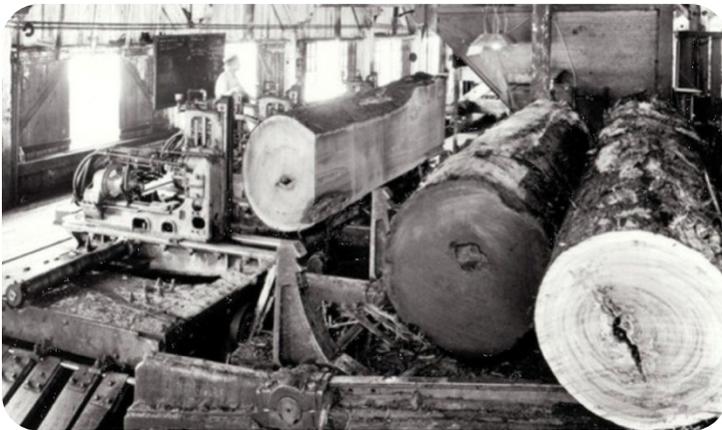


INTRODUCTION

History and Background

The Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee area has a rich cultural heritage embedded in the old railroad towns and the mill towns associated with the railroads.



Lacoochee

The history of Lacoochee is related closely to the arrival of the Cummer sawmill from Michigan in 1922. Considered to be town's foundation, the mill brought prosperity to the area. Prior to the

construction of the mill in 1922, the community's growth had been minimal. The area surrounding the mill had prospered for a while, growing citrus and strawberries; however, after the Big Freeze of 1898, the produce never recovered.

In 1922, Cummer acquired the industrial site to construct a modern, completely electrified sawmill and box factory. During this time, the mill became the largest payroll in Pasco County. This operation continued until 1959.



After the Cummer Mill closed down, the location was purchased by Mosaic Wood Corporation of Louisville, Kentucky in 1960, and remained open until 1964. Lacoochee was never able to recover

economically, and has steadily seen a decline in prosperity since the mill's closure.

Trilby



Trilby was founded in 1925 by Henry B. Plant. Initially known as Macon, the town had no prosperity until its railroad station was given the name Trilby, based on Mr. Plant's fascination with a book by the same name, written by Du Maurier. The name Trilby sparked interest among real estate agents, winter tourists visiting Florida, newspaper writers, and even Florida maps referenced it as the most conspicuous names of towns and cities in the state. Many of the town's unique features reflect the book from which it was named, including a Svengali Square, which resembled the spider web emblem on the book's cover, and many of the streets are named for the women in the book.

In 1925, a fire started in the upstairs of Bradham's Dry Goods Store, and destroyed the west side of Trilby, including the train station depot and other commerce. Since the fire, many of the town's residents have believed that, like the Phoenix, Trilby would rise from its ashes and restore itself to its historic prominence.

The Lacoochee and Trilby communities are located adjacent to the Hernando County line and will be shaped by forces outside of their local communities. This is a special place both in Pasco County and regionally, because it provides opportunities for ecotourism and agritourism, as well as job creation and training.

Lacoochee-Trilby Strategic Master Plan

In February 2009, the Board of County Commissioners of Pasco County directed the County staff to retain a consulting team to assist in the preparation of a strategic master plan for the areas of Trilby, Lacoochee, and Trilacoochee. The neighborhoods were identified as high priority areas in need of redevelopment in several of the previous planning studies undertaken by the County.

The County established the following primary goals for the strategic master plan:

- Formulate economic development strategies to stimulate the local economy creating job growth and employment opportunities for area residents.

- Develop a long-term vision for the rehabilitation, redevelopment infill and enhancement of the neighborhoods.
- Identify key infrastructure projects that will allow the County to make capital improvements projections based upon known project needs, demands and proposed locations.

The planning process consisted of focus group meetings, inventory and analysis of available resources, conceptual plan development, two public workshops, development of the implementation program, and the completion of the final master plan.

Participants at the workshops included those from every demographic group that lives in the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee community. They sat in mixed groups at each of the tables, exchanging information and recognizing that they had more similarities than differences in their hopes for the community.

The participation process was an experience shared by the County and the public in the area. By bringing this public participation process together, the County was able to share information, knowledge, and experience to create a shared understanding and platform for the future of the Trilby and Lacoochee communities.

The important thing that was recognized was that there is more to community than similarity of circumstances. Community involves understanding one another and sharing concerns.

Multiple examples of this occurred at the two public workshops, held in July and September. The overall feedback from the individual communities, and the greater community as a whole, was similar throughout the workshops.

The end result was the communication of information from the community members to County Staff and their consultants, building a sense of trust within the community and a belief in the planning process, and the preparation of a plan that had the community's core values and recommendations at heart.



The Lacoochee-Trilby Strategic Master Plan defined a clear vision and provided policy direction for the Lacoochee and Trilby areas. It served as a guideline for promoting the sound development and redevelopment of the area, and identifies opportunities for

public improvements, new private investment, and future land use composition.

Lacoochee Community Center



The Lacoochee Community Center was identified as one of the most significant priorities as a result of the Lacoochee-Trilby Strategic Master Plan. Once the decision was made to build a community center in 2010, the primary objective was funding. Although everyone recognized the need for the center, the area has been historically underserved and is primarily low income. The partnerships among the key players were integral to identifying alternative funding sources and cost savings to see the building come into fruition. Identifying real non-profit

relationships was key; there have been a lot of failed attempts at bringing health care and employment opportunities to the community due to its rural location.

Through the networking of multiple resources, the community was able to identify ways to utilize the community center not only for its primary purpose, housed by the Boys and Girls Club, but also as a centralized location for essential social services.



During 2011, the funding goal was realized by the donation of park land (Stanley Park) by Pasco County, \$1 million from the State of Florida, \$300,000 from Pasco County’s Community Development Block Grant fund, and approximately \$550,000 from private efforts spearheaded by Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative. Also, the design of the community center was completed at no

charge by Spring Engineering. This was a considerable savings to the project and jumped started the process of actually building a community center.

With the construction of the community center came access to employment opportunities, social services, recreation, after school and summer programs, at risk youth intervention and medical services to an area that has been historically underserved. The center also houses an indoor basketball court, a stage for school plays and events, retractable bleachers, kitchen, dining area, concession stand, computer lab and an office for the Pasco County Sheriff's Officer Friendly Program. More importantly the center solidified the common goal of increasing community identity and strengthening partnerships amongst multiple entities that shared common goals but different approaches.

The Choice Neighborhood Planning Initiative

Planning Process

Pasco County and the Pasco County Housing Authority utilized a three-step planning process to develop the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Transformation Plan.



Needs Assessment

The needs assessment phase of the planning process consisted of three independent but interconnected evaluations: a Comprehensive Needs Analysis (based on a resident-driven survey), a Housing Market Analysis, and an Economic Impact Study. These three studies provided a substantial amount of data that identified gaps and opportunities in the community, and provided the basis for the development of the draft plan.

In addition to the formal needs analyses that were completed, there were many statistical evaluations through Census and American Community Survey Data, the Pasco County Property Appraiser's Office, and the District School Board of Pasco County that provided specific data related to the educational attainment,

property values and status, and community profile that may not have been captured otherwise.

Lastly, community involvement played a significant role in the completion of the needs assessment. Many community members and agency partners participated in focus groups, community meetings, and interviews to provide information and context to the evaluations being conducted. In addition, many residents conducted windshield surveys with consultants to introduce them to the neighborhoods and allow them to come in closer context with the specific community needs that exist in the area.

Draft Plan Development and Validation

Throughout the planning process, working groups consisting of residents, agency partners, County and the Pasco County Housing Authority staff discussed goals, objectives, and action strategies to assist in transforming the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee neighborhood. Initially, there were fourteen independent working groups, as well as a working group leadership team, that met routinely to closely examine specific aspects of the plan. It was quickly discovered that there was significant overlap between many of these working groups, and some were more successful than others in completing the work that was requested; upon compiling the preliminary draft and presenting it to the community through a Stakeholder Roundtable, it was decided to reorganize the working groups into larger groups with a common mission: Social Services, Education, Economic Development, Housing, and Neighborhood. By doing this, it allowed for resident and agency involvement to target larger social problems

Financing and Implementation Strategies, and Plan Adoption

Each of the chapters that follow contains goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that reflect the guiding principles and values of the Lacoochee-Trilby Transformation Plan. The strategies all contain an associated measurement tool, current condition as established by the Comprehensive Needs Analysis, Housing Market Assessment, or Economic Study; as well as the result expected from the implementation of the strategy. Lastly, partners are identified, as well as any funding opportunities or commitments.

Prior to final submittal to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, this plan was approved by the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Steering Committee, the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee residents via a public forum, the Pasco County Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, and the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners.

Guiding Principles and Values

People

- Direct Outreach Efforts with Pasco County Housing Authority residents
- Identify Housing Community leadership and involve them in planning process
- Meet bilingual needs of residents
- Identify short and/or long term strategies for case management program creation and stability
- Evaluate potential for remedial education and training at housing authority communities
- Expand opportunities with the Boys and Girls Club - create new partnerships, reach out to more students, and pair successful youth programming with adult education and training - dual generational opportunities
- Identify opportunities for early learning programs
- Establish a medical facility in Lacoochee at the Lacoochee Community Center
- Create a medical network and referral process for residents seeking medical services
- Integrate education into case management plan
- Revisit adult educational opportunities

Neighborhood

- Utilize Lacoochee Community Center - Provides access to social services, creates a sense of community identity, and provides training and technical assistance opportunities
- Lacoochee Elementary School is a safe place for students and parents, offers an existing infrastructure for communication with parents and community members, and is a neighborhood asset
- Increase the capacity of social service providers by identifying specific needs and targets, coordinating services with larger initiatives, and identifying funding gaps and opportunities
- Use Planning Grant as catalyst for further infrastructure projects
- Transform Economic Challenges Into Opportunities by Focusing on Distinctive Community Assets
- Utilize Partnerships with Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Steering Committee, Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative as Anchor Institution, Premier Community HealthCare Group, United Way of Pasco County, Boys and Girls Club, and local not for profit agencies to develop cohesive neighborhood fabric.

Housing

- Demolish substandard housing structures in the neighborhood, offering free demolitions to homeowners
- Utilize Housing Replacement Programs as revitalization strategy when funds are available
- Continue to acquire and rehabilitate properties in partnership with not for profit housing partners such as Habitat for Humanity of East and Central Pasco and Keystone Challenge Fund.
- Maintain Lacoochee and Trilby's historic and architectural nature for new construction
- Enhance mix of housing units owned by the housing authority
- Complete a comprehensive overview of Pasco County Housing Authority units and determine viability for rehabilitation and/or reconstruction while maintaining resident needs
- Stabilize and increase the number and percentage of homeowners in the area