



MINUTES

**Pinellas County Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan (PDRP)
Economic Redevelopment Group
www.PostDisasterPlan.org**

Friday, August 27, 2010
Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
4000 Gateway Centre Blvd.
Pinellas Park, FL

Staci Swank with Pinellas County Economic Development welcomed everyone and gave an overview of the PDRP Project – especially in regard to Economic Redevelopment – to date. She reviewed the current Plans for Economic Development, Redevelopment & Tourism including the following:

1. [Economic Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan](#)
 - Priorities and parameters for attracting high-wage primary employers, particularly targeted industries that have been identified as well-suited for Pinellas County's unique characteristics;
 - Strategies for maintaining and enhancing industrial lands;
 - Continuing support and assistance for small businesses, new start-ups and entrepreneurs;
 - Assurances that land development regulations are designed in such ways that help facilitate revitalization and redevelopment with needed flexibility in a positive manner that improves environmental conditions and contributes to quality communities and neighborhoods;
 - Support for existing business expansion, retention and overall economic diversity that help assure a strong economic base that is well-equipped to weather economic downturns and recessions;
 - Promotion and support for the tourism industry as a continuing vital component of Pinellas County's overall economy; and
 - Support for economic initiatives on a regional level and cooperation with adjacent governments, as regional decisions can have important impacts on the local economy.
2. [Pinellas by Design](#): Adopted in 2005, Pinellas by Design: An Economic Development and Redevelopment Plan, is the county's redevelopment strategy to foster business development, while managing population growth and preserving our quality of life. The purpose of Pinellas by Design was to identify the means by which the county can maintain and enhance its long-term economic vitality, which is threatened by the disappearance of developable vacant land.
3. [Pinellas' Tourism Industry](#) - The St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (SPACVB) is a department of Pinellas County government and is the official tourism marketing and management organization for the county. The SPACVB is charged with enhancing the county's economy by increasing direct visitor expenditures and job development, training and retention in the tourism industry. It works domestically and internationally to develop and enhance consumers, travel media, the travel industry, meeting and conference planners, sports promoters and film producers with research-driven marketing programs focusing on beaches, sports, arts and culture and nature-based opportunities. The SPACVB also leads a community-based team to market the benefits of tourism to local residents while working with varied interests to assist in the development of new attractions and the redevelopment of others. [2009 St. Petersburg/Clearwater Destination Profile](#)
4. She also discussed Pinellas County's (current) Targeted Industries:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Aviation & Aerospace
 - Business & Financial Services
 - Information Technology
 - Life Sciences & Medical Technology

- Microelectronics & Nanotechnology
- Modeling & Simulation
- Optics & Photonics

II. **Brady Smith with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council reviewed the Results of the Survey** taken among the Economic Redevelopment Work Group members. Each members was asked to rank each of the goals listed last meeting. The results are posted on the website: www.postdisasterplan.org

- Business Resumption & Retention
- Small Business Assistance
- Changes in Market and Workforce Composition, and
- Tourism Renewal

III. Tourism Recovery

D.T. discussed the importance of tourism renewal and the steps necessary to bring this industry back online after a disaster. D.T. had extensive experience in Lee County- including Ft. Myers, Ft. Myers Beach and Sanibel Island following Hurricane Charley in 2004 and Wilma in 2005.

- DT indicated that in Hurricane Charley, there was a 10-day delay in re-entry that caused significant delay in the hospitality industry damage assessments.
- Ongoing assessment of operational status of hotels/restaurants, etc. going to EOC and CVB
- Timing issues: Restaurants opened but hotels took much longer
- Ad campaign to locals – eat out and support your local businesses and their employees
- Campaigns funded by Bed Tax which can take a significant impact (This impact was mitigated as (1)not tourist season and (2) interior hotels were packed. Not sure if Pinellas would fare that well as most units in vulnerable locations)
- Political implications in Recovery \$
- Difference in Government COOP plans and readiness
- Contacted seasonal owners of homes/condos to see if they would rent them to workers/displaced neighbors. Most did.

IV. Break out Sessions

In order to discuss each the goals and strategies and to identify tasks associated with each. The Work Group broke up into two smaller Break-out groups for 30-45 minute discussions.

1. Business Resumption & Retention / Small Business/ Tourism Renewal
2. Changes in Market and Workforce Composition, and

Each group reported on recommended recovery/redevelopment strategies for the top priorities:

BREAKOUT GROUP #1

Purpose: Develop Strategies, Programs and Alliances to Promote Economic Resiliency and Recovery in Pinellas County

Goal 1 Business Resumption and Retention

Strategy 1.1: Establish Business Recovery Centers to include physical and virtual business assistance centers

ACTIONS:

- Identify sites in short term
- Revamp SBA applications (?) and work with CPA Firm Partners to volunteer to assist in the application process.
- Identify other roles for volunteers/gov't workers?

Comment [bcj1]: •Note: Participant wanted to know the relationship between the Business Recovery Center, Business assistance center and temporary business space?

Strategy 1.2: Identify and help to facilitate acquisition of temporary business space for businesses, if necessary.

ACTIONS:

- Prepare list of companies (Agility, TBM, Rentsys) to give to local companies.
- Identify set up for small companies
- Think about long-term in terms of location
- Encourage companies helping companies (Network/rent)
- Emergency ordinance(s) to allow temporary use (industrial to office)
- Inventory of empty business space (Develop list of property managers/commercial realtors) to provide ongoing assessment/operational status

Strategy 1.3: Financial Assistance Programs

ACTIONS:

- Emergency Bridge Loans are needed the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd weeks, not long term issue although if they are not available, – designated phone numbers, application centers, websites
- Public information/ outreach – to capture financial assistance process. What resources are available? Dept. of Financial Services Website – go to for resources
- Insurance – facilitate adjustors, insurance villages (if necessary)
- Assistance with SBA loans

Strategy 1.4: Develop strategies to keep companies local after a disaster

ACTIONS:

- Workforce and customers are key to successful recovery for business
- Outreach /PR Campaign
- Buy local/ “staycations”/ restaurants, etc.
- Checklist: coupons
- Emergency notification system (Ready Alert/ Text system)
- Call Center
- Priority use of local businesses and workers in disaster recovery

Strategy 1.5: Temporarily waive sign permitting requirements
Skipped

Strategy 1.6: Transition business assistance from short- to long-term recovery
Skipped

Strategy 1.7: Workforce Assistance

ACTIONS:

- Expanded provision of childcare, if needed
- On-site temporary workforce housing, if needed

Add: Permitting Issues/Process

Add: Public Outreach/ PR Program (Internal External communications)

Refer these strategies to Infrastructure Work Group:

Re-establish telephone, cellular and Internet communications
Re-establish a supply chain to and from the community

Goal 2 Small Business Assistance

Discussion – what would be different for “small businesses”?

Goal 4 Tourism Renewal

Strategy 4.1: Develop a timeline for hospitality industry recovery

ACTIONS:

- Conduct immediate Physical Assessment of all properties
- Continual re-inventory of properties and operational status
- Establish communication and coordination network of property owners/managers

Strategy 4.2: Prioritize the reconstruction of tourist attractions and accommodations

ACTIONS:

- Work with Construction/Permitting Work Group to address the challenge in getting licensed commercial contractors
- Debris removal is more challenging for hotels/motels than residential. Ensure the Debris Management Plan addresses hotel/motel and commercial structures sufficiently.

Strategy 4.3: Reestablish a marketing campaign to promote tourism

ACTIONS:

- Develop strategic staged marketing and public relations campaigns to meet the needs of the industry as recovery occurs.
- Promote and resume local annual events and festivals as part of community recovery
- Include outreach to the national and international tourism markets as recovery is accomplished.
- Reach out to national and international organizations that hold large annual meeting to promote the Tampa Bay area

BREAKOUT GROUP #2

Goal 3 Address changes in market and workforce composition

Strategy 3.1: Use National Emergency Grants to create temporary employment and ~~train employees~~ training for displaced local residents.

Discussion: From an economic development perspective, the emphasis should be on getting local residents back to work and not generating temporary jobs for people outside the region looking for work.

Substitute the following strategy:

Strategy 3.1: Work with local businesses negatively affected by event to adapt to changes in market

ACTIONS:

- Set up mentoring/business advisors for local businesses

Strategy 3.2: Centrally located employment announcements.

Discussion: Rather than create a different process for notifying the public of job openings, it was stressed that normal methods should be used that people are familiar with. For example, on-line services like Monster and Career Builder, Worknet Pinellas, and ads in the St. Pete Times.

It is recommended that multiple processes be used to notify the public about job openings. Not everyone is computer savvy, so having locations where people can go to access job information and receive assistance in using a computer will be helpful for some. Most, however, are expected to use on-line information in their job search.

It seems to make sense to have a central repository of all job openings in the county, and Worknet Pinellas seems the logical choice. Worknet Pinellas can assist in the hiring process by providing services like drug testing. Should there be an emphasis on hiring local residents?

ACTIONS:

- Set up a distribution network through Worknet Pinellas
- Set up partnerships with Monster/Career Builder/ and other websites to direct traffic to Worknet Pinellas
- Use newspapers including local papers, flyers, etc.

Strategy 3.3: Continue / Expand Employment Counseling Services

This strategy received the lowest priority among the group.

ACTIONS:

Strategy 3.4: ~~Expanded~~ Continue and make use of workforce training programs.

ACTIONS:

Inventory current training programs and determine whether there might be opportunities to enhance these programs with federal or state funds following a natural disaster.

Strategy 3.5: Business incubators

Discussion: This appears to be something to look into, although it was not rated as a high priority among the group. It was felt that there might be a benefit to establishing business incubators to assist businesses getting established. We would need to determine how these incubators could be established, perhaps being located in retail space that becomes vacant after a disaster. Decisions would have to be made about what types of businesses to assist through use of incubators.

ACTIONS:

Identify potential types of businesses which would benefit from the incubators and look at previous case studies to determine applicability of strategy

Strategy 3.6: ~~Reassess list of target industries/marketing to targeted industries~~ Assess the status of businesses in the county following a disaster by surveying what businesses remain in the county after a certain length of time following a disaster event.

Discussion: Use this information to identify any gaps that may have developed in the range of services provided or products produced by our local economy. If critical gaps occur, local governments may need to assist certain businesses in filling these local needs. This information may also be helpful in determining what types of businesses to support through use of incubators (Strategy 3.5).

ACTIONS:

- Identify list of incentives - Identify all possible incentives, county, local, state, federal - taxes, etc.
- Work with Construction Permitting Work Group re: Expedited Permitting Process
- Priority projects for larger companies (road reconstruction, et al)
- Look at small business strategies

Strategy 3.7: ~~Develop strategy~~ Identify opportunities to further the implementation of existing strategies to further diversify the local and regional economy.

Discussion: Don't "develop", use existing plans. Look at ways to expedite the process, instead of recreating the wheel

ACTIONS:

Look for opportunities to expedite economic diversification.

Look for land assembly and purchasing opportunities, depending on the availability of funding sources.

Strategy 3.8: Identify incentives that the public sector can provide to help re-establish businesses following a disaster.

Strategy 3.9: Recognize the importance of effective communication, and maintain a consistent message.

III. Adjourned meeting at noon.

Handout/Reference Information:

Pinellas By Design Plan Implementation Progress

Adopted in 2005, Pinellas By Design: An Economic Development and Redevelopment Plan, is the county's redevelopment strategy to foster business development, while managing population growth and preserving our quality of life. The purpose of Pinellas by Design was to identify the means by which the county can maintain and enhance its long-term economic vitality, which is threatened by the disappearance of developable vacant land. Almost every local government has passed a resolution in support of the plan, which was designed so that each community will be able to define its future vision within a shared planning framework. For detailed information on the five year planning process, including community input, analysis, and related studies go to www.pinellasbydesign.org.

Pinellas by Design estimated that some 50,000 new jobs at salary levels approximately thirty percent above the average wage will need to be created over the twenty year period through 2025 to maintain the same level of economic health that the county has enjoyed over the previous twenty years. Absent a concerted effort and coordinated public policy it will be difficult to achieve this goal, particularly as we reach build out, and the ability of the private sector to find and utilize the land necessary to locate and expand business opportunities is limited.

The multi-faceted implementation includes **regulatory/urban design, transit planning, real estate and economic development programs** that will ensure adequate opportunity to preserve and expand the potential for high-wage job creation.

Regulatory/Urban Design:

Regional Planning – One Bay is an effort to develop a shared regional vision for the seven-county Tampa Bay region to answer the question: how can the overall region prosper from a position of strength, diversity, opportunity, and economic vitality over the long term as we continue to grow?. The regional visioning process began in 2007 with Reality Check, a day-long event at the Tampa Convention Center where citizens from across the region came together to vision for the future of Tampa Bay. Since Reality Check, a series of public input events and presentations engaging over 6000 citizens across the seven-county region has resulted in the development of four distinct scenarios of potential growth patterns for the region. See [One Bay](#)

Transit Oriented Development – Currently, the County and its municipalities are readying for future transit development through the creation of transit oriented policies and codes. See [PPC TOD work program](#)

Comprehensive Planning – In 2009, an Economic Development Element for the County's Comprehensive Plan was adopted. This allowed many of the principles of Pinellas By Design and its related studies to be codified. See [Economic Element](#)

Livable Communities - Pinellas County approved a set of model comprehensive plan policies and land development codes designed to implement livable community features in the design and construction of streetscape improvements and land development projects. The term "livable communities" is used to describe urban environments where walking, bicycling and transit service is safe, comfortable and efficient and where the physical environment offers an interesting and unique experience from the standpoint of street, land and building design. Another key aspect of livable communities is the mixing of land uses which allows people to live closer to their points of destination such as shopping and work locations. See [Pinellas County Livable Communities](#)

Redevelopment Land Use Categories - A Countywide Rule amendment created four new future land use categories, which are designed to allow local governments flexibility in planning for redevelopment through special area plans. The new "Planned Redevelopment" categories include Residential, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial. <http://www.co.pinellas.fl.us/PPC/default.htm>

Hotel Densities - A Countywide Rule amendment allows temporary lodging densities in some future land use categories to be increased if certain conditions are met. Depending on the size of the site and other conditions, 50 to 150 percent more hotel rooms can be built per acre. The changes will allow each community in Pinellas to

have the option to either increase density for hotels, subject to certain guidelines, or keep the status quo.
<http://www.co.pinellas.fl.us/PPC/default.htm>

Transit Planning:

High Speed Rail - Florida has received \$66.6 million in federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation to develop a brand new high speed rail system between Orlando and Tampa. Florida's first funding installment is part of the \$1.25 billion grant to the state announced by the Administration in January 2010.

See <http://www.floridahighspeedrail.org/>

Regional - The Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) was created by the Florida State Legislature in 2007 to develop and implement a Regional Transportation Master Plan for the seven-county West Central Florida region consisting of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota Counties.

See [TBARTA web site](#)

Pinellas County - The Metropolitan Planning Organization completed an update of the Long Range Transportation Plan, which will guide decision making for transportation improvements needed through 2035.

See [Long Range Transportation Plan](#)

The most significant plan has already begun with a \$4 million Alternative Analysis (AA) that is expected to be complete in 2011. An AA is an independent and extensive evaluation of local transit corridors that will help us determine the placement and type of transit options that are most suitable for Pinellas County, and that qualify for federal funding. One of the areas to be reviewed will be the corridor from downtown Clearwater to the Gateway area to downtown St. Petersburg. The other will be a connection from Pinellas County via the Howard Frankland Bridge to the planned High Speed Rail (HSR) line and the proposed local light rail system being developed in Tampa. See [PCED Transit Web Site](#)

Real Estate:

Toytown – On July 1, 2008 the Pinellas Board of County Commissioners approved the purchase and sale agreement for Toytown, a 240-acre historic landfill in mid-county with excellent interstate access. An extensive due diligence and development review process is now underway to further determine the feasibility of the plan to create an entirely new planned community – **Villages at Gateway Fields**. This ambitious project proposes to remake Toytown into a mixed-use village that will allow residents to live, work, play and shop within a livable community designed to encourage walking, biking and mass transit. The proposal conceived by Florida Gateway Development LLC plans to create 2 million square feet of office space; 1.5 million square feet of retail; 375 hotel rooms with 50,000 square feet of meeting and convention space; and a residential village with a workforce housing component. Importantly, the proposal also includes 70 acres of new parks and recreation facilities. www.pced.org/toytown

Airco – On October 28, 2008, the Pinellas Board of County Commissioners received the Market and Feasibility Analysis and Implementation Recommendations for the county-owned Airco Golf Course. The County Commission agreed to explore closing the course and using its 123 acres for aviation, office, industrial and hotel uses based on report's findings. The study recommended that approximately 45 acres be reserved for aviation uses including 25 acres for various bulk hangars and 20 acres for aprons and taxi areas; and the remaining 78 acres be used for office, industrial uses and hotel uses. The office and industrial would be the economic development focus of any realized redevelopment of the site – providing nearly **one million square feet of new space to support high-wage job creation**. This long term project will be dependent on extensive planning, permitting and infrastructure improvements, including significant transportation related issues. The Airco Golf Course will continue to operation as usual into the foreseeable future. Go to www.pced.org/airco

Brownfield Program – Pinellas County and its municipalities have developed a strong Brownfield Land Recycling program. The County has established a process and procedures to assist a qualifying Brownfields project applicant to obtain designations and approvals for status as a Brownfields area pursuant to the Florida

Brownfields Redevelopment Act. Administrative, regulatory, technical assistance and financial incentives are available.

See [Brownfield Program Web Site](#)

Industrial Land - A detailed study of the supply and demand of industrial land in Pinellas County begun in 2006 was approved by the Board of County Commissioners in April 2008. More than 2,000 businesses in targeted industry clusters were surveyed about their use of and need for industrial-designated land and other types of real estate for the **Target Employment and Industrial Land Study**. The feedback was combined with an analysis of the existing land supply using geographic information system (GIS) technology. The final report recommends long-term regulatory and economic strategies for ensuring a supply of appropriately located, economically viable real estate that can accommodate high-wage primary employers. To view a copy of the final report, go to http://www.pced.org/download/document/20080415_100058_19695.pdf

Real Estate Listings - Property owners can advertise their shopping centers, hotel/motels and retail properties on the County's real estate database providing excellent opportunities for redevelopment - www.pced.org/realestate.

Economic Development

Pinellas by Design identified two important measures by which the local economy should be evaluated: size determined by the total earnings of all the workers in the county, and quality, determined by the average earnings per worker. In order to sustain the level of prosperity that the county currently enjoys, it will be necessary to enhance both size and quality. The plan established preliminary estimates and projections for future employment growth, based both on the overall number of jobs (which influences the size of the economy), and the number of jobs provided by high-wage primary businesses (which affects the quality of the economy). Primary businesses are defined as those that import at least 51 percent of their annual revenues from outside the local area, while high-wage jobs are those that pay at least 130 percent of the average annual wage. The plan concluded that to maintain growth in the size and quality of the county's economy, it will be necessary to create approximately 278,000 new jobs of which 50,000 are primary high-wage jobs over the next twenty years. See [PCED Success Stories](#)

Partnerships and Awareness:

Pinellas By Design recognized that the county can not implement a redevelopment strategy on its own. Partnerships with local municipalities, regulatory agencies, community development groups and the private sector will be needed for a successful redevelopment program. Ultimately the county seeks to encourage high quality projects that match the vision of each community. To assist the many agencies and individuals promoting redevelopment in Pinellas County, the county has produced educational and promotional information focused on redevelopment. See [PCED Redevelopment Web Site](#)