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# Retired Air Force general David Scott, Nielsen combine forces to improve Ybor

Premium content from Tampa Bay Business Journal - by Margie Manning, Senior Staff Writer

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**TAMPA** — Business and neighborhood leaders in Ybor City want to identify and emulate the secret sauce that draws people to communities such as New Orleans' French Quarter and Miami's South Beach.

The Moving Ybor Forward committee has launched an "aspirational communities" study, focusing on the original characteristics of four geographically and culturally diverse areas of the United States. Communities under review also include Lower Haight in San Francisco and the Lower Downtown Historic District in Denver.

The comparative analysis, being conducted with the pro bono help of The [Nielsen Co.](#) (NYSE: NLSN) and consulting firm North Highland, will identify attributes Ybor might want to have in the future as the community implements its vision plan, said **Vince Pardo**, manager of the Ybor City Development Corp.

"If there is something they all possess that's contributing to their success and locally we don't have a strong suit in that area, there's something for us to consider," said **David Scott**, chairman of the Moving Ybor Forward committee.

The process is still in the early stages, with the four targets under study only recently culled from a list of 26 communities nationwide. Review of at least some of the findings could begin in late April, Pardo said.

## Leadership and inspiration

The concept of aspirational communities extends beyond Ybor. Aspirational communities tend to be managed by people who express a sense of passion and idealism, wrote **Brent E. Herrington**, vice president, [DMB Associates Inc.](#) in Scottsdale, Ariz., in a publication for the [Community Association Institute](#). Aspirational leaders are focused on building the social and civic well-being of their communities, and believe their role is to provide leadership and

inspiration, not merely administration, Herrington said.

Those traits seem to describe Scott, a retired major general from the U.S. Air Force who served as deputy director of the Center for Special Operations at the U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base. Besides chairing Moving Ybor Forward, he is leading the Adamo Drive Mural Project, a public/private effort to enhance the appeal of the Ybor Historic District for visitors and residents.

Ybor City is ready for new investment, "but we have to have a sense of confidence and a feeling where we are headed in the future," Scott said.

Scott persuaded **Bob McCann**, executive vice president of client solutions and senior leader of Nielsen's Global Technology and Information Center in Oldsmar, to take on the project without compensation for Nielsen.

Nielsen is drawing on several of its resources to support the project, said **Amy Rettig**, vice president of public affairs. It's using data collected by Nielsen Claritas Prizm, which sorts U.S. ZIP codes into 66 different demographic clusters, as well as from NM Incite, a joint venture between Nielsen and McKinsey & Co. that offers social media tracking. Measurement science, a specialized research group within Nielsen, developed a survey for Ybor City visitors, who were queried by students from [Hillsborough Community College](#) as part of the process.

North Highland, which frequently partners with Nielsen, gathered the various stakeholders and worked with them to determine the project's goal of finding and implementing other communities' best attributes. North Highland also worked as consultants for a successful revitalization of Winter Park's downtown area, Scott said.

Nielsen could tackle similar projects in the future, as McCann strives to get the newly public company more involved in the community, Rettig said.

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