ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA
GROW SMARTER INITIATIVE

STRATEGY

Submitted by Market Street Services Inc.
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November 2014
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SPONSORS

The following partners have invested in the development of St. Petersburg’s Grow Smarter Strategy. This process would not have been possible without their generous commitment to the future of the community.
OVERVIEW

The St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce and the city of St. Petersburg have embarked on a comprehensive process to assess and enhance the city’s competitive position to support quality, diverse economic growth now and in the future. As other cities in Florida and across the country focus increased resources and attention on growing their economies, how St. Petersburg is positioned for quality growth is a critical issue to address. Comprehensive quantitative and qualitative research has informed the development of this Grow Smarter Initiative Strategy. The phases of the Initiative include:

COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT

The Competitive Assessment presented a detailed examination of the city of St. Petersburg’s competitive position as a place to live, work, visit, and do business. Rather than simply describing data trends, the Competitive Assessment synthesized key findings from the analysis and community input framing the discussion around key “stories” and competitive issues faced by the community.

TARGET BUSINESS ANALYSIS AND MARKETING REVIEW

Using the findings from the first phase, the business sectors that most strongly align with St. Petersburg’s competitive strengths are reviewed and defined. This Target Business Analysis evaluated the city’s workforce, existing economic strengths, global trends, and both obvious and “aspirational” job sectors. The goal of the Target Business Analysis was to identify how to diversify and strengthen the economy through entrepreneurship, existing business expansion, and recruitment. A Marketing Review also assessed the city of St. Petersburg’s principal marketing programs and tools. The following graphic represents the approved target sectors that will drive diverse economic growth in St. Petersburg in the coming years:

Target “niches” represent sub-categories that can be differentiated in terms of compositional subsectors and growth dynamics, but nevertheless share complimentary strategic concerns and competitive advantages such as talent, buyer/supplier networks, infrastructure, technologies, marketing messaging, and others, that warrant them being considered under the same overarching target category.
Specific actions to grow the city of St. Petersburg's recommended target sectors are included in this Grow Smarter Initiative Strategy.

GROW SMARTER INITIATIVE STRATEGY

This Strategy is holistic and inclusive of the many components that affect St. Petersburg’s ability to be a prosperous community. The Strategy’s proposed goals, strategies, and actions have been built from the key findings of the research reports.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

While the Strategy represents “what” St. Petersburg needs to do, the Implementation Plan determines “how” to do it. The Implementation Plan will serve as the road map for putting the Strategy into motion. The Implementation Plan outlines the activities of the Strategy’s objectives on a day-by-day, month-by-month, and year-by-year basis.
INTRODUCTION

St. Petersburg is in an enviable position of having a core of competitive assets that position it well for growth in the New Economy. Capitalizing on these assets, addressing potential pitfalls to achieving quality economic development, and identifying and capturing opportunities to become a more dynamic talent and employer “magnet” are the challenges that this Grow Smarter Strategy has sought to address through a holistic program of goals, strategies, and actions. The plan emerged from the comprehensive quantitative and qualitative research into St. Petersburg’s competitive position and priority target-sector opportunities. Over 1,500 local residents contributed their voices through interviews, focus groups, and an online survey conducted in coordination with the Grow Smarter Initiative.

Just as the development of the plan has been a community effort, so too will its implementation. The St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce will not be able to single-handedly activate every initiative proposed in the Grow Smarter Strategy. The City of St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Pinellas County Schools, and a host of public, private, and non-profit partners on the west (and, potentially, east) sides of Tampa Bay will be called upon to support implementation either through dedication of personnel, resources, or time. In the spirit of this collaborative need, Market Street has sought to incorporate existing organizations, programs, and policies in this strategy that contribute to the positive and progressive growth of St. Petersburg’s economy. The goal is not to reinvent the wheel programmatically if an existing effort has demonstrated success and sustainability.

The Grow Smarter implementation process will identify entities to lead and support strategic activities and build a network of implementation partners so existing programs and processes can be optimally coordinated under the Grow Smarter umbrella. As implementation proceeds, programmatic gaps and issues will be identified as partners activate the strategy and determine how these gaps and limitations can be addressed.
STRATEGY

The City of St. Petersburg is experiencing a renaissance as its downtown and other central neighborhoods have become hotbeds for investment and new development and its economy continues to evolve from construction and tourism-based employment to a model leveraging information and technology sectors. To continue this trajectory, it will be necessary for St. Petersburg to become more competitive across a number of strategic categories that influence the location decisions of top companies and talent. This Grow Smarter Strategy will challenge local public and private leaders to take efforts to the next level in order to ensure that the successful transformation of St. Petersburg continues in the years to come. Six strategic focus areas (inner circle) will combine to positively influence the advancement of three principal goal areas (outer circle), broad categories that represent the city’s future ambitions.
These three goals are:

- **People**
- **Prosperity**
- **Place**

It will be necessary to see positive results in all six strategies and three goals for St. Petersburg to achieve its strategic ambition.

**Goals**

Economic development is ultimately about building wealth in the community. In today’s world, this is not possible without a top-flight workforce and a quality of life and place that can retain and attract this talent. These dynamics are reflected in the principal goal areas of the Grow Smarter Strategy.

**PEOPLE**

Simply put, the quality of a community’s workforce and capacity to provide skills required by today’s highest-value employers is the most important competitive criterion determining future success. If knowledge and technology-based companies cannot fill positions needed to enable growth, they will look elsewhere for locations to invest. Talent trends in St. Petersburg are moving in a positive direction; degree attainment is on the rise, higher-skilled migrants are moving to the community, and public school performance is making incremental gains. Strategies to provide a consistent supply of trained talent to local employers and continue to attract the best and brightest workers to St. Petersburg are critical outcomes of the Grow Smarter process.

**PROSPERITY**

In the pursuit of new employment, strategies should not be focused on growing jobs for jobs sake. It is critical that economic development pursues opportunities that lead to jobs that pay at or above St. Petersburg’s annual average wage. It is also important that targeted sectors provide employment at a range of skill and wage levels so that the entirety of the local workforce has opportunities to build wealth. That wealth, in turn, translates directly to additional local jobs as new spending is circulated through the local economy. In the Target Business Analysis report, the project’s Steering Committee approved target sectors that all feature well-paying positions that are projected to remain in demand for years to come.

**PLACE**

Closely tied to the first two goals is a community’s desirability as a place to live, work, and visit. The development and enhancement of local quality of place can often be a “chicken and egg” situation between provision of lifestyle amenities and the creation of good jobs that retain/attract talent and
support growth. In St. Petersburg’s case, however, these two processes have been linked from its earliest history. It has been the city’s appeal as a visitor destination that helped establish a local economy and ultimately attract legions of retirees and second-home owners. St. Petersburg’s pedestrian-scale downtown, historic neighborhoods, location, recreation and cultural opportunities, and other factors that continue to make it a popular tourism destination have also contributed to its growing appeal for entrepreneurs, young professionals, college students, and other highly desired groups. As the city evolves and diversifies its economy, quality of life and place must remain important considerations for public and private leaders.

Key Initiatives

The following actions were determined by the Grow Smarter Steering Committee through group discussion and participation on an online comment survey. They represent the most impactful, priority activities that the Grow Smarter implementation team should focus on during the initial months after strategic launch. The Key Initiatives are:

- **Formalize the development of a Downtown St. Petersburg Innovation District (1.1)**
- **Proceed with holistic strategies to reduce poverty in South St. Petersburg (1.3)**
- **Capitalize on citywide development opportunities along key St. Petersburg transportation corridors (1.4)**
- **Effectively support the growth ambitions of established St. Petersburg companies (2.1)**
- **Pursue specific actions to grow St. Petersburg’s target business sectors (2.2)**
- **Develop targeted St. Petersburg external marketing capacity and tools (3.1)**
- **Promote St. Petersburg as a growing hub for entrepreneurial and startup activity (3.2)**
- **Enhance the availability of capital for new business formation (4.1)**
- **Formalize new partnerships to advance “cradle-to-career” education (5.1)**

It will be important that Grow Smarter achieves “early victories” in its implementation in order to demonstrate to business and elected leaders and the public at large that the strategy has momentum and will not just sit on a shelf. The success of these Key Initiatives is doubly important as they represent the tactics with the greatest impact on St. Petersburg’s competitive position and economic vibrancy.

For certain strategic recommendations in the Grow Smarter Strategy, BEST PRACTICES have been researched and identified to provide perspective on how other communities have addressed these challenges or opportunities. An action or tactic with an associated best practice is indicated by the letters “BP” noted parenthetically after the title.
Strategies

The six strategy areas that will drive St. Petersburg’s goal achievement came directly from the full breadth of quantitative and qualitative research conducted for the Grow Smarter process. Each strategy impacts one or more goal areas, with most serving to foster attainment of all three. As with the goal areas, the strategic categories are interrelated. Development of key economic districts will stimulate job creation in the city’s target sectors along with coordinated education and training pipelines for occupations in demand. Optimizing the growth of districts and corridors will strongly influence housing strategies, which in turn support talent retention and attraction, which ties back to targeted development, and so on. Implementation of the Grow Smarter plan will link the various strands together into a cohesive network of practitioners and organizations all focused on common goals and metrics. Underlying the strategies will be a host of actions that address specific competitive challenges and opportunities inclusive of each strategic category.

1.0 DISTRICT & CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

While there are definitely parcels available for new development, St. Petersburg nevertheless is denser than almost every major city in Florida and has limited large sites available for major residential, commercial, or industrial projects. As such, the redevelopment and revitalization of key districts and corridors in St. Petersburg will be the principal means to enhance the community’s housing stock, office product, walkability, transit viability, and ensure there is sufficient space for business expansion and relocation. Special Area Plans, land-use guidelines and protocols to encourage dense, mixed-use development will be important tools to facilitate district and corridor development. While Downtown St. Petersburg has strong growth and development momentum, it will be important to maintain a citywide focus for District and Corridor Development, especially because many of the sites with the greatest investment potential are found outside of the city core.

ACTION 1.1: **Formalize the development of a Downtown St. Petersburg Innovation District. (BP)**

**Overview:** Initially proposed in the 2013 ULI Advisory Services Panel Report “Forging Connections for a Vibrant Downtown Waterfront,” the establishment and branding of an Innovation District not only captures opportunities provided by the world-class collections of assets in the port area, but is also consistent with current industry analysis on how to optimize the impact of clustered innovation and technology assets. The boundaries of the Innovation District will need to be formalized, but it is generally considered to consist of the businesses, institutions, and research centers surrounding Bayboro Harbor and the Port of St. Petersburg. While there is certainly the possibility that the District could one day extend beyond the downtown, its genesis and initial development will likely be where the supportive assets are clustered.
1.1.1: Repurpose and formalize the St. Petersburg Ocean Team (SPOT). Local leaders should consider incorporating SPOT (potentially rebranded) as a staffed non-profit entity overseeing the management, development, marketing, and growth of the Innovation District. It could be given statutory authority over District growth with the potential to provide development incentives and other powers, or it could simply serve as the District’s marketing and administrative entity; the choice will be up to local leaders. SPOT would collaborate with local, regional, and state economic development entities to position the district for success. In addition to confirming/securing partnerships with district investors such as the federal government, SRI International, and Johns Hopkins Medicine, SPOT should determine the viability of encouraging the University of Florida to expand its relationship with Bayfront Hospital to that of a full research partner.

1.1.2: Designate and brand the Innovation District. A first step towards district creation would be to determine the zone’s boundaries and identify key stakeholders. A brand, marketing platform, and website should be created to position the district as a global hub for marine and life sciences. The campaign should incorporate existing assets and institutions as well as outcomes from processes like the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan and potential enhancements to Al Lang Stadium and other facilities.

1.1.3: Develop a Special Area Plan for the Innovation District. The ongoing Downtown Waterfront Master Plan process incorporates areas that encompass the potential Innovation District. While economic development is not among the Guiding Principles directing waterfront growth, Market Street feels that a Special Area Plan for an Innovation District would not only support the overall ambitions of the Waterfront Plan, but enhance the attractiveness of the waterfront by enhancing its destination appeal for some of the top talent in the world. The Innovation District Special Area Plan should incorporate multiple scenarios to facilitate district development. Importantly, the Innovation District Special Area Plan should be coordinated with the Waterfront Master Plan, the recently developed master plan for the University of South Florida-St. Petersburg (USFSP) campus and other district institutions, organizations, companies, and facilities, including the recently announced All Children’s Hospital research building. The Innovation District plan should also determine whether an extension of the statutory lease limits at the Port of St. Petersburg should be pursued again through a public campaign and vote. This may enable the successful recruitment of research vessels to the Port to support marine science cluster development. The plan should also consider the potential to leverage the decommissioned Albert Whitted Wastewater Treatment Plant for District development.
**ACTION 1.2**: Conduct and market a citywide property inventory of available St. Petersburg development sites and buildings.

**Overview:** The conventional wisdom is that the city of St. Petersburg has limited land available for new commercial, office, and industrial development. While it certainly cannot offer a “mega-site” suitable for an auto plant or major distribution center, the city in fact does have multiple tracts and buildings that can accommodate new investment. Among these are: the Dome Industrial District, Skyway Marina District, Metropointe, Baypoint Commerce Center, Pinellas Business Center, Carillon, Toytown, Gateway Business Center, Azalea Park, and Tyrone Industrial Park. By providing potential investors and corporate decision-makers with easy access to complete information on all available parcels in the city, opportunities for high-value project development are significantly increased. The inventory will also support the efforts of property owners and commercial brokers marketing local sites and highlight the potential need for site and building upgrades based on investor feedback.

1.2.1: Conduct a targeted analysis of all available St. Petersburg development property. Based on St. Petersburg’s approved target sectors, assess available sites and buildings for applicability to one or more target business categories. Record this information along with all ownership, cost, access, utility, building spec, broker, and other applicable data for all city property. Incorporate, as applicable, all previous city-led inventories of this type into the new analysis.

1.2.2: Market the St. Petersburg property inventory on all applicable economic development websites. It will be critical that local, regional, and external corporate and site selection professionals can identify and access the property database quickly and easily. Prominent placement on city, county, regional, and state websites will be important, potentially with a tagline such as “St. Petersburg is open for business.” All relevant information needed to make investment decisions should be available and updated often to ensure accuracy. Mapping tools should also be made available for assessing site compatibility and features.

**ACTION 1.3**: Proceed with holistic strategies to reduce poverty in South St. Petersburg.

**Overview:** Neighborhoods in South St. Petersburg are the locus of much of the city's low-income population, experience higher frequencies of crime, and have some of the lowest-performing schools. Recent years have seen more investment in retail and commercial districts and improving school outcomes. Believing that a comprehensive, aggressive, and holistic anti-poverty strategy would be the most impactful tactic to improve standards of living in South St. Petersburg, key leaders have developed the 2020 Plan as the principal agenda for raising incomes, reducing crime, and revitalizing neighborhoods. The Plan’s goal is to reduce poverty by 30 percent in the district by the 2020 U.S. Census. It is important to convey that the 2020 Plan is, at its core, a collaborative economic development strategy designed to improve the city’s overall fiscal health and its ability to attract and retain businesses. While there will be new strategies developed, 2020 will also leverage ongoing and planned initiatives such as the Community Wealth Building Coalition.
1.3.1: Leverage coalitions to secure necessary funding for full 2020 Plan implementation. Just over $1.5 million included in the recent state budget for the 2020 Plan was vetoed. In order to secure the $47 million in operating funds deemed necessary for first year implementation, a broad coalition of interests will be needed to apply for and secure funds from sources such as the federal and local governments and private foundations. State money can also be reapplied for in the 2015-2016 budget; local leaders should strategically outreach with state officials to determine why these funds were not approved and what is necessary to ensure future support for their appropriation. The City of St. Petersburg is moving forward with its commitment to poverty eradication and creation of opportunities for residents through investments of more than $1 million in fiscal year 2015 focused on four program areas: 1) Opportunity creation; 2) Connecting through cultural affairs; 3) Nurturing neighborhoods and families; and, 4) Being a catalyst for commerce.

1.3.2: Support city and community partnerships allied behind South St. Petersburg reinvestment. A plan developed for the Southside CRA (Community Redevelopment Area) will channel investments through a 2020 Plan implementation network of over 50 churches, faith-based non-profits, and other organizations. Economic development practitioners should ensure that key redevelopment parcels in the CRA are included in the St. Petersburg property inventory (see Action 1.2) and marketed accordingly. Multiple incentives are also available to attract quality projects in the district. Another key South St. Petersburg-focused initiative is the Community Wealth Building Coalition, a partnership between Bon Secours Health Systems and the Greenhouse. A 2015 conference facilitated by Democracy Collaborative will be aimed at crystallizing a mission and agenda for the Coalition oriented around a self-sustaining “evergreen” model of community-based enterprise development. Envisioned as a key plank of the 2020 effort, the Coalition will seek to leverage the purchasing power of Bon Secours, St. Petersburg Area chamber members, and other potential customers for South St. Petersburg enterprises.

ACTION 1.4: Capitalize on citywide development opportunities along key St. Petersburg transportation corridors.

Overview: Many local stakeholders believe that transportation corridor development represents the City of St. Petersburg’s best opportunity for infill development and construction of multiple-price-point housing. Through a partnership with Eckerd College, the city already invests personnel and resources in its Business Corridor Program in which city staff support business startup, retention, and expansion on the city’s major transportation corridors. The city’s Planning and Economic Development Department will continue to assess, confirm, and advance priority corridor designations with the greatest potential for high-value development.

1.4.1: Continue updating zoning and development codes for priority transportation corridors. Many arterial streets such as the corridor between 1st Avenue north and south (including Central Avenue) had already been upzoned for higher densities in anticipation of new mass transit. Despite the defeat of the Greenlight Pinellas plan, City of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County officials said that leveraging transit-oriented design corridors and centers that have already been codified will continue. Land-use codes will also continue to encourage more urbanized, pedestrian-friendly construction in appropriate activity nodes.
along high-volume corridors. History has shown that mass transit referenda – even those that had been defeated multiple times – eventually pass. Therefore, city and county leaders should continue to optimize regulatory frameworks to capitalize on ongoing and future transit enhancements as key opportunities for higher density, mixed-use, walkable development.

1.4.2: Determine target-specific corridor development opportunities. Through the process of assessing optimal land uses along transit corridors (see 1.4.1), analysis should also be conducted to identify potential redevelopment and/or reuse scenarios tied to St. Petersburg’s approved target sectors. If feasible, specific regulations tied to laboratory space, light industrial, and other uses could be incorporated into station-area plans and zoning overlays. All potential target-specific parcel development opportunities should be marketed through the proposed property database (see 1.2.2).

ACTION 1.5: Maintain the momentum of Downtown St. Petersburg development.

Overview: Hundreds of millions of dollars has and is being invested in downtown commercial, retail, and residential development. The district is also proving to be a competitive draw for entrepreneurs and established companies. The opening of the Sundial district will further contribute to downtown’s destination appeal. Disparate plans and developments must be seen in the context of the overall downtown to make the district more accessible and connected.

1.5.1: Ensure the St. Petersburg waterfront continues to be the “jewel” of the city. The aforementioned ULI report, the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan, and a public process to arrive at an approved design for the St. Petersburg Pier will all inform the future management and development of St. Petersburg’s waterfront. Approved plans should be implemented in a timely, cost-effective, and coordinated manner and informed by the approved strategies of this Grow Smarter plan.

1.5.2: Improve access and connectivity of downtown destinations. Existing assets such as Al Lang Field and world-class museums, including the recently announced Museum of the Arts and Crafts Movement, should be integrated into the broader fabric of downtown. Specifically, the ULI report recommended connecting the “pearls” of downtown into a more connected necklace. This includes leveraging Al Lang Field as a key link to better connect the north and south waterfront. Accessibility to assets would be improved by developing a parking wayfinding (directional signage) system to guide drivers to available lots close to their destinations.

1.5.3: Assess contingency opportunities for the Tropicana Field site. Eighty-six continuous acres in the heart of downtown St. Petersburg could be a lucrative development opportunity if the Tampa Bay Rays move elsewhere in St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, or the Tampa Bay region. While it would be presumptive to conduct a master planning process, discussions on the property can nevertheless begin immediately. The land use agreement between the club and the city allows
redevelopment at the site contingent on certain revenue-sharing and parking-replacement agreements.

1.5.4: Confirm the highest and best use of Albert Whitted Airport for St. Petersburg's future economy. Millions of dollars have been spent to upgrade Whitted Airport and make it a more competitive location for general aviation users and services. Future plans call for runway lengthening to accommodate even larger private aircraft. The last attempt to repurpose the site, a 2003 referendum to convert half of the airport to parkspace, was overwhelmingly defeated. However, the airport's prime waterfront location, proximity to recreation, research, institutional, sports, cultural, and entertainment assets continues to cause speculation that it could be a more impactful economic engine if repurposed. A comprehensive, data-intensive, and effectively modeled analysis of Whitted’s highest and best economic use would put to rest once and for all questions over its highest value to the citizens of St. Petersburg. The report should include comprehensive data on current usage of the facility, the returns and costs to the city, tax assessments, and frequency of daily sorties.

1.5.5: Identify and advance potential marketing and development synergies between Downtown and Midtown St. Petersburg. Whether it involves cultural and heritage tourism, arts, transit, wayfinding, or some other opportunity, representatives from the city’s downtown and midtown districts should consistently meet and discuss potential connections and mutually beneficial projects and programs that would spur growth and development in both districts. This will be important if the city is to accrue tangible benefit from opportunities to continue downtown’s development momentum beyond the core district.

1.5.6: Consider the creation and staffing of a downtown management association (BP). The St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership is a dynamic organization that is responsible for many of the transformative investments that have brought the district to its current level of success. It will continue to have a vital role to play in the development of the proposed downtown Innovation District and other activities. But downtown would also benefit from a business- and government-supported organization or department to manage public spaces, program and host events, market downtown locally and eternally, potentially fund and manage a downtown “ambassador” corps, and other beneficial roles. St. Petersburg would join the majority of prominent U.S. downtowns that feature an organization of this type. The new organization would likely take the form of a business improvement district created under city statute with the authority to assess a levy to employers in the boundaried district to support the organization’s staff and programming. The new downtown organization must be approved by a majority of taxpayers in the proposed district.

2.0 TARGETED JOB CREATION

Research shows that the vast majority of new jobs in a community are created by its incumbent businesses. Currently, there is no formalized existing business programming implemented for St. Petersburg companies. Efforts must be initiated and targeted on the sectors identified in the Grow Smarter research as the priority opportunities for cluster development in the city. Business retention and expansion (BRE) programs are also effective tools for identification of competitive issues and opportunities, policy
priorities, and potential corporate attraction prospects. Ongoing discussions with leaders of existing companies should be coordinated with county and regional partners to ensure programmatic consistencies across geographies.

**ACTION 2.1: Effectively support the growth ambitions of established St. Petersburg companies.**

**Overview:** In order to most effectively capitalize on growth opportunities of existing businesses, a professionally staffed program must be put in place to leverage their feedback and perspective, but in a non-obtrusive, time-sensitive way. This is done through fostering of structured, informed conversations that speak to companies on their level rather than through a repetitive survey question-and-answer format. Growth in firms in St. Petersburg’s target sectors provides added value because they represent so-called “traded” employment, or jobs that bring outside money into the city where it creates additional opportunities via a “multiplier effect.”

2.1.1: Create a professionally staffed existing business program for targeted St. Petersburg firms. The first step of implementation will be the design of the BRE program. As noted, the program must be 1) **staffed**, with personnel well versed in the competitive dynamics of St. Petersburg’s targeted industries. A 2) **complete inventory of local companies** must be conducted to identify and classify companies by target sector and size. Based on the inventory, 3) **visitation protocols** must be developed specifying minimum business size, frequency of visits, and contact persons. A 4) **survey instrument** should be developed that is structured around key questions but leads to natural conversation flows and information exchange. A 5) **BRE database** should be selected that provides flexibility and scalability. The database will become a rich source of information on St. Petersburg businesses to supplement government-generated reports. Consistent management of the BRE database will inform not only visits but also strategic and follow up activities. This includes potential attraction of leads identified through site visits.

2.1.2: Help existing businesses identify and capitalize on export opportunities. The existing Tampa Bay Export Alliance can be a key partner for local officials to leverage in the identification of potential overseas opportunities for St. Petersburg companies to pursue. This assistance could either be provided during BRE visits and/or follow ups, or through direct assistance by the Alliance and its partners. The Tampa Bay Partnership and Enterprise Florida also take multiple marketing trips to high-profile international destinations promoting the state and its regions. St. Petersburg should manage the relationships necessary to ensure that local companies are exposed and connected to potential foreign customers. Likewise, city officials should inform the state and region’s international travel planning and itineraries to best capitalize on St. Petersburg’s target sector strengths.

2.1.3: Advocate for policies supportive of local employment growth. The St. Petersburg Area Chamber is already active in public policy and advocacy through the development of an annual Legislative Agenda, a regular Advocacy Newsletter, the empaneling of a Public Policy Council, Legislative Committee, and issue-specific task forces, management of a St. Pete Chamber PAC, and involvement in the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan, and flood insurance reform initiatives. The implementation of the BRE program
recommended in the previous action will enhance the ongoing development of local, regional, state, and national legislative agendas moving forward. The Chamber and its partners should incorporate all target-sector related issues and opportunities into their advocacy and policy programs. This may include state and federal requests for program and facility funding, regulatory reform, creation of ballot initiatives supportive of sector growth, and other activities.

2.1.4: Leverage business community support to continue capacity expansion at regional airports.
Passenger traffic at both Tampa International Airport (TPA) and St. Petersburg–Clearwater International Airport (PIA) has been increasing steadily in recent years. New non-stop destinations and additional flights are being added at both facilities. To support the travel demands of existing businesses and make Tampa Bay communities more competitive for the attraction of corporate and regional headquarters, efforts should continue to expand domestic and international direct flights and frequencies. In many communities, an economic development organization empanels a group of top business leaders to serve as an air service task force (or advisory committee). These individuals work with economic development professionals to compile data making a compelling case to the airlines to expand service and destinations. Communities also monetize air-service incentive funds to attract new carriers and/or destinations. St. Petersburg officials should work with regional partners to determine the need and value of creating a high-profile air service task force to advocate for service expansion at regional airports.

2.1.5: Consider providing supplemental, growth-supportive research services for local companies (BP).
A key benefit local economic development organizations can provide existing companies is supporting their growth ambitions through the provision of contracted (either pro bono or fee-based) research on market trends, potential clients, best-practice growth strategies, and other topics. While these services can be offered to firms of all sizes, their most impactful application is often through economic gardening programs. These programs support second-stage companies – businesses that have advanced beyond the startup phase but have yet to reach maturity. They typically employ from 10 to 99 workers and generate about $1 million to $50 million in annual revenue. Economic gardening strategies help CEOs identify and address strategic growth challenges by leveraging tools and information applicable to their market segments. They can also serve as tools to support “intra-preneurial” strategies to help companies innovate, optimize, reinvent, and refocus their goals and operations to foster sustained growth. St. Petersburg should pursue a pilot economic gardening program with the potential to scale the effort to multiple second-stage firms.

\[1\] Source: Edward Lowe Foundation.
**ACTION 2.2:** Pursue specific actions to grow St. Petersburg’s target business sectors.

**Overview:** To a large extent, strategies proposed in this Grow Smarter strategy related to existing business programming, advocacy, marketing, entrepreneurial development, talent development, and corridor and district revitalization will drive cluster-building efforts for St. Petersburg’s targeted industries. However, there will also be stand-alone activities customized for one or more existing/potential clusters.

### 2.2.1: Advance targeted activities to grow the Marine & Life Sciences sector

The development of a Downtown Innovation District (see Action 1.1) will be the principal catalyst for enhancing the growth of the Marine & Life Sciences cluster. There will also be workforce development programs recommended to expand the current capacity of marine and health-related training opportunities. **Policy actions** could include recommending and supporting ballot initiatives and advocating for funding of a SPOT budget, new facility and infrastructure development (including USFSP master plan initiatives), new research capacity, and district wayfinding and streetscape improvements. Because the intersection of marine and life sciences research and product development is the most transformative component of this target, the development of joint R&D facilities, commercialization programs, attraction of research scientists and/or faculty, and other initiatives should be considered for implementation. This includes soliciting additional investment from Johns Hopkins Medical System in St. Petersburg. The Innovation District Special Area Plan (see 1.1.3) will address and formalize many of these potential recommendations to be implemented by the repurposed SPOT organization.

### 2.2.2: Advance targeted activities to grow the Specialized Manufacturing sector (BP)

Strategic actions related to the analysis, inventorying, and marketing of available St. Petersburg development property (see 1.2.1/1.2.2) will be key to supporting existing business expansion and attraction of small- to mid-sized manufacturing firms. With large projected workforce shortages, **education and training program development and implementation** will also be critical as will **policy efforts** focused on optimizing state and local tax and incentive climates. A beneficial effort to better coordinate the identification and advancement of site development, training, advocacy, and business development programs would be to enhance the connectivity (and potentially combine) the many manufacturing organizations in St. Petersburg and Pinellas County. Local public and private officials should also pursue the development of a fab lab\(^2\) or similar facility for public and private use by entrepreneurial manufacturers, “makers” and “tinkerers,” and other constituencies. The facility could be the site for events such as maker fairs, 3-D printing demonstrations, startup and small business development classes, and other activities. A model facility for St. Petersburg can be found in the library at the Seminole campus of St. Petersburg College, where a 3D printer anchors the college’s new Innovation Lab.

### 2.2.3: Advance targeted activities to grow the Financial Services sector (BP)

As St. Petersburg’s largest and most concentrated sector, growth in Financial Services will somewhat be driven simply by the

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\(^2\) A fab lab (fabrication laboratory) is a small-scale workshop offering (personal) digital fabrication. It is generally equipped with an array of flexible computer controlled tools that cover several different length scales and various materials, with the aim to make “almost anything”. (Source: Wikipedia)
development strategies of the area’s largest firms. However, as with other targets, economic development practitioners and their partners can support cluster growth through targeted workforce and policy development. A product inventory (see 1.2.1) of available Class A office space in St. Petersburg will also inform corporate expansion and attraction efforts and determine if new Class A product is needed to fill demand. Market Street also suggests that St. Petersburg creates a Financial Services Council to serve as a representative association of local firms and professionals. The Council would be staffed by an economic development organization and include representatives from business, training, government, small business and entrepreneurial support entities, and technology groups. The Council would help craft specific strategies to address challenges and opportunities to most effectively grow Financial Services in the city. Efforts should also be integrated and coordinated into county and regional programs as necessary.

2.2.4: Advance targeted activities to grow the Data Analytics sector (BP). Of St. Petersburg’s target sectors, Data Analytics is the most difficult to define and conceptualize. Because of this, the initial implementation action should be the development of a comprehensive study detailing the specific companies (both standalone businesses and departments of multi-specialty firms), NAICS sub-sectors, talent, technologies, inter-firm relationships, training programs, and markets that comprise what will become the Data Analytics sector. A component of the study could be the recommendation of specific strategies to grow a local Data Analytics cluster. Market Street believes a truly impactful strategy could be the funding and launch of a Big Data Research Collaborative and associated business accelerator in St. Petersburg. The Collaborative would include representation from business, higher education, workforce development, technology providers, and government. Another key strategy could be the creation of Data Analysis master’s and PhD programs at one or more local/regional universities.

2.2.5: Advance targeted activities to grow the Creative Arts and Design sector. This sector already benefits from a number of established entities and programs to drive its growth. These include local arts alliances and councils, world-class museums, dedicated public funding, promotional integration with tourism and hospitality marketing, the City of St. Petersburg’s Public Arts Commission, Art in Public Places, and SPARC Exchange programs, gallery crawls and arts-specific events and festivals, and multi-purpose facilities like the Morean Arts Center with classes, studios, and artist-in-residence programs. The city also features five arts districts of varying sizes and concentrations. Harnessing the opportunities inherent in this capacity will require a connected, coordinated, multi-platform campaign. Key components should include: 1) a small but high profile Arts Coordination Council comprised of the top leadership of St. Petersburg (and potentially Pinellas County) associations, facilities, companies, and individual artists. The Council would seek to unify what is reportedly a disconnected and disparate local arts network. 2) Return of public arts funding to pre-recession levels. 3) Fostering of marketing synergies between tourism and economic development campaigns. 4) Enhancement of arts education programs at the K-16 levels. 5) Renewed efforts to support the identification of local and external buyers for art produced in St. Petersburg.
Petersburg. 6) Improved signage and marketing of arts districts. And, 7) a Digital Art and Design Center with programming developed specifically to train and support artists interested in transitioning to digital markets such as web design, mobile and internet application development, and other software platforms such as education technology, modeling and simulation, and gaming. The Center would leverage existing/proposed entrepreneurial development programs and could be sponsored by a coalition of advocates including colleges and universities, arts and cultural entities, philanthropists, and private companies. Potential synergies also exist between Creative Arts and Design and the local film sector. In fact, the newly appointed St. Petersburg-Clearwater film commissioner said that, “One of the big things I’ll focus on is digital media and Web-based content... I want to do as much as I can to grow that business locally.”

Also complementing Creative Arts and Design development are two announcements made in summer 2014. The first is a plan to develop a multipurpose arts complex in the city’s Warehouse Arts District to provide affordable space for artists and further raise the city’s arts profile. Public and private support to convert the cluster of six buildings into studios and other future uses will be essential to realizing the vision for the complex. The second announcement revealed that St. Petersburg was recently selected as one of ten cities to pilot a program from online marketplace Etsy to provide workshops and expert advice to supplement the incomes of craft artists. Free classes hosted by the St. Petersburg Greenhouse began in fall 2014 and were taught by local craft sellers with experience doing business on Etsy.

3.0 AWARENESS BUILDING

Currently, the Tampa Bay Partnership is the only entity investing resources to market St. Petersburg outside of the Tampa Bay region. However, some public and private city leaders feel that the Partnership’s multi-county geography has spread the organization too thin to effective tell the story of local communities. In order to establish a holistic brand outside the region and change perceptions about St. Petersburg, its assets, and its economic possibilities, it will be necessary to invest capacity in marketing the city outside its borders. Market Street believes that building awareness of St. Petersburg outside the region will feature three principal components: 1) promotion of targeted opportunities, 2) improving awareness of the city’s growing entrepreneurial ecosystem and capacity; and 3) advertising St. Petersburg’s desirability as a destination for young talent. Though messages will be focused on St. Petersburg, it is important that the competitive benefits of the city’s location in the dynamic, growing, and diverse Tampa Bay region are not ignored.

**ACTION 3.1: Develop targeted St. Petersburg external marketing capacity and tools.**

**Overview:** There is a definitive need for St. Petersburg’s “story” to be told to potential investors, corporate decision-makers, and site consultants. There are multiple options for how this can

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be accomplished. Regardless of local strategies, efforts must always be coordinated with county and regional economic development partners to ensure messages are consistent and complementary. It is also vital that promotional efforts are funded by a partnership of public and private entities. To that point, the city of St. Petersburg has already allocated funding in its most recent budget for external marketing.

3.1.1: Create and optimize online media promoting St. Petersburg (BP). As the principal private not-for-profit economic development entity in the city, the St. Petersburg Area Chamber must take its marketing efforts to the next level. This is especially true for its economic development-focused Grow Smarter campaign. By creating a Grow Smarter website or enhanced sub-page of the Chamber website, the organization will establish an online access point for interested corporate, talent, and general visitors. Content would focus on key programs, targeted industries, competitive assets, city-specific data, and links to county, regional, and state partners. To complement the Grow Smarter web presence, the City of St. Petersburg's Economic Development Division and Pinellas County Economic Development should optimize their web content, design and usability. As feasible, the three sites should seek to align targeted messaging, data profiles, and promotional narratives.

3.1.2: Invest in the design and implementation of a St. Petersburg-focused external marketing campaign. Outside awareness of the competitive position, assets, and opportunities in the City of St. Petersburg must be broadened. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to formalize a multi-channel program to market St. Petersburg outside of Tampa Bay. The dynamics of this campaign, from the development and use of collateral materials, potential for travel to target-specific meetings and conferences, visits to high-value prospect markets, placement of online advertising in targeted media, and investment in public relations should be designed and approved as a component of Grow Smarter implementation. Regardless of the dynamics chosen to promote St. Petersburg externally, it will be vitally important to continue to leverage county, regional, and state economic development partners to quantify local trends, tell St. Petersburg’s story, and market it nationally and internationally.

3.1.3: Effectively market St. Petersburg to influential visitors. Targeting the highest-value individuals and events for promoting the city as a destination for business can be an effective strategy to drive local growth. Potential components include: 1) hosting site consultants during high-profile events, most prominently the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, to introduce them to the city’s companies, business and activity districts, lifestyle amenities, entrepreneurial assets, and other assets. 2) Building upon the strategic planning of the St. Petersburg Chamber’s Visitor Development and Promotions Department to focus on targeting visitors for promotion of the city as a business destination. 3) Investing aggressively in promotional and marketing opportunities at the BLUE Ocean Film Festival and Conservation Summit. This recurring event could become a signature local economic development program and a lynchpin in building awareness of St. Petersburg’s marine science cluster.
**ACTION 3.2: Promote St. Petersburg as a growing hub for entrepreneurial and startup activity.**

**Overview:** St. Petersburg is becoming a Bay Area nexus for entrepreneurialism. But this fact is not widely known within Tampa Bay nor to mention outside the region. In order to build the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and increase the city’s pool of established entrepreneurs, St. Petersburg’s entrepreneurial capacity, networks, companies, programs, and facilities should be effectively promoted. If successful, St. Petersburg can legitimately tout itself as the top startup community in Florida, a title that has yet to be claimed. It is not enough to simply promote assets, however. St. Petersburg must concurrently build the capacity to support entrepreneurs and grow businesses in order to deliver on its promises to existing and future prospects.

**3.2.1: Establish a St. Petersburg presence at key external events.** Investments should be made in facilitating staff travel to events such as South-by-Southwest interactive in Austin, Apple and Android developers’ conferences, and other high-profile gatherings. St. Petersburg-specific promotional meet-ups and giveaways could also be programmed.

**3.2.2: Invest in targeted entrepreneurial event sponsorships.** A consistently effective strategy for generating interest in a local entrepreneurial climate is to attach a name to a prominent event. Whether as a title sponsor or a tiered investor, St. Petersburg should research the highest-value opportunities to sponsor high profile events frequented and/or followed by regional and state entrepreneurs (national events could be a phase two of the program). Either the City of St. Petersburg itself or a local entity such as the Greenhouse or TEC Garage could be offered as the titled sponsor.

**3.2.3: Launch and promote entrepreneurially-focused contests.** By creating and managing business-development contests, St. Petersburg can both generate positive publicity about the local ecosystem and also seed new generations of local entrepreneurs. Enterprise-creation contests could be held at local high schools, colleges, and potentially even statewide or nationally. Though it would be expensive, a “Start Up in St. Pete” contest providing seed money for the winning applicant if they agree to locate their business in St. Petersburg for a set period would attract not only entrepreneurs but also attention to the city’s startup community.

**ACTION 3.3: Introduce St. Petersburg to skilled external talent and priority markets.**

**Overview:** As the Grow Smarter Competitive Assessment showed, St. Petersburg’s talent dynamics are changing. While net growth in the city’s population has been slightly negative, St. Petersburg is becoming more entrepreneurial, younger, and better educated. While these changes have occurred organically, applying funding and programs to talent attraction will increase the flow of smart people into St. Petersburg.

**3.3.1: Leverage existing promotional initiatives and programs.** Millions of dollars are spent advertising St. Petersburg as a destination for tourism and recreation. Because many of the amenities sought by tourists are consistent with what talent is looking for in a residential or employment destination, a talent-
Attraction component or sub-campaign could be integrated into the community’s tourism marketing initiatives. This sub-campaign could direct interested visitors to the city’s proposed talent portal (see next action). Peer cities considered “talent magnets” like Austin and Raleigh could be incorporated into the campaign to tout St. Petersburg’s comparative assets combined with a lower cost-of-living.

3.3.2: Create an online St. Petersburg “landing pad” for existing and potential talent (BP). Many communities are bundling talent-focused services and interactive networking tools into an online site designed and marketed to professionals seeking information and opportunities to live and work in the area. St. Petersburg’s site would include a database of available internships and job openings, information on local housing, arts and entertainment assets, volunteer opportunities, professional organizations, leadership groups, healthcare options, family-friendly amenities, and other information important to individuals looking to stay or relocate to the city. Community members could volunteer to serve as site coordinators and monitor interactive networks of residents, visitors, and outside talent.

3.3.3: Conduct a road trip marketing St. Petersburg in the style of old-time campaigns. As featured in the book “Warm Wishes from Sunny St. Pete,” the young city and its chamber of commerce engaged in creative and successful stunts to advertise St. Petersburg. One of these included driving a Model 37 Hudson Touring Car up the east coast with painted messages urging Northerners to “Come along to the Sunshine City.” By mimicking this road trip for a modern audience and leveraging multimedia tools like Instagram, YouTube, live tweets on Twitter, Foursquare meet-ups, and other creative devices – and promoting it extensively through all marketing channels – St. Petersburg could generate a tremendous amount of national press and attention. A theme of St. Petersburg “then and now” could play on the historic campaign and contrast the city of the early 1900s with the dynamic community that has emerged in recent decades.

4.0 ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH

Though still emerging, the entrepreneurial ecosystem in St. Petersburg is nevertheless building capacity and beginning to see results. With its pedestrian-scale, walkable, and amenity-rich downtown, St. Petersburg is fast becoming the nexus of Tampa Bay’s entrepreneurial economy. Taking the next steps in this evolution will require increasing the availability of capital, expanding entrepreneurial networks and awareness, and providing additional programs and facilities to launch, scale, and sustain startup enterprises. Opportunities abound to engage local populations in the ecosystem, from businesses in South
St. Petersburg to wealthy retired or part-time residents. Because the most sustainable ecosystems are entrepreneur-driven, it will be critical that existing and potential local founders demonstrate leadership and commitment to support the sustainable growth and promotion of St. Petersburg’s startup community. The institutional capacity of St. Petersburg got a major lift in September 2014 when the University of South Florida-St. Petersburg’s business school received a $10 million gift for naming rights from Kate Tiedemann. In addition to supporting programmatic development and new faculty, the gift binds a successful local entrepreneur to a business college gaining national attention for its entrepreneur studies.

**ACTION 4.1: Enhance the availability of capital for new business formation.**

**Overview:** Many in St. Petersburg’s entrepreneurial community identified a lack of capital as the biggest challenge to growing and sustaining local startups. St. Petersburg is not alone in this regard; most startup communities outside of major capital markets report that funding for all stages of enterprise development is difficult to secure. There are no ready solutions to this situation other than to continue to build awareness of local funding opportunities, marshal the resources of existing and potential funders, seek institutional and governmental funding, and ensure that money received from the sale of local startups stays in the community and reinvests in the entrepreneurial economy. Financing sources must be diversified, from micro to angel to venture and all points in between.

**4.1.1: Leverage existing assets to fund enterprise development (BP).** There are a number of individual angel investors in the St. Petersburg area, but no major affiliated, staffed network. The Downtown Partnership’s Technology Fund has also seeded successful startups, most notably LumaStream. Many in the entrepreneurial community feel that great potential exists to better engage the assets of local retired executives and other high-net-worth residents. In order to do this, outreach must be made and opportunities publicized to solicit interest in capital investment from local wealth. An entity like the Greenhouse could be the lead coordinator of such an effort. Ultimately, a branded angel network could be formed from these lead investors and a process for vetting and supporting investment opportunities could be formalized.

**4.1.2: Create new early-stage capital investment capacity (BP).** While angels typically prefer investing in startups with established products and revenue streams, there is also a need for funding at earlier stages of enterprise development. At the genesis of a new business idea, founders often seek “seed” investments from family and friends, proof-of-concept funds, certain government programs like SBIR/STTR grants, or startup accelerators. In many communities, private, not-for-profit entities have launched seed investment funds to support the development of startup enterprises. These funds solicit capital from multiple sources to build pools of money for investing in promising new enterprises and often rely on experts to vet funding opportunities and optimize new venture ideas. Not-for-profit seed funds may ask for a smaller ownership stake from startups only to the degree that it supports the funds’ operations. St. Petersburg should consider launching a seed fund managed by a not-for-profit entity that solicits funding from public, private, institutional, and individual investors to support startup development in the city.
4.1.3: Promote investment opportunities in St. Petersburg’s entrepreneurial economy. Strategies recommended in Action 3.2 touting St. Petersburg’s entrepreneurial assets can serve to build awareness of local funding opportunities among external venture capital firms and other investment sources. St. Petersburg marketers and entrepreneurial representatives at outside events should always look to connect funders with investment opportunities in the city, either directly or by referral. Sustainability in relationship-building with funders will be important as awareness increases of investment opportunities in St. Petersburg. Ultimately, a local presence of an outside venture capital firm could be established, or a new firm launched in response to the emergence of a critical mass of fundable opportunities.

ACTION 4.2: Continue to leverage events and networking opportunities to build St. Petersburg’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Overview: Leaders of St. Petersburg’s entrepreneurial community said that the founding of the Greenhouse as a public-private facility and programmatic partnership was a key catalyst behind the growth of the local ecosystem. The 1 Million Cups events held weekly at the Greenhouse have become some of the most popular entrepreneurial networking opportunities in Tampa Bay. As the community builds, continuing to enhance events and grow networks will be critical to the success of startups in the city.

4.2.1: Establish a strategic direction for the Greenhouse (BP). As noted, 1 Million Cups and other events at the Greenhouse have catalyzed and coalesced St. Petersburg’s entrepreneurial community. What must be determined is how to build on this momentum and continue to expand the Greenhouse’s reach and impact. Leveraging the expertise and commitment of local entrepreneurs, Greenhouse leadership and staff should hold brainstorming sessions to identify future opportunities to develop new Greenhouse offerings and enhance existing programs. These sessions could form the basis of a strategic plan to take the Greenhouse to the next level. Entities similar to the Greenhouse in other communities have gradually added incubation and acceleration capacity, held summer coding classes for local youth, developed and implemented lending programs, and other initiatives.

4.2.2: Capitalize on additional local and regional networking assets and opportunities. The Greenhouse complements other networking capacity including the Tampa Bay Technology Forum, a major regional technology network, the SEI Alliance, an undergraduate collegiate entrepreneurship program leveraging local professionals, and TampaBay620.com, a website established by two St. Petersburg entrepreneurs that “maps” the local ecosystem and serves as a digital networking and information tool. While it is proposed that the Greenhouse becomes the entrepreneurial “center of gravity” for St. Petersburg, it should always leverage and coordinate (as feasible) the additional assets available locally and regionally to support the launch and scaling of startup enterprises. Networks should not be limited to specific geographies. Outreaching to small businesses and entrepreneurs in districts like South St. Petersburg can ensure that opportunities for buyer-supplier network development and commerce in goods and services can uplift companies citywide. Enterprising youth from across the city

(Photo: City of St. Pete)
should also have the opportunity to network with entrepreneurs, communicate their ideas and ambitions, and even be provided co-working or incubation space and mentoring if their ideas are marketable. Ultimately, the coordination of existing activities should supersede the development of new capacity if possible.

**ACTION 4.3: Expand startup incubation and acceleration capacity in St. Petersburg.**

**Overview:** Historically, the City of St. Petersburg did not have an official coworking space or startup acceleration program. This changed when the Tampa Bay Innovation Center (TBIC) launched its TEC Garage incubator affiliate. Now it must secure funding to construct a permanent location. In addition to event spaces, St. Petersburg must have facilities and programs where entrepreneurs can interact, support each others’ businesses, exchange ideas and information, and build networks.

4.3.1: Provide sufficient incubation space for St. Petersburg startup businesses. Prior to TBIC’s fall launch of TEC Garage in temporary space at the St. Petersburg College Downtown Center, the City Council approved an agreement to lease city-owned property as a **permanent location for the incubator**, which must now raise funds to build a 40,000 square-foot building on the property. Local public and private leadership and economic development professionals should lend their full support to TBIC in its pursuit of grants and investment to fund incubator construction. Another local asset is a **business incubator on 22nd Street South** launched by the City of St. Petersburg and the Tampa Bay Black Business Investment Corporation to help expand commerce in Midtown neighborhoods. Participating entrepreneurs receive services and counseling, meeting space, access to equipment and software, and loans up to $5,000. Eventually, the development of a **co-working and/or incubation function** at the Greenhouse could complement these existing facilities if recommended in the entrepreneur-driven strategic plan (see 4.2.1) proposed for the facility. The future need for co-working and incubation spaces and places should always be identified and communicated by the entrepreneurial community with support from economic development and government for facility and program development as needed.

4.3.2: Create additional startup acceleration programs in St. Petersburg. Acceleration programs are more formalized than incubators and typically feature time-specific (usually about three to six months) cycles of mentored and supported startup activity ending with “demo days” in which entrepreneurs present their businesses to funders. These programs eliminate the space constraints often faced by incubators with companies that remain in businesses but fail to grow large enough to leave the facility. **Gazelle Lab**, an existing accelerator, is run out of USFSP but is not affiliated with the university. The Lab is the first on-campus accelerator ever incorporated into the TechStars network and is also part of the Global Accelerator Network. The program raised a seed fund but it has yet to become sustainable. In addition to the potential for the Greenhouse to launch an acceleration program in the mode of a facility such as The Iron Yard in Greenville, South Carolina, **Market Street** has recommended that an accelerator program be created to coincide with the proposed **Big Data Research Collaborative** (see 2.2.4). Opportunities to create additional target-specific accelerators – for example, financial services – should be assessed as implementation of targeted employment continues.
5.0 COORDINATED EDUCATION & TRAINING

While there is a clear disconnect between locals’ perceptions of the performance of Pinellas County schools and the actual results of student achievement, there is nevertheless more that can be done to effectively prepare local students for college and careers. In order to maximize the benefit and effectiveness of Pinellas schools, existing efforts must be leveraged and new partnerships formed to ensure that the business and social services sectors are fully invested in the outcomes of the community’s students. Pinellas County Schools has already made strides beyond most public K-12 districts in customizing its curricula to career-focused education. To capitalize on this capacity, businesses that benefit from this training and social service providers who positively influence students’ lives outside of school must be brought into more effective alignment with education and training systems.

ACTION 5.1: Formalize new partnerships to advance “cradle-to-career” education.

Overview: The most pervasive local model for student-support-and-advancement programming is through initiatives tied to the “collective impact” philosophy of coordinated, collaborative, data-driven, community-wide coalitions focused on identifying and addressing intractable issues. These programs are typically staffed, funded, and feature participation from representatives of business, education and training, and social services sectors. They either leverage existing programs or launch their own and often create sub-committees focused on specific issues underlying educational-performance dynamics. This philosophy will expand upon efforts Pinellas County Schools have already made to incorporate business and community voices into their operational dynamics.

5.1.1: Develop a business/education/social services coalition in Pinellas County to support education and training pipelines (BP). While the Strive Partnership in Cincinnati and Alignment Nashville may be the best known cradle-to-career coalitions, affiliated or similar collective impact educational coalitions have been created in dozens of cities of all sizes and demographic compositions. Because they demonstrate positive results, the model has proliferated rapidly across the country. Based on best-practice models, Pinellas County Schools should develop a new public-private partnership between these three principal entities focused on student support and outcomes to optimize the development and implementation of a targeted cradle-to-career pipeline for locally available jobs. The partnership concept dovetails with the vision of the district’s current five-year Academies of Pinellas Master Plan, which is a community-supported effort to provide students with the skills needed to succeed in college, work, and life. Indeed, one of the three pillars informing Academies of Pinellas development was “Sustaining Change through Business and Civic Leadership.” Based on discussions among the cradle-to-career coalition partners, decisions can be
made related to the size, scope, and staffing of the new partnership. The discussions and potential research output of the coalition should inform new program development (see 5.2.2). Performance goals should be established and tracked closely for assessment of program efficacy. Care should also be taken to fully integrate and coordinate the education-focused work of the 2020 Plan into the cradle-to-career framework.

5.1.2: Effectively leverage all existing educational-support and oversight capacity. Though Market Street is recommending the development of a new cradle-to-career coalition, it should not create redundant capacity; instead, the partnership should leverage and integrate the full universe of existing support and oversight entities and programs into the cradle-to-career network. Key non-institutional elements of this existing capacity include the Pinellas Education Foundation and its Career Education Board, CareerSource Pinellas, WorkNet Pinellas, the Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, Pinellas County Urban League, the District Monitoring and Advisory Committee (DMAC), the Early Childhood Mental Health Committee, the Family Study Center at USFSP, the Independent Citizens Referendum Oversight Committee (ICROC), local PTAs, and multiple adult-literacy centers and programs affiliated with the Florida Literacy Coalition. Active programs include WorkNet Pinellas’ Internship Program, Pinellas County’s Summer Bridge, the City of St. Petersburg’s local hiring ordinance for non-violent ex-offenders, the Enterprise Village mentoring program, and many others.

ACTION 5.2: Capitalize on and develop career-targeted programs to support student achievement, talent retention, and economic growth.

Overview: Multiple studies have shown that student performance is markedly improved if they are engaged from an early age in the benefits of their learning on future college and career pursuits. Academies of Pinellas has already developed more career-focused campus options than comparably sized and even larger districts, providing numerous options for students looking to pursue occupational-specific programs.

5.2.1: Incorporate existing career-focused programs into the cradle-to-career framework. Under the auspices of the proposed cradle-to-career education and training coalition, all existing career-focused public and private school programs should be incorporated under the new partnership’s umbrella. As noted previously, through its Academies of Pinellas program, Pinellas County schools has already developed robust capacity to provide career-focused training and also “2+2” programs to prepare high school students to transition to two-year programs and then the workplace. The district has committed to expanding these programs to meet demand, including applying for a new federal Magnet Schools Assistance Grant that would add magnet programs to five county schools for the 2015-16 academic year. Career academies have already been developed for Architectural Design and Building Technologies, Engineering, Finance, Information Technology, Aquatic Management and Environmental Technology, Automotive, International Culture & Commerce, Graphic Arts, Culinary Arts, and Veterinary Science. Many of these contribute strongly to training needs for the Grow Smarter target business sectors. Middle and high school career tech programs aligned with two-year post-secondary education are offered for dozens of occupations; again, multiple categories can be feeders for locally targeted sectors. As such, local businesses should regularly seek to assist career-focused programs supporting their industries through
direct participation with schools and classes and opening up their workplaces for field trips and job-shadowing opportunities. In addition to leveraging these Pinellas County Schools programs, the cradle-to-career coalition should also incorporate career-specific training at area private schools and partnerships between training and business such as the 7th grade Digital Mathematics program developed in partnership with SRI, LumaStream, and others.

5.2.2: Develop new training programs to support targeted employment growth. A key benefit of the cradle-to-career alliance will be consistent discussion and data assessment of the skills required by local employers to support growth. This analysis will complement work already done through a partnership between Hillsborough County Economic Development and the WIBs in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties to identify skills gaps in manufacturing and information technology, with another study under development for Big Data. Higher educational institutions should consistently seek to build work requirements into curricula and performance assessment, utilizing St. Petersburg companies as “living laboratories” for job training. However, identifying the need for new curricula is just the first step in addressing employer needs. Programs must also be approved and funded by school boards and regents and funding identified, often from multiple sources. The cradle-to-career coalition will thus benefit from lobbying efforts conducted by the St. Petersburg Area Chamber and many of its public and private partners.

5.2.3: Foster and promote opportunities for local college students to connect with St. Petersburg employers. The most effective way to retain smart, talented students attending college or training in St. Petersburg is to connect them with a quality employment opportunity. It is even more impactful if these connections can be made when the candidate is still in school. Most higher education institutions have job placement departments and programs that serve as clearinghouses for employers looking to post available positions. Some have career fairs that provide further opportunities for students (usually rising seniors) to meet with prospective employers. However, the most impactful strategy for graduate retention is to develop a community-wide, coordinated, and widely promoted internship database. Often coordinated by a third party, this program connects institutions and students with high-value companies looking for skilled talent. The proposed talent “landing pad” (see 3.3.2) can serve as a portal for students and companies seeking to find positions or hire interns. In some programs, students create profiles highlighting their educational and work experience and career ambitions. Both the talent and employer databases should be searchable to optimize the potential for connections. Student and employer postings should be self-generated but moderated by the administering organization to ensure they are consistent with program specifications and kept current. Students hired into full-time positions from their internships should be leveraged for online testimonials and other means for promoting the efficacy of the database.
6.0 CULTURE & COMMUNITY

As has been mentioned more than once in this strategy, St. Petersburg has an ace-in-the-whole as it relates to business and talent retention and attraction in that its quality of life and place-based amenities have been strong draws for tourists and retirees for decades. It is these assets as well as Downtown St. Petersburg’s continuing evolution into a dynamic live-work-play environment that are making the city an increasingly competitive location for top companies, skilled professionals, and entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is essential that these qualities are preserved and enhanced as St. Petersburg grows and changes. Addressing potential threats to this quality of life will also be a critical strategy to ensure that the city’s momentum is not curtailed by factors that could diminish its destination appeal to constituencies of all types. Two key current threats are public safety and housing. A key theme of Grow Smarter public input, the housing stock in St. Petersburg was said to be sub-optimal for the attraction and retention of families and skilled professionals. A preponderance of smaller post-World War II detached houses and limited land available for new residential development have contributed to a deficit in quality housing options at multiple price points. While fear of crime was a less prevalent input issue, public safety is always a key concern for visitors and residents alike.

**ACTION 6.1: Design and implement a St. Petersburg Housing Action Plan (BP).**

**Overview:** The issues that have led to the current deficit of quality housing in St. Petersburg and the actions necessary to address the situation are multiple and complex. Because of this, an omnibus strategy should be developed to take a city-wide perspective on the creation of a sustainable and competitive supply of housing. The Plan will aggregate and incorporate existing programs and partners and formalize a detailed, prescriptive strategy to leverage resources, organizations, and programs to advance the condition and capacity of local housing of all types. A particularly timely early focus could be on downtown-adjacent neighborhoods as development pressure from St. Petersburg’s top investment district radiates outward from the core.
6.1.1: Apply coordinated partnerships to the development and implementation of the Housing Action Plan. Condition and supply of housing in St. Petersburg is not a new issue. City government and non-profit entities have been focused on strategies to address the problem for years. Recently, the city of St. Petersburg has renewed efforts through its Neighborhood Affairs department to address vacant and dilapidated housing in disinvested city neighborhoods. Local and outside entities also bring resources to bear on the issue. Since it became a Habitat for Humanity affiliate in 1985, Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County has built 302 homes (as of July 2014) and funded 270 homes overseas. Venture House is a non-profit whose mission is to take vacant, foreclosed, and distressed houses within a target neighborhood and rehabilitate them as affordable housing for entrepreneurs contingent on residing and creating jobs in St. Petersburg. Builders of Hope, a North Carolina-based non-profit that rehabilitates homes as affordable housing, recently spent $1.6 million to buy 68 homes in the St. Petersburg neighborhoods of Midtown and Childs Park. The Housing Action Plan must ensure that government-funded, private, and non-profit partners are fully leveraged to support resource development and implementation. It must also focus on all St. Petersburg neighborhoods and income categories if an optimal product mix is to be determined, proposed, and realized. Because of this, linkages between housing efforts and Grow Smarter talent development strategies should be fostered so that preferences of Millennials, mid-career professionals, recent graduates, entrepreneurs and other key workforce constituencies are incorporated into the analysis.

6.1.2: Leverage existing programs and resources as the baseline for new Housing Action Plan initiatives (BP). Because it has been an ongoing concern in St. Petersburg, established and new programs have been created to address the city’s housing issues. At the city level, St. Petersburg implements a Neighborhood Stabilization Program to provide targeted assistance to acquire and rehabilitate foreclosed upon residential properties that might otherwise become a source of blight within communities. The city also offers home-repair loans and launched an online tool for developers to encourage private and non-profit investment in neighborhoods of need. Pinellas County has allocated $5 million from the 2014 Penny for Pinellas funds to be used for land assembly for housing developments. An additional $5 million will be set aside in each of the next two fiscal years to be used for this purpose anywhere in the county. Recently, Habitat for Humanity Pinellas launched a new initiative, Midtown Mercy Neighborhood Preservation Partnership, to offer affordable home rehabilitation services to low-income homeowners along Midtown’s 22nd Street corridor. These programs provide important initial capacity to the Housing Action Plan and lay the groundwork for new and better coordinated efforts. These newly conceived initiatives should be developed through the Housing Action Plan process to ensure they have consensus and coordinated support for implementation. One potential new initiative could be the development of a St. Petersburg Land Bank. These public entities are effective tools to assemble delinquent properties and repackage them as incentives for quality housing projects. However, it will still be necessary to attract
developers who are comfortable doing scattered-site housing, a slow process involving assembly of tracts large enough to be financially feasible.

6.1.3: Ensure regulatory frameworks support Housing Action Plan implementation. Development controls, zoning and permitting processes, and other regulations must support the creation and rehabilitation of quality housing in St. Petersburg. Indeed, a stated intent of recent city efforts to reposition the Neighborhood Affairs department was to remove development obstacles preventing non-profit and for-profit housing organizations and developers from investing in the city’s lower-income districts. As recommended in Action 1.4 of this Grow Smarter Strategy, creation of overlay zoning and development codes for major transportation corridors in St. Petersburg can encourage higher density, mixed-use projects in activity nodes that can support greater intensities of housing, retail, and commercial development.

ACTION 6.2: Ensure the perception and reality of public safety are conducive to growth in tourism and residential demand.

Overview: In the Grow Smarter Competitive Assessment, data showed that violent and property crime in the City of St. Petersburg was higher than all comparison areas except Orlando. Respondents to the report's online survey also identified crime as one of the city's top challenges to overcome. Nevertheless, crime rates in St. Petersburg are dropping, with violent crime down 41.6 percent from 2007 to 2012. The city recently hired a new police chief, Anthony “Tony” Holloway, with a long-time commitment to data-driven law enforcement and community policing. As chief in Clearwater, Florida, Holloway required his officers to have more in-person contact with residents through a program branded “Park, Walk, and Talk.”

6.2.1: Utilize community-focused, “predictive” policing to ensure public safety in St. Petersburg (BP). Increasingly, urban police departments across the country are relying on sophisticated real-time data systems to analyze crime statistics and proactively address unlawful behavior. These so-called “predictive policing programs leverage analytics through mapping and historical statistical analysis to target crime hot spots and chronic perpetrators in order to better focus resources on crime prevention. Many departments complement these programs by restructuring to allow for more effective integration of personnel, resources, and intelligence-gathering capabilities. The St. Petersburg Police Department should complement a data-focused strategy with outreach and engagement of the public through community policing. Applying the “Park, Walk, and Talk” philosophy to St. Petersburg neighborhoods will likely be an early implementation priority for the department’s new chief. Citizen outreach will not only bolster predictive programs, but work towards ensuring public support for these policies.

6.2.2: Develop a communications strategy to promote crime prevention and reduction in St. Petersburg. If the perception of local public safety is negative, then it is tantamount to reality for many residents and visitors. The St. Petersburg Police Department should partner with community groups and the media to more broadly disseminate information on crime totals, reductions, programs, and philosophies. Many cities are utilizing “e-government” technologies to enable citizens to report crimes
from their cellphones, access digital crime data and incident locations via the web, and other strategies to improve transparency and trust between police departments and the public. As new leadership positions the St. Petersburg Police Department for future success, a formal communications and media outreach plan should be a prime strategic consideration.

**ACTION 6.3: Sustain and enhance St. Petersburg’s distinctive lifestyle amenities.**

**Overview:** In the strategic pursuit of new jobs and investment and a more diversified economy, it can be easy to lose sight of core assets that position the community competitively in the first place. In St. Petersburg’s case, many of these advantages contribute to the city’s desirability as a place to live and visit. Arts, culture, recreation, unique events and destinations, a well defined sense of place – these facets have, and will, ensure that talent and companies are attracted to the community. While the Grow Smarter Strategy challenges economic development professionals and public and private leaders to take job creation and talent development efforts to the next level, implementation partners must include those entities defining, defending, and driving improvements in St. Petersburg’s quality of life and distinctive character.

**6.3.1: Further support the integration of arts and culture into St. Petersburg’s community fabric.** This Grow Smarter Strategy recommends a number of tactics (see 2.2.5) to develop a Creative Arts and Design cluster in St. Petersburg. But further advancing the penetration of arts and culture into St. Petersburg’s identity and core values takes a more pervasive and intentional shift of attitude to incorporate the arts into the very essence of how the city operates. In many European cities, art-as-community becomes almost second nature as every project and program integrates some element of the arts into the design and implementation process. Whether this involves the planning of public space or a particular public service, it is understood that art will play a role. It is not suggested that St. Petersburg could or should go to these extremes to become a city defined by art. However, leaders of the arts community, business, and government can engage in purposeful, structured conversations about how St. Petersburg can leverage its historical, current, and future capacity in the arts to more definitively inform the city’s everyday decision-making and strategic planning.

**6.3.2: Continue the development and promotion of world-class recreation amenities in St. Petersburg.** As noted earlier in this strategy, the St. Petersburg Downtown Waterfront Master Plan is a critical process for protecting and enhancing the district’s recreational assets. So too is the city-coordinated effort to reimagine a new future for the St. Petersburg Pier. These processes support a broader countywide vision for parks and recreation development in Pinellas. The 15-year Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan approved in 2005 developed a long-range vision for these components of the county’s public realm. The plan recommended seven major initiatives for making Pinellas County a more livable and sustainable place to live, work, and raise a family. Many of the plan’s initiatives are funded by Penny for
Pinellas, a one-percent sales tax surcharge for leisure facilities extended through January 2020 by county voters in March 2007. Over $60 million is estimated to be generated by the tax in its current iteration. At the city level, St. Petersburg’s Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan provides a framework for achieving future bicycle and pedestrian enhancement, including the development, maintenance, and promotion of CityTrails comprised of bicycle lanes, routes, recreational trails, sidewalks, and other means of non-motorized mobility. A 2009 CityTrails Master Plan Update solidified the vision for this infrastructure for the years to come. As these various plans and processes indicate, St. Petersburg and Pinellas County have and continue to plan for upgrades to local recreation capacity and infrastructure. Ensuring these efforts are implemented in an effective, coordinated way will be critical to moving the city towards its goal of being the "most pedestrian and bicycle friendly city in the country." It will also be important for economic development professionals to emphasize the value of these assets for St. Petersburg’s competitive position as a destination for companies and talent.

6.3.3: Leverage unique events and attractions as local amenities that also raise awareness of St. Petersburg’s destination appeal. Many local leaders say that a key catalyst for St. Petersburg’s downtown renaissance was the launch and growth of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg. This event continues to draw people to the city from around the world and provides a high-profile opportunity to build awareness about St. Petersburg’s expanding list of amenities. Established events like Sunscreen Film Festival, Tampa Bay Blues Festival, the Mainsail Arts Festival, and upcoming events like the BLUE Ocean Film Festival and Conservation Summit also provide valuable marketing muscle to support St. Petersburg’s economic growth ambitions across multiple sectors. But it is not only the major events that contribute to St. Petersburg’s distinctive character; regular programs across the city like art crawls, farmer’s markets, First Fridays, music series, and other events serve as key attractors for visitors and residents. A potentially transformative development could be the eventual escalation of the Tampa Bay Rowdies to the first tier of American soccer: Major League Soccer. While this would necessitate a new stadium and significant behind-the-scenes lobbying, the award of a franchise to St. Petersburg could put the city even more squarely on the national and international map as a world-class destination. It is also important to acknowledge the strong value of the Tampa Bay Rays as a community asset, entertainment amenity, and highly visible ambassador of St. Petersburg to the nation and world. Efforts to keep the team in St. Petersburg have been ongoing, but a long-term solution has yet to be identified. The business community and government representatives should continue to work closely with the team to broker a viable plan to secure the Rays’ long-term presence in the city.
CONCLUSION

This Grow Smarter Strategy represents a marked increase in economic development specific – and supported – programming for the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of St. Petersburg and their partners. However, a plan of this breadth is necessary for the city to compete for the top companies and talent in today’s economy. With a premium placed on knowledge industries and their workers, every U.S. community of size is aggressively striving to retain and attract top companies and talent. In order to stay in the game against this competition, St. Petersburg must ramp up its efforts accordingly.

That said, the city has a number of enviable assets that gives it a leg up on competition from less dynamic cities and regions. Its hundred-year-plus history as a vacation and retirement destination has provided St. Petersburg with a wealth of lifestyle amenities and destinations that appeal to top firms and talent as well as visitors. Continuing to promote not only these benefits but also the side of St. Petersburg that is not as well known – the diverse economy, budding entrepreneurial ecosystem, revitalizing neighborhoods, young professional vitality, and other positive trends – will be critical to maintaining the city’s upward-trending momentum. So too will strategic efforts to grow and expand existing businesses, launch and grow new enterprises, train world-class talent, revitalize key districts and corridors, and offer a stock of quality housing demanded by buyers and renters at all price points.

Ultimately, this Grow Smarter Strategy comprises the “what” that St. Petersburg must advance to maximize its potential. The Implementation Plan will then detail “how” this can be effectively accomplished.
APPENDIX: BEST PRACTICES

Markets Street maintains an extensive library of best practice programs, processes, organizations, and efforts for application to key competitive opportunities and challenges identified through our comprehensive research process. Best practices recommended to inform the Grow Smarter Strategy were selected based on their specific relevance to actions and efforts the community can pursue. Ultimately, local leadership should utilize these best practices as guidelines and potential programmatic models to inform strategic efforts custom-tailored to the City of St. Petersburg.

ACTION 1.1: CORTEX INNOVATION COMMUNITY (ST. LOUIS, MO)

Founded to capture the commercial benefits of university and regional corporate research in St. Louis, the Cortex Innovation Community is a 200-acre technology district embedded into St. Louis’s Central West End and Forest Park Southeast neighborhoods. The innovation district features customizable lab and office space, proximity to world-class research institutions, availability of a trained local workforce, and three anchor life sciences and biotechnology research institutions. The Center for Emerging Technologies (a public-private partnership business incubator), BioGenerator (a privately funded organization that transforms promising technologies into sustainable businesses), and CIC St. Louis (a co-working space aimed at fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem) combine their efforts to support entrepreneurs in their research and funding phases. Once fully developed, the district will consist of one million square feet of space customized to fit the needs of start-ups and mature businesses. To further support entrepreneurs, the Cortex Innovation Community has also co-located multiple venture funding and entrepreneur support institutions within the district’s confines. To date, over $155 million has been invested in the district with another $189 million under development. The district was established as a Tax Increment Financing district, leveraging public dollars to spur private investment.

TACTIC 1.5.6: WICHITA DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (WICHITA, KS)

The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC) was launched in 2002 to revitalize and enhance downtown Wichita. Working closely with the private sector and local government, the non-profit corporation stimulates investment and interest in the center city. In 2011, WDDC won the International Downtown Association’s highest award, the PINNACLE Award, for their work building and strengthening partnerships to realize a clarified vision for downtown WDDC employs five professional staff to work with entrepreneurs, business owners, and property owners to identify prospective business locations, provide market data, evaluate opportunities for new retail and service businesses, develop marketing and promotional strategies, and assist with conceptualizing and implementing construction projects.
TACTIC 2.1.5: TWIN CITIES (MN) AREA ECONOMIC GARDENING PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership supports existing businesses well-positioned for growth by providing strategic research assistance to participating firms. Eligible businesses have between 10 and 99 employees and revenue between $1 and $5 million. Expanded from a pilot project implemented by Hennepin (Minneapolis) County, the Partnership includes the counties of Hennepin, Carver, Anoka, Scott and Ramsey; together they provide

- Custom research: 40 hours per chief operating officer (CEO) of four “pods” of 15 selected core companies (for a total of 60 companies)
- CEO round table sessions: Eight half-day sessions for the CEO’s of the 60 selected core companies
- CEO forum events: Four sessions for CEOs of up to 100 companies per session

TACTIC 2.2.2: FAB LAB (TULSA, OK)

Fab Lab—short for “Fabrication Laboratory”—is a community workspace in Tulsa that provides the public with access to “modern means for invention.” The center contains computer-controlled fabrication technology such as 3D printers and laser cutters that allow individuals of a variety of skill levels to design, develop, and fabricate almost any object. The goal is to make the process of “rapid prototyping”—previously an expensive process available primarily to Hollywood studios and aerospace engineers—accessible to the entire Tulsa community to promote innovation and entrepreneurship. Individuals can access the entirely self-service facility by becoming a member and taking a mandatory orientation course. Members may reserve machine time at a rate of $125 for 10 hours or $60 for four hours. Fab Lab also offers limited free hours to the public on Saturdays.

TACTIC 2.2.3: GREATER ST. LOUIS FINANCIAL FORUM

Empaneled to support the growth of one of the region’s targeted employment clusters, the Greater St. Louis Financial Forum is a CEO-led industry roundtable working to increase and leverage Greater St. Louis’ recognition as a leading off-Wall Street financial service center. The Forum is charged with accelerating economic development throughout the region in the financial and information services sector by working with local universities to develop industry-supportive degrees and curricula and pursuing public policy initiatives that could more narrowly target incentives for financial services firms. Participating companies include Edward Jones, Scottrade, Stifel, Wells Fargo Advisors, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and headquarters operations for CitiMortgage, Reinsurance Group of America, Century Link Technology Solutions (formerly Savvis) and Thomson Reuters.

TACTIC 2.2.4: SPRINT ACCELERATOR (KANSAS CITY, MO)

The Kansas City-based Sprint Accelerator is a three-month, immersive, mentor driven startup accelerator focused on mobile healthcare startups. Examples of mobile health products and services include wearable
technology like medical devices for movement tracking and vitals monitoring, medication schedule apps, and socially enabled products and services focused on achieving personal goals. The first class of ten companies received ongoing mentor support from within the entrepreneurial community, corporate executives, health experts, and venture capitalists. They had access to testing labs, research facilities, and network engineers at the Sprint Campus as well as technical support and development expertise from Sprint’s development team and dedicated accelerator space in Kansas City. The accelerator’s first graduating class recently pitched to a full house at the program’s Demo Day.

TACTIC 3.1.1 GRPVA.COM (RICHMOND, VA)

The online tools of the Greater Richmond Partnership (GRP), the economic development organization for the three-county, one-city region of Greater Richmond, are considered to be best-practice models in the industry. The site features a clearly-visible drop-down menu of information for site location consultants with high-quality, up-to-date information on business incentives, major employers in the region, the local workforce, available buildings and sites, and cost of doing business. A data report builder allows users to generate customized reports with detailed data and information about the region. A companion website, RichmondWorldView.com, is available in several languages and targeted at 14 global markets to further leverage international development opportunities. Another affiliated website, LoveWhatYouFind.com, directs users to the different communities in the Greater Richmond region and guides them to an online photo tour, videos, information, and resources based on users’ interest in the region as a place to work, live, learn, or play.

TACTIC 3.3.2 CARPE DM (DES MOINES, IA)
Found at the address www.SeizeDesMoines.com, Carpe DM is an online portal developed by the Greater Des Moines Partnership as a landing pad for existing and potential talent interested in the region. The Partnership built the central content with links to a comprehensive database of information on moving to and/or discovering Des Moines. Much content is expected to be user-generated, with local volunteers serving as site coordinators for various functions and topic areas. The site launched in early 2014 with information and links to finding a career; starting a business; local primary, secondary, and higher education; housing options, including rentals and real estate broken down by community; transportation in the metro and outside of it; volunteer and network opportunities for students, young professionals, career-minded adults, families, and empty nesters; local farmers markets, health care, spiritual communities; local arts, sports, politics, entertainments, and news; and area professional organizations and leadership programs.

TACTIC 4.1.1 TAMIAMI ANGEL FUND (NAPLES, FL)

A group of Southwest Florida investors created the for-profit Tamiami Angel Fund in 2010. From 2010 to 2013, the fund distributed more than $2 million to six startups at varying early stages of establishing their markets. The fund enables private, accredited investors to collectively make private equity investments in companies from promising early stage starts ups through expansion stage commercial ventures. Membership is by invitation only and the member-owned and member-managed fund expects percipients to actively contribute to the process investing time as well as money. The second round of investing is planned to start in 2014, with the goal of capitalizing a second fund of $6 million.

TACTIC 4.1.2 NESTMINT (DES MOINES, IA)

Announced in April, 2014, Nestmint is a seed investment fund managed by the Greater Des Moines Partnership economic development agency that is geared towards bridging the gap from idea to proof of concept for the earliest-stage Iowa startups. Envisioned to fill a gap left by traditional venture capital funding, Nestmint’s goal is to raise roughly $1 million for an initial round of investments from accredited Iowa investors in small amounts. The money will then be deployed through an application process that asks entrepreneurs with an idea to present their business plans (and other metrics) that show their idea is a viable one. The focus is on fledgling businesses too young to raise capital, investing around $25,000 and up to $50,000 to ensure promising ideas can reach the proof of concept stage. Unlike for-profit funds, Nestmint will take a negligible stake in funded companies.
TACTIC 4.2.1  IRON YARD (GREENVILLE, SC)

Launched in 2010 as a co-working space, the Iron Yard quickly grew in scope. The Iron Yard today is equal parts business accelerator, academy, co-working and event space. Iron Yard seeks to bring entrepreneurs, investors, developers, and artists together to inspire innovation. The Iron Yard runs two accelerator programs per year – an open tech program in the spring, and a digital health program in the fall. To enhance the experience, and ultimately the success of the accelerator participants, Iron Yard partners with specialists in marketing, design, community management, and other disciplines to offer well-rounded support and immerses potential companies in its co-working space, provides intensive code education, and invites entrepreneurs to their local technology and design events. At the program’s conclusion, Iron Yard holds a Launch Event to generate buzz about the company’s product, entrepreneurs may also go on two fundraising trips to market their product to investors. Iron Yard also hosts a popular coding academy of area youth during the summer months.

TACTIC 5.1.1: CRADLE-TO-CAREER EDUCATION COALITIONS

These public-private coalitions convene education, training, government, non-profit, and business constituencies through a shared vision of creating a best-in-class regional workforce development system and product. Business interests in communities around the country have long sought to support and improve the quality of education systems. But in recent decades, as school systems have faced increasingly severe challenges and as resource constraints have increased, many communities have formalized these efforts through the creation of comprehensive programs or independent, non-profit entities.

Strive Together (Cincinnati, OH)

Promoted by community leaders in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, the Strive Together effort was launched in 2006 to focus cross-sector community leaders on prioritizing education through significant investments of time, talent, and treasure. The Strive Partnership has a three-pronged approach: engaging executive and grassroots partners in the vision, working through turf issues among service providers, and encouraging funders to move existing resources to proven strategies. During its first five years, Strive saw positive improvement in 40 of the 53 educational outcomes it measured. Strive’s success has inspired other communities to adopt the model. Since starting in Greater Cincinnati, Strive has grown to include a network of 49 partnerships across 26 states and the District of Columbia from Maine to Alaska to Austin and San Diego.

Alignment Nashville (Nashville, TN)

Founded in 2004, Alignment Nashville was created to align community organizations and resources to provide coordinated support for Nashville’s youth, having a positive impact on public school success, children’s health, and the success of the community as a whole. Alignment Nashville is governed by a Board of Directors, which appoints an Operating Board to oversee Design and Implementation Teams. This structure allows varying levels of involvement and leadership and engages a wide range of stakeholders in different ways. Alignment programs, based on Alignment Nashville have also been implemented in
Rockford, Illinois; Jackson, Mississippi; Coachella Valley, California; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Oneida-Herkimer-Madison, NY.

Though the Strive and Alignment networks are the largest and most prominent cradle-to-career coalitions, many other communities have launched similar efforts, including 55,000 Degrees in Louisville, KY; the Los Angeles (CA) Education Partnership; the Boston (MA) Opportunity Agenda; Project L.I.F.T. in Charlotte, NC; the Alliance for Education in Seattle, WA; and the recently announced EDGE Initiative in Greater Des Moines, IA.

**ACTION 6.1: HOUSING ACTION PLAN (ST. PAUL, MN)**

Housing was a central issue for St. Paul when they developed their comprehensive plan for 2008-2018. The plan called for the preparation of a Housing Action Plan to report on the market context of housing activities; outline the implementation actions being undertaken, including specific targets to be met; and foster coordination between the Department of Planning and Economic Development, the City’s Department of Safety and Inspections, and other housing organization partners. The Plan focuses on four key areas: increasing the housing stock with new construction at a variety of income levels, maintaining an older housing stock, addressing demand for housing for long-term homeless, and consistently funding public housing and publicly-assisted low-income housing.

**TACTIC 6.1.2: FULTON COUNTY/CITY OF ATLANTA LAND BANK AUTHORITY**

Land banks are public authorities created to efficiently hold, manage and develop tax-foreclosed property. They act as legal and financial mechanisms to transform vacant, abandoned and tax-foreclosed property back to productive use. In addition, a land bank is a locational incentive that encourages redevelopment in older communities with little available land and/or neighborhoods that have been blighted by an out-migration of residents and businesses. The Fulton County/City of Atlanta Land Bank Authority’s mission is:

- To return nonrevenue generating, non-tax producing property to an effective utilization status in order to provide housing, new industry and jobs for the citizens of the County.
- To acquire title to certain tax delinquent properties which it will in turn inventory, classify, manage, maintain, protect, rent, lease, repair, insure, alter, sell, trade, exchange or otherwise dispose of under such terms and conditions.
- To extinguish past due tax liens from property foreclosed upon by Fulton County and the City of Atlanta in their tax collection capacities.

**TACTIC 6.2.1: OPERATION BLUE CRUSH (MEMPHIS, TN)**

Operation Blue CRUSH (Crime Reduction Utilizing Statistic History) began as a partnership between the University of Memphis’ Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice along with the Memphis Police Department. The partnership utilized predictive analytics through mapping and historical statistical analysis
to target crime hot spots and chronic perpetrators thereby combating criminal activity in a proactive manner. Along with the use of real time data to predict potential crimes, Operation Blue CRUSH has commenced an outreach strategy to engage and maintain public support for its effort through establishing sustained contact with community leaders and neighborhood groups, developing diversified and sustained media exposure, and engaging the assistance of various referral agencies and service organizations when needed.