

# THE PLANNING PROCESS

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In October 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Area was identified for the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant. The end result was to create a transformation plan for the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee neighborhoods.



For nearly four years prior to the receipt of the grant, Pasco County, the Pasco County Housing Authority, stakeholder agencies, and local residents had been actively engaged in implementing the Lacoochee-Trilby Strategic Master Plan, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on November 17, 2009. Since October 2012, the initial visioning

completed as a result of the strategic planning process has continued through the unique identification of people, neighborhood, housing, and community engagement strategies as part of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative to develop a comprehensive transformation plan for the neighborhoods.

At its core, the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Transformation Plan is a resident-driven plan that focuses on the area's unique characteristics, capitalizes on existing partners, and identifies opportunities for the improvement of quality of life.

The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative was developed with Pasco County as the grantee and planning lead, and with the Pasco County Housing Authority as co-grantee. The Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Steering Committee, an existing grassroots community group, served as key stakeholders by reviewing concepts and chapters, providing feedback and direction on plan objectives, and maintaining accountability throughout the planning process.

The Leadership Team responsible for the development of the Goals, Objectives, and Action Strategies to implement the People, Housing, Neighborhood, and Community Engagement Plans represent the diversity that exists within and around the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Communities.



## Resident Outreach Coordinator

Recognizing the importance of meaningful resident and community participation, a resident outreach coordinator was contracted by the Pasco County Housing Authority (PCHA) to serve as the team lead for the community engagement team. The resident engagement coordinator not only served as the catalyst for significant involvement of Pasco County Housing Authority residents, but also served to involve not-for-profit agencies into the planning process and implement strategies that would immediately improve quality of life for residents in the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee (LTT) community.

The addition of the resident outreach coordinator had an immediate positive impact in the community. Being bilingual, she easily fit into the community and was visible at community events consistently promoting upcoming events and opportunities. Her enthusiasm was infectious, and quickly the community began to experience changes. The number of PCHA residents attending

meetings such as the LTT Leadership Academy has steadily increased over time with the encouragement of the resident outreach coordinator.

Constant networking resulted in new or renewed relationships with area partners, faith-based leaders, and stakeholders. By gaining insight and understanding into the individual agency missions and goals, she was able to explore new ways to share resources and expertise. Common interests were identified and new alliances were forged. It soon became commonplace to see one agency advertising an event of another throughout the community. A resource guide specific to the LTT area was a byproduct of these new alliances, and a volunteer quickly offered to translate this resource guide.

The resident outreach coordinator was not afraid to go “door to door” throughout the housing communities to deliver flyers to area residents to help ensure that they were aware of upcoming meetings, training opportunities, and activities. She soon began to gain the trust of the residents and began to develop a group of volunteers – individuals that were not active in the community prior to her outreach. The trust that she had earned from the residents enabled the resident outreach coordinator to canvas the neighborhoods and complete a Resident Safety and Security Survey. Area providers were not able to complete such a survey in the past and reported that without the assistance of the resident outreach coordinator they would have been unable to complete it – with her army of volunteers, the resident outreach coordinator was able to complete over 100 surveys at the PCHA and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) communities. The resident outreach coordinator began to meet regularly with the PCHA executive director and USDA housing managers and soon the residents began to see her as a liaison between the

management and the residents. Residents have started reporting that maintenance issues in the communities are improving.

One of the reasons that the resident outreach coordinator was able to build the trust of the residents in the community was that she was able to affect changes in the communities. These “mini-successes” were held up to the community as an example of how a few people can have a significant impact. The residents had reported that security was a primary concern, so the resident outreach coordinator and her volunteers looked at the community and identified that a number of streetlights that were in disrepair. Together, they documented which streetlights needed attention from the electric company; brought the list to the electric company; and within two weeks all of the streetlights in the community were in working order. The residents immediately reported feeling safer in their homes and in their neighborhoods.

The resident outreach coordinator has also directed her efforts towards the youth in these communities. She has identified volunteer opportunities for students, and has worked with the Youth Residential Team empowering them to conduct a presentation and share their ideas on how to improve their neighborhood with PCHA and Senator Bill Nelson. Additionally, she went door to door in the communities to provide outreach to the graduating seniors encouraging and helping them to apply for scholarship opportunities. Three college-bound seniors were the recipients of scholarships, and each has reported that they would not have been able to apply for the scholarship without the assistance of the resident outreach coordinator.

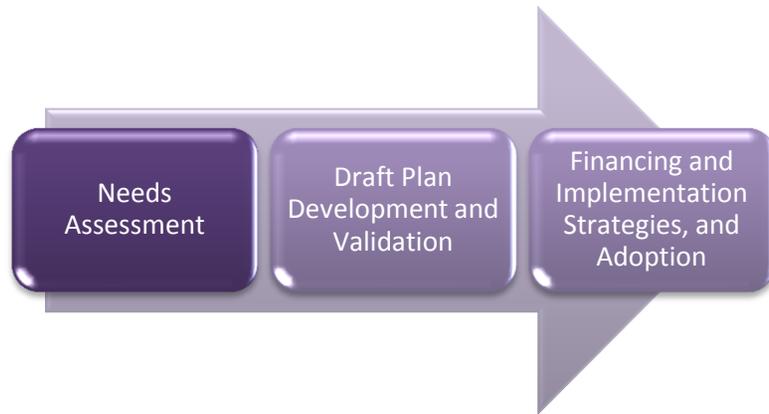
The resident outreach coordinator has had a significant impact on the community in the area of resident engagement and education. A short nine months since the resident outreach

coordinator began in the communities; residents are reporting that the community is experiencing changes for the better. Continued employment will be contingent upon funding from the Pasco County Housing Authority.



The Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Transformation Plan addresses specific issues pertaining to the communities it serves including: lack of employment and economic development opportunities; lack of consistent education and information about social service agencies and program; failing elementary, middle, and high schools; and substandard infrastructure such as roads and potable water. However, among the tangible concerns related the neighborhood’s current conditions, there has been and will continue to be a sense of community pride and engagement among its residents. The concepts of “Unity” and “One Community” have not only been in existence since the dawn of the strategic planning process, but have been the fabric that has held the community together since its inception.

# The Choice Neighborhood 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 the U.S. Census and American Community Survey Data, the Pasco County Property Appraiser's Office, and the District School Board of Pasco County all which provided specific data related to the

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

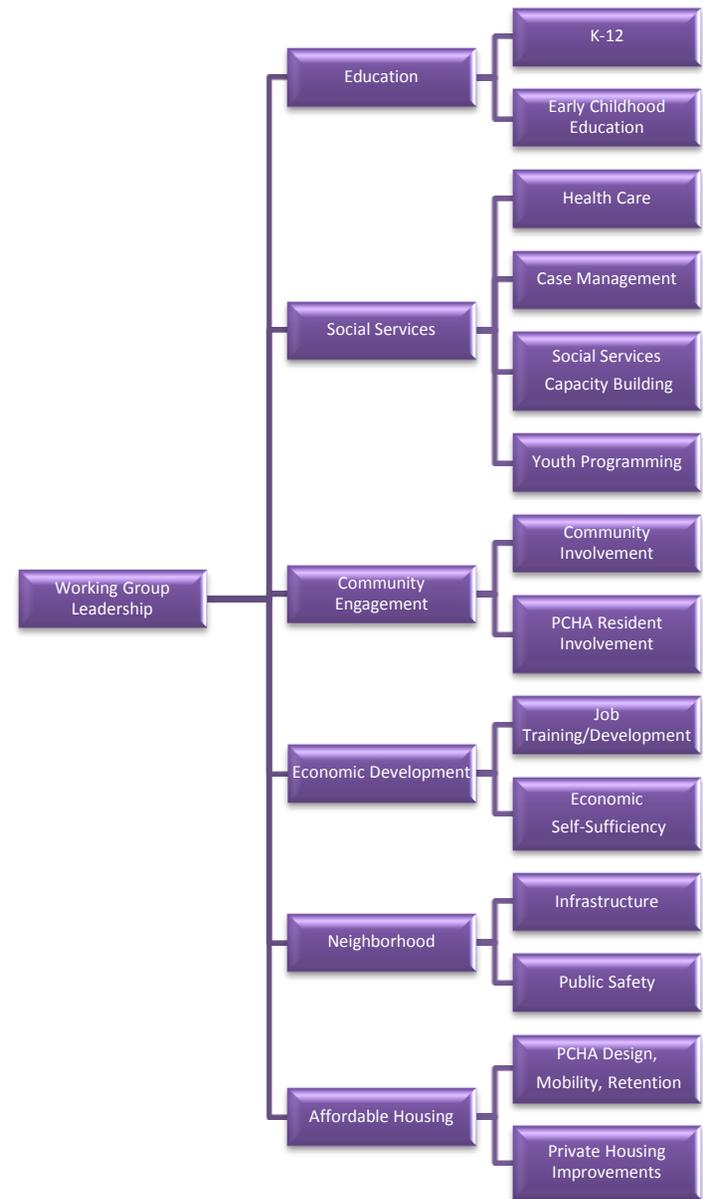
Lastly, community involvement played a significant role in the completion of the needs assessment. Many community members and agency partners participated in focus groups, community meetings, and interviews to help provide information and context to the evaluations being conducted. In addition, many 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, Pasco County staff, 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 common missions: social services; education; economic development; housing; community engagement; and neighborhood. Doing this allowed resident and agency involvement to target larger social problems.

The survey/needs analysis was initially established as a working group to complete the baseline assessment of needs in

the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee area. As the survey was completed early in the planning process, its results were integrated throughout the development of strategies developed as a result of the remainder of the working groups.



## Financing and Implementation Strategies, and Plan Adoption

Each of the chapters that follow contain 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 U.S. 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.



## Consistency with Other Planning Efforts and Awards

### Lacoochee-Trilby Strategic Master Plan

On November 17, 2009, the Lacoochee-Trilby Strategic Master Plan was adopted. The primary goals of the strategic plan included formulating economic development strategies to stimulate the local economy, creating job growth and employment opportunities for area residents; developing a long-term vision for the rehabilitation; redevelopment infill and enhancement of the neighborhoods; and identifying key infrastructure projects that will allow Pasco County to make capital improvement projections based upon known project needs, demands and proposed locations.

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

The Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Transformation Plan builds upon these strategic goals by taking many of the large-scale strategies established in the strategic plan and breaking them down into strategies that are data-driven and have specific partners associated with the implementation. In addition, the transformation plan reflects the interrelationships that exist between the improving housing conditions, addressing individuals' needs, and improving the overall quality of life. While the strategic plan was primarily focused on infrastructure and land use goals, the transformation plan focuses on individuals and families living in the neighborhoods.

### **USDA Rural Community of the Year Recipient, 2012**

In 2012, the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee area received the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Rural Community of the Year Award, due to the successful partnerships that were developed to improve the quality of life for residents in these areas. The primary asset that this award focused upon was the funding and development of the Lacoochee Community Center. While the center had not yet been constructed at the time of the award, the partnerships and funding that were required to build the center in the impoverished rural community told a story of great success about

the resident leadership and many of the stakeholders invested in the area.

### **Signature Community, US Department of Housing and Urban Development**

The Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee area was also named a signature community by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development due to its unique partnerships and approach toward improving the lives of its residents. This designation reflects the commitment by residents, stakeholders, government officials, and funding agencies to revitalize the area; provide guidance and support; and to improve the quality of life for residents in the community.

### **Preliminary Goals**

Upon receipt of the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant, key stakeholders, including resident leadership, not-for-profit and business agency partners, government staff and officials, and others, identified preliminary goals for the development of the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant. These goals capitalized on existing partnerships; identified gaps in service provision and economic opportunity; and focused on resident engagement pitfalls which would need to be addressed to provide a comprehensive revitalization plan for residents in the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee communities.

These preliminary goals are woven throughout the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Transformation Plan.

People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Direct outreach efforts with PCHA residents.</li> <li>•Identify housing community leadership and involve them in planning process.</li> <li>•Meet bilingual needs of residents.</li> <li>•Identify strategies for case management program creation and stability.</li> <li>•Evaluate potential for remedial education and training at PCHA.</li> <li>•Expand opportunities with the Boys &amp; Girls Club of Pasco County.</li> <li>•Identify opportunities for early learning programs.</li> <li>•Establish a wellness center at the Lacoochee Community Center.</li> <li>•Create a medical network and referral process for residents seeking medical services.</li> <li>•Integrate education into case management plans.</li> <li>•Revisit adult educational opportunities.</li> </ul>

Neighborhood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Utilize Lacoochee Community Center to provide access to social services, create a sense of community identity, and to provide training and technical assistance opportunities.</li> <li>•Lacoochee Elementary School, a safe place for students and parents, offers an existing infrastructure for communication with parents and community members, and is a neighborhood asset.</li> <li>•Increase the capacity of social service providers by identifying specific needs and targets, coordinating services with larger initiatives, and identifying funding gaps and opportunities.</li> <li>•Use Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant as a catalyst for further infrastructure projects.</li> <li>•Transform economic challenges into opportunities by focusing on distinctive community assets.</li> <li>•Utilize partnerships with the Lacoochee-Trilby-Trilacoochee Steering Committee, Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative as anchor institution, Premier Community HealthCare Group, United Way of Pasco County, Boys &amp; Girls Club of Pasco County, and local not for profit agencies to develop cohesive neighborhood fabric.</li> </ul>

Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Demolish substandard housing structures in the neighborhood, offering free demolitions to homeowners.</li> <li>•Utilize housing replacement programs as revitalization strategy when funds are available.</li> <li>•Continue to acquire and rehabilitate properties in partnership with not for profit housing partners such as Habitat for Humanity of East &amp; Central Pasco and Keystone Challenge Fund.</li> <li>•Maintain Lacoochee and Trilby's historic and architectural nature during new construction.</li> <li>•Enhance the diversity of housing units owned by the housing authority.</li> <li>•Complete a comprehensive overview of Pasco County Housing Authority units and determine viability for rehabilitation and/or reconstruction while maintaining resident needs.</li> <li>•Stabilize and increase the percentage of homeowners in the area.</li> </ul>

**Preliminary Goals – Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant**