



Chapter 1 - Executive Summary

The City of Tampa is located on the west coast of Florida, anchoring a major metropolitan region that includes diverse and economically vibrant communities. Tampa is one of Florida's leading cities, offering a wide range of economic and lifestyle opportunities. As the City continues to mature and reached first stage build out, infill redevelopment of its inner core residential neighborhoods has occurred. Now through concerted efforts by the City government as well as ongoing market forces, the urban downtown core faces similar revitalization interest, as new higher density residential uses are added the area. One of Tampa's core areas experiencing urban redevelopment is the Channel District Community Redevelopment Area, see Figure 1-1.

The Channel District is facing dramatic change as its future development pattern emerges at the onset of the 21st Century. The 200-acre redevelopment area on the eastern side of the downtown peninsula has emerged from its industrial past. Originally the Channel District housed heavy shipping, loading and marine services along the Ybor and Garrison Channels and grew to include the first new residential development adaptively reusing the area's historical warehouse pattern (see Figure 1-2, Location Map). Today however, the District is evolving dramatically to include increased tourism related cruise industry uses, and higher-density residential and mixed-use projects. New urban dwellers are being drawn to this unique urban waterfront area in increasing numbers.



Channel District - 1929

1.1 Overview

Change is not new to the Channel District. Since the area's original development in the 1920's, the Channel District has been re-invented (and renamed) several times, as market forces dictated change. The residential community, originally a part of the City's labor workforce housing, was entirely replaced with cold storage warehousing and other general cargo activities needed for the Port's active general cargo trade. The area was vital until the late 1970's, when container shipping was developed and the shipping business moved to other ports of entry.



Channel District - Today

After several decades of relative decline and inactivity, the District gained new importance as targeted public investment in infrastructure by the City and the Port Authority began to reverse the decline. The development of the Florida Aquarium, new cruise terminals, Channelside mixed-use development, redevelopment of Channelside Drive, and the TECO Line Streetcar System brought increased activity



and supported cruise industry expansion. Recent City of Tampa redevelopment initiatives, including establishment of the Community Redevelopment Area designation for the District, and the Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority's current development of Meridian Avenue as a major transportation improvement gateway has energized the current development impetus. The new urban form rising in the area today represents the Channel District's 21st century form of mid/high rise and high-density mixed-use development.

Without question, the Channel District represents a unique opportunity for the Tampa community to guide the development of a special place; a new and different urban, mixed-use, transit-related residential neighborhood, adjacent to the Central Business District.

1.2 Purpose

Creation of this Strategic Action Plan (SAP) was initiated by the City of Tampa with the clear intent to understand and guide the market forces transforming the Channel District, and proactively plan for the area's physical build-out with the capital and aesthetic improvements required to provide new infrastructure, a superior public realm environment and quality of life for all of its residents and visitors.

The Plan has been crafted to document the District's existing conditions and plan for future growth, in the context of the collective redevelopment activity that is occurring in the City of Tampa's Central Business District and surrounding urban center (see Figure 1-2, Redevelopment Areas). The SAP responds to the collective citizen, private development, public agency staff and officials input received during the planning process. It represents a balance between previous development decisions with guidance provided for future public and private development actions in delivering a high quality and functioning City neighborhood.



Public Workshop

The Strategic Action Plan advances the following:

1.2.1 Guiding Principles –

- Understand the District's relationship with the CBD and surrounding urban core neighborhoods.
- Balance the District's development projections with other sub-areas of the urban core.
- Create a strong, urban neighborhood while respecting the existing sense of place and community.
- Recognize and accommodate the current development pattern, and City Council zoning precedents and commitments.



- Maintain the momentum of development activity in the District.
- Create a good redevelopment environment by emphasizing design quality for both private development and the public realm.
- Emphasize the importance of infrastructure and urban design/public realm improvements to the continued success of the District redevelopment process.
- Recognize both the development potential and public realm/infrastructure potential for the properties located on the east and south sides of Channelside Drive.
- Accommodate the potential for new development in the District at varying heights, densities and architectural styles.
- Provide realistic and creative public financing recommendations for the improvements required in the District.

1.2.2 Future Development Benchmarks –

Several key market condition benchmarks were identified during the Channel District planning process, including:

- Residential development increase to 6,330 units by 2025.
- Population increase to 12,027 persons by 2025.
- Employment increase to 8,823 jobs by 2025.
- Commercial development to 1.89M square feet by 2025.
- Office development to 1.43M square feet by 2025.
- Tourism visitors to reach 1.5M persons per year by 2025.

1.3 Recommendations

Each chapter of this report includes recommendations that are organized by three types of actions needed to implement the plan, including:

- 1) Public Actions
- 2) Private Actions
- 3)
- 3)
- 4)



5)
Other Institutional Actions

Each of the chapters also identifies these actions within a One and Five year Action framework. Refined recommendations will be included upon completion of the public review and City Council presentations.

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