



# The Tampa Riverwalk Project

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## ***GENERAL QUESTIONS***

### **1. What is the Riverwalk?**

The Tampa Riverwalk consists of a waterside walkway that will stretch 2.6 miles along the banks of the Hillsborough River and shores of Tampa Bay. Although not completely finished, it offers a unique pedestrian path that links parks, museums, cultural and convention facilities downtown. The Riverwalk will provide a safe and healthy venue for biking, walking, and rollerblading as well as a needed impetus for other transportation means such as a water taxi. Drawing great numbers of locals and tourists to the downtown core, it is an economic catalyst providing the entrepreneurial spark for retail, restaurants, hotels and other services found around a thriving venue of this type. Encouraging greater use of the river, the Riverwalk is increasing the number of boat docks allowing additional means to access downtown waterfront amenities. Promoting environmental stewardship, the project is focused on restoring deteriorating seawalls to natural habitat and constructing filtering devices for pollutants flowing from downtown streets. By “opening the river to the people,” The Tampa Riverwalk allows the community to enjoy one of its greatest assets – the waterfront.

## **2. What is so exciting about a sidewalk?**

The Riverwalk project is so much more than a sidewalk. The structure is certainly a key aspect of this pathway along the river, but the other components like restaurants, retail, events, boat docks, murals, shade, bridge lighting, adjacent cultural amenities, the Portal, and interpretive displays create a wonderful waterfront environment that is becoming the “destination of choice.” The environment provides immediate and free access to the water’s edge, connecting people physically and emotionally to the water in this relaxing environment. In addition to leisurely strolls, it also provides a gathering place for large and small scale events and festivals that occur on a regular basis. All of this provides the potential for an economic engine for Tampa as it attracts citizens and tourists regionally, nationally and internationally. The potential for what it can do for our city is most exciting.

## **3. Why is the Riverwalk a City priority?**

Our waterways comprise a key community asset that we should capitalize on. The Riverwalk is an opportunity to open the waterfront to all by providing a wonderful venue to enjoy events or a peaceful stroll to sooth the soul. The walkway will link various destinations along the river and will be a catalyst for economic development and tourism. Additionally, the project plays a large role in restoring natural shoreline and filtering stormwater from the city streets. This project is one of the keys to revitalizing downtown Tampa as an enjoyable place to live, learn, work and play. Additionally, the Riverwalk is part of Mayor Buckhorn’s vision to make the river the center of downtown connected to all the surrounding neighborhoods.

## **4. When will the Riverwalk be finished?**

The Riverwalk is already finished as it can currently be enjoyed by the public. There are several more sections that are being added. The Doyle Carlton section from the Straz Center to Water Works Park is currently under construction and will be opened in April 2016. That will expand the walkway to 2.3 continuous miles. Once the Heights Project gets underway, it will add another .3 mile to the north end.

In another sense the Riverwalk will never be completely done. Now that we have infrastructure in place, we will continue to improve it as time goes on, making it more and more of an attractor and economic generator for our city.

## **5. How can I get to the Riverwalk? Where do I park? Will more parking be added to accommodate Riverwalk visitors?**

There is ample parking around the various sections of the Riverwalk. As you enter the downtown area by car there are signs that direct drivers to parking areas adjacent to the Riverwalk. Downtown parking information can be found on the Friends of the Riverwalk website at [www.thetampariverwalk.com](http://www.thetampariverwalk.com). More parking will be added as the waterfront matures.

**6. Is it okay to walk behind the Tampa Convention Center or the David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts?**

Absolutely. The Riverwalk is a public transportation corridor meant for the enjoyment of all. The Riverwalk runs along the seawall behind the Convention Center and Straz Center and is open even when events are being held.

**7. What happened to the planks from the original Riverwalk at Curtis Hixon Park?**

In the mid 1970s, citizens were given the opportunity to purchase wooden planks with their names engraved for \$25 each. These planks comprised the original Riverwalk through Curtis Hixon Park. Over the years, the wood eventually began to deteriorate and in the name of safety, was removed, placed in storage and replaced by granite pavers. The deterioration of the wood was so extensive, they ultimately were discarded. In order to recognize all of the individuals and organizations that contributed to the original Riverwalk through the planks, their names were placed on eight large bronze plaques located on the wall of the ramp along the water linking Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and the Rivergate Tower (round building). The names are also included on the Riverwalk website at [www.Tampariverwalk.net](http://www.Tampariverwalk.net) and can be found on the Riverwalk Donors page in the "Pioneers of the Riverwalk" section.

**8. Where can I get more information on the Riverwalk?**

Information is available at the following locations:

- The Friends of the Riverwalk website at [www.TheTampaRiverwalk.com](http://www.TheTampaRiverwalk.com).
- The Friends of the Riverwalk on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/TheTampaRiverwalk>.
- The City's website is at [www.TampaRiverwalk.net](http://www.TampaRiverwalk.net)

**9. What is the Historical Monument Trail on the Riverwalk?**

Nestled along Tampa's Riverwalk, the Historical Monument Trail of beautiful bronze and marble busts and monuments tell the story of noteworthy people that have shaped the history of Tampa and Hillsborough County. It is an educational tool for all ages; a commemoration of our ancestors that have contributed so much to our life and culture today; and an inspiration to our entire community. As of January 2015, there are 18 monuments in place along the walkway. Learn more about the trail at [www.thetampariverwalk.com/historical-monument-trail.aspx](http://www.thetampariverwalk.com/historical-monument-trail.aspx).

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***QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT PLAN***

**10. How long is the planned walkway? Will it be continuous or cross busy streets?**

The walkway will ultimately stretch 2.6 miles from North Boulevard Bridge (near Blake High School) down the Hillsborough River along Garrison Channel to the Channelside District. The Riverwalk avoids crossing busy city streets by passing under all of the 10 bridges along the walkway, with the exception of the Cass Street/CSX RR Bridge. Even with the low clearance of

the CSX Railroad Bridge, the City has a viable design for a beautiful underpass, which is part of a future phase.

**11. Is the Riverwalk only on the east side of the river?**

Mayor Bob Buckhorn's vision for our city includes making the waterfront the center and focus of downtown. A waterfront pathway is already completed on the west side from North Boulevard Bridge to Julian B. Lane Park. Future plans will eventually link the completed section south to Bayshore Boulevard Trail.

**12. What is the completion date for the project?**

See answer to question #4.

**13. What needs to be done to accommodate the increased traffic to the area?**

Increasing the amount of people downtown will require planning in many areas including transportation, pedestrian safety, parking, and wayfinding. More people visiting the waterfront will spawn more businesses to support them. Restaurant and retail space will also be critical to meet the needs of the Riverwalk visitors.

**14. Will the Riverwalk connect to the Bayshore Boulevard Trail?**

The Platt Street Bridge currently connects the Riverwalk to the Bayshore Boulevard Trail. The Riverwalk Master Plan envisions a separate pedestrian bridge on the south side of Platt Street Bridge to link the two. The Riverwalk connects to the Meridian Street Trail at the corner of Beneficial and Channelside Drives, and also connects to the Selmon Greenway just south of Brorein Street.

**15. What types of amenities will be along the Riverwalk?**

There are already numerous amenities along the completed segments and more are coming soon. The public input forums held in 2005, and numerous other public input mechanisms, shaped the amenities that are provided and planned. Commercial space, retail, restaurants, social gathering spots, and watercraft access are key components to a waterfront where people want to be. Specific destinations along the Riverwalk include the David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, the Glazer Children's Museum, the Tampa Museum of Art, the Tampa Bay History Center, the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts, the Tampa Convention Center, the Sail Pavilion, the Tampa Bay Times Forum, and waterside restaurants. Numerous watercraft rentals off the docks at the Convention Center include eBoats, water bikes, and small personal craft as well as charters. The Channelside Bay Shoppes, Florida Aquarium and the American Victory Ship are located at the southern terminus. Segway tours of the downtown can be obtained in Channelside. The redesigned Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and the extended Cotanchobee Ft Brooke Park, as well as four other parks, line the waterfront in this urban setting. To keep the kids cool and entertained, children's splash fountains are found in Water Works Park, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and Cotanchobee Ft Brooke Park. Dog parks are located at Water Works Park and Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. Educational displays are found in the completed segments as well as an electronic Portal that displays art images with associated

educational messages in the evening hours. The Riverwalk provides an excellent venue to host exciting outdoor events, performances, and art and music festivals.

#### **16. What is the Activation Plan?**

The Activation Plan is the heart and soul of the Riverwalk project. This plan outlines the programming of current and future events and activities that you will find along the Riverwalk and associated parks. Examples would be period actors from the “Plant Hotel” walking along the Riverwalk; movies in the park; water and walking audio tours; festivals; health, environment and history information; public art displays, musical and theatrical performances; water sports and health events. This flurry of activity gives reason to come to the downtown as a destination of choice because “something is always going on!”

#### **17. What are the security precautions set in place for pedestrians walking the area at night?**

As safety is a critical factor to the success of the Riverwalk, the Master Plan incorporates the proper lighting and design to make the Riverwalk safe. Currently, Tampa Police Officers and Tampa Downtown Partnership guides patrol the completed sections. Surveillance cameras are being considered to enhance the already safe environment.

#### **18. Can the Riverwalk accommodate special events and festivals?**

Currently, there are numerous parks along the Riverwalk that can be used for events and festivals. The walkway along the river offers excellent viewing areas for river and portside events. Permits for special activities along the Riverwalk can be obtained from the Parks and Recreation Department at <http://www.tampagov.net/parks-and-recreation/how-do-i>.

#### **19. What are trail construction plans for the west side of the Hillsborough River?**

A one mile trail now exists behind Blake High School on the west bank of the river. It is part of Tampa's Ross J. Ferlita Greenways & Trails System and is planned to extend from Columbus Drive south to the Bayshore Boulevard Greenway Trail. This pathway will provide the basis of the Riverwalk on the west side of the river.

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### ***QUESTIONS ABOUT PROJECT COSTS AND FUNDING***

#### **20. What is the total cost of the project?**

Considering what has already been spent and what will be spent to complete the full 2.6 miles, the estimated cost will be about \$34 million.

#### **21. How has the project been funded?**

Over the last decade, the City has included the project in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget. No property tax was used as most of the Riverwalk CIP funding comes from federal gas tax revenues. The only exception was the \$62,000 came from the Channelside Tax Increment District, which is property tax folded back into that specific district. Since City dollars

alone are not enough, planners pursued every source of funding, including state and federal grants and private donations through the Friends of the Riverwalk. The specific break down of the total cost is: Grants - 53%, City - 42% and Private - 5%. Department of Transportation grants have provided about 44% of the total cost.

**22. What is the TIGER IV Grant and what did it do for the city?**

The TIGER Grant is a highly competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The total amount available nationwide was close to \$500,000,000. The City of Tampa partnered with the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) to put in an application to fund the building of the two Riverwalk sections, Kennedy Boulevard Plaza and Doyle Carlton, and Selmon Greenway. The City and THEA were notified in June of 2012 of the award of \$10,900,000 to complete the three items listed above. There were only two of these grants awarded in the State of Florida that year.

**23. What are the greatest needs for the project? How can I help improve the Riverwalk?**

Now that the City is completing the Riverwalk from Channelside to Water Works Park, the greatest need will be enhancements and activation. Enhancements include more shade structures, retail and restaurants, events, art, educational displays and docks. The Friends of the Riverwalk will help by raising funds through events and tax free donations. Additionally, they are planning events to activate the waterfront. RiverFest 2016, which encompasses the entire downtown waterfront, is a 2-day event that will kick off on April 30. Becoming a member and a volunteer of the Friends is a great way to get involved in building our community. Contact Friends through their website at [www.thetampariverwalk.com](http://www.thetampariverwalk.com).

**24. Who are the Friends of the Riverwalk?**

Friends of the Riverwalk is a non-profit 501 (c) (3). Their goal is to enhance the quality of life and build a stronger sense of community for Tampa Bay by preserving the waterfront for use by our citizens and visitors in a way that inspires a sense of ownership and invites active participation in city life. For more information go to <http://www.thetampariverwalk.com/about/friends-of-the-riverwalk.aspx>

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***QUESTIONS ABOUT PROJECT PROGRESS***

**25. How much of the Riverwalk is complete?**

See the answer to question #4.

**26. What are the next segments to be built?**

See the answer to question #4.

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## ***QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL***

### **27. Will the Riverwalk connect to Channelside shops and restaurants?**

South Plaza is the southern end of the Riverwalk and connects to the Channelside Shoppes via a sidewalk that runs along Channelside Drive. The connection between the Riverwalk and Channelside will be enhanced as Channelside is improved in the future.

### **28. Will new businesses be attracted to the Riverwalk?**

As more and more people come to enjoy the Riverwalk, businesses will develop to meet their needs which will attract more people bringing more business opportunities. This cycle will mature the Riverwalk environment into the project's vision. Currently there are several projects pending such as the Heights Project, the residential tower near the library and the tower just north of Brorein Street. The City encourages business development as is important to the success of the Riverwalk. Since much of the waterfront consists of parks and waterside buildings, the City will seek to integrate other downtown restaurant and retail establishments in close proximity to the Riverwalk as part of the overall environment. This concept works to make the Tampa downtown the destination of choice.

### **29. I am interested in retail opportunities on the Riverwalk. Who do I contact for more information?**

Please contact Lee Hoffman with the City of Tampa's Riverwalk Development Office by email at [lee.hoffman@tampagov.net](mailto:lee.hoffman@tampagov.net) or by phone at 813-274-7439.

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## ***QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSPORTATION ON THE RIVERWALK***

### **30. Is transportation along the Riverwalk being considered?**

The city will accommodate transportation needs as more and more people come downtown to enjoy the Riverwalk. A water shuttle already operates on an as needed basis. The rubber wheel trolley and the TECO Line Streetcar currently service the downtown waterfront. We hope to have a water taxi soon that runs along the downtown shoreline on a scheduled basis.

### **31. Will a water taxi be available sometime in the future?**

With increased activity along the waterfront, we expect water taxi operations to begin at some point in the not too distant future.

### **32. Are there docks along the Riverwalk for boat access?**

Docks already exist at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, the Tampa Convention Center, Water Works Park and the Tampa Bay History Center. Riverwalk planners are looking at additional dock locations to allow maximum boating access to the Riverwalk and adjacent amenities.

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***WHO IS THE RIVERWALK FOR?***

**33. Is the Riverwalk only for the downtown community?**

The Riverwalk is a community asset that is free for everyone, whether you live downtown, throughout Tampa, or outside the local area. Programmed events like the International Dragon Boat Racing Championships attracted visitors from around the world.

**34. Who is the Riverwalk designed and programmed to attract?**

The Riverwalk is designed and programmed for all age groups to enjoy. Everyone in our area should feel there is something for them along the waterfront.

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