



St. Petersburg City Council: Create a Community Land Trust for the Historic Gas Plant District (HGPD)

What LWVSPA Wants

We are seeking written support from each St. Petersburg City Council member to create a Community Land Trust (CLT) for the public land asset known as the historic gas plant district (HGPD).

The League of Women Voters of St. Petersburg Area (LWVSPA) supports the creation of a CLT for the HGPD. This policy approach ensures that public land remains a public asset, providing long-term affordability, equity, and stability for residents. A CLT would balance economic growth with community priorities, preserving affordability and preventing displacement.

Why It Matters

Families: Housing is the priority need for families throughout Florida.¹ The barrier to building more affordable housing is the lack of buildable land in St. Petersburg. Other cities have provided housing by putting land into a CLT and passing zoning and development guidelines requiring the City/Private Developer to provide a mix of income in one residential building, as well as providing residential units for sale².

Employers: The Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation has told the LWVSPA that employers project a shortage of employees in the near future if affordable housing is not available in our City. Employees will not commute long distances for low- or minimum-wage jobs.

Communities: South St. Petersburg leaders have expressed concern that development of the HGPD will result in gentrification. Community land trusts prevent gentrification by acquiring land and permanently removing it from the speculative real estate market, ensuring affordability and accessibility for long-term residents.

¹ Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation. (2024). Employer Workforce Housing Report.

² Shelter Force (2014) Denver Land Trust Fights Displacement.

<https://shelterforce.org/2025/10/14/denver-land-trust-fights-displacement-whether-it-owns-the-land-or-not/>

<https://www.gainesvillefl.gov/Government-Pages/Government/Departments/Housing-Community-Development/Community-Land-Trust-Program>

Housing/Health/Education/Economy: Community Land Trusts (CLTs) ensure permanent affordable housing, combat gentrification and displacement, and foster community stability and equity. CLTs preserve affordability, support wealth-building for lower-income households, reduce absentee ownership, and create inclusive neighborhoods.

Public Health/Safety: Research shows that families paying excessive amounts of their income for housing often have insufficient resources remaining for other essential needs, including food, medical insurance, and health care. Furthermore, studies continually show that children living in unstable housing environments are more vulnerable to mental health problems, developmental delays, poor cognitive outcomes, and depression than children who are stably housed. A CLT allows the City's elected representatives to adopt zoning specific to the HGPD, putting public health and safety above developer profit.

Local Economy: A CLT is steered by community leaders, including business leaders who understand the local economy and how to attract high-paying commercial and industrial jobs.

Key Facts

Equity: Placing development decisions in the hands of the private sector leads to projects that do not address community priorities.

Housing: Private developers who acquire land from the City can resell the land without benefit to taxpayers.

Open Space: Private developers are incentivized to provide as little open space as possible. CLTs allow the balance of open space and developed space to reflect community priorities.

Personal Accounts from Impacted Group

- LWVSPA reviewed the Rays/Hines contract for the HGPD development. Left to the private developer, the contract sold the land for well below market value and allowed resale with no benefit to the city. The developer could simply pay a small penalty and provide no affordable housing units. The developer proposed primarily low-paying hospitality jobs and minimal open space, compared to similar projects.
- A 2024 LWVSPA poll of registered voters showed more than 70% of voters in St. Petersburg opposed selling the HGPD land to a private developer.³

League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area
Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.
lwvspa.org

³ League of Women Voters of St. Petersburg Area. (2024, February). *Stadium survey*