

US 19/Rivergate/Main Street Gateway

This “gateway” to Downtown New Port Richey, referred to as “Rivergate,” has become a focus of extensive recent Pasco County visioning and planning activities and more recent real estate activity involving the existing Walgreens drug store and the adjacent vacant newspaper building. This 22-acre area is bounded by US 19, Main Street, River Road, and South Road.

Pasco County’s recent planning and visioning initiatives have occurred at a very opportune time, given more recent real estate market happenings in the area, including the imminent closure of the Walgreens drug store at the corner of US 19 and Main Street, which is currently for sale, the demolition and redevelopment of the adjacent parcel for an Aldi’s market, and development of the new Main Street Landing mixed residential/retail project on Main Street between River Road and the Cotee River.

Rivergate consists 22.14 acres of land with 22 properties and 20 property owners and a total taxable value of \$9.27 million as shown in Figure 7. This includes \$7.08 million for seven parcels on US 19, \$1.07 million for seven parcels on Main Street, and \$0.48 million for eight parcels on River Road and Acom Street. Development on US 19 consists of mix of large retail, office, and warehouse facilities, car wash, and restaurant. Professional and medical offices and small retailers characterize development on Main Street.



Figure 7: US 19-Rivergate-Main Street Gateway

US 19 commercial frontage includes seven developed parcels (Parcel 1 through 7) with 13.04 acres, 224,833 square feet of building area, and a total taxable value of \$7.08 million. Taxable values average \$542,619 per acre and \$31.50 per square foot. U-Haul Storage, with 94,993 square feet of mini-warehouse space, and the old Bank of America building, with 62,727 square feet, are the largest facilities. Highest taxable values are U-Haul Storage (\$2.13 million) and Walgreens drug store (\$1.96 million). Walgreens is for sale currently for \$1.35 million, which is much lower than its taxable value.

Main Street commercial frontage includes seven parcels (Parcel 16 through 22), six of which are developed, with 2.03 parcel area, 39,635 square feet of building area, and a total taxable value of \$1.70 million. Taxable values average \$836,500 per acre and \$43 per square foot. The largest and highest value property is the six-tenant Alderman Plaza retail center with 13,423 square feet and a taxable value of \$477,492. One small commercial property, an 8,000-square foot warehouse, on Acorn Street (Parcel 14) has a taxable value of only \$155,695 (\$19.50 per square foot), and is for sale for \$495,000.

Six parcels that front on River Road (Parcel 8 through 13) are residential or institutional, including two churches, one of which is City-owned Gateway Church. The 2.3-acre Gateway Church parcel (Parcel 12) is viewed as part of a potential site for affordable or market rate housing development. The church parcel was acquired by the City in 2006 and was rezoned to allow up to 10 dwelling units per acre, or up to 23 units. Given the location of this property adjacent to commercial uses on US 19, a density of 15-20 units per acre is reasonable, making it feasible to develop many additional units, particularly in combination with other River Road properties (Parcel 8 through 11) and the undeveloped rear portion the U-Haul Storage parcel (Parcel 5). These five parcels and the church property total approximately five acres and could accommodate up to 75-100 units. All properties but the church property have a total assessed (just) value of \$550,000.

Vision 19 Redevelopment Concepts

Redevelopment concepts for a larger Main Street gateway area along US 19 and Main Street, including properties in this 22-acre Rivergate area, were studied and proposed by the County in its 2014 report, *Vision 19: A Catalyst for Change in The Harbors*. This ambitious but creative and thoughtful list includes several projects and initiatives, outlined below, in the US 19/Rivergate/Main Street Gateway area, which can help drive joint actions by City and County leaders to redevelop this prominent community gateway.

- Acorn Street pedestrian walkway network
- Innovation Café (a “coffee house” type of meeting place and incubator of ideas)
- Places for the display of public art
- Main Street streetscape improvements.
- Transit-oriented mixed-use development on Main Street
- Development of affordable housing on City-owned church property on River Road
- Development of a parking structure south of Main Street at Bank Street and Nebraska Avenue
- A “Food Hub” where the Aldi’s market is proposed

Redevelopment Initiatives

Given the impetus provided by the County's Vision 19 initiatives for and interest in this Rivergate area, opportunities for the vacant newspaper building presented by the new Aldi's market and the nearby Main Street Landing development, the urgency created by the imminent closing of Walgreens at the highly visible US 19 and Main Street corner, and the presence of aging and haphazard development along US 19, the time is right for City and County to follow through jointly in redeveloping this prominent gateway area. Initiatives include:

- Working with property owners and commercial brokers to sell, lease, update, and reuse the Walgreens store.
- Working with management of Aldi's market to expedite permitting and address their access, and operating needs.
- Finding and negotiating with a qualified developer of affordable, market-rate, or senior assisted housing for the City-owned Gateway Church property and adjacent River Road properties.
- Improving landscaping and enhancing streetscapes and sidewalks along US 19 and Main Street frontages. Investigate funding these improvements and enhancements through special assessments on benefiting property owners.
- Developing pedestrian walkways through the Rivergate area with connections to the Cotee River and the Main Street Landing.

The County's Vision 19 was followed by a 2015 report, *Harbors Catalyst Project Development Strategy Concept Plan Market Area*, that focused more specifically on redevelopment needs and opportunities in the Rivergate area. The RCLCO consulting firm assessed three market concepts for the 22-acre Rivergate site involving three different mixes of retail, office, and housing development. Concepts ranged from 75,000 to 146,955 square feet of retail space, from 112,400 to 135,665 square feet of office space, and from 95 townhomes to 180 multifamily housing units. Aspects of all three concepts had advantages and disadvantages, with no strong preferences expressed for one over the others.

Figure 8 provides a conceptual site layout for the Rivergate site that reflects a retail, office, and housing development. The layout considers locating retail development fronting the corner of Main Street and US 19 with parking in the rear. Residential development is located adjacent to the retail uses. An office/institutional development is located in the south of the site and includes parking structure which maximizes available space for an office complex and public space.



Figure 8: Rivergate Development Concept

Figure 9 is the rendered site plan for Main Street Landing as prepared by New Port Richey Development Department. This residential site is adjacent to the Rivergate site and includes access to the river.



Figure 9: Main Street Landing Site Plan

Various Proposed Future Projects

Continued investments in a variety of community-wide projects will support and/or encourage additional development activities. These opportunities range in community investments. Some of these opportunities will need to be timed with realistic expectations of Public/Private Partnerships with property owners, investors and the City, others are coordinated investments that add aesthetic value, connect areas or properties for better accessibility, or supplement adjacent investments. These opportunities are not all inclusive, and will continue to evolve and require further investigative study prior to implementation to establish boundaries, detailed work programs and budgetary obligations:

- Gateway Area Infrastructure Plan:
 - Drainage
 - Parking
- City Owned Boat Ramp and Parking
 - Redesign for efficiency and mixed-uses
- Chamber Offices Redevelopment
 - Redesign for efficiency and mixed-uses
- Data Communication Network
- Streetscape Enhancements
- Riverwalk Expansion
 - Various Overpass/Underpass U.S. 19
 - Sims Park Under Main Street to South
 - Sims Park to Port Richey
- Alley Rehabilitation
- Bicycle/Trail Routes:
 - Grand Boulevard to Marine Parkway
- Corridor Improvements:
 - Gulf Drive
 - Utility Burials
 - Madison Avenue - City Limit (6th Ave.) to Main Street
 - Sidewalks/Landscape/Lighting
- Tourism Facilities:
 - Recreation Enhancements
 - Docks/Boat Ramps/River Taxis
 - Athletic Training Facilities
 - Olympic/Competition Sized Swimming Pool



RIVERGATE-PALM DISTRICT

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

City of New Port Richey

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

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Conceptual Site Plan Diagram





Conceptual design of a kayak launch site South of Stonehaven at Main Street.

Source: TBRPC 3D Model