of South Florida

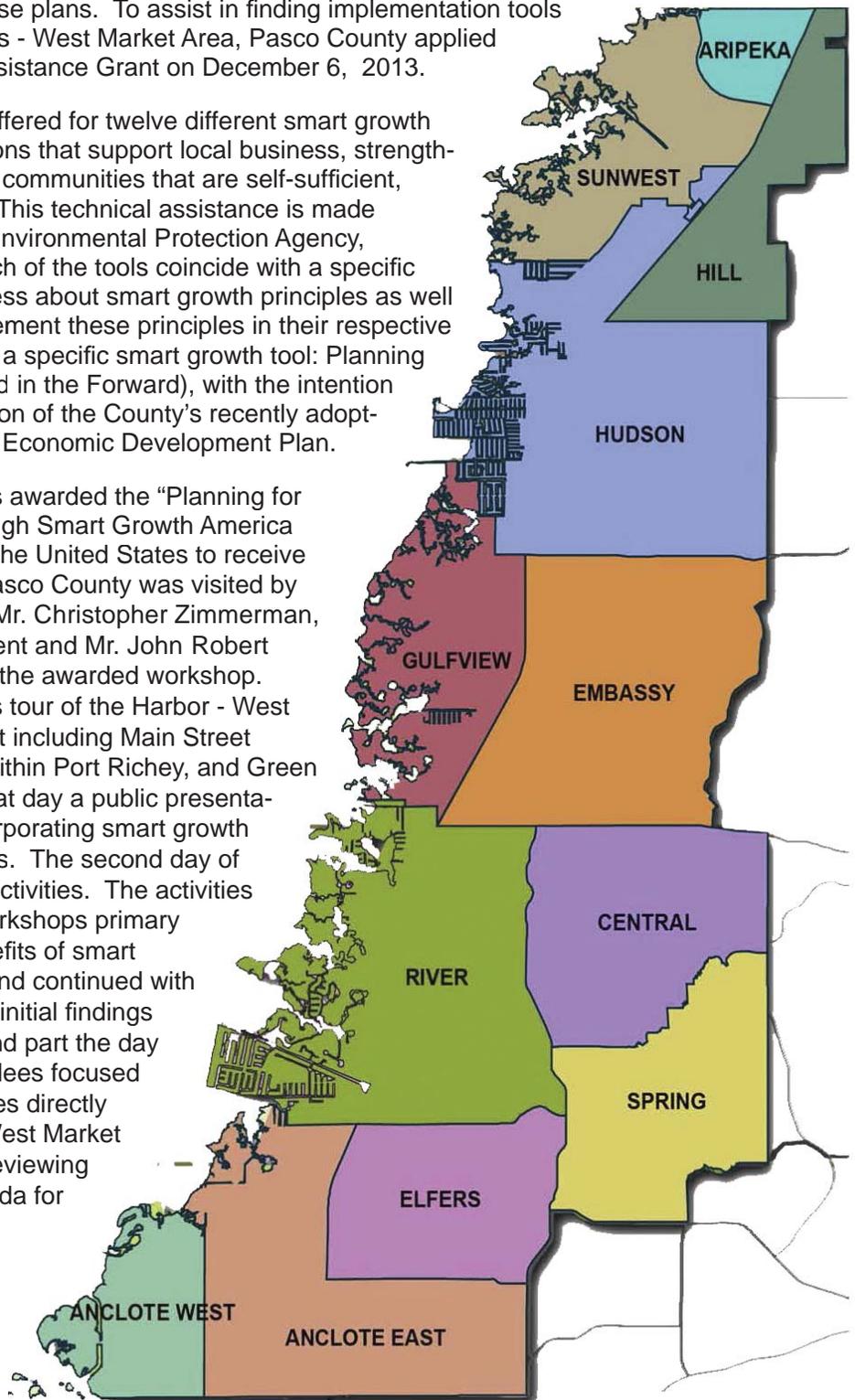
# Background and History

Pasco County has made tremendous efforts in redeveloping the western portion of the County, also known as the West Market Area. With more than 200,000 people, the West Market Area is home to approximately 40% of the county's population and includes a large share of its tax base. It is mostly characterized by an aging suburban development pattern, inadequate infrastructure, and vacant and obsolete strip commercial developments. In collaboration with the local community, the county adopted the Harbors – West Market Redevelopment Plan and its first Economic Development Plan. Having adopted the West Market Redevelopment Plan on June 25, 2013 and the County's first Economic Development Plan on May 7, 2013. Pasco County sought implementation tools that would help realize the vision defined within these plans. To assist in finding implementation tools and techniques that targeted the Harbors - West Market Area, Pasco County applied for the 2014 Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant on December 6, 2013.

The Smart Growth America grants are offered for twelve different smart growth tools that are focused on creating solutions that support local business, strengthen the economy, and help create livable communities that are self-sufficient, affordable and have great connectivity. This technical assistance is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Sustainable Communities. Each of the tools coincide with a specific workshop designed to increase awareness about smart growth principles as well as educate civic leaders on how to implement these principles in their respective communities. Pasco County applied for a specific smart growth tool: Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health (Outlined in the Forward), with the intention of gaining guidance on the implementation of the County's recently adopted, Harbors - West Market Plan and the Economic Development Plan.

On January 28, 2014 Pasco County was awarded the "Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health" grant through Smart Growth America and was one of only 18 communities in the United States to receive the grant that year. On July 30, 2014 Pasco County was visited by Smart Growth America representatives Mr. Christopher Zimmerman, Vice President for Economic Development and Mr. John Robert Smith, Senior Policy Advisor to conduct the awarded workshop. The first day of workshop included a bus tour of the Harbor - West Market Area touring key areas of interest including Main Street within New Port Richey, Millers Bayou within Port Richey, and Green Key Park within Pasco County. Later that day a public presentation was held on the advantages of incorporating smart growth policies into the County's planning efforts. The second day of the workshop consisted of a full day of activities. The activities started with a presentation about the workshops primary focus, Fiscal and Economic Health Benefits of smart growth in the context of Pasco County and continued with Florida State University presenting their initial findings within the West Market Area. The second part the day smart growth representatives and attendees focused their efforts on fiscal and economic issues directly effecting the targeted areas within the West Market area. The second day wrapped up by reviewing the findings and creating an action agenda for moving forward.

This report is the culmination of the findings from the workshop and the recommendations from Smart Growth America representatives.



# Forward - SGA's Summarized Goals

**Tool: Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health**

**Provider: Smart Growth America**

## Summary:

Smart growth policy can help communities save money now, reduce their liabilities for the future and use targeted investment to spur economic development. The “planning for economic and fiscal health” workshop draws on successful private and public sector lessons to help local leaders foster smart growth communities that cost their taxpayers less to build, run and maintain. This workshop first brings you the latest lessons in how smart growth saves money for local governments, makes money for businesses and is integral for the long-term fiscal and economic health of the community. Using an interactive and hands-on method, the workshop then shows how to apply these lessons in your community.

## Description:

The first half of the technical assistance workshop focuses on the ways in which smart growth approaches save the community money, including:

- increasing tax revenues and reducing tax burdens
- attracting new businesses
- increasing the efficiency of the labor market
- providing greater stability in times of uncertainty and rising energy costs
- investing public funds to stimulate private investment
- increasing local capital circulation
- providing a foundation for long term fiscal and economic health and competitiveness

Participants will also learn how to overcome serious barriers to implementing smart growth including:

- a lack of understanding of the relationship between development and municipal costs and revenues
- the importance of growing small and mid-size businesses
- the role of adjacency to value creation

This smart growth foundation is then applied in the second half of the day when the technical assistance team joins participating community members to look at the community’s economic development plans and projects to evaluate how the current situation compares to smart growth principles. Working with the community, the team will create specific changes to strategy and identify next steps in planning for fiscal and economic health that makes sense for the community, which may include suggestions for changes to the capital budgeting process, permitting process, regulatory framework and direction of economic development incentives. A follow-up implementation memo will gauge progress and leave the community with further actionable next steps.



Assistance provided with grant support from US EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities under their Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program.



## **Technical Assistance for Sustainable Communities:** Building Blocks

### **Technical Assistance Tool:** Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health for Pasco County, FL

To: Richard E. Gehring, Planning & Development Administrator  
Matthew J. Armstrong, Executive Planner  
Smita Ambadi, Planner II

From: Christopher Zimmerman, Vice President for Economic Development  
John Robert Smith, Senior Policy Advisor  
Smart Growth America

Date: September 15, 2014

Re: Report and Suggested Next Steps

## **Introduction: Purpose of this Memo**

Pursuant to our technical assistance award with Pasco County, this Memorandum constitutes our final report summarizing the workshop on Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health and suggesting some possible next steps for the County's efforts in the West Market Area (also known as the Harbors).

On July 30 and 31, 2014, Smart Growth America provided assistance under the Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health tool, supported by a grant from the US EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program. In conjunction with the Pasco County Department of Planning & Development, Smart Growth America delivered a two-day technical assistance workshop. Tuesday evening consisted of a presentation that was open to the public. On Wednesday, invited stakeholders attended a full-day session that involved an additional presentation, a facilitated brainstorming session and discussion of various development issues and alternatives.

The workshop brought together a wide range of professional staff and elected officials, private sector representatives including the real estate community, local residents, the non-profit community and others interested in the future of the West Market Area. The Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health presentations provided an overview of the fiscal and economic impacts of different development patterns, focusing on the differences between sprawling patterns and more compact, "smart growth" patterns.

Through the two-day program, Pasco planning leadership was able to engage community stakeholders around the ways in which smart growth approaches can make the area more competitive and reduce taxpayer burdens. The intent of the workshop was neither for Smart Growth America to create a plan nor bind the community to any particular course of action, but to assist community efforts to create a more vibrant, successful region, consistent with the goals of their adopted plans.



## Background Context for the Technical Assistance

This technical assistance centered on the development challenges in a small part of the West Market Area that includes the River District and the areas surrounding it.

The County has been heavily engaged with the community in creating a vision for the area and establishing new plans, notably the Harbors Plan and an accompanying Economic Development Plan. In addition, the two major municipalities in the area, the City of New Port Richey and the City of Port Richey, have adopted specific plans of relevance, namely the New Port Richey Community Redevelopment Area Strategic Redevelopment Action Plan, the Port Richey Waterfront Overlay District and the Waterfront Park Draft Master Plan. To help realize the vision defined by these plans, the County is seeking implementation tools, and felt that “at this critical stage, guidance received through the ‘Planning for Economic & Fiscal Health’ tool will be instrumental in translating the proposed vision into actionable items.”

A major aim of the technical assistance was to facilitate thinking about strategies that might help to energize appropriate redevelopment activity and foster the realization of the intended vision. The “Planning for Fiscal and Economic Health” workshop sets the stage by presenting information about factors driving economic change across the nation.

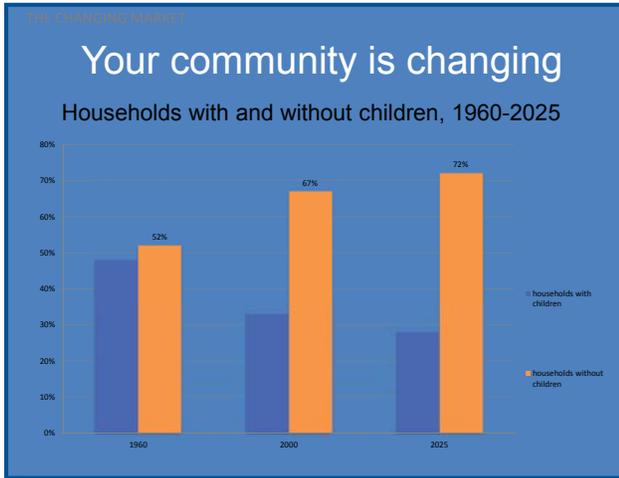
## Smart Growth and Fiscal and Economic Health

Communities around the nation are always concerned about their fiscal and economic health. By *fiscal* health, we mean a local government’s bottom line: Does the life-cycle cost of new development—up-front infrastructure, ongoing service provision and eventual repair and maintenance—cost more to the town than it brings in tax revenue? By *economic* health, we mean the general economic well-being of the community: How does new growth and development add to or detract from the creation of jobs, wealth, retail sales, economic competitiveness and fiscal sustainability?

In approaching these questions in the Pasco County area, as in any part of the country today, it is important to bear three trends in mind:

1. ***Our nation’s demographics are changing in a way that is profoundly affecting the housing market.***

Demographic trends are moving the housing market strongly away from conventional suburban housing. The two biggest demographic groups in the nation, retiring Baby Boomers and so-called “Millennials” (18- 30-year-olds,) are both expressing a strong preference for a more walkable, urban/village lifestyle. Indeed, a growing percentage of Millennials prefer to live without cars altogether or to live a “car-lite” lifestyle. The vast majority of net new households being formed have no children at home, and most of them are one- and two-person households—which are much more likely to prefer a walking lifestyle.



Furthermore, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has fallen below population growth, while the demand for public transportation has been rising steadily. These trends are a complete departure from those experienced for decades in the twentieth century.

## 2. *The formula for economic growth is changing.*

Business growth used to be driven by large corporations that operated in a fashion that was both private and linear. In the past, new research breakthroughs occurred in sealed research laboratories controlled by the companies. Manufacturing and other business processes occurred in assembly-line situations. These conditions led to communities that featured large, sealed-off campuses and tended to be linear in their arrangements.

Today, business growth is driven by collaboration among many types of entities—private companies, research institutions, universities and others—that must interact frequently and work together creatively. This trend requires cities and communities that encourage interaction and collaboration—the opposite of the older model just described. How communities are designed directly impacts their ability to create interactive and collaborative environments.

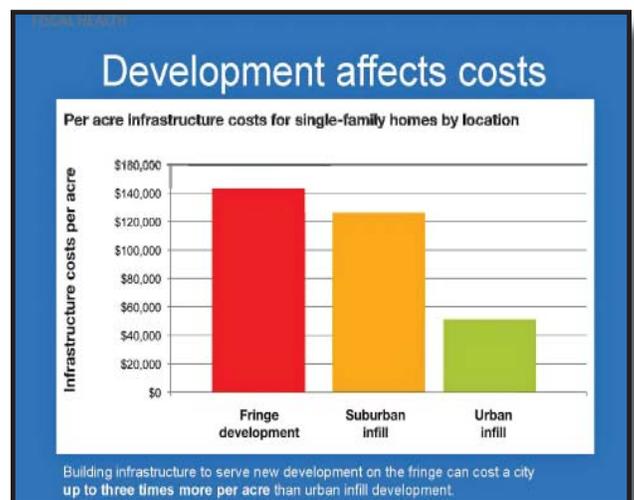
Most significantly, the “Knowledge Economy” depends heavily on skilled workers. The companies that are driving innovation are pursuing highly-educated talent, especially among the Millennial generation. Increasingly, companies find it necessary to locate in places that the work force wants to live in; and this means walkable communities.

Similarly, the market for retail is changing. The suburban shopping malls and “power centers” that thrived for decades are struggling as a result of oversupply and a shift in preferences. With online buying playing a bigger role for consumers (especially for bargain hunters), many are looking for a more “authentic” experience when they shop in person. This is bringing new value to traditional walkable Main Streets.

## 3. *Suburban development patterns are making it more difficult for local governments to balance their budgets.*

Suburban development patterns require extensive investments in capital infrastructure and ongoing service delivery. Low-density development requires more infrastructure to serve fewer people and requires service providers such as firefighters and school buses to travel farther. More compact development patterns reduce both life-cycle infrastructure costs and operating costs.

A 2013 study by Smart Growth America, *Building Better Budgets: A National Examination of the Fiscal Benefits of Smart Growth Development*, concluded that compared to conventional suburban development, smart growth patterns can save up to one-third in up-front infrastructure cost and 10% annually in ongoing operating expenses. Smart growth development patterns can generate approximately 10 times more revenue on a per-acre basis.



Not all of these trends will be completely relevant in every situation. But it is important to bear all three in mind in considering the fiscal and economic health of any community.

# Participant Viewpoints: Realizing the Vision

These concepts were elaborated upon in the presentation portion of the workshop, which was followed by a general discussion among all participants and the identification of a number of issues or themes bearing on the realization of the regional vision. The purpose was not to establish consensus on a specific plan, but to focus thinking by identifying obstacles and promising possibilities.

Discussion was organized around three plan areas: Main Street and Cotee River (New Port Richey), Millers Bayou and Port Richey waterfront (Port Richey) and the River District-Harbors Area (Pasco County). Two tables of participants focused on each of the three areas.

Participants engaged in a robust dialogue and offered their thoughts on opportunities and obstacles that may impede progress in the region. Major themes and associated issues raised by participants in the discussion included:

## *“Create a unique identity”*

Specific ideas for the Main Street-Cotee River area included:

- Introduce uses and activities around the Cotee River that follow a common theme or image such as, education, health and wellness.
- Create distinct sub-districts—commercial, entertainment, educational and “eco” areas.
- Do visioning for the various smaller districts and sell the vision through the Downtown New Port Richey marketing package and Pasco Economic Development Council (PEDC).
- Brand “wide open waterways.” Host design competitions to generate more ideas for branding. Brand New Port Richey downtown and the riverfront area, perhaps as an artistic theater, culinary, hospitality, aquatic center or outdoor recreation involving kayaking, roller-skating, skiing, high-end boat docks, wind surfing and sailing.

- Create a marketing package for the riverfront area and the Downtown with the help of Pasco Economic Development Council (PEDC) and the Greater New Port Richey (NPR) Main Street.
- Involve local merchants’ associations to help with branding and generating of interest and conversations
- Introduce uniform signage to enhance greater NPR Main Street, probably with a coastal or river-based theme.

Specific ideas for the Millers Bayou-Port Richey waterfront included:

- Invest in place-making.
- Create a uniform identity for the waterfront district tying together the Millers Bayou area, Port Richey Waterfront Park and the area around Nicks Park and Catches.
- Create gateway features at the entrance to the Port Richey Waterfront District from the U.S. 19 corridor.

Specific ideas for the River District-Harbors area included:

- Create monuments along U.S. 19 to identify the communities. Create a visual interest and mark the entrance to the waterfront destinations located in the County and the cities of Port Richey and New Port Richey.
- Enhance access and wayfinding, especially to the key sites along the coast and the Cotee River, through effective signage and marketing.
- Emphasize the natural coast as an ecotourism area.
- Adopt signage and symbols along U.S. 19 that reflects the coastal and/riverine context.
- Adopt uniform cross-jurisdictional signage standards that are consistent with the identity established for the waterfront destinations in the Cities of New Port Richey and Port Richey.



***“Make connections linking the jurisdictions using greenways and blueways.”***

Specific ideas for the Main Street-Cotee River area included:

- Enhance linkages to the County and the City of Port Richey (Millers Bayou) through water, bikeways, sidewalks and trolleys.
- Enhance and promote river connections between the City of Port Richey and New Port Richey.

Introduce boardwalks connecting to or on both sides of Main Street.

- Use trails blueways and bike paths to tie all the parks and destinations along the coast and the Cotee River-synergy towards Main Street, Hacienda Hotel, James E. Grey Preserve, Frances Avenue Park, Sims Park and Orange Lake Park.
- Use public-private partnerships to create a trolley system that links key areas across the three jurisdictions.
- Introduce multi-modal paths.

Specific ideas for the Millers Bayou-Port Richey waterfront included:

- Improve connectivity between important nodes and water features such as the Werner Boyce Salt Springs State Park, Robert K. Rees Memorial Park (Green Key), Port Richey Waterfront Park, Millers Bayou, Sims Park, and James E. Grey Preserve.
- Develop trail connections across the County, Port Richey and New Port Richey.
- Develop trails to connect Miller Bayou to the Sims Park.

Specific ideas for the River District-Harbors area included:

- Provide trails and blue ways connecting destinations (both existing and proposed) along the Cotee River connecting the three jurisdictions, all the way from James E. Grey Preserve to the Millers Bayou Area.



***“Make the Land Development Code (LDC)  
more favorable for development.”***

Specific ideas for the Main Street-Cotee River area included:

- Make required changes to the local code to allow densities that enable us to go higher.
- Replace professional offices and other similar uses in the City of New Port Richey Downtown with more active ground floor uses such as retail and restaurants.
- Explore overlay district options for the areas around the Pithlachascotee River (focusing on appropriate uses, density and height).
- Improve code enforcement to deal with dilapidated housing and crime.
- Strengthen zoning regulations and code enforcement, and collaborate with local businesses to generally clean up areas, remove illegal signage, and reutilize foreclosed properties and dilapidated structures.
- Do required changes to the code that support and enhance uniform wayfinding and storytelling throughout the downtown and the riverfront area.

Specific ideas for the Millers Bayou-Port Richey waterfront included:

- Introduce shopping, arts and antiques along the boardwalk from the Waterfront Park to Catches. Do required building and zoning code changes to support the above developments.
- Do required changes to the code to support unified landscaping and way finding all the way from the bridge to Grand Boulevard.

Specific ideas for the River District-Harbors area included:

- Standardize the codes (Port Richey, New Port Richey and Pasco County) for signage to create a unified identity along the coast and the Cotee riverfront area.
- Introduce development standards that help create uniform aesthetics along the U.S. 19 corridor.
- Strengthen code enforcement to improve the overall image along the U.S. 19 corridor, especially around the entrance to the key destinations along the coast and the Cotee River. Effectively address illegal signs and unmaintained properties.



***“Introduce a range of activities, uses or attractions along the river.”***

Specific ideas for the Main Street-Cotee River area included:

- Activities could include kayaking, roller skating, trolleys, water taxis, white water rafting, etc.
- Expand the existing kayaking and boating areas.
- Promote water uses to James E. Grey’s preserve, such as kayaking and paddle-boating

Specific ideas for the Millers Bayou-Port Richey waterfront included:

- Introduce more family friendly activities at the waterfront park and along the coastline such as a library, educational center, art gallery, museum, or health center.
- Introduce a variety of events to increase usage of the Port Richey Waterfront Park.

Specific ideas for the River District-Harbors area included:

- Introduce uses and activities along the U.S. 19 corridor on key intersections that support a pedestrian environment and create a pedestrian spillover towards the waterfront destinations in both the cities.

**Other Ideas.**

Other ideas for the Main Street-Cotee River area included:

- Conduct a design competition to get ideas on possible uses along the river, how to create an image and how to improve connectivity between Cotee River, the Parks and the Miller Bayou Area.
- Promote Sims Park and other water parks as weekend destinations as opposed to using them only for annual and monthly events.

- Leverage what we have: the Hacienda Hotel (local history), art eclectic, culinary, hospitality and edible landscaping (health and wellness).
- Introduce edible landscapes along the waterfront.
- Attract outfitter type retail for major commercial nodes.
- Identify major and small landowners and/investors who are willing to invest and redevelop abandoned and foreclosed properties.
- Remodel Hacienda under a boutique hotel concept.

Other ideas for the Millers Bayou-Port Richey waterfront included:

- Enhance pedestrian connectivity around the water and create unique destinations around the water within walkable distances from the surrounding residences.
- Enhance waterfront access and usage.
- Do park improvements.
- Engage local and transient clientele using a variety of uses such as a mix of shopping, entertainment, arts and hotels.
- Introduce high-density development—vertical structures (with parking and housing) on the site opposite the waterfront park (where the mobile homes were cleared).
- Introduce opportunities for shopping, arts and antiques along the boardwalk from the Port Richey Waterfront Park to Catches.
- Introduce a hotel or similar uses along the Millers Bayou Area that also provides visual access to the Gulf of Mexico.
- Collaborate with educational institutions to create a unique destination that involves a boardwalk, walkable destinations, an interactive children's museum, educational nature trails and other family friendly activities around the Millers Bayou and Port Richey Waterfront Park.
- Address parking through acquisition of property to the east of U.S. 19 close to Millers Bayou or along the bridge.

- Address parking along the coastline, especially around Seaside and Hooters.
- Develop an observation tower close to the Port Richey Waterfront Park that provides visual access to the Gulf.

Other ideas for the River District-Harbors area included:

- Enhance the pedestrian environment on U.S. 19. Develop a comprehensive streetscape plan for the U.S. 19 corridor.
- Prohibit all overpasses on the U.S. 19 corridor.
- Create pedestrian walkovers on U.S. 19, especially at key intersections such as Grand Boulevard and U.S. 19; Main Street and U.S. 19 and Marine Parkway and U.S. 19.
- Create pedestrian oriented developments (anchors) at key intersections on the U.S. 19 which mark the entrances to the waterfront districts and create a pedestrian spillover towards the coast.
- Provide comfortable and safe pedestrian connections to key nodes and waterfront areas (located on the west of U.S. 19) from the U.S. 19 corridor.
- Enhance water access and create marina and sunset destinations.
- Do capital investments on the U.S. 19 corridor to reflect or emphasize “nature coast” and eco-destination.
- Develop a mixed-use corridor on Rowan Road that will create a spillover into the Port Richey and New Port Richey Downtown and waterfront destinations.
- Introduce value added design (dual purpose design elements).

# Smart Growth America Recommendations: Moving Forward

The recommendations that follow are based on the discussions that occurred during the July 31 workshop and discussion.

Pasco County has made a good start in preparing for a prosperous and sustainable future with the work that has been done in developing the Harbors – West Market Redevelopment Plan and the accompanying Economic Development Plan. The challenge now is to realize the resulting vision. The key to achieving this vision is principally a matter of implementation and coordination with the approved plans of the two municipalities. Some specific recommendations for consideration follow:

## 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.



There are a range of approaches that can be taken to facilitate cooperation across jurisdictions, from informal to highly formalized. In practice, successful inter jurisdictional cooperation usually involves some combination of the two. It is important to foster an ongoing dialogue, by establishing regular meetings of elected leadership to discuss key issues that cut across city and county lines. This process in turn will support routine staff collaboration.

A move to systematic collaboration is sometimes begun through informal, low-key techniques, such as instituting regular lunches or dinners among a group of mayors or council chairs to discuss issues in general, or specific topics. More formal approaches include face-to-face public sessions held jointly between a pair of governing bodies or day-long conferences among several, with work sessions on specific issues. The most formal approach is a regional (or sub-regional)

association of governments, with representatives appointed by each jurisdiction. (This might be distinct and separate from any generalized “council of governments” that may exist in the metropolitan area. It may involve only a subset of jurisdictions, and be focused on a specific set of issues, such as economic development, promotion of tourism, etc.)

Ultimately, guidance from the top is essential. To fully realize the potential of the synergies that are possible when they work in concert, meaningful collaboration between (or among) jurisdictions must become institutionalized. For that to happen, leadership must communicate it as a policy imperative to every member of the respective organizations. This can be effected through a joint resolution, with an identically-worded statement adopted by both governing bodies (or more, if there are more governments that are party to the agreement). This is the highest level of guidance, giving direction in a very public manner that signals a strong commitment to collaboration on the part of the elected leadership. It is also possible to execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which may cover specific details of collaboration between jurisdictional entities, which could include a pooling of local funds in the service of redevelopment efforts.

## 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 non-profits, and citizen representatives.

A range of organizational types are found in communities around the US, from small downtown revitalization organizations run as non-profits (typically with some kind of joint sponsorship by government and the business community), to business improvement districts (BIDs) that have access to dedicated revenue sources (which may be derived from local taxes, such as a property tax add-on, approved by property owners within the district). Such groups help to bring focus to a downtown or main street district, ensure that its needs receive consistent attention, and help to provide a sense of identity for the target area.

These organizations could have several roles,

including providing a non-threatening venue for different sectors to engage each other, thereby helping to improve communication and understanding across the sometimes contentious interests of local businesses, land owners, developers, neighborhoods and government; advocating on behalf of the district, both to the general public and in official processes; promoting local businesses; and perhaps most importantly of all, providing place management services. Place management services includes staging and promoting events (weekend festivals, lunchtime concerts, evening open-air movies, etc.); sponsoring ongoing activities (like farmers' markets, "first Fridays", etc.); and supporting cleanliness, maintenance and security within the district.

An example of a small group that has had a big impact with limited resources is the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO) in Arlington, Virginia, which has operated for more than 25 years with a staff of one to three people and a minimal annual subsidy from the County. Its Board of Directors includes representatives from business owners, developers, land owners, neighborhood associations, citizen commissions and county government officials. It oversees two weekly farmers markets and an annual blues festival that is a regional draw. It is the principal convener for interested businesses in the corridor it serves. It has been instrumental as an advocate and facilitator for major redevelopment/revitalization efforts, although it has no formal jurisdictional authority.

There are many examples of more formal public-private partnerships that exercise greater powers. A good example is the Bethesda Urban Partnership in Montgomery County, Maryland (see [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org)), which manages everything from festivals to street beautification to marketing to managing an arts and entertainment district. Other good examples are Downtown Roanoke ([www.downtownroanoke.org](http://www.downtownroanoke.org)) in Roanoke, Virginia; River City Company ([www.rivercitycompany.com](http://www.rivercitycompany.com)) in Chattanooga, Tennessee; and the James Street Improvement District in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

There are more than 1,000 BIDs in the US today, with varying levels of funding and activities. The International Downtown Association ([www.ida-downtown.org](http://www.ida-downtown.org)) is a good source of information on practices and organizations that perform these functions.

### **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. Bring all tools to bear to make it a near-term success. This could include pooling funding resources and channelizing them toward relevant actions and the outlined development program components.

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

Allow a more active, pedestrian-generating mix of uses, with some higher densities and greater height, in target areas. Simplify the process for desired outcomes.

An active downtown district or main street can become a valuable destination, generating a large net tax benefit to local government. In general, such areas produce a high return in taxes per acre, while demanding comparatively little in services (like public school costs). The more attractive the district is (both visually and in terms of the availability of amenities), the more it draws activity, the greater the return to both private land owners and the governments to whom they pay taxes. The creation of such an environment is, however, often impeded by local ordinances.

For example, many communities have ordinances regulating commercial signage which may be too restrictive. Inappropriate regulation can be a significant problem, especially for the small, entrepreneurial businesses that are important to generate active street life and create the sense of place that you are trying to establish. This includes things like the amount of space allowed per building, the placement of business names on awnings and the use of A-frame signs placed outside of shops. Some local codes may not prohibit sidewalk restaurant seating, but may make it very difficult in practice. Some restrict the appearance of product names on the umbrellas used to provide shade for outdoor seating. It is probably worth asking businesses what regulations are most inhibiting and asking yourself how important those regulations really are to the well-being of the community.

Zoning codes tend to force development into suburban, car-oriented patterns, rather than the walkable environment needed for an attractive downtown place. Inappropriate setback and parking requirements are typically major problems.



***“The challenge now is to realize the resulting vision. The key to achieving this vision is principally a matter of implementation and coordination with the approved plans of the two municipalities.”***

They can sometimes be relaxed through site-specific granting of exceptions, but this can be cumbersome and discourage applications from developers. One option increasingly used in communities around the country is the substitution, or overlay, of a form-based code. This lets citizens, landowners and developers know what is expected, and it simplifies the approval process for everyone.

On the administrative side, it is also important to make it easier for folks to do what you want. This often means process re-engineering for things like permit approval.

### ***5. Leverage existing assets.***

Communities should find ways to take advantage of existing assets such as legacy buildings, theaters, green spaces, blues spaces, natural features and other unique assets, such as a concentration of blues musicians who reside in the County/Region.

### ***6. Make better use of the water.***

Not just the coast, but the rivers as well. Waterfront and waterways are being used creatively for place-making all around the world, with strong economic performance.

### ***7. Take better advantage of events.***

The area has many events that attract people each year. Coordinated, promoted, and packaged, they can contribute to an identity for the community, and help to support larger economic development goals.

## 8. Create a real downtown.

New Port Richey has “good bones.” It has a fairly complete street grid, connection to the water and some lovely green space, historic buildings and attractions like the theater. There remain some needs, such as housing, increased density, infill development in place of parking lots and empty surface spaces. A near-term goal should be to create four-or-so quality, continuous walkable blocks. The goal should be to make it a regional destination. (For example, a theater with regular programming can serve as an anchor for a restaurant district, a place where people come from beyond the immediate area to spend an evening. With a cluster of dining options, with outdoor seating, arrayed along a corridor in close, walkable proximity, people will come without necessarily having a specific establishment in mind. They come to stroll, observe the choices, and then take their pick. This activity itself contributes to the ambience of the area, drawing more people. If there are also shops that may be of interest, this will help to generate interest – and return business – and add to the synergy that makes a destination regional.)

**One note of caution:** A number of participants in the workshop discussions expressed a desire to move some current office uses out of downtown retail space. (See the note above, “Replace professional offices and other similar uses in the City of New Port Richey Downtown with more active ground floor uses such as retail and restaurants.”) While in the long run restaurants and other retail uses may be optimal for these locations, at present there does not seem to be a shortage of available storefront space, and the current uses are providing some activity. Landlords will likely move such secondary uses to secondary space (i.e., second floors and side streets) as demand grows for the highest and best use of these storefronts. In the meantime, however, it is better to have secondary uses in storefront space than to have empty storefronts.

## Notes:

- “Suburbs Try to Prevent an Exodus as Young Adults Move to Cities and Stay,” Joseph Berger, New York Times, April 16, 2014 (on-line at, [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/17/nyregion/suburbs-try-to-hold-onto-young-adults-as-exodus-to-cities-appears-to-grow.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/17/nyregion/suburbs-try-to-hold-onto-young-adults-as-exodus-to-cities-appears-to-grow.html?_r=0).)
- “See ya, suburbs: More want to live in the big city,” Greg Toppo and Paul Overberg, USA TODAY, March 27, 2014.
- “Why urban demographers are right about the trend toward downtowns and walkable suburbs,” Kaid Benfield, [bettercities.net](http://bettercities.net), February 28, 2014.
- “NAR 2013 Community Preference Survey: Americans Prefer to Live in Mixed-Use, Walkable Communities,” National Association of Realtors, November 1, 2013.
- See: “Business Performance in Walkable Shopping Areas,” Gary Hack, Robert Wood Johnson, Technical Report, November 2013 (available at [http://activelivingresearch.org/files/BusinessPerformanceWalkableShoppingAreas\\_Nov2013.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/files/BusinessPerformanceWalkableShoppingAreas_Nov2013.pdf)).
- “DC: The WalkUP Wake-Up Call” (2012) and “The WalkUP Wake-Up Call: Atlanta” (2013), Christopher B. Leinberger, George Washington University School of Business. (Downloadable at <http://business.gwu.edu/walkup/>.)
- “What to Do with Empty Big Box Stores,” Sarah Schindler, [sustainablecitynetwork.com](http://sustainablecitynetwork.com), February 12, 2014.
- “Walking the Walk: How Walkability Raises Home Values in U.S. Cities,” Joe Cortright, *CEOs for Cities*, August 2009.
- “THE WALKABILITY PREMIUM IN COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS,” Gary Pivo and Jeffrey D. Fisher, Working Paper, Responsible Property Investing Center, University of Arizona, and Benecki Center for Real Estate Studies, Indiana University, February 2010.
- “The Built Environment and Travel: Evidence from the United States,” Robert Cervero, *European Journal of Transport and Infrastructure Research*, 3, no. 2, (2003).

The full report can be downloaded at, <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/building-better-budgets>.

# Supplemental: Smart Growth Grant Submitted Application

## Online Submittal - [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/grants](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/grants)

### December 6, 2013

SMART GROWTH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT 2014  
The Harbors - West Market Redevelopment Plan, Pasco County, FL

#### 1. Why are you applying for this smart growth tool? How will this tool help your community overcome the barriers to implementing smart growth? (350 word limit)

Pasco County is applying for the Smart Growth tool - 'Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health', because it believes that this tool, will strengthen its capacity to redevelop West Pasco.

For the past two years, Pasco County has made tremendous efforts in redeveloping the western portion of the county, also known as the West Market Area. With more than 200,000 people, the West Market Area is home to approximately 40% of the county's population and includes a large share of its tax base. It is mostly characterized by an aging suburban development pattern, inadequate infrastructure, and vacant and obsolete strip commercial developments. Pasco County wishes to focus this smart growth tool on a small part of the West Market Area that includes the River, Elfers, Gulf View and Embassy Districts.

In collaboration with the local community, the county recently adopted the Harbors – West Market Redevelopment Plan and its first Economic Development Plan. Having completed these plans, Pasco County is seeking implementation tools that will help realize the vision defined within these plans. At this critical stage, guidance received through the 'Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health' tool will be instrumental in translating the proposed vision into actionable items.

The chosen smart growth tool will play a vital role in addressing the barriers to implementing smart growth. Lack of sufficient knowledge and uncertainty in terms of what to do, are major impediments to redevelopment. The Smart Growth Technical Assistance will help build local knowledge about smart growth strategies and their significance for long-term fiscal and economic health.

In addition, Smart Growth America has accumulated a vast knowledge based on their experience with different communities. The selected smart growth tool will expose the county's leaders to this knowledge and provide them with best practices that are most appropriate to our communities, and well aligned with the county's goals and vision. The lessons learned will enable the county to adopt a comprehensive economic development approach for the West Market, that is based on smart growth principles, and provides multiple benefits such as, cost savings, increased tax revenues, and creation of healthy, self-sufficient communities.

#### 2. What is the community's interest in smart growth solutions? (125 word limit)

The West Market Area faces a wide range of issues and thus its redevelopment calls for a comprehensive approach. Pasco County believes that smart growth solutions will help develop a smart and comprehensive approach towards growth, which will not only help the county recover its economy, but will protect the natural resources, and create healthy, livable neighborhoods.

As the economy recovers, and Pasco County aggressively refocuses its efforts towards the redevelopment of this area, it is important to have in place all policies and incentives, that will support such a change. The smart growth solutions and actionable steps that will be identified through the technical assistance grant will enable the County to achieve this balanced growth, and help build a stronger economy.

#### 3. What is the community's need for technical assistance? (125 word limit)

Through the technical assistance the county wishes to identify smart growth strategies that will address some of the challenges that currently limit the redevelopment of the West Market Area. The county seeks implementation tools that will strengthen its economic base, effectively redevelop infill properties, encourage targeted investments, and help plan for the county's fiscal and economic health.

Lastly, in order to ensure a collective effort for redevelopment, it is important that all stakeholders are well aware of smart growth principles and best practices, and their relationship with fiscal and economic growth. Pasco County believes that the technical assistance workshop including its hands-on method will provide an opportunity to educate and demonstrate to the private sector and other stakeholders, the economic benefits of smart growth.

**4. To what level are community leaders (elected, business, community) committed to pursuing smart growth solutions? (125 word limit)**

Pasco's community leaders are aggressively involved in the redevelopment of the project area, and smart growth solutions are integral to these efforts. Community leaders are seeking redevelopment strategies that will not only strengthen the local economy, but also protect natural resources, and help build great neighborhoods.

Community leaders include the cities of New Port Richey and Port Richey, Pasco County, Pasco Economic Development Council, Brownfields Advisory Board, Gulf Coast Commercial Realtors, Pasco Alliance of Community Associations, The Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County, local banks, local businesses and residents. Although there is a lot of interest in smart growth, Pasco County sees the technical assistance as a great way to enhance the existing local knowledge, and equip its community leaders with actual implementable tools.

**5. How does the community propose to implement the smart growth solution once assistance is received? (200 word limit)**

The overall steps that will be taken to implement smart growth solutions include:

- Developing a clear list of actions or next steps and responsible agencies.
- Identifying relevant agencies and partnerships that will support the implementation of solutions generated through the Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant.
- Leveraging available resources and identifying funding to support the strategies.
- Continuing public outreach to increase awareness and encouraging participation in the technical assistance.

Pasco County has already initiated some of these steps and established collaborations that are critical for the redevelopment of this area. Once assistance is received, the smart growth solutions will be implemented using the collaborations established through the county's past and current planning efforts.

The Harbors Plan also ties into the county's other planning initiatives such as, the Economic Development Plan, Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan, and community development efforts. Therefore, implementation of solutions generated through the Technical Assistance Grant will be accomplished through the execution of these plans and policies. The continued support and involvement of the elected officials in the redevelopment process, and their interest in smart growth solutions, will further ensure that the strategies identified through technical assistance, are implemented in the best possible manner.

**6. Describe your plan for involving the public in the technical assistance. (125 word limit)**

The extensive outreach process for the Harbors Plan included, nine community workshops, involving more than 300 participants. Pasco County plans to continue with a similar level of public involvement in the Smart Growth Technical Assistance process. Some of the steps that will be taken include:

- Creating a website to share information regarding meetings and planning process.
- Organizing outreach events that help increase awareness about smart growth principles.
- Conducting workshops to identify smart growth solutions that are best suited to the community's vision for the West Market Area.
- Creating educational programs that increase awareness about smart growth principles and the benefits of sustainable strategies.
- Developing surveys to understand the community's preference and priorities in terms of the smart growth implementation strategies.

**7. To what degree does your plan address equity issues? (125 word limit)**

As the project area is characterized by a wide disparity in terms of age and income levels, extra care was taken throughout the planning process, to include and represent issues and concerns related to each segment of the population. Community workshops and charrettes were conducted in under served and distressed neighborhoods to encourage public input and participation. The project employed several different methods of outreach and all workshops were conducted in local schools and were ADA accessible. Some of these previously employed strategies will be continued throughout the Smart Growth Technical Assistance. In addition, new methods of outreach will be developed and fine-tuned to suit the needs of the underrepresented, disadvantaged or overburdened population groups.

**8. Have you received related technical assistance from EPA, other federal agencies, or their contractors or grantees in the past?**

~~Yes~~

**No**

**9. If yes, describe the assistance, including how the new assistance you are requesting of Smart Growth America would build upon or complement the past assistance.**

**N/A**

**10. Are you applying for related technical assistance from EPA, other federal agencies, or their grantees or contractors?**

~~Yes~~

**No**

**11. If yes, describe the assistance, including how that assistance would complement the assistance you are requesting of Smart Growth America.**

**N/A**

**Memorandum of Understanding  
EPA Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities  
Technical Assistance Grant**

**Pasco County, FL and Smart Growth America**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into by and between Pasco County and Smart Growth America (SGA) in order to complete the technical assistance workshop funded by a grant from the EPA Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program (hereafter known as “the Workshop”).

Pasco County and SGA agree to work together in a collaborative spirit and negotiate in good faith on all tasks and deliverables required for the Workshop, including those identified in the attached Workshop description and any required subsequent to completion of the Workshop.

**Goals and Objectives**

The parties to this MOU agree that the Workshop objective is to provide Pasco County with technical assistance focused on economic development and healthy communities, to implement the County’s adopted West Market Harbors Plan, utilizing smart growth strategies.

**Dedication of Resources**

SGA, through its grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), shall cover all direct monetary costs of the work to be performed on the Workshop as described by the attached Workshop Description, including staff work by SGA and the costs of any consultants retained for the Workshop. Pasco County shall not be required to provide any direct financial support for consultants or staff retained by SGA.

Pasco County shall make its staff resources available as necessary, subject to availability, to assist SGA in completing the Workshop. Pasco County shall assure that adequate staff resources are dedicated to the Workshop to assure that it is completed with high quality and in a timely manner according to the timelines set forth by the parties.

Pasco County shall make suitable meeting facilities available to SGA for conducting the Workshop, will provide any advertising related to the Workshop, and will provide light refreshments at the Workshop.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

*Smart Growth America*

SGA shall serve as the Project’s fiscal agent and shall be responsible for signing all contracts and handling all billing.

SGA shall be responsible for timely completion of all deliverables identified in Workshop description and any mutually agreed modifications to the Workshop description.

SGA shall make every effort to complete tasks and deliverables within the agreed upon timelines identified by the parties and shall work with the Pasco County to extend timelines if tasks and deliverables cannot be completed per the agreed upon schedule.

Within thirty days of the Workshop's conclusion, SGA shall provide Pasco County with a next steps memorandum recommending strategies for implementation of smart growth initiatives identified during the Workshop.

*PASCO COUNTY, FL*

Pasco County shall lead the identification of stakeholders and the nature and timing of their engagement in the Workshop with input from SGA.

Staff from Pasco County shall be made available as necessary, subject to availability, to provide SGA necessary support, including research, to advance the Workshop and complete tasks and deliverables.

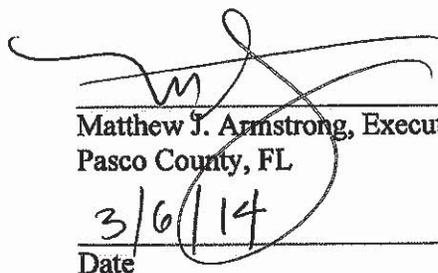
Pasco County will reserve meeting space and audio-visual equipment for the workshop.

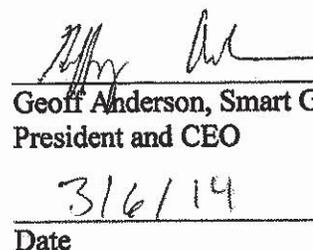
If Pasco County determines that advertising or other notice of the Workshop is appropriate, Pasco County will develop and distribute such advertising or other notice. Pasco County will consult with SGA on the substance of the advertising or other notice.

If Pasco County determines that light refreshments (coffee, juice, snacks, etc.) are appropriate for the Workshop, Pasco County will provide the refreshments at no cost to SGA.

Pasco County shall provide SGA with progress reports in memorandum format describing the implementation of any strategies or programs arising from the technical assistance. Progress reports shall be provided, at a minimum, immediately after receiving SGA's next steps memorandum, six months after the Workshop, and twelve months after the Workshop.

This MOU may be modified by mutual agreement of the parties. This agreement may be terminated only by mutual agreement of the parties, or if grant funding is withdrawn by the EPA, in which case SGA and the Pasco County shall make all reasonable efforts to find alternate funding sources and, failing that, complete the Workshop to the extent possible using available resources.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew J. Armstrong, Executive Planner,  
Pasco County, FL  
3/6/14  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Geoff Anderson, Smart Growth America  
President and CEO  
3/6/14  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Supplemental: Brochure of The Harbors - West Market Area Bus Tour Handout July 30, 2014

## SMART GROWTH WORKSHOP Tour

**River District** *(Vision as defined within the Harbors Plan.)*

**VISION** Create waterfront activity centers, entrance gateways to the cities and preserve and enhance historic assets.

**New Port Richey**  
46.0%

**Port Richey**  
8.2%

**River District Breakup of the River District**

**The Harbors - West Market Area**

## THE HARBORS West Market Area

**A City of New Port Richey**  
**Area:** Approx. 4.6 square miles  
**2011 Population:** 14,934  
 Includes approx. 46.0% of the population within the River District.  
*Redevelopment Efforts: 2012 CRA Redevelopment Plan*

**B City of Port Richey**  
**Area:** Approx. 2.7 square miles  
**2010 Population:** 2,671  
 Includes approx. 8.2% of the population of the River District.  
*Redevelopment Efforts: The Port Richey Waterfront Overlay District and the Waterfront Park Draft Master Plan.*

**C River District**  
*The term 'River District' was first defined within the Harbors - West Market Redevelopment Plan that was adopted in June 2012. It is one of the twelve districts in the Harbors Area, delineated for planning purposes. It includes both the City of New Port Richey and the City of Port Richey and the areas around them. It is the third largest district within the Harbors Area in terms of population.*

**Area:** Approx. 11.7 square miles  
**2010 Population:** 32,427  
 15.1% of the population of the Harbors or West Market Area.  
*Redevelopment Efforts: The Harbors Plan & Economic Development Plan.*

**Questions?** harborlife@pascocountyfl.net    Smita Ambadi (727) 847-8140    /Harborlife  
 EMAIL    PHONE

**Pasco County**  
**Board of County Commissioners**  
**Planning and Development**  
 8731 Citizens Drive, Suite 320  
 New Port Richey, FL 34654

## The HARBORS River District

- River District
- New Port Richey
- Port Richey
- Parks and Other Open Spaces

### KEY STOPS

- 1 Main Street
- 2 SMARTstart, Pithlachascotee River, Sims Park, Peace Hall
- 3 Hacienda Hotel
- 4 Green Key Park
- 5 Nicks Park, Boat Launch Area
- 6 Millers Bayou, Port Richey Waterfront Park
- 7 Brasher Park
- 8 Oakleaf of Congress

**Supplemental: Planning for Economic and Fiscal Health  
Workshop Agenda  
July 30, 2014**

**Smart Growth Technical Assistance Workshop  
AGENDA**

**WORKSHOP FIRST DAY: July 30 (Wednesday)**

***PUBLIC PRESENTATION***

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM Evening Public Presentation and Discussion

*Location: SMARTstart Incubator  
6345 Grand Blvd. New Port Richey, FL*

**WORKSHOP SECOND DAY: July 31 (Thursday)**

***ALL DAY WORKSHOP***

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM Sign-in and Introductions

*Location: SMARTstart Incubator  
6345 Grand Blvd. New Port Richey, FL*

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM Presentation: Fiscal and Economic Health Benefits of Smart Growth in the Context of Pasco County

10:15 AM - 10:40 AM Presentation: Florida State University Planning and Development Lab (PDL)

10:40 AM - 11:00 AM Break

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM Facilitated Discussion of Pasco's Fiscal & Economic Issues

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM Lunch

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM Creation of the Action Agenda for Pasco County

3:00 PM Wrap-up

**Memorandum by:**



1707 L Street NW, Suite 250  
Washington, DC 20036  
[www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org)

**Edited and Compiled by:**



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