



# **The Channel District**

## **Community Redevelopment Plan**

Prepared by

The City of Tampa  
Department of Urban Development and  
The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission

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**Table of Contents**

I.....Introduction  
II.....Legal Description and Neighborhood Boundaries  
III.....Statutory Requirements  
IV..... Comprehensive Plan and Zoning  
V.....Neighborhood Character, Existing Land Use,  
Relationship to Adjacent Neighborhoods  
VI..... Transportation System  
VII..... Need for Redevelopment, Development Environment  
VIII..... Proposed Redevelopment Plan, Implementation Measures,  
Neighborhood Impact, including Affordable Housing  
IX..... Capital Improvements  
X..... Development Controls  
XI.....Cost and Timing of Redevelopment  
XII.....Funding Sources  
XIII..... Public Participation

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS APPENDIX A**

- F1. Redevelopment Area Boundary Map
- F2. Adopted Comprehensive Plan - Future Land Use map
- F3 Existing Zoning Map
- F4. Existing Land Use Map
- F5. Community Redevelopment Plan – Map
- F6 CRA Plan Area Diagram

## I. Introduction

The City of Tampa is committed to the process of redevelopment of its **Urban Center**, a term describing the City's Central Business District and the adjacent neighborhoods comprising the city's urban core. It is a significant geographical area, and includes districts and neighborhoods originally developed over 100 years ago.

The challenge of redevelopment and revitalization for an inner-city district is heightened because of the age of the City, and compounded by the rapid growth and physical expansion in unincorporated Hillsborough County over the past 30 years.

This Community Redevelopment Plan (the "Plan") is for the Channel District Community Redevelopment Area ("Area"), a 221-acre urban neighborhood (**see Figure F1**) adjacent to the Central Business District (CBD), occupying the eastern side of the downtown peninsula. The Plan has been prepared in compliance with Part III, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, including all applicable sections and supplements.

The purpose of the Plan is to eliminate the conditions of blight found to exist in the "Area" and to provide for affordable housing to residences of low and moderate income. An analysis of the factors leading to that determination was prepared by the City of Tampa, Department of Business and Housing Development, and is entitled **The Channel District Finding of Necessity**.

The Plan recognizes the historical character of the area, and development plans currently underway by both public agencies and organizations, and the private sector, within the Channel District. The Plan also acknowledges and incorporates past planning efforts in the area, including: **The Florida Center for Urban Design and Research, *An Examination of Long-Term Development Options for the Ybor Channel Area*, July, 1989, City of Tampa, *The Channel District, A Plan for the Future*, August, 1993, and The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, *The Channel District*, December 10, 1997.**

While the Redevelopment Plan is represented by a generalized land use plan, it is designed to facilitate the elimination of blighted neighborhood conditions, unsafe or obsolete infrastructure, support a perspective of investor, develop confidence sufficient to encourage extensive redevelopment in the District and to provide for affordable housing to residences of low and moderate income. As a consequence of such redevelopment, the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County can anticipate new urban residents, job creation and an enhanced tax base in the area. The Plan anticipates that the Channel District will enjoy an increasingly synergistic relationship with Tampa's Central Business District, Ybor City and nearby urban neighborhoods.

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## **II. Community Redevelopment Area – Legal Description**

This part of Sections 18 and 19, Township 29 South, Range 19 East, all lying within the City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida, lying within the following described boundaries to wit:

Begin at the intersection of the Northerly projection of the Centerline of Channelside Drive (Thirteenth Street) and the Centerline of Adamo Drive (S.R. 60) (First Avenue) as shown on TAMPA DOCK CO'S. ESTUARY SUBDIVISION NO. 2, a subdivision of record in Plat Book 1. Page 95 of the public records of Hillsborough County, Florida; run thence Easterly along said Centerline of Adam Drive to its intersection with the Northerly projection of the Easterly boundary of the following described tract: Tract beginning on the South Right of Way line of Adamo Drive a distance of 443.80 feet East of the East Right of Way line of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and run East 390.94 feet; thence South 02° 16' 19" West a distance of 204.51 feet; thence South 56°02'33" West a distance of 171.71 feet; thence North 88°09'38" West a distance of 250.00 feet, to a point lying 294.96 feet South of the point beginning; thence North 01°50'22" East, a distance of 294.96 feet to the Point of Beginning, less Right of Way for Expressway, as shown by the Tampa Hillsborough County Expressway Authority, on their drawings prepared by Greiner Engineering, and titled Tampa South Crosstown Expressway Eastern Extension to I-75, project number 10002-2520-035, Sheet No. 3; run thence Southerly along said Northerly projection and Easterly boundary of said described tract, to and along its Southeasterly projection, to its intersection with the Centerline of Ybor Channel, said Centerline being that between the Easterly and Westerly combined Pierhead and Bulkhead Lines of said Channel as determined by the Jacksonville District, Corps of Engineers of the Department of the Army and shown on their drawing of the U.S. Harbor Lines, Tampa Harbor, Florida Hillsboro River and Hillsboro Bay Sheet No. 2, File 45-20, 641; run thence Southerly along said Centerline to its intersection with the Easterly Projection of the Centerline of Garrison Channel per the Tampa Port Authority Bulkhead Lines as established by Hillsborough County Port Authority on September 15, 1960 and filed for record in Plat Book 42, Page 37 of the public records of Hillsborough County, Florida, said Centerline lying, 150 feet Northerly of and parallel to that combined Pierhead and Bulkhead Line forming the Northerly boundary of Seddon Island (Harbour Island), and lying between the U.S. Corps of Engineers Harbour Line Monuments THL 214 and THL 215; run thence Southwesterly along said Centerline to its intersection with the Southwesterly projection of the Easterly boundary of Water Lot 70 of HENDRY & KNIGHT'S MAP OF CHAMBERLAINS, a subdivision of record in Plat Book 5, Page 10 of the public records of Hillsborough County, Florida; run thence Northeasterly along said projection, Easterly boundary, and its Northeasterly projection to the Easterly projection of the Centerline of Channelside Drive ( Carew Avenue, Platt Street), as shown on said HENDRY KNIGHT'S MAP OF CHAMBERLAINS; run thence Easterly along said projection and Centerline to its intersection with the Southeasterly projection of the Westerly boundary of Meridian Avenue (Wiggins Avenue), as shown on said HENDRY &, KNIGHT'S MAP OF CHAMBERLAINS; run thence Northwesterly along said projection and boundary, and its Northwesterly projection, to and along the Westerly boundaries, and their Northwesterly projections of Meridian Avenue (Unnamed per plat) as shown on MAP OF FINLEY AND CAESAR SUBDIVISION, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 84 of the public records of Hillsborough County, Florida, Meridian Avenue

(Maxwell Avenue) as shown on MAP OF FINLEY AND STILLINGS SUBDIVISION, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 88 of the public records of Hillsborough County, Florida, and Meridian Avenue, as shown MAP OF FINLEY AND JONES SUBDIVISION, as recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 93 of the public records of Hillsborough County, Florida, to its intersection with the Southwesterly projection of the Southeasterly Limited Access Right of Way line of said Tampa South Crosstown Expressway Eastern Extension to I-75; run thence Northeasterly along said projection and Limited Access Right of Way line, and its Northeasterly projection, to its intersection with the Centerline of Channelside Drive (Thirteenth Street); run thence Northerly along said Centerline and its Northerly projection to its intersection with the Centerline of Adamo Drive (First Avenue), said intersection being the Point of Beginning.



### III. Statutory Requirements

Any area proposed as a Community Redevelopment Area must meet the standards and requirements of the Community Redevelopment Act, Chapter 163.335 - .362, Florida Statutes. That process includes clearly defined steps. These steps include the preparation of a work program and schedule, a legal description of the area to be designated, a formal Finding of Necessity based upon survey and analysis, address the affordable housing shortage and a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Plan.

The CRA Plan must be primarily based on the Finding of Necessity, and propose the methods by which those conditions will be alleviated. The Plan must also be consistent with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, and either be consistent with the existing zoning and land use intensities and densities in the area, or recommend appropriate changes.

The Plan is intended to propose a general work program and time frame within which public and private resources may be used to accomplish rehabilitation and redevelopment, and provide public resources appropriate to the area in question. The Plan may also recommend land acquisition, disposal and redevelopment, if appropriate.

The Channel District CRA Plan has been prepared by the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission and the City Department of Housing and Business Development, on behalf of the City of Tampa. It was prepared pursuant to the laws of the State of Florida, upon the foundation of appropriate findings by the Tampa City Council.

The CRA boundaries were selected after careful analysis, and included consideration of natural boundaries, man-made barriers such as major highways, and adjacent CRA boundary lines. The proposed Community Redevelopment Area reflects a logical delineation, and one which reflects the historical character and development pattern of the area, as well as current redevelopment patterns.

### IV. Comprehensive Plan and Zoning

#### 1. Comprehensive Plan

The City of Tampa's adopted Comprehensive Plan recognizes the Channel District's location on the downtown peninsula, immediate proximity to the Central Business District, and waterfront - related redevelopment potential. The Plan has also long anticipated redevelopment of the area at a significant urban scale, while protecting the existing maritime character, and light industrial, business and commercial uses.

The Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan designates the Channel District with the Regional Mixed Use (RMU-100) land use designation, a category encouraging a broad range of land uses developed at high density and intensity. That range includes retail (including regional commercial), office, residential, entertainment and cruise ship industry-related development. Mixed-use urban development is strongly encouraged (**see Figure F2**).

Residential densities are permitted up to 75 units per acre (\*100 units per acre utilizing density bonuses available in the area) and floor area ratios (F.A.R.) of 3.50 (7.00 F.A.R. utilizing performance standards available in the area).

The Comprehensive Plan also anticipates that the area could become an important transportation hub. Specific transportation projects will be summarized and will include efforts underway by the City of Tampa, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART), the Tampa - Hillsborough County Expressway Authority, the Florida Department of Transportation, Amtrak, CSX Transportation and the Tampa Port Authority.

The Greenways & Trails Master Plan adopted by City Council in February 2001 designates proposed on-road bicycle lanes/route and off-road multi-purpose paths within the Redevelopment area. These are part of the McKay Bay Greenway. These include:

Proposed Off-Road Multi-purpose Paths

- Garrison Channel between Cotanchobee Park and Channelside Drive
- Old CSX ROW between Twiggs Street and Adamo Drive.

Proposed On-Road Bike Lanes/Routes

- Twiggs Street Between Meridian Avenue and Channelside Drive
- Channelside Drive between Platt Street and Adamo Drive

The Plan also recognizes the possibility of local and regional higher educational facilities in the District, as well as international business facilities. The potential for such a diverse and intense mix of uses for the area, in conjunction with development trends in the Central Business District and Ybor City, would suggest the need to anticipate the emergence of the area as both an employment center and an urban residential neighborhood.

The Channel District CRA is located within the geographical boundaries of the City's State Enterprise Zone, and the Federal Enterprise Community designation for the City of Tampa. These designations all include programs that enable the City to apply special redevelopment programs, initiatives and grants funding programs to redevelopment and economic development efforts in appropriate areas. These designations are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and supportive of goals and objectives within the Plan encouraging redevelopment in the Channel District.

## 2. Zoning

Until 1994, the Channel District utilized traditional City zoning districts. Most of the property in the District was zoned either Commercial Intensive (C-I) or Heavy Industrial (H-I), with the exception of the Port's initial Garrison Seaport property acquisition, which was zoned Planned Development (PD).

In 1994, the Tampa City Council enacted Ordinance No. 94-173, incorporating **Article XIX. The Channel District** into Chapter 27, City of Tampa Code, and establishing zoning districts specifically for the Channel District. The new section was developed on the basis of the City study cited earlier in this plan. Completed in August 1993, **The Channel District: A Plan for the Future** was developed by the City of Tampa planning staff in conjunction Planning Commission staff, and extensive participation by area property owners, and commercial and residential residents.



Three zoning districts were created, **CD-1, CD-2 and CD-3**, with ascending degrees of permitted intensity; all intended to provide for a dynamic, mixed use redevelopment environment, while protecting existing maritime, light industrial and commercial land uses (**see Figure F3.**)

**Article XIX** provides for the three zoning districts, a schedule of permitted uses, a schedule of dimensional regulations, design guidelines and procedures for design approval, and parking requirements.

**CD-1** was written for commercial and residential uses and projects within the interior of the District, anticipating development that would enhance urban residential character. **CD-2** was intended to accommodate both existing and future commercial and light industrial land uses located more on the periphery of the District. **CD-3** was provided in anticipation of the development of mid - and high - rise residential, office and mixed - use structures. **CD-3** must be accompanied by a detailed site plan, similar to a PD zoning application.

The dynamic combination of public and private property ownership in the District, and its proximity to downtown and Ybor City is expected to eventually generate a broad range of urban scale redevelopment in the area.

Design guidelines were considered an important element of the redevelopment process, and were accepted as a matter of general consensus; in response to the recognition that redeveloped properties and new public infrastructure in the District would essentially define the new urban form of the area.

Those design standards address basic issues in urban areas; including pedestrian access and mobility, shade and landscape standards, exterior architectural quality, sign and lighting standards and public access to the waterfront. This Plan assumes that the current zoning governing development within the District is sufficient.

**V. Neighborhood Character - Existing Land Use Relationship to Existing Neighborhoods**

**1. Neighborhood Character**

The character of the Channel District, from its beginnings over 75 years ago, was maritime - related; a hardworking, industrial and commercial area, developed to serve the Port of Tampa, and the private shipping interests which gave Tampa its earliest reputation. Until the mid-1970's, when the commercial use of containerized shipping displaced general cargo shipping in Tampa, the District, known over the years as the **Estuary, La Draga**, and the **Ybor Channel** area, was home to ships' chandlers, shipping companies, bonded warehouses and thousands of longshoremen loading and unloading general cargo ships.

The late 1970's and 1980's were a period of decline and transition for the area, lagging behind redevelopment efforts in Downtown and Ybor City. It was a time when property ownership struggled to keep tenants in buildings and property values dropped. During that period, the larger property owners in the area, including the Gulf Florida Terminal Company, the Tampa Port Authority, Anthony Distributors, Inc., the Coca Cola Bottling Company, and Bonanni Ship Supply

formed the Ybor Channel Redevelopment Association, which promoted and positioned the area for eventual redevelopment

A key turning point for the area was the decision by the Tampa Port Authority to acquire waterfront property on Garrison and Ybor Channels in the mid - 1980's, and develop an ambitious master plan for the property's redevelopment. The original master plan was never constructed. However, it was revisited in the early 1990's, and has evolved today into Garrison Seaport.

## **2. Existing Land Use**

What has followed in recent years will alter the character of the area (**see Figure F4.**). Today, the Channel District is an urban, commercial neighborhood in transition. Within Garrison Seaport, redevelopment activity driven by public and private investment is underway. The Florida Aquarium opened several years ago, several new cruise terminals for a growing list of ship operators have opened, and the Port Authority has just completed a new corporate headquarters on Channelside Drive.

Channelside at the Seaport, a 250,000 square foot entertainment / retail attraction, opened in late 2000, and more new cruise terminals, hotels and other development are in planning stages.

The heart of the District, north of the Seaport and south of Twiggs Street, is still composed of older warehouse and loft buildings, some of which are again in active use, including a number renovated for professional office, art and dance studio, entertainment and residential uses.

Just as significantly, there is interest by the private sector in the potential for new urban housing, professional and corporate office and other business and commercial uses in this area.

North of Twiggs Street is a somewhat different opportunity. It is an area bound by Twiggs Street, Channelside Drive and the Leroy Selmon Expressway. The City of Tampa owns a majority of this area. For years, most of the property was utilized by several of the City's public works departments for a variety of operational uses. The City has offered the 10-12 acre area to the private sector for redevelopment. Brownfield cleanup activity is currently underway on the property by the contract purchaser.

Finally, the privately owned property located on the north-northeastern end of Ybor Channel is in disuse, for sale and available for redevelopment. It is about six acres in size, with considerable frontage on Ybor Channel.

It is important to note that the Channel District is relatively small; 221 acres, including uplands (124 acres), public right of way (49 acres), water area (48 acres). Within the area are 27 city blocks of various sizes, 180 separate parcels and 109 structures. The City's analysis of factors leading to the area's blighted condition noted a significant degree of physical deterioration of both structures and infrastructure, recognizing both the age of the improvements and lack of property maintenance as probable factors leading to those conditions.

Aside from the new development, redevelopment, and renovations either completed within the past few years or presently underway on public property, most of the existing structures within the Channel District are aging commercial buildings originally used for maritime - related commercial, light industrial or distribution uses. In some instances, the existing structures are appropriate for economically feasible renovation, in others property assembly and / or complete property redevelopment appears to be more likely.



### **3. Relationship to Existing Neighborhoods**

The Channel District, while having a distinctive physical character developed over the years since its initial development, is located on the downtown peninsula, adjacent to the Central Business District (CBD), and should be considered to be a part of the downtown area, particularly as redevelopment occurs. The difference in character today can be attributed to several factors; the physical and visual separation of the two areas by the 22+ acre CSX rail yard which runs north and south dividing the peninsula, and the more advanced state of re-development in the CBD.

The rail yard has only two crossings, the Lafayette Viaduct, an aging bridge carrying Kennedy Boulevard over the yard, and Twiggs Street, which is an at-grade crossing of the yard. The rail yard has precluded several other potential street connections, and created, over the years, a powerful visual and perceptual impression that the downtown and the Channel District are really different communities.

On the other hand, the Channel District has a strong relationship with Tampa Union Station, a recently renovated historic treasure located in the CBD, just outside the technical boundary of the District, at Twiggs Street and Nebraska Avenue. Union Station's future is positive, and could eventually include serving as a true multi-modal terminal for light rail service, electric streetcar service, and Florida's east coast - west coast passenger service, in addition to enhanced Amtrak passenger service and bus service.

The redevelopment process in the CBD has only recently included Union Station and the Channel District. Historically, downtown growth accentuated the impression of separation, particularly when the first major revitalization efforts occurred. Downtown rail lines and shipping-related industrial uses along the Hillsborough River were demolished and public cultural facilities and parks constructed in their place, and Ashley Drive was transformed into a landscaped boulevard, and became the entryway to the CBD from the new Interstate 4. Later, the impression was even more pronounced, as high-rise development became predominant in the CBD, making it look and feel much different from surrounding neighborhoods.

Since that time, dramatic redevelopment efforts have continued to evolve Tampa's pre-World War II downtown into a modern, regional urban center. In addition, the neighborhoods adjacent to the CBD on the south and west, Harbour Island, Davis Islands, and Hyde Park, have experienced dramatic development and redevelopment activity, as has Ybor City, Tampa's entertainment and National Historic District.

Redevelopment of those areas has preceded the more recently discovered Channel District, giving the impression that it is a different neighborhood. In fact, it is largely a matter of timing, total market demand for new urban development, and the District moving steadily upward on the City's priority list for redevelopment attention.

As redevelopment activity continues on public property within the Area, a new investment perspective of the Channel District will hopefully emerge. It will still be maritime and water-related, but will also include a much closer association with the CBD, Union Station, and Ybor City, and include a broader range of new land uses, including residential, retail and entertainment uses.

## **VI. Transportation System**

The current street network in the District is generally aged and inadequate to support significant redevelopment in the area. Channelside Drive, formerly 13th Street, is the main thoroughfare through the area. Meridian Street is the second north / south through- street, running parallel to the CSX rail yard, on the western edge of the District.

The interior streets of the District are deteriorated and outdated and in some cases, unevenly joined at intersections. Furthermore, they lack sidewalks, streetscape, on-street parking, urban-scale street lighting, shade trees and public landscaping. Pedestrian and bicycle access is inadequate. No existing greenway trail linkages are present.

The Lafayette Viaduct carries Kennedy Boulevard from Channelside Drive over the CSX rail yard, to the CBD. It is an unattractive and aging structure, and creates a distinct physical and visual barrier between the District and the CBD.

### **1. TECO Line Streetcar System**

The TECO Line Streetcar system, 2.4-mile vintage electric streetcar system linking the Tampa Convention Center, the Waterside Marriott and the CBD with the Channel District and Ybor City began full revenue service in October 2002. The system's alignment is along Channelside Drive through the District, providing a new fixed-rail transit link connecting downtown, the Channel District and Ybor City.

City, State and Federal public investment funded the system's capital cost. The system was intended to serve as both a transportation system and an economic redevelopment tool. It provides regular, daily streetcar service through the community's urban core, initially utilizing a fleet of eight historic-quality, streetcar replicas, allowing both visitors and area residents to travel throughout the area without using an automobile. A private, not-for-profit corporation, Tampa Historic Streetcar, Inc., utilizing the streetcars and capital infrastructure provided by the City and HART, oversees the operational funding and physical operations of the system.

Operating costs for the system will be provided by a unique combination of revenue sources, including fare box and advertising revenues, a special assessment district including the CBD, the Channel District and Ybor City, and interest income from a special endowment fund created for that purpose. Naming fees from private corporations, for the system name, the eight streetcars and the initial 11 streetcar stops, and contributions from the Port Authority and Harbour Island, will fund the endowment.

### **2. The Leroy Selmon Expressway**

The Tampa - Hillsborough County Expressway Authority is currently constructing a new, elevated deck for the Brandon leg of the Leroy Selmon Expressway, an existing toll-road connecting Tampa and the Brandon area. The project will provide reversible express lanes for Brandon commuters, utilizing innovative construction techniques, and fast track design, construction and financing plans. The current estimate for project completion is late 2005.

The plan includes new entry and exit ramps at the intersection of Meridian and Twiggs Streets, and extensive redevelopment of Meridian Street into a multi-lane boulevard, with significant



streetscape, pedestrian and bicyclist amenities, and new surface street connections from the Channel District into the CBD.

### **3. Garrison Seaport**

Several years ago, the Tampa Port Authority made a long-term commitment to enhance Tampa's cruise ship market share, as a Port of Embarkation for this hemisphere's cruise ship industry, and has begun implementing that plan with several new cruise ship terminals and an intensive marketing and development master plan. It is likely that the cruise industry's growth in Tampa in the next decade, primarily focused on the Garrison Seaport area, will bring many new cruise ships and millions of new visitors to the District, and add a new context to the concept of multi-modal transportation facilities for the area. Improvements to Garrison Seaport are funded by public investment.

## **VII. Need for Redevelopment / Development Environment**

When viewed from a community-wide perspective, it has been clear to City and community leaders for at least 35 years that the explosive growth pattern in unincorporated Hillsborough County has adversely affected the economic viability of much of the City of Tampa's urban core.

Beginning in the 1960's, revitalization and redevelopment efforts have been underway in downtown Tampa, Hyde Park, Davis Islands and Harbour Island. Those efforts have shown steady and very positive results, despite the high suburban growth rate in unincorporated Hillsborough County.

Redevelopment efforts were intensified in the 1990's, when the City extended such commitments to Ybor City, Tampa Heights, and the Channel District. The City's vision recognized the need for the entire core of the City to become vital again, not only with office workers, tourist and visitor venues, but with urban residents and shoppers, and improved support services for that new diversity.

Urban redevelopment and economic growth momentum is well underway in the CBD, Ybor City and Tampa Heights, all of which include community redevelopment areas within their boundaries, and receive the concentrated political, governmental and economic attention required to stimulate urban reinvestment. However, the Channel District has followed somewhat behind the pace of those redevelopment efforts.

### **1. Need for Redevelopment**

The timing is appropriate for the District to receive the same focused attention. New linkages to the CBD and Ybor City are being formed, and the stage is set for Tampa's urban core to receive new visitors and new residents. Significant capital investment in public infrastructure has already been committed in the area. Investments are in place by the City, HART, the Florida Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration for the Streetcar System, by the Tampa Port Authority for Garrison Seaport, by the City for the Florida Aquarium, and by the Expressway Authority for major improvements to the Expressway and Meridian Street, the latter two with assistance from the State of Florida, Hillsborough County, and the City of Tampa.

Despite the interest, commitment and investment already underway, however, there is ample evidence that significant blighted conditions persist in the area.

The City's analysis of factors determining slum and/or blight conditions: **The Channel District, A Finding of Necessity (May, 2004)**, has identified a number of specific issues, particularly in the District's interior, where the property is largely privately owned.

**Those Factors Include:**

- A. Structural conditions** - a high percentage of deteriorated, dilapidated and terminal structures (63%), of which 20% are of the most severe categories (dilapidated or terminal), and a general aging of structures (83% of the District's buildings are 40 years of age or older),
- B. Deterioration of Public and Private Improvements** - aging subsurface infrastructure of questionable capacity for new development, including water, wastewater and stormwater facilities, deteriorating street conditions, excessive property maintenance conditions (77% of 180 District properties, February, 2000) and code violations (30% of 180 District properties with a code enforcement history),
- C. An obsolete interior street layout**, inadequate to accommodate modern vehicular or pedestrian traffic or on-street parking demands,
- D. A diversity of property ownership** - small lots, particularly within the District's large interior blocks, multiple ownership of small one- or two-lot parcels; which are impeding property assemblages,
- E. Out-dated building density patterns and sub-standard lot sizes** for modern development, including small parcel ownership, and abutting foundations of aging structures,
- F. Inadequate parking** throughout the center of the District, particularly for existing structures, many of which utilize most of existing lot area for building coverage,
- G. A lack of public parks, sidewalks, pedestrian amenities, public street trees, neighborhood and gateway identification signage and public landscape** throughout the District, including interior streets and major thoroughfares, Furthermore, a lack of a bicycle friendly environment, including designated bike lanes, bike routes, bike parking, etc.
- H. Potential subsurface environmental contamination**, particularly in that part of the District north of Kennedy Boulevard, as evidenced by recent environmental investigations,
- I. General economic distress** resulting in a diminished tax base and tax revenues, a transitional land use pattern dominated by outdated industrial land uses inconsistent with the long term vision for the District, and a series of physical deterioration problems, as evidenced by the indices of blight, outlined in this report.



The combined effect of these factors has contributed to the City's conclusion that the special commitment of a CRA designation, to provide support and stimulus for the District's redevelopment efforts, is necessary and timely.

**2. Development Environment**

In order for real estate development to occur anywhere, there must be a market for the product, and the cost of development must be justified by the potential for income, or rents, sufficient to justify the risk of the investment to a prudent investor.

Urban redevelopment is generally entails more risk than development in suburban areas, because market demand is a smaller universe of potential buyers and/or renters, and the cost of urban development is generally higher than similar suburban development products.

The development environment in Tampa's urban core is stronger than it has been for decades, particularly for residential and tourism - related land uses, in addition to the more traditional office uses serving the downtown business, commercial and legal communities.

This is largely due to increased market demand for more diverse urban development products from residents and visitors, strong national, state and local economies, and the success of both restoration and new development ventures in the CBD, Ybor City, Harbour Island, Davis Islands and Hyde Park.

The trend has also been strongly influenced by significant capital investment by the government sector in those areas, the skill and enthusiasm of the City government in encouraging redevelopment and the strong reception of all those factors by the private sector.

In the matter of urban redevelopment, timing and location are critical. It is timely for the Channel District to capitalize upon those factors with special assistance from the community. The potential exists to create an urban, mixed-use vitality and healthy tax base that will complement the health of adjacent districts and neighborhoods, and ultimately stimulate other nearby urban neighborhoods in redevelopment efforts still in the future.

The Channel District (the District) has historically been characterized by land uses that supported surrounding maritime and industrial activities. Existing residential uses are/have been considered urban pioneering, as they have not been typical or compatible with the predominately industrial surroundings.

A number of residential developments are underway, approved, or planned, in the Channel District. However, this new supply of housing units is not expected to be affordable for persons of low and moderate-income.

The District has potential for substantial additional development, including housing. Twenty-two percent of the parcels in the area are vacant and over half of the buildings in the District are 50 years of age or older.

There is an absolute shortage of sound housing in the District that is affordable to residents of low or moderate income. The Tampa Housing Authority, which is immediately north of the District has a waiting list of 2,013 households for rental housing. In 2003, the East Tampa Housing initiative (now not in operation) had a waiting list for home ownership of 75 families.

## VIII. Redevelopment Plan / Implementation Measures / Neighborhood Impact

### 1. Redevelopment Plan (See figure F5)

Although the Channel District is a relatively small geographical area (124 upland, non-right-of-way acres), it can be viewed as **four** sub-areas, from a redevelopment perspective. While redevelopment in each of these areas will be similar, each has different existing conditions and will be actualized by somewhat different means.

**Area 1- Public Waterfront** - includes Garrison Seaport, the Florida Aquarium, and the Tampa Port Authority ownership along Ybor Channel, and just north of Garrison Seaport, across Channelside Drive. The Port Authority, in partnership with private development and business interests, will develop this area. It is reasonable to assume at this time that the Port Authority will pursue development proposals consistent with the Garrison Seaport philosophy; including additional cruise ship-related facilities and cruise ship visitations, urban entertainment venues, and other, compatible mixed-use concepts. A need to expand with public access where appropriate. Public investment will continue to be utilized in the development of this area.

**Area 2 – City - Sponsored Redevelopment** - identifies the area bound by Twiggs Street, Channelside Drive, and the Leroy Selmon Expressway. It was owned by the City of Tampa and the Expressway Authority. The City offered the area to the private sector for redevelopment and an agreement was recently signed. The area is comprised of about 12 acres, making it an attractive site for a unified development concept of significant scale.

**Area 3 - Meridian Street** - Design plans for the Channel District area of Meridian Street are in the implementation phase. The concepts envision an attractive, landscaped boulevard, capable of carrying considerable traffic at rush hours, while creating new entryways into the CBD. Those plans will also include a pedestrian friendly environment along and across its edges, in addition to the new exit and entry ramps to the Expressway in the vicinity of Twiggs and Meridian Streets intersection.

As these improvements are completed, the redevelopment potential of properties bordering Meridian Street could well intensify, resulting in more intense urban development facing the CBD. While it is not located within the Channel District, the CSX rail yard on the western side of Meridian will also be considered for redevelopment within the next decade.

The nature of eventual redevelopment here is not known at this time. It could include private land development, public open space or public, transit-related development. Regardless, it is a critical area in terms of reuniting the downtown peninsula, and should be considered very carefully as it redevelops.

**Area 4 - District Core** - is generally bound by Twiggs Street, Channelside Drive, Meridian and Cumberland Streets. It is mostly held in multiple, private ownership, and presents the greatest opportunity for entrepreneurship by smaller scale urban developers and property owners. It is also the area most affected by the infrastructure problems described earlier in this report.

Herein lies the potential for mixed-use development, including residential, office, live/workspace, galleries, individual entertainment venues, and other creative urban land uses.

While the number of historically or architecturally significant buildings in the District is limited, most of those that do exist are in this area. Several significant structures here have already been successfully renovated for residential and professional uses. While those property owners could



be considered urban pioneers, their buildings have already begun to enliven this area, and give it new character.

**Area 4** includes about six acres of property in private ownership at the north end of Ybor Channel. It is the only waterfront property in private ownership on Garrison and Ybor Channels and presents an additional opportunity for private sector, waterfront-related, mixed-use redevelopment.

Throughout the District, it is anticipated that redevelopment can occur within the guidance provided by the adopted Comprehensive Plan. The District is designated Regional Mixed Use-100 (RMU-100), a future land use designation identifying areas suitable for high intensity land uses; including residential, office, entertainment and regional-serving commercial development.

Such development potential anticipates the provision of significant land area for redevelopment, multi-modal transportation access, adequate parking facilities, and other public infrastructure necessary to support that scale of urban development.

As noted earlier, the existing Channel District zoning categories, CD-1, CD-2, and CD-3, are consistent with the Future Land Use Plan categories, and appear to be adequate to support anticipated redevelopment activity. Planned Development zoning is also an option for development projects in this area.

The future for Channel District can be described in Map F6 which provides a diagram as required by F.S. 163.362 (1). Generally speaking this diagram illustrates the area future land use map which provide for open space, public parks, recreation areas, streets, public utilities and public improvements of any nature in each category.

**2. Implementation Measures**

Facilitating the redevelopment process in the Channel District will require additional public investment to stimulate private investment and remedy the causes of the blighted conditions identified in the City's March, 2004 Finding of Necessity.

The establishment of a CRA designation for the District will greatly enhance the Agency's ability to undertake the necessary activities. Subsequent to the designation, the Agency will evaluate a wide variety of programs and projects in the District, including the following, to remedy the identified blighted conditions:

**Crime Prevention** - Recent statistics compiled by the Tampa Police Department reveal an increase in several crime categories such as murder, sexual battery and aggravated assault; perhaps caused by the increased maritime, commercial and tourist activity in the area. Crime prevention and community policing programs, such as **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**, community mobilization, neighborhood block watch, citizen patrol, foot patrol, neighborhood storefront police stations, field interrogation, and an intensified motorized patrol will become an important component of the area's civic support system.

**Marketing/Public Awareness** - Within the administration of a CRA designation for the Channel District, City-directed coordination of public and private development interests, regular and concerted marketing and public relation/education activities, and early master planning for the provision of infrastructure, public amenities and public services should be high priorities.

**Structural Conditions** - the general condition of deteriorating and aging structures is remedied slowly, using a variety of approaches to either renovate and restore existing structures or demolish buildings and redevelop property. Such tools could include concerted code enforcement, facade improvement loans, assistance in packaging Small Business Administration (SBA) and other special renovation loan programs, City assistance in acquiring any remaining CSX spur easements, facilitating property assembly and redevelopment, special tax deferral programs, and other financial and technical inducements.

**Infrastructure Deterioration** - some replacement of water and wastewater facilities will be undertaken by the private sector in the District as redevelopment occurs. However, the Agency will also consider undertaking the replacement or upgrading of those facilities, or provide financial assistance to the private sector to do so, as circumstances dictate.

The Agency will consider a systematic upgrading of storm water facilities in the District, with priority attention to localized problems. Financing for these improvements will be facilitated by the District's CRA designation.

Consideration should also be given to encouraging the development of centralized "chiller plant" facilities, to provide chilled water for air conditioning to new development in the District. Such facilities would be viewed as a positive financial inducement to urban developers considering investment in the area.

**Street Improvements, Sidewalks, Pedestrian Amenities, Tree and Landscape Amenities** - the District's interior street system will be examined for improvement, and if appropriate, functional relocation. That process should include a comprehensive, creative and flexible plan for street resurfacing, new sidewalks and on-street parking, new public treescape and landscape, public art and transit stops.

Major District gateways should be identified and recognized with special signage and public art, and Channelside Drive evaluated for new pedestrian-friendly, urban design improvements. The development of the TECO Line Streetcar System along Channelside Drive has heightened the need for sensitive pedestrian connections of the Streetcar station stops with the District's interior areas, and traffic-calming improvements to Channelside Drive, to make the area safer, more attractive and user-friendly for pedestrians and streetcar riders.

The timely replacement of the Lafayette Viaduct with a surface roadway, in conjunction with the Expressway Authority's plans for improvements to Meridian Street, will have a very positive effect on the area. Financing for many of these improvements will be enhanced by the District's CRA designation.

**Open space** - there is no public open space or urban park within the District, in the sense of neighborhood public parks or recreational amenities for present and future residents. As additional public investment is contemplated subsequent to the District's CRA designation, consideration should be given to public park space and recreational amenities within the District's interior, as well as convenient and usable public access to the waterfront.

Consideration should be given to extending the City's CBD Riverwalk concept throughout the Channel District, and including the District in the City's Greenways Master Plan, which will allow pedestrians and bicyclists safe and unimpeded access through the area. Provision of such amenities will enhance the attractiveness of the area to housing developers and urban residents. Financing for such improvements will be facilitated by the District's CRA designation.



**Diversity of Property Ownership, Outdated Building Density Patterns and Sub-Standard Lot Sizes** - the City will consider assistance to private property owners in facilitating property assemblage for redevelopment. Such assistance may include providing marketing assistance, assisting in the acquisition of unused easements and "left-over" and unusable parcels, parking agreements, provision of public parking facilities, business recruitment and provision of public amenities attractive to larger scale developers. The CRA designation will greatly enhance the City's ability to provide technical, legal and financial assistance.

**Parking** - the City will evaluate the feasibility of providing public parking facilities in the District, to enhance the redevelopment potential of private property. Such facilities could include surface parking lots, structured parking facilities and additional on-street parking. The CRA designation will enhance the City's ability to underwrite the cost of such facilities.

**Transit** - the City and HART will consider extending the Phase 1 commitment to the Streetcar System in the District. That consideration will include an analysis of the physical potential and economic feasibility of extending the system to Union Station, and completing the northern extension of the System through the CBD to Ybor City and back down to the Channel District. Such eventual improvements would greatly enhance accessibility to the District from all parts of both the CBD and Ybor City.

**Brownfields** - as briefly noted within the Agency's blight analysis of the area, there is evidence of some subsurface contamination within the District. While such problems are generally considered a chain-of-title problem borne by the property owner, the City has already begun the process of identifying a solution - path to the problem by including the District in its Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Work Plan. It is the policy of the City to provide assistance and incentives to public and private property owners and businesses to apply for a "Brownfields" designation, if appropriate, and take advantage of the programs of assistance available to resolve those environmental problems.

The CRA designation will permit the Agency greater latitude in providing technical and financial assistance in identifying and solving those problems on both public and private property. Assistance could include joint application for grants and potential funding from the establishment of a tax increment finance district, waivers of other development fees and special loan programs.

In addition, the Agency will consider additional urban design analysis in the District, and ongoing citizen participation to ensure coordination of public and private planning and development efforts, and a consensual approach to proposed public investment.

The net result from these efforts by the Agency, the Port Authority, other major public players, and District property owners, residents and commercial tenants will be the steady and thoughtful redevelopment of the Channel District. Area redevelopment will dramatically increase property values and ad valorem tax base, and effect a replacement of the economic distress evident in the district today with economic health.

**3. Neighborhood Impact**

**Impact on residents** - in the classic sense of residential neighborhood impact brought about by the restoration, redevelopment and intensified public and private investment in older urban

neighborhoods of predominant residential character, the Channel District will suffer little or no negative impact.

**Relocation Policy** – It shall be the policy of the Agency that any persons displaced as a result of redevelopment projects shall be provided services that will ensure they are not unduly inconvenienced by their relocation. In the implementation of this Plan, the Agency will provide fair and equitable treatment to any and all displaced persons; including full opportunity to occupy comparable replacement housing, with regard to cost, location and related aesthetic considerations. The Agency will attempt to minimize the disruptions caused by the relocation, provide maximum choice to those required to relocate, provide whatever ancillary relocation services may be required to those in need of special assistance, such as the elderly or physically challenged, and make a diligent effort to avoid any financial hardship to relocating persons, due to the relocation process. The Agency will observe the same guidelines with businesses and non-profit organizations required to relocate.

Relocation assistance will be provided through the City's Division of Business and Housing Development. Such assistance will be provided in a fair, equitable and thorough manner.

The District has been almost entirely commercial in character since its original development phases 60 years ago. So, there will be little or no negative impact from residential relocation, gentrification or dislocation in the redevelopment process to come. The residential uses in the District today are recent, welcome, and emblematic of the residential - mixed-use - entertainment character the community seeks for the area.

Public investment in infrastructure and public / private partnerships for development should significantly enhance private property values in the area, creating more freedom of choice for existing property owners. Market demand for property in the District will hopefully occur at an increasing rate, and result in a steady rate of redevelopment within the District.

**Impact on Residents of Surrounding Areas** - redevelopment of the Channel District should have a positive impact on residents in the CBD, Harbour Island and Ybor City; resulting from the creation of new jobs, and the provision of new urban services and public facilities. In addition, the development of new urban attractions, restaurants and entertainment venues in the District will encourage the functional interconnectedness of the Urban Core, providing greater availability of goods and services to area residents.

**Traffic Circulation** - improvement to District transportation facilities will be a major contribution to the redevelopment process. In addition to improvements to Meridian Street, new and / or improved surface connections between the CBD and the District, and the continued development of the Streetcar System, this Plan contemplates significant improvements to interior street conditions, sidewalks, bikeways and public parking facilities.

Traffic volumes are expected to increase over time. However, planned transportation improvements are anticipated to compensate for those increases, while providing significant improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

**Environmental Quality** - environmental quality in the Channel District will improve in several ways as a result of redevelopment in the area. Visual pollution will be reduced through the redevelopment process, when deteriorated structures are either renovated or replaced with new development, and property maintenance is improved.

The addition of pedestrian amenities, public open space, and public landscape will greatly enhance the visual attractiveness of the area; and property with any environmental contamination



will require appropriate remediation prior to redevelopment, including property in public and private ownership.

**School Population** - the impact of District redevelopment on local school population should be minimal, even over the 20-year redevelopment horizon. While aspirations for the development of a significant residential community in the District are high, the demographic mix for such urban housing, as in the CBD and Ybor City is anticipated to be mostly single adults and couples, rather than families with school-age children.

**Community Facilities and Public Infrastructure** - this Plan anticipates the improvement of wastewater and water facilities, as required, to meet the needs of redeveloping property. In addition, improvements to the area's stormwater management system are expected to be accomplished as related public improvements occur, and can be implemented together in an efficient manner.

Transportation, urban design and public open space improvements in the District, discussed earlier in this Plan, will also make a vital contribution to the impetus for District redevelopment.

**Affordable Housing** - The Channel District (the District") has historically been characterized by land uses that supported surrounding maritime and industrial activities. Residential uses have been very limited and are/have been considered 'urban pioneering', as they have not been typical or compatible with the predominately industrial surroundings.

Some residential development is underway in the Channel District. However, this new supply of housing units is not expected to be affordable for persons of low and moderate-income. There is an absolute shortage of housing in the District that is affordable to residents of low or moderate income.

The District has potential for substantial additional development, including housing. Twenty-two percent of the parcels in the area are vacant and over half of the buildings in the District are 50 years of age or older.

Affordable housing strategies that the City might employ in the Channel District would include programs for low down payment and deferred payment loans; purchase of land and properties; direct developer incentives; expedited building permit processing; infrastructure improvements; and coordination and cooperation with Tampa Housing Authority and other organizations who promote the development of affordable housing.

## IX. Capital Improvements

In addition to the transportation infrastructure improvements previously described in the Plan; the Streetcar System, the Expressway Authority's implementation of plans for the Leroy Selmon Expressway and Meridian Street, and the Port Authority's multimodal strategies for cruise ships, cruise passengers and other maritime – related tourist and visitor activities, the Community Redevelopment Agency will evaluate and make specific recommendations to the City regarding a variety of potential capital improvements within the District.

Those areas, outlined earlier in the implementation section, may include additional surface transportation improvements, including a reorientation of local streets, subsurface utility infrastructure, the development of a new neighborhood park, pedestrian – oriented urban design

improvements such as sidewalks, landscaping, street furniture, signage, special city services, new public open space and the provision of public parking facilities.

Such recommendations will be considered in accordance with the vision and the goals of the CRA Plan, the needs and recommendations of the District property owners, and the actual redevelopment proposals and projects which come about.

The City of Tampa will retain the responsibility of insuring adequate public infrastructure and public safety, and a redevelopment environment conducive to achieving the policies, goals and objectives for the Channel District. The City will also retain the ability to enter into development agreements with private sector entities to assist in the achievement of those goals and objectives.

## **X. Development Controls**

All development and redevelopment within the District shall be consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, and all local building, zoning and other applicable regulations. At this time, it is anticipated that no special limitations shall apply to land uses undertaken within the Channel District Community Redevelopment Area other than those limitations imposed by development regulations in place at the time development approval is sought. Development reverter clauses requiring developers to develop property within specific timeframes could be explored as a means to insuring that development occurs in a timely manner.

Other than those design guidelines and requirements currently located within adopted ordinances, there are presently no architectural restrictions on new development or redevelopment within the District.

Any proposals for development on publicly - owned property shall be reviewed and approved by the appropriate public agency, and shall be in accordance with this Plan.

## **X. Cost and Timing of Redevelopment**

### **1. Cost of Redevelopment**

It is anticipated that the direct costs of private sector redevelopment will be borne largely by the private sector, on both public and privately - owned property. However, the commitments to provide new infrastructure already in place by the State Department of Transportation, Port and Expressway Authorities, the City of Tampa and HART, are current costs of redevelopment to be borne by the public sector.

Furthermore, it is the intent of the Agency, as indicated by the preparation of this Plan and the subsequent CRA designation, to program additional capital improvements as required, and as funding becomes available, from a wide variety of local, state and federal funding sources; including federal and state grants, loans, private funds, City enterprise funds, tax increment finance revenues and City general funds.

### **2. Timing of Redevelopment**



The substantial redevelopment of the Channel District is anticipated to be complete within a 30 year time period (2004-2034) commencing upon approval of the Plan. Urban redevelopment is more complex and requires the assumption of more risk than conventional new development in suburban areas, and can be more time-consuming.

Such development is also more dependent on economic cycles than more conventional, growth - driven suburban development, and appeals to a smaller potential marketplace.

The Channel District is presently well - positioned, both geographically and in terms of the emerging urban marketplace, for redevelopment activity, provided the community support described herein is set in place.

## **XII. Funding Sources**

The Community Redevelopment Agency will evaluate the potential of funding appropriate projects, capital improvements and other expenditures from a variety of funding sources, included, but not limited to the following:

- Federal and State grants and loans
- City Revenue Bonds
- Industrial Revenue Bonds
- State Enterprise Zone Tax Credits
- City of Tampa General Revenue
- A Special Assessment
- Tax Increment Financing
- Public / Private Partnership and/or Development Agreements
- Industrial Revenue Bonds
- Community Investment Tax
- Corporate Community Tax Credits

## **XIII. Public Participation**

Prior to the preparation of the Community Redevelopment Plan for the Channel District, The City of Tampa, The Planning Commission and the Channel District Council jointly sponsored a workshop, on December 14, 1999. The workshop was scheduled to discuss the City's intentions with regard to the establishment of a CRA in the Channel District, and the process to be followed; and to solicit input from District property owners, tenants and other interested parties. Reaction to the City's plans was positive and supportive.

On January 19, 2000, an update on work progress was presented to a general meeting of the Channel District Council membership, including interested members of the general public. On Thursday, January 29, 2004, the Channel District CRA Advisory Committee met with city officials to review the process of updating both the Finding of Necessity report and the CRA Plan draft.

Throughout the process, both City and Planning Commission staffs have met with anyone requesting a briefing on the Plan's preparation. In addition, City staff has met regularly with the Channel District Council on the status of the Plan's implementation schedule.