

**Florida Job Growth Grant Proposal
Sumter Boulevard Utilities Expansion Project
City of North Port, Florida**

1.A. Provide a detailed description of the public infrastructure improvements:

The City of North Port is requesting \$2,842,410 for the construction of approximately two-miles of City water and sewer service from south of Hansard Avenue to Kalish Avenue, just north of the I-75 Sumter Boulevard exit 182 interchange, to encourage and attract business development to the properties surrounding the interchange. The water line will be 12" PVC, and 14" HDPE; and the wastewater line will be 12" PVC, 16" PVC and 14" HDPE. This project has been designed and permitted, with the exception of an Environmental Resource Permit. To date, the City has spent \$78,740.25 in design and permitting for the proposed utility infrastructure and a developer has spent over \$100,000 in engineering and marketing studies for the site.

North Port is one of Florida's "platted lands" communities wherein vast tracts of land were designated and platted for primarily residential development, however, most properties are still lacking central water and wastewater services. North Port has recently seen commercial development starting to catch up to the residential rooftops that have been going up steadily. Commercial development is providing new areas for shopping, limited medical services, and restaurants and is helping North Port become a more sustainable community. However, the City has yet to see a great influx in professional and industrial facilities to complement the large and growing workforce population in North Port.

The City of North Port has eight (8) unique Activity Centers, which are un-platted non-residential areas set aside to foster employment development. Sumter Boulevard and I-75 property is in Activity Center 3 which consists of 177 acres zoned for Planned Community Development (PCD). Under the current Comprehensive Plan, the land use scenario includes:

Institutional	32 Acres
Commercial	77 Acres
Professional/Office	12 Acres

The northeast and southwest quadrants of land surrounding the interchange are owned by private land owners who are interested in developing the properties. The southeast quadrant of the interchange is owned by Sarasota County Public Hospital Board. The northeast quadrant is under speculation for future development. All parcels are currently vacant. Sumter Boulevard is a two-lane road located near the City government center of the 104 square mile City and is one of two main corridors from the I-75 exit and is also a main evacuation route from the City. City Hall, the Police Station, a Fire Station, commercial businesses and the Post Office are located on Sumter Boulevard approximately two-miles south of I-75.

The property owned by the Sarasota County Public Hospital Board is proposed for a future hospital site. A developer is proposing two 40,000 square feet specialized medical offices for specialized doctor practices, two 63,000 square foot hotels, and three restaurants. Other professional office buildings are also being proposed. Potentially, over 4,800 jobs could be created in this corridor.

This project, if awarded, will help attain the following economic objectives:

- Shift in tax base: 80% of the City's properties are residential, causing the tax burden to be off balance. There is an inequity between residential, commercial and industrial growth, causing the burden to be primarily on residential properties. This project will help balance the tax base and create future sustainability.
- Increase revenues: If Activity Center 3 is developed, over a 30-year cumulative period, assuming build out within the next 15 years, the City may gain \$16 million in revenues. These revenues are important for City sustainability and balancing of the tax base.
- Create employment opportunities for residents closer to home: More than half of the City's workforce travels outside of the City for employment. The average travel time is 28.1 minutes. This project will help create a City where residents work and shift the City's direction away from becoming a bedroom community.

1.G. Provide a detailed description if, and quantitative evidence demonstrating how the proposed public infrastructure will promote:

- **Economic recovery in specific regions of the state;**
- **Economic diversification; or**
- **Economic enhancement of a Targeted Industry.**

Over the past twelve years, North Port has experienced a steady increase in population and recently became the lead city for the North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota Metropolitan Statistical Area. According to the Bureau of Economic and Business Research 2019 data, the City of North Port population is 70,631. The City of North Port has a young, skilled workforce with a median age of 45, and opportunities for additional training and education through local colleges and universities such as State College of Florida, Suncoast Technical College and the University of South Florida add to North Port's appeal as a great location to do business.

The City of North Port experienced substantial commercial and industrial growth after water and sewer was extended to Toledo Blade Boulevard south of I-75 in the mid-2000's. A commerce park is now located in the corridor and includes diverse economic development such as medical offices, professional offices, light industrial and manufacturing. The City expects the utilities expansion on Sumter Boulevard at I-75 to produce even greater results, thereby expanding economic diversification.

Based on the land use scenario, a potential of 4,859 jobs could be created in this interchange corridor, assuming a +/- 100 bed medical facility is constructed. A larger facility could increase employees by an additional 1,000. As mentioned in the detailed description, a developer is proposing two 40,000 square feet of medical offices for specialized doctor practices. Two 63,000 square foot hotels and three restaurants are proposed. Other professional office buildings are also proposed.

In May 2019, the City of North Port Economic Overview was completed in JobsEQ®. According to the report, the City has a civilian labor force of 26,559. As of the last quarter of 2018, total employment in the City was 9,753. The largest labor employment sector in the City of North Port, FL is Retail Trade, employing 1,828 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Construction (1,200 workers) and Educational Services (1,151).

The average commute for a North Port resident is 28.1 minutes, higher than the state average of 25.7 minutes. Only 22% of employed residents work within City limits. A high concentration of those are employed in health and medical services. According to the 2018 North Port Community Livability Report

conducted by National Research Center, Inc. and ICMA, only 27% of residents felt positive about employment opportunities in North Port. Less than 4 in 10 respondents gave favorable evaluations to the vibrancy of the commercial area and to the City as a place to visit and as a place to work. When asked about their perceptions on growth, about 7 in 10 survey respondents felt that jobs growth was much or somewhat too slow.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan Update identifies land at I-75 could close the gap quickly to attract the resident workforce it desires. This proposed project will make land at I-75 more attractive to developers and bring the City one step closer to providing targeted medical and professional jobs to the City's resident workforce and reduce drive time for employed residents.

2.C. Detail whether required permits have been secured, and if not, detail the timeline for securing these permits. Additionally, if any required permits are local permits, will these permits be prioritized?

In 2014, the City committed to invest in this project by having an engineer prepare the design and apply for the necessary permits. The City has previously obtained a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) General Permit for Constructing a Domestic Wastewater Collection/Transmission System which is valid through March 13, 2024. The City has also previously obtained a Florida Department of Health (DOH) General Permit for Construction of Water Main Extensions for PWSs. An Environmental Resource Permit is needed from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The remaining application can be done concurrent with the bidding process and received within 90 days.

2.D. What is the future land use and zoning designation on the proposed site of the infrastructure improvements, and will the improvements conform to those uses?

The zoning designation for the quadrant of properties at Sumter Boulevard and I-75 interchange is Planned Community Development (PCD) district. The purpose of the PCD district is to provide an area for coordinated development of industrial, commercial, service, residential and government uses within a park-like setting. The establishment of this district provides a mechanism to attract major employers to the City, which can contribute to the diversification of the economic base in a manner consistent with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. The PCD district provides for a variety of uses where project components and land use relationships are physically and functionally integrated. This concept incorporates a wide range of traditional industrial uses with a variety of non-industrial activities which may support or otherwise relate to the commerce/industrial activities which may support or otherwise relate to the commerce/industrial economic base of the City. Generally, PCD land uses include manufacturing, wholesaling and warehousing, construction services, transportation activities, retail trade and service, residential and government uses. It is the intent of these regulations to facilitate the harmonious interaction of land uses not individually provided for in other industrial, commercial, service, residential or government use districts through grouping of similar uses. These regulations are designed to protect adjacent properties from the potentially adverse impacts associated with mixed-use development and to promote efficient and economic land use among functionally integrated activities. This intent is achieved through coordinated application of standards, which regulate location, open space, ground coverage, height, lighting, signage, landscape, buffer and other physical design elements.

The future land use designation is Activity Center 3. Development within the described Activity Center has identifying characteristics and design. Activity Centers promote the public health, safety and welfare and conform to the provisions regulating the development of areas designated as Activity Centers set forth in the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan as follows:

- Ensure that the character and location of land uses maximize the potential for economic benefit and the enjoyment of natural and man-made resources by citizens while minimizing the threat to health, safety and welfare posed by hazards, nuisances, incompatible land uses, and environmental degradation.
- These lands are designated to provide an area for coordinated development of industrial, commercial, professional office, residential, public and recreational uses. This designation provides for a variety of uses where project components and land use relationships are physically and functionally integrated.
- To develop an effective multi-modal transportation system which optimizes safety, convenience, cost and pollution reduction practices by establishing internal and external transportation linkages between residential neighborhoods and activity centers.
- The City of North Port shall provide a stormwater management system which protects real and personal properties, preserves natural resources, maintains recharge to the surficial aquifer, and maintains or improves the quality of surface water runoff.

Permitted principal uses and structures for Activity Center 3 are listed in Section 55-26 of the Unified Land Development Code, and are as follows:

- Auditorium and convention center.
- Bank or financial institution.
- Commercial complex one hundred thousand (100,000) square feet + (not big box).
- Gas station.
- Hotels, (one hundred (100) rooms +) full or limited service.
- Medical.
- Motel, (one hundred (100) rooms +) full service.
- Parking lots and parking garages.
- Recreation, active and passive.
- Research and process laboratories.
- Restaurant.
- Service station.
- Sports arena.
- Theater for live stage productions.
- Wholesale club.

This project and future development conform to these uses and no changes will need to be made.

2.G. Does this project have a local match amount? If yes, please describe the entity providing the match and the amount.

The City of North Port does not have matching funds for the construction of this project, however, the City has invested \$78,740.25 for the design and permitting of the water and sewer lines. The design was completed in 2015, and the permits were recently renewed. Also, the City owns the right-of-way for the infrastructure. The developer has invested over \$100,000 in engineering and marketing studies on this site.

3.C. Provide a detailed budget narrative, including the timing and steps necessary to obtain the funding and any other pertinent budget-related information.

Commission has approved the acceptance of a grant award with the request to apply. Only legal review of the grant contract would be needed prior to signature.

The construction will need to be formally bid. It takes approximately 120 days for the bid process to be prepared, let, reviewed and awarded to a construction firm at a Commission meeting. An Environmental Resource Permit through the Southwest Florida Water Management District is still needed, and the permit process would run concurrent with the bidding process and issued in 90 days.

Wastewater construction is estimated at \$1,669,500 and potable waterline construction is estimated at \$1,172,910 for a total of \$2,842,410.

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