



June 14, 2023

Benjamin Melnick, Deputy Secretary  
Division of Community Development  
Florida Department of Economic Opportunity  
107 East Madison Street, MSC 160  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-4120

RE: Community Planning Technical Assistant Grant Request from the City of North Port

Dear Deputy Secretary Melnick,

Please accept this application from the City of North Port for the Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant. We are requesting \$75,000 to partially fund a master plan for our Gateway Activity Center, a targeted major employment center. The City of North Port would use the Technical Assistance Grant funds to identify best land uses and integrate those uses with effective stormwater solutions, allowing the area to become both a commercial and environmental asset for the City. The total cost of this master plan is expected to be \$200,000 and the City has allocated local funds available for the remaining \$125,000.

Over the past ten years, the City of North Port's population growth has accounted for over 20% of Sarasota County's growth, but only 2.5% of the county's job growth. This is a trend North Port's elected officials, staff, and community members are determined to address.

The City of North Port was predominantly pre-platted as a single-family community with very little consideration for the environment, water and sewer needs, transportation, and non-residential land uses. This inept form of development has created longstanding issues that must be resolved for the sake of increased quality of life and decreased tax burden to city residents. This master plan would address the issues of inadequate stormwater management and limited land for non-residential uses. In fact, the City has begun to address some of these concerns with allocating \$4.9 million dollars in the expansion of water and wastewater services along the Sumter Boulevard and Interstate 75 interchange.

The Gateway Activity Center is a 177.8-acre area surrounding the Sumter Boulevard and Interstate 75 interchange in which all four corners of the interchange are undeveloped. Currently, the City is actively engaged with Sarasota Memorial Hospital to expedite the construction of a 100-bed hospital to be located on the southeast quadrant of this area; construction is anticipated to begin in 2025. In addition to interest from the private sector, the Florida Department of Transportation has also identified this interchange as an area of need and has allocated nearly six million dollars for signalization and other safety improvements. These civic and government investments have spurred interest in the development potential of the Gateway Activity Center and has exacerbated the need for a



localized master planning approach.

This plan would also include identification of opportunities to improve the City's stormwater system within the project area. North Port's original developers constructed approximately 80 miles of canals to drain water from the Myakka River Watershed that historically flowed overland through North Port. The City's roads were originally constructed as part of the stormwater system, with water collecting in the roads and homes elevated above street level. Hurricane Ian provided a stark demonstration of the system's deficiencies as thousands of residents were stranded in their homes for weeks due to flooding, many needing to be rescued by boat and high-water vehicles. Exhibit C showcases a comparison between a FEMA flood zone map with a photo of the City during Hurricane Ian.

The attached scope of work, deliverables, schedule, and budget describe the proposed grant request in greater detail. The City will pursue hiring a well-qualified firm to assist City staff in completing this study. The City staff contacts for this project are:

Lori Barnes, AICP, CPM  
Planning & Zoning Division Manager  
4970 City Hall Blvd.  
North Port, FL 34286  
[lbarnes@northportfl.gov](mailto:lbarnes@northportfl.gov)  
(941) 429-7221

Jennifer Sadonis  
Grants Coordinator  
4970 City Hall Blvd.  
North Port, FL 34286  
[jsadonis@northportfl.gov](mailto:jsadonis@northportfl.gov)  
(941) 429-7006

Securing this funding opportunity will allow the City of North Port to pursue next steps toward diversifying our local economy and becoming more hurricane resilient. We appreciate the opportunity to apply for this funding and appreciate your consideration of our request.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Jerome Fletcher II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "J".

A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA  
North Port City Manager

## 2023/2024 Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant Request, City of North Port

### EXHIBIT A: Scope of Work

#### A. Project Description

The City of North Port shall utilize funding from this grant to develop a Master Plan for the 177.8-acre area surrounding the Sumter Boulevard and Interstate 75 interchange, identified as Activity Center 3, the Gateway Activity Center. The goal of this Master Plan is to create an area that will enhance the City's sense of place, which will generate growth and create a true gateway into the City. This effort will ensure the City can maximize the economic development potential in the Gateway Activity Center while evaluating needs and opportunities for enhancements to hurricane resiliency, sustainability, transportation, and infrastructure that will well-serve the area. Without a Master Plan, the Gateway Activity Center is likely to develop within the next few years without a cohesive and deliberate approach to address these topics. In that instance, the City would likely lose a rare opportunity, one that would unequivocally transform the commercial and natural landscape of North Port, creating an additional hurdle in the City's goal to increase both the economic and environmental resiliency of our City. If the City of North Port is awarded this funding, the creation of a Master Plan for the Gateway Activity Center will provide a solid approach to developing this area in a cohesive manner.

#### B. Deliverables and Tasks

Deliverables & Tasks	Performance Measures & Goals	DEO Due Date
<p><b>Deliverable 1 – Develop a Strategic Framework</b></p> <p>Task 1: Hold a kickoff meeting to orient the team and establish project expectations. The City will provide all necessary planning documents and other relevant materials.</p> <p>Task 2: Compile data from other studies, site development pipeline and perform analysis that would give insights into the current economic, traffic and environmental conditions.</p>	<p>Completion of Deliverable 1 as evidenced by submission of all the following documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Summary of kick-off meeting.</li><li>2. Sign-in roster from kick-off meeting.</li><li>3. Assessment Report highlighting findings of compiled data described in Task 2.</li></ol>	12/31/2023

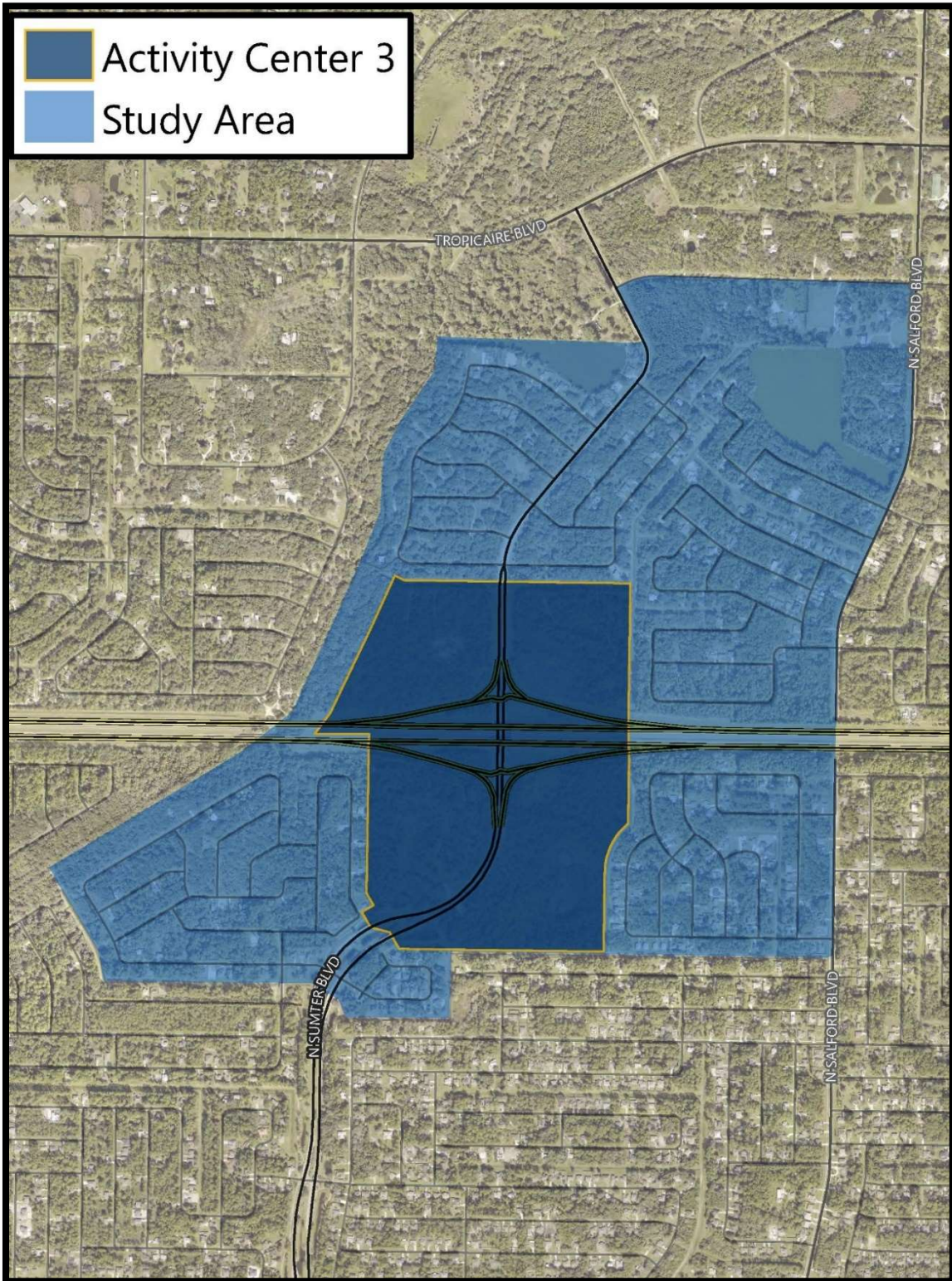
Deliverables & Tasks	Performance Measures & Goals	DEO Due Date
<p><b>Deliverable 2 – Solicit Public Participation and Gather Public Input</b></p> <p>Task 1: Create a stakeholder participation plan and for each meeting provide the following documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice of meeting</li> <li>• List of attendees</li> <li>• Agenda</li> <li>• Summary including stakeholder preferences</li> <li>• Meeting materials</li> </ul> <p>Task 2: Hold public input meetings to gather feedback from the public.</p>	<p>Completion of Deliverable 2 as evidenced by submission of all the following documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stakeholder participation plan.</li> <li>2. Copy of public notice of meeting(s) held.</li> <li>3. Copy of meeting agenda(s).</li> <li>4. Copy of attendance roster(s).</li> <li>5. Summary of meeting(s) held to include common stakeholder preferences.</li> </ol>	<p>1/31/2024</p>
<p><b>Deliverable 3 – Create Land Use Models</b></p> <p>Task 1: Create three (3) land use models of the study area that align with the strategic framework.</p>	<p>Completion of Deliverable 3 as evidenced by submission of all the following documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Three (3) land use models and accompanying narrative statements.</li> </ol>	<p>3/1/2024</p>
<p><b>Deliverable 4 – Determine Stormwater Management Improvements</b></p> <p>Task 1: Recommend a minimum of five (5) stormwater management improvements within the study area. Each recommendation shall include a narrative statement that details implementation and a measurement of impact on the current environmental conditions.</p>	<p>Completion of Deliverable 4 as evidenced by submission of all the following documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minimum of five (5) recommendations and accompanying narrative statements.</li> </ol>	<p>5/1/2024</p>

Deliverables & Tasks	Performance Measures & Goals	DEO Due Date
<p><b>Deliverable 5 – Draft Master Plan</b></p> <p>Task 1: Draft a final report based on City and stakeholder input and tasks three (3) and four (4). The report should follow the guiding principles indicated in the strategic framework.</p> <p>Task 2: Present draft report to City Commission at City Commission meeting. Draft report will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft report and recommendations</li> <li>• PowerPoint Presentation</li> <li>• Maps</li> </ul>	<p>Completion of Deliverable 5 as evidenced by submission of all the following documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Copy of draft report.</li> <li>2. Copy of City of North Port Commission Meeting agenda showing when draft report will be presented.</li> </ol>	<p>5/31/2024</p>
<p><b>Deliverable 6 – Finalize Master Plan</b></p> <p>Task 1: Prepare final report and recommendations including input from City Commission.</p> <p>Task 2: Present final report to City Commission at City Commission meeting.</p>	<p>Completion of Deliverable 6 as evidenced by submission of all the following documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Copy of finalized master plan.</li> <li>2. Copy of City of North Port Commission Meeting agenda showing when finalized master plan will be presented.</li> </ol>	<p>6/14/2024</p>

**C. Budget Summary**

Item	Cost
Contracted Services for Master Plan Creation	\$75,000
City matching funds	\$125,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>

EXHIBIT B: study area map



2023/2024 Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant Request, City of North Port  
Exhibit C: flood map & photo illustrating street conditions during a flood event

