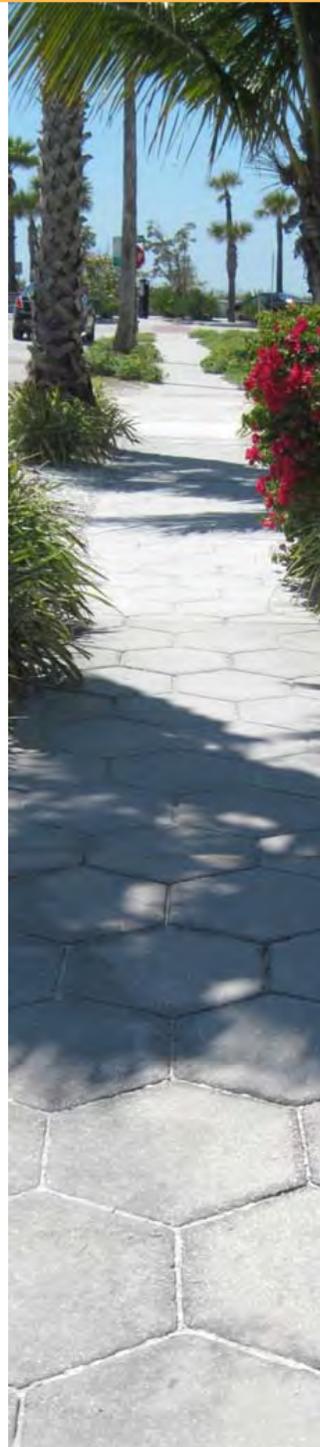
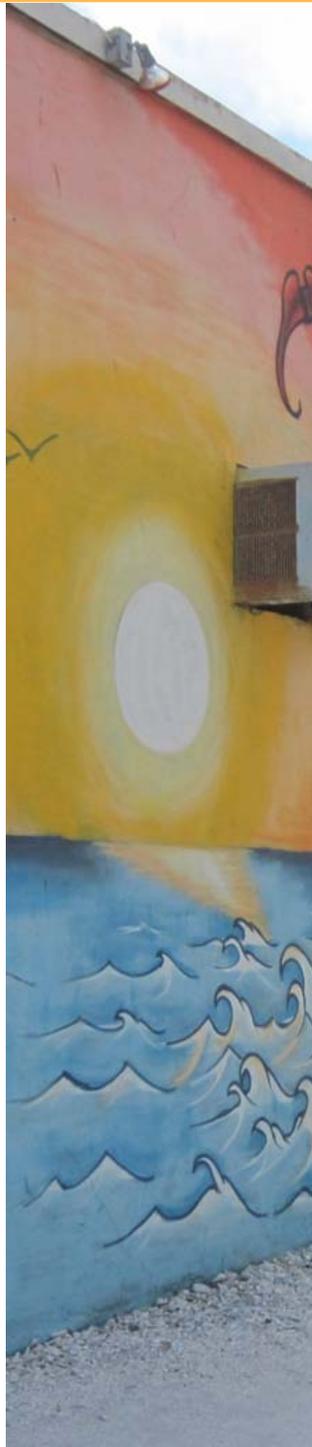


PASS-A-GRILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

DRAFT – July 2014



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PREPARED FOR:

CITY OF ST. PETE BEACH, FLORIDA

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JULY 30, 2014

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of St. Pete Beach requested Tindale-Oliver (TOA) to assist in reaching out to the Pass-a-Grille community to seek input and direction regarding the development of design/development standards to protect the architectural and historic integrity of the community. These planning documents will address the preservation of existing structures, compatibility of new structures, non-conforming uses in the area, public realm design, infrastructure assessment, wayfinding, and branding and will determine a capital budget. Input was gained through a series of public activities and workshops.

The following is a summary of the results of four community engagement events held as part of the Pass-a-Grille Historic District Community Workshops. The first event was a walkabout around a selected area of the Historic District, held on April 23, 2014. There were 22 participants for this event, in addition to City staff and the TOA Project Team. The second event was a workshop held on May 7, 2014, in the Warren Webster Community Center. This event was open to the entire community, and 12 participants attended. To collect more information from a wider selection of St. Pete Beach citizens, City staff hosted a Community Design Fair in City Hall on May 29 and 30, 2014. On those two days, an Open House with workshop materials (provided by TOA) were available to participants. A total of 27 people attended. The fourth event was a workshop held on July 18, 2014, in the Warren Webster Community Center. This event was also open to the entire community and 64 participants attended. In total, 125 participants participated in the four events and of those, 88 unique St. Pete Beach residents provided input into the future of the Pass-a-Grille Historic District.

WORKSHOP THEMES

All four events were structured around three primary themes: Access and Circulation, Architecture and Land Use, and Streetscapes and Hardscapes. These are issues that were preliminarily identified by City staff and the TOA Project Team as the most important topics on which to gain feedback from the community. Figures 2, 3, and 4 provide examples of the three themes in the Pass-a-Grille Historic District.

For specific items within each of these topics, participants noted what current characteristics they would like to keep, those they would not like to keep, and potential solutions for improvement. Additionally, for each overall topic, they noted what mattered most to them and provided input for prioritization strategies. Participants also gave their ideas for their vision of Pass-a-Grille in the future. Definitions of the three themes are as follows:

1. *Access and Circulation* refers to how people navigate and move around a place. Elements to consider include parking, roadways, signage, wayfinding, pedestrian ways, and alleyways.
2. *Architecture and Land Use* refers to the design, appearance, and use of buildings. Elements to consider include style, size, and scale of buildings, as well as how they transition to the public realm.
3. *Streetscapes and Hardscapes* refers to the design and appearance of the public realm (streets, sidewalks, alleyways, etc.) Elements to consider include landscaping, lighting, outdoor furniture, plazas, and open spaces.



Figure 1: Diagram of the three workshop elements presented to the community throughout the public outreach series.



Figure 2: Examples of access and circulation within the Pass-a-Grille Historic District.



Figure 3: Examples of architecture and land use within the Pass-a-Grille Historic District.



Figure 4: Examples of streetscape and hardscape within the Pass-a-Grille Historic District.



COMMUNITY WALKABOUT

On April 23, 2014, 22 participants joined the TOA Team and City staff for a discussion regarding the most important issues within the historic district. Led by the TOA Team, a walkabout was conducted from 11th Avenue to 7th Avenue between Pass-a-Grille Way and Gulf Way. Discussion revolved around the three themes: Access and Circulation, Architecture and Land Use, and Streetscapes and Hardscapes. Participants were asked to comment on each of these topics with what they liked and disliked, as well as ideas for improvement. Original feedback from participants is included in Appendix 1.

Some general observations from the walkabout were:

- Protection of neighborhoods from tourist and commercial activity, including parking
- Use of streetscape materials to signify hierarchy of public space
- Non-conformity of use and how it relates to potential investment and redevelopment
- Maintenance of public right-of-way
- Consistency in wayfinding signage
- Unique and “quirky” character of Pass-a-Grille
- CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design)
- Connectivity including alternate connections such as alleyways, sidewalks, and “hidden trail” parallel to Sunset Way
- Large number of bicyclists and pedestrians
- Parking conflicts and issues

Figures 5–8: Community walkabout.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1

On May 7, 2014, 12 participants attended the first community workshop. Held in the Warren Webster Building, it was open to the public and publicized by City staff. The evening included a presentation and group exercises. Groups were organized around the three themed areas: Access and Circulation, Architecture and Land Use, and Streetscapes and Hardscapes. For each of the stations, participants were asked to identify what elements they wanted to keep or not keep, as well as solutions for improvement. They were then asked to prioritize which elements matter most and to offer strategies for their prioritization over the next 3 years, 3–10 years, and 10+ years. Also at each station was a table map of the study area for which participants were invited to note specific location of issues and opportunities as they related to the three topic areas. Original feedback from participants is included in Appendix 2; however, three main conclusions resulted from this workshop:

1. The community and the City leadership's want to influence specific projects determined the need for a master plan for the Historic District.
2. There are elements of the existing zoning code that prohibit the desired land uses and reduce preservation opportunities.
3. The community confirmed a strong interest in developing design standards to guide the appearance and compatibility of future development and to protect historic structures.

COMMUNITY DESIGN FAIR

The Community Design Fair was a continuation of the first Community Workshop. It was conducted by City staff in City Hall over two days, May 29 and 30, to reach a greater number of Pass-a-Grille residents. A total of 27 participants attended and completed the activities as they were presented in the first workshop. Original feedback from participants is included in Appendix 3. Participants confirmed the results of the first workshop and articulated the vision statement for the Historic District.



Figures 9–10: Community Workshop #1.



Figures 11–12: Community Design Fair.

EMERGING THEMES & CONTRADICTIONS

At this time in the project, leading into the final public outreach event, feedback was assessed based on the three elements guiding the public outreach process (Access and Circulation, Architecture and Land Use, Streetscapes and Hardscapes). This analysis was completed to better structure the final Community Workshop to gather the most pertinent information to determine if the community would support Design Standards.

In this analysis of the first three public outreach events, the following themes were apparent:

A Vision for Pass-a-Grille

- Preserving the “quirky beach village” character by recognizing the history and eclectic feel of the community and how it fits within the larger context of St. Pete Beach.

Access and Circulation

- Alleys – their preservation, materiality and maintenance.
- Parking – its enforcement and expansion.
- Signage – the consolidation of existing signs, and/or the addition of wayfinding and gateway signage.
- Public Access – including street ends, walkways, view corridors, access to the beach.
- Street Hierarchy – the need to identify street types and then correspond design to differentiate between commercial areas, primary roads, and neighborhoods or residential areas.

Architecture and Land Use

- Non-Conforming Uses – zoning regulations conflicting with “grandfathered” uses, which are causing problems with the establishment and renovation of small and vernacular beach uses.
- FEMA Regulations – FEMA flood regulations are influencing the design of new construction, and renovations are contributing to the development of buildings that are out of scale with the historic fabric of the Historic District.
- Design and Character – new construction and renovations are not consistent with Florida’s vernacular architectural style and massing/scale within the Historic District.

Streetscapes and Hardscapes

- Level of treatment – need to develop a street hierarchy on which to base public realm standards; this will assist in determining the location and type of hardscape and streetscape materials and amenities.
- Materials – the use of brick, hex block, or shell and concrete aggregate.
- Trees – specifically, the use of Washingtonian Palms and other shade options.
- Street Furniture – the character, consistency, and maintenance of items in the right-of-way.
- Maintenance – level of maintenance and need for standards and additional code compliance.

Additionally, the analysis of public feedback also revealed certain issues that created some conflicting priorities and values of the Pass-a-Grille community. They were as follows:

- Washingtonian Palms – 1) the Washingtonian Palms were an important historic element to the character of the Historic District and should be preserved and planted; 2) some felt that they provided little purpose in the streetscape (no shade). This demonstrated a need to communicate the function of trees within the Historic District.
- Use of shell in alleyways – 1) the shell alleyways were instrumental in preserving a "beachy" and historic character and reflected more sunlight to keep a cool environment; 2) the shell alleyways are uncomfortable to walk on and require too much maintenance.
- Parking Enforcement and Expansion – 1) parking should not be expanded; 2) parking should be maintained but meters should be better enforced.
- Signage – 1) provide more signage; 2) provide more consistently-designed signage; 3) no new signage needed.
- Streetscape Materials – 1) hex block and stamped hex block in concrete; 2) no expensive materials (brick or hex block); 3) hex block in certain locations only.

The analysis confirmed the support for the development of Design Standards. Additionally, feedback was focused on the community's desire to provide project-specific input, which confirmed the need for a master plan for the Pass-a-Grille Historic District. The desire to demonstrate that Pass-a-Grille was part of St. Pete Beach was also an important element.

The second Community Workshop was structured to confirm emerging themes and discern a clearer direction on conflicting issues.



Figures 13–17: Conflicting elements cited by Pass-a-Grille residents.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2

On July 17, 2014, 64 participants attended the second Community Workshop. Held in the Warren Webster Building, it was open to the public and publicized by City staff. The evening included a presentation and a large group polling exercise. The presentation showed the preliminary findings of the first three events for discussion. Attendees then participated in a visual preference survey that asked them to rank topic photographs based on the degree to how much they liked them. These were presented in three categories: Overall Character, Public Realm Character, and Private Development Character.



Public Realm Character questions addressed:

- Street furniture
- Paving materials
- Parking options
- Multimodal facilities



Private Development Character questions addressed:

- Architectural character
- Public/private transition
- Building scale
- Land uses

These categories were organized in a way that reflected the themes from the previous three public outreach events, but also framed the discussion around public and private development. This allowed the gathering of material most relevant to the next steps of the project: the Master Plan and Development Standards.



The visual preference exercise clarified the priorities of the Pass-a-Grille community and provided clear direction for future development. Original responses from participants are included in Appendix 4; however, the following results clarify the conflicts presented on the previous page:

Figures 18-21: Community Workshop #2

- The community supports preserving and using Washingtonian Palms as a unique identifying factor of the

historic significance of Pass-a-Grille; however, they would like to use other tree species where more shade is desired.

- A majority of the community (78%) prefer the use of shell in alleyways.
- A majority of the community (80%) supports current on-street parking located on Gulf Boulevard, 39% favor parallel parking, 21% favor a parking garage, and 12% favor back-in angled parking.
- The community desires more consistency in the treatment of the public realm, including signage and wayfinding, that represents the unique identity of Pass-a-Grille while still reflecting the identity of St. Pete Beach as a whole.
- A majority of the community (86%) prefers hex block pavement to brick (66%), shell concrete aggregate (36%), or asphalt (9%).

Additionally, the following conclusions were reached through the visual preference exercise:

- The community prefers traditional street furniture options, especially Adirondack chairs (86%).
- More on-street bike parking is preferred (65%).
- The existing architectural character along 8th Avenue is preferred by the community (95%).
- While a mix of residential character is accepted, historic architecture is most preferred (83%).
- Where buildings are not adjacent to the sidewalk, the community prefers landscaping as a tool in transitioning from public to private space.
- The community prefers a building scale of 1–3 stories.
- Bars, restaurants, gift shops, and clothing stores are preferred commercial uses; single-family homes is the preferred residential use.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The Pass-a-Grille community is focused on preserving the historic and unique character of the Historic District. It is important that active steps be taken to protect the environment based on human-scale construction, vernacular Florida architectural design, historic materials, native landscaping, and public accessibility, to name a few. The main factors that are currently impeding this are:

- FEMA flood building regulations
- Increasing property values
- Non-conforming uses as they relate to zoning regulations
- Lack of enforceable design standards in existing code
- Lack of master plan that provides a vision, framework, and implementation steps for future development

By addressing these issues through future planning work, Pass-a-Grille will be preserved as a unique district, while continuing to enhance St. Pete Beach. Consensus on future planning work from the community engagement process is as follows:

1. A Community Vision for the Pass-a-Grille Historic District was established and confirmed.
2. Direction to complete Development and Design Standards was supported by the community.
3. A Master Plan is needed to identify project specific improvements based on the community's priorities.
4. There is a need to reevaluate the underlying zoning code.
5. It is necessary for the TOA Team to coordinate with the engineering team working on the Pass-a-Grille Way Reconstruction project to ensure the streetscape design is consistent with desired public realm design standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the feedback and concerns of Pass-a-Grille Historic District community, recommendations for the next steps are as follows:

1. Complete a Zoning Code Assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of how the existing regulatory structure can be used to meet the vision for Pass-a-Grille.
2. Complete a Master Plan that addresses the planning context, community planning principles, conceptual public realm design, infrastructure assessment, wayfinding and branding, and capital budget for the completion of projects.
3. Complete Development and Design Standards that clearly communicate requirements for the public realm and private property, including a street hierarchy, site requirements, building form, architectural design, and coordination with the Land Development Code.
4. Coordinate with future projects to ensure they reflect the intent of the development standards.

These steps will ensure that the preservation and enhancement of the unique character of Pass-a-Grille and its contributions to St. Pete Beach.

A Master Plan and Overlay Design Standards have two distinct purposes. A Master Plan is an evolving, long-term document that establishes a framework, a vision, and key elements that are important to a place. In addition, it provides implementation steps and possible projects to move a place towards meeting community goals. Overlay Design Standards are enforceable regulations that guide detailed design requirements for construction. They ensure consistency in aesthetic design and use of the public realm and design characteristics of private development. The standards have a specific purpose and fit into the overarching purpose of a Master Plan. Overlay Design Standards are an important tool, especially in a community that is experiencing redevelopment that is inconsistent with the historic character it is aiming to protect.

The four public outreach events completed serve as a strong foundation for moving forward seamlessly with both of these documents and the Zoning Code Assessment. They demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the citizens of St. Pete Beach and an understanding of the vision they have for Pass-a-Grille. The work accomplished from these workshops allows for a consolidated public involvement process for the next planning steps.

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APPENDIX 1: COMMUNITY WALKABOUT RESULTS

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APPENDIX 2: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 RESULTS

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APPENDIX 3: COMMUNITY DESIGN FAIR RESULTS

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