



Chapter 2 – District Context

The Strategic Action Plan was undertaken to identify specific initiatives, critical to supporting the redevelopment phenomena underway within the Channel District Redevelopment Area. The Channel District is located along the eastern side of Tampa's Central Business District and occupies approximately 200-acres adjacent to the Port of Tampa's Ybor and Garrison Channels, see Figure 2-1. The District's development pattern has been influenced by its location and the historic dependence upon port related activity. Even today the District reflects the diverse activities emerging at the Port and its evolution as a tourist destination.

2.1 Regional Overview

The City of Tampa is located on the west coast of Florida, anchoring a 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. A strong local college and university knowledge base provides the right infrastructure for firms relocate and grow, and to quickly and effectively move products, services and data. Florida's population growth is adding nearly 30 thousand new residents to Tampa and Hillsborough County annually.

Tampa has experienced an annualized population increase of 8.4% between 1970 and 2000 census data. During this period 23,534 persons have been added to the City's 303,447 total population. This population increase is affecting existing residential neighborhoods, as the need for higher density and infill development has accelerated change. Tampa will continue to grow; how it accommodates new growth is part of an important ongoing community discussion that will effect its long-term economic position and livability.

A critical component of the region's strong economic and market presence is the Port of Tampa. The Tampa Bay Region's exports of goods to overseas markets were estimated to be about \$2.7 billion in 2004. It is estimated that in any given year, the Tampa Bay Region accounts for an eighth of Florida's total export of goods. As of 2004, there were over 160 foreign-affiliated companies in the Tampa Bay Region, employing more than 8,000 people. The Port of Tampa is Florida's largest port and handles more than 50M tons of cargo annually through its 5,000-acres of maritime use in Tampa Bay. The Port Authority oversees its operation and has positioned its success through a diversified business base including bulk commodities, general cargo, cruise, shipbuilding and repair, and mixed-use real estate that insulate the port from downturns in any one sector and position for long-term success. The Port contributes directly to more than 5,000 jobs. The Port's use influences more than 100,000 jobs, which together equates to a total of more than \$13B annual impact. Part of the Port's real estate holdings includes the Channelside



Channelside Area



entertainment area. This successful mixed-use development has sparked growth in the major cruise port industry and contributes significantly to the creation of a vibrant and livable Channel District area.

2.2 Redevelopment Initiatives

Tampa has recently placed major emphasis upon redevelopment and revitalization of the existing urban neighborhoods surrounding the inner central core of the community. Each of these neighborhoods has unique conditions. As redevelopment plans are formulated for these neighborhoods, each must recognize these unique conditions. The Channel District is one of these areas, and its physical and cultural environment should be viewed within the perspective of City's overall redevelopment initiatives, see Figure 2-2.

2.2.1 Downtown Core CRA's (Figure 2-3) –

Tampa's Central Business District provides a diverse array of commercial office space, government offices, hotels, entertainment, and meeting convention center uses. Included in the area, are the majority of public offices and government services. Harbor Island is located south of the Channel District and is directly connected via the Beneficial Bridge over Garrison Channel. The area has undergone a significant increase in residential development within the past decade, mostly on Harbour Island. US Census data identified a dramatic rise in population from 283 to 1,711 persons from 1990 to 2000. It is anticipated that this figure has risen in the last 5 years to house more than 2,500 persons. The proximity to this residential population, as well as its composition of the urban professionals and empty nesters may increase the development pressure upon the Channel District redevelopment to provide more retail. In addition, the essentially built-out status of Harbour Island will hopefully move the market emphasis for new urban housing into the CDB and the Channel District.



Downtown Core

2.2.2 Tampa Riverwalk (Figure 2-4) –

A time-honored concept, but a recent addition to the urban core's redevelopment priorities, is renewed emphasis by the City to develop and extend its Riverwalk along the Hillsborough River, and Garrison and Ybor Channels. The goal of the project is to create a continuous pedestrian linkage from the Tampa Heights redevelopment area to the Channel District. Development of the project is anticipated to occur in stages through public and private initiatives along the urban waterfront in the central business district. The potential to extend the Riverwalk into the Channel District has been articulated within the SAP. While Port of Tampa security requirements limit waterside extension of the facility, the SAP includes an important alternative pedestrian promenade located along the south and east sides of Channelside Drive. The linkage of these systems will permit continuous access to the Channelside mixed-use development, the Florida Aquarium and extension northward on City of Tampa and Port Authority lands.



2.2.3 Ybor City CRA's (Figure 2-5) –

Ybor City is a National Landmark Historic District, located north of the Channel District. It was initially developed in the late 19th and early 20th century and is comprised of historic brick buildings within a traditional neighborhood grid. It retains much of its important historic fabric, and has evolved into a vibrant entertainment and residential district. The redevelopment of Ybor City has occurred sporadically for decades. Recent redevelopment efforts have been very significant, bringing more residents, land uses and private investment into the area. Recent infill development and redevelopment of historic structures have also added to the area's diverse mixture of uses.



Ybor City

2.2.4 Central Park Village (Figure 2-6) –

Central Park Village is one of Tampa's aged, public subsidized housing complexes. It is located adjacent to the western end of Ybor City, northwest of the Channel District, north of the Central Business District. This area is the focus of a new redevelopment initiative that will encompass larger acreage and is expected to regenerate local street connections, and a mixture of uses and incomes in a fully functional residential neighborhood.



Central Park Village

2.2.5 Old Police Station Site CRA / Tampa Heights (Figure 2-7) –

One of the City's oldest residential areas, this neighborhood is also located north of the Central Business District, along the Hillsborough River, and represents a great opportunity for community revitalization on the north side of the downtown. It too is the focus of a new redevelopment initiative that will link infill residential with connection via the Tampa Riverwalk to the Central Business District and the Channel District.

2.3 Historic Context

When the Channel District underwent a period of substantial development in the late 1940's, the majority of the area's infrastructure was constructed. These infrastructure improvements included the construction of the water, sewer and stormwater systems to serve the establishment of new business within the area. Also, included in those early improvements was the construction of the road network that generally serves the area today.

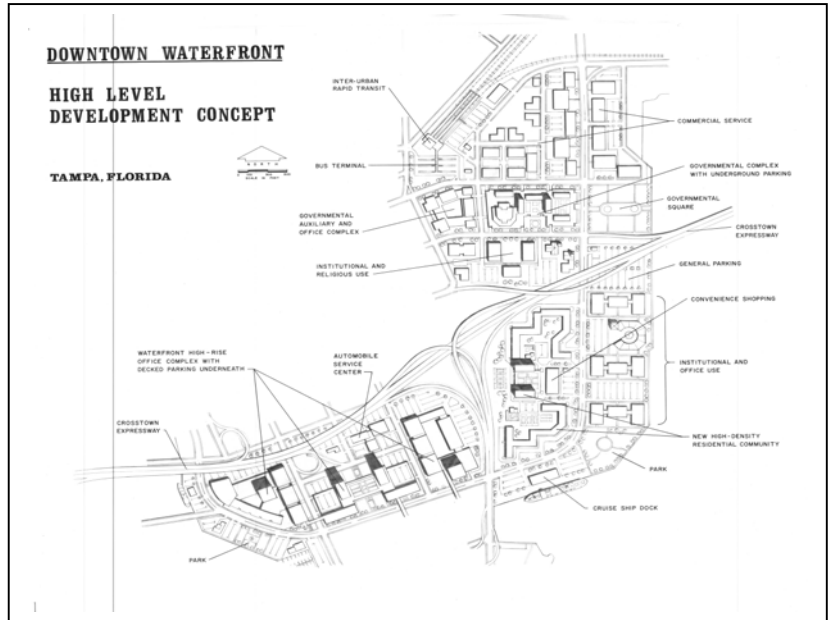
Development patterns and uses have changed during the District's history. Originally occupied by dockworker residential neighborhoods, during the early 1920's removal of the neighborhoods and orientation towards the port / marine industry occurred. The supporting port industry uses have changed as manual labor was replaced by mechanical loading and then by the use of containerized



shipping and cruise industry uses. As changed occurred, past community leaders undertook several planning efforts that charted new futures for the District.

2.3.1 The Downtown Waterfront Plan (1967) –

The 1967 plan was the first of these new visions for portions of the District. Faced with a declining urban waterfront, City leaders proposed a series of Low, Medium and High level development scenarios that proposed to bring new use to the area. Uses included expanded government offices, commercial, high density residential, parks, cruise ship docks and high-rise office buildings. The master plan identified alternative alignments of the yet unbuilt Crosstown Expressway corridor with a major interchange that provided direct connection to the area and Harbor Island. Also the opportunity for Inter-Urban Rapid Transit and the combined effect of transportation improvements theorized that construction would add to the development potential in the area.



1967 Plan

Since the plan, construction of the Crosstown Expressway was completed and did effect the development potential in the area. However, limited access points largely ignored the circulation of travelers into the area and the redevelopment of major uses was limited. A connection to Harbor Island was envisioned.

2.3.2 A Plan For The Future (1993) –

In 1993, the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission completed a citizen-bases vision plan for the District area. This special area plan reviewed existing conditions and identified a series of implementation actions that corresponded with three planning horizons:

- a. Short Term Outlook – Primarily Tourism
 - Restaurants, retail, convenience stores, service



1993 Plan



stations, and international activities.

- Small arts and entertainment enclave.
- Discourage strip commercial development.

Since the Plan was prepared, results of development within the District show that few restaurants and some limited retail uses have occurred. Artist studio space was one of the first pioneering land uses, but preservation of existing space as well as expansion has been limited by increasing real estate costs. Strip commercial development has not occurred.

b. Intermediate Outlook –

- Expand cruise ship activities and transition commercial district to adaptive reuse and infill development
- Streets will become major pedestrian corridors with high quality streetscape with outdoor cafes, attractive facades, landscaping and courtyards
- Removal of freight rail lines & relocation of flour mill

Since the Plan was prepared, results of development within the District show that the cruise industry has expanded and is doing extremely well. While adaptive reuse of the limited quality structures have occurred, the District is experiencing continued infill redevelopment that will provide improved pedestrian corridors. Existing freight rail lines are still needed to support land use. Future relocation still desired.

c. Long Term Outlook -

- Relocation of City uses on Twiggs Street
- Expansion of tourism and trade to South America
- Create opportunities for the development of large in-town residential complex to augment the people oriented commercial
- The result could be another urban village similar to Hyde Park and Ybor City but with its own unique character

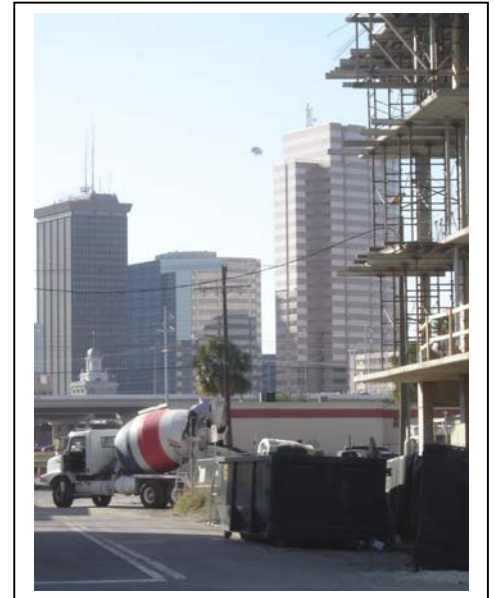
Since the Plan was prepared, relocation of the City uses outside of the District has occurred. Expansion of tourism continues to bring more visitors to the District. Expanded trade to South America is an important element of the Chamber of Commerce's goals. Urban residential is now the predominant use occurring within new development in the District. However, it is occurring at a larger and denser scale than that of either Hyde Park, Harbor Island, or Ybor City.



2.3.3 CRA Designation –

In 2002, the City and the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission prepared a Community Redevelopment Area Finding of Necessity Report and City Council designated the District as a CRA under F.S. requirements. The adoption of the plan included reference to previous planning efforts, and established a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) mechanism for future capital improvements within the District.

Since the CRA designation, market forces have continued to influence the District's pattern of development as significant urban residential projects have been planned, designed and construction initiated. These projects are occurring at a larger and denser scale than previous development within the District. It is recognized that the formulation of the SAP is in part a response to the ongoing, dynamic redevelopment occurring in the District and at the interface of previous and future development decisions.



Current Development Activity

2.4 Current Conditions

The Channel District is experiencing rapid growth and private investment as the demand for urban, high-density residential use has occurred. Redevelopment within the District has been influenced by a significant investment in public infrastructure. Development of the TECOLine Streetcar System, and the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority's construction of its reversible commuter lane bridge system, that will increase roadway capacity between Brandon and Tampa, have added tremendous capacity to the areas transportation system. Meridian Avenue, a 6-lane, urban boulevard incorporates widened sidewalks, trails and urban design elements to increase place identity. The roadway's anticipated opening will dramatically improve vehicular movements to and through the district.



Meridian Avenue Treatments

2.4.1 Development Projects –



As part of this planning process, a review of current development projects was undertaken. Future Development Projects were identified and mapped by their entitlement status. Figure 2-8 depicts all property located within the 200-acre District and identifies its current status based upon the following categories:

a. Committed Projects –

These properties include development projects that are in the planning stages and have received zoning or site development approval; and may have undertaken construction. The District includes 26.25-acres, more than 13-percent of the available land is designated as committed projects.

b. Uncommitted Lands –

These properties represent the remaining developable lands that have not revised development applications, are not approved or remain in an underdeveloped existing condition. The District includes 67.62-acres, nearly 34-percent of the available land is designated as uncommitted lands.

c. New / Renovated Projects –

These properties include developments projects that have recently been completed, are under construction, or represent renovation of structures that tend to support their long-term retention. The District includes 37.46-acres, nearly 19-percent of the available land is designated as new / renovated projects.

d. Remaining Lands –

The remaining 68.67-acres MOL includes public right-of-way, and open water that is included within the District boundary including open water within the Garrison and Ybor channels.



The Meridian



Victory Lofts

2.5 Future Growth

The City is experiencing a dramatic redevelopment shift as the country’s changing baby-boomer demographics and the emergence of other market segments occurs that desire an alternative to a suburban development environment and effect redevelopment of residential uses within the downtown



core. This shift is fueling a rapidly rising demand for new, higher density urban residential development that is being delivered in the downtown core and Channel District. The accommodation of future population growth in these areas of the City is important. First, the District and downtown core have a limited current residential population. Secondly, both areas can absorb a larger amount of residential growth without impacting other City neighborhoods whose existing design scale and context would dictate redevelopment at a smaller scale and lower density. Recognizing that this market shift is occurring is the first step in understanding an opportunity to absorb future City population growth in areas suitable for the increase.

The Channel District provides the Tampa community with a unique location to plan for significant residential accommodation for the increasing population. The District has undergone several waves of redevelopment as industry and community needs have changed. However, the current redevelopment activity is at a different scale and will represent the area’s ultimate development form. The establishment of the District’s Community Redevelopment Area designation in 2002 has assisted in this recent transformation. The neighborhood now is recognized to provide the opportunity for higher density residential development that will support downtown core growth and maturation.

As part of the Strategic Action Plan process, a projection of the current and future development patterns was created to quantify the total amount of new development that may occur within the District. The projections were created using the current Committed and Conceptual Approved projects as a base, then adding variable FAR projections for the Uncommitted Lands. The following table identifies three alternative projections based upon a 3.5, 5.0 and 6.5 FAR build-out on the remaining lands.

After review of the development projections, relevant case studies and current market absorption conditions, the consultant team identified a 20 Year forecast for the District, see the following table.

Table 2-1: Development Projections / 20 Year Forecast

Development Projection	Committed / Conceptual Projects, plus 3.5 FAR	Committed / Conceptual Projects, plus 5.0 FAR	Committed / Conceptual Projects, plus 6.50 FAR	20 Year Forecast
Residential DU's	8,894	11,430	13,786	6,330
Residential S.F.	10,913,038	13,514,800	20,749,703	8,290,446
Commercial S.F.	3,378,899	4,702,142	6,025,384	1,892,219
Office S.F.	3,258,021	4,620,604	1,350,047	1,437,588
Other Non-Residential S.F.	947,597	1,350,047	1,752,496	199,486
Total Vertical S.F.	18,497,556	24,187,592	29,877,629	11,819,738
Population	16,898	21,546	26,194	12,027
Employment	18,961	26,682	34,403	8,823

