CONNECTING TAMPA

A report by the American Institute of Architects
Sustainable Design Assessment Team
Tampa, FL
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Tampa recently adopted a new comprehensive plan. Sustainability is an integral part of the plan, reflecting an increased interest in sustainability among community members and at the city and planning commission levels.

The Urban Charrette, with support from the City of Tampa, the Planning Commission, and many others, requested that the American Institute of Architects (AIA) send a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to Tampa to help the city become more sustainable, create a framework for neighborhood planning, and prepare for light rail and improved transit.

The City of Tampa has requested:
- Strategies to maximize social, economic, residential and recreational opportunities;
- Focus on the appropriate design and development of its neighborhoods and urban villages to accommodate projected growth;
- Recommendations to update the existing infrastructure to empower neighborhood associations to plan for a sustainable city;
- Strategies to connect land use patterns with transit planning;
- Visioning for appropriate use of open space and vacant lots and properties.

Tampa, like many cities in the U.S., has spread geographically, weakening its urban core and fostering disjointed neighborhoods. Though the new comprehensive plan has been completed, the city needs an updated planning framework that would be enhanced by input from the community. Multi-modal transit plans have started to be implemented, including light rail planning, bus rapid transit, and bike and pedestrian paths. However, there has not been a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the planning of these modes and citizens of Tampa have become frustrated with the inability to efficiently connect with goods and services, other neighborhoods, and each other.

AIA was excited about the challenge of building on all of the local planning efforts to make a large American city a more sustainable one, and agreed to underwrite the majority of the costs of sending an SDAT to Tampa.

ENVIRONMENT

EQUITY

SUSTAINABILITY

ECONOMY
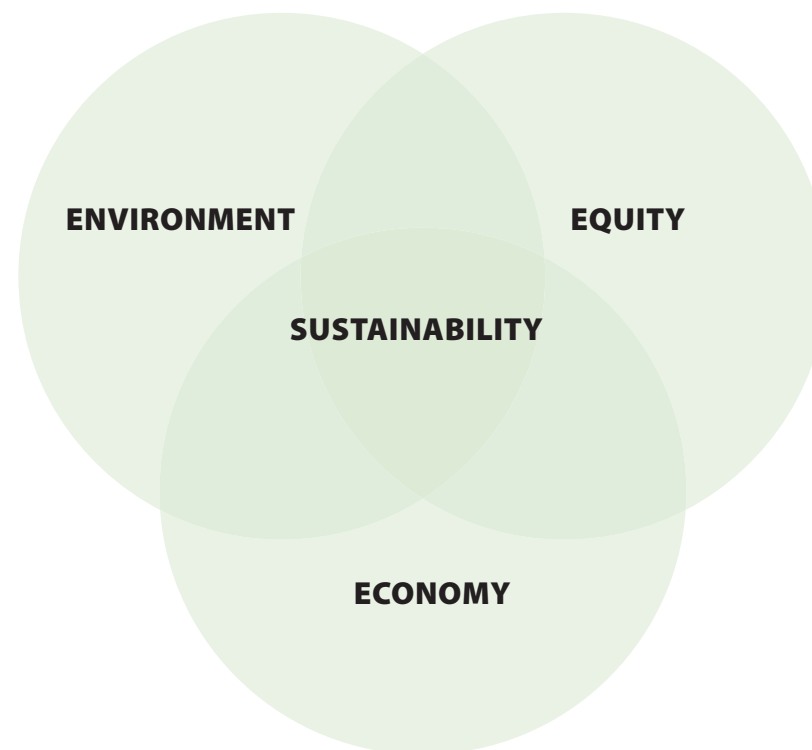
What is a Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT)?

Since 1967, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has administered the Design Assessment Team program. These efforts started in 1967 with Regional/Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT), which focus on specific design problems. AIA expanded their efforts in 2005 with Sustainable Design Assessment Teams, which

focus on improving sustainability in an urban context.

Design Assessment Teams (both R/UDAT and SDAT) are results-driven community design programs based on the principles of interdisciplinary solutions, objectivity, and public participation. They combine local resources with the expertise of a multidisciplinary team of professionals from the fields of urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, economic development, and the arts. Team members volunteer their time to identify ways to encourage desirable change in a community. They address the social, economic, and political issues as well as develop potential urban design strategies. This comprehensive approach offers communities a tool that mobilizes local support and fosters new levels of cooperation.

Following months of preparation, a team visits the community for three or four intense, productive days. At the end of the visit, the team presents a final report and, shortly thereafter, an illustrated document of strategies and recommendations for addressing the community's concerns. Implementation is overseen by a local steering committee of community leaders and citizens dedicated to following up on the recommendations. Team members return within a year to review progress and to advise on implementation strategies.

The Design Assessment Team program has used this grassroots approach across the nation to help create communities that are healthy, safe, livable, as well as more sustainable.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Google "sustainable development" and you get millions of hits. Everyone wants sustainability; it's become the new buzz word. Sustainability is the new black. Unfortunately, sustainability is so overused that sometimes it means nothing.

The most commonly used definition of sustainability "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Bruntland Commission)

Sustainability includes, but is far more than, green buildings, recycling, water conservation, land use patters that reduce the need to drive, healthy downtowns, and healthy communities. Sustainability involves balancing and combining three equally important goals (the three Es): Environment; Equity (social equity and community); and Economy. Leave out any of these three goals, and it is not sustainability.

Preserving our environment is critical, but preserving our environment without providing jobs and addressing poverty and addressing environmental justice is not sustainable. Economic development is critical, but economic activity that consumes our environment and the very things we all embrace is not sustainable. Social equity is critical, but meeting social needs without creating more wealth to build a healthy society is not sustainable.

Tampa needs a holistic systems approach to becoming a great and a sustainable city. Let's get going!

Tampa has the potential to be a great, sustainable, American city. As one of the nation's most rapidly growing urban areas, Tampa has constant opportunities to reinvent itself and to direct growth to those areas that most benefit from it.

Tampa retains some of the best elements of its industrial past, especially an active and growing port and rich industrial architecture. It has a small but vibrant creative economy, exciting and very diverse cultural communities, and great natural and cultural attractions. It has an energetic and diverse population. Tampa rightly prides itself on being a great place to play, for residents and visitors alike.

Tampa also has a range of very strong, dynamic, and diverse neighborhoods, providing a sense of place and many choices for Tampa residents to call home. In many neighborhoods, local community organizations are strong and politically empowered.

For those who like downtown living, Tampa's four primary downtown neighborhoods provide a great urban experience. Ybor City, one of the downtown neighborhoods, is on the national register of historic places and has recently been rejuvenated. This fall, the American Planning Association named Seventh Avenue, Ybor City as one its ten great streets for 2008.

Environmental and Land Use Strengths

- In the last decade, Tampa's downtown core neighborhoods (Downtown, Ybor City, Tampa Heights, and Channel District) have all had dramatic improvements, bringing back urban life and vitality to an area that had been somewhat neglected and dramatically under populated. Recent investment in these neighborhoods, which have been supported by Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, has led to significant TIF funds that are being collected for infrastructure and related improvements within the districts. In addition, the city is currently making major investments in downtown museums to complement existing institutional presence.

- Tampa Bay and Hillsborough River riverfront are extremely scenic and visual amenities, and are parts of a critical and ecologically diverse estuary. Tampa has made great strides in developing this resource by creating parks, walkways, and other amenities near and connecting to these resources, while also preserving its natural beauty and keeping its ecological value intact.

- The Hillsborough River is a valuable natural and recreational resource. It is used for canoeing and there is a local commitment, both by government and non-profits, to improve access to the river and to restore riverine habitat. For the first time, the guaranteed minimum flow being released into the Hillsborough River from an upstream dam is enough to protect the river's lower reach. This lower reach is a productive tidal estuary and a key ingredient to the health of Tampa Bay. There is also an interest in developing a water taxi along the lower reach of the river.

- After many delays and setbacks, the Tampa Bay Seawater Desalination Plant recently opened, greatly reducing pressure on water supply for Tampa and the Tampa region, albeit a high-energy solution. Community commitment to preserving surface water supplies, for environmental and economic reasons, is very strong.

- Hillsborough County recently adopted a commitment to make certain new County-owned buildings green or LEED certified.

- The City of Tampa recently adopted a green buildings ordinance.

- Tampa added a "Green Officer" portfolio to its Deputy Director of Growth Management and Development Services to create a stronger focus on sustainability.

- Tampa's current mayor recently signed the US Conference of Mayors "Mayors Climate Protection Agreement."

- Tampa is working to become a Florida Green Building Council (FGBC) "Green Local Community."

- Tampa is working on a small expansion of the existing street car system that will improve the link from downtown to Ybor City and increase the visibility of the system.

- Tampa and Hillsborough County, as well as other regional entities, are slowly working

towards a citywide and region-wide rail transit system that can reverse the decades long trend towards more vehicle miles traveled and more vehicle-generated air pollution.

Economic Strengths

- Tampa has a diverse economy that provides some insulation from economic downturns. Strong sectors of the economy include sports, fire insurance and real estate ("Fire"), military, ports, educational and medical facilities ("Eds and Meds"), the creative economy, tourism, and the airport. Eds and Meds, MacDill Airforce Base, and the Port of Tampa are especially recession resistant.

- The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission just completed a new comprehensive plan, which the city voted to adopt. This plan creates a new comprehensive vision to improve community sustainability and advance rational planning. In theory, this should lead to a greater predictability for new economic development projects.

Tampa's Challenges

Tampa could be a great American city, but it is not there yet. As one resident told us, "Tampa's identification is not so good and is tattered in some places." Another told us of the need to build a sense of "place value." Gertrude Stein's

famous description of Oakland, "there is no there there," doesn't apply to Tampa, but neither does Tampa have the sense of unique identity and being that helps define a great city.

The development of Tampa's urban neighborhoods is far from complete, and downtown populations are still too small to sustain basic urban services and provide any option other than single-occupancy vehicles for most trips. Throughout the entire city, transportation culture is built around single-occupancy vehicles, and deliberately or not, the city is hostile to bicycles, pedestrians, and transit.

The current focus on building a downtown center and downtown civic culture, as well as building community and political support for transit, will go a long way towards making Tampa a great city. These are necessary, but not sufficient, to take Tampa to the next level. It also needs a stronger sense of identity and that secondary urban infrastructure that builds off and connects downtowns and transit into the community fabric.

One final impression; Tampa is not yet a leader in sustainability. Creating a healthy downtown, building urban neighborhoods, building transit, maintaining urban neighborhoods, and undertaking specific environmental and energy improvements, all underway, put Tampa ahead of many of its peers. It is far, however, from a national sustainability leader. There are enormous opportunities to reduce Tampa's carbon

and environmental footprint, provide greater social equity and sense of community, and to improve the economy for all the residents.

Environmental and Land Use Challenges

- The majority of commercial and office areas lack a strong sense of place, and sprawling residential and commercial development predominate. The Westshore District, a suburban-style office park and shopping center area that is a critical component of the Tampa economy, contains more shopping and office space than downtown and, even with higher land rents, has a significantly lower vacancy rate.

- Conflict between neighborhoods and commercial areas exists at many points where activities overlap, in large part because commercial development in Tampa is often not neighborhood friendly. In spite of a few examples of strong neighborhood commercial centers, neighborhoods are often hostile to mixed use where neighborhoods intersect with commercial areas.

- Tampa shares the distinction with Detroit as one of the last two major American cities without a light rail system. Transit (bus) primarily serves only those without any other transportation choices. Only a relatively new and very limited streetcar system (connecting downtown, the Channel District, and Ybor City with 460,000

person trips/year) provides urban connectivity. Limited coverage, dead areas within the downtown and urban core, and poor service time make this of little general use. There is enormous excitement about the opportunity for light rail both as a key to allow compact urban areas to help reduce traffic congestion (for those who use rails and those who do not), and the sense that light rail may be the "spark" to make Tampa a great city and inspire community imagination about its future.

- Transportation culture is built around single-occupancy vehicles and the urban landscape is heavily dominated by cars. Tampa residents are slowly discovering that they can never build enough roads to alleviate traffic congestion. Transportation and parking systems encourage driving and make non-driving transportation modes very difficult. Most projects include its own parking and the cost of building is bundled with an entire development, which does not provide any incentive for reducing reliance on cars. The Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) recently completed a transit plan that reviewed options for light rail and improved bus transit, but there is significant political opposition that makes it difficult to implement. It would take an enormous paradigm shift to reduce urban parking and create significant modal shifts out of single-occupancy vehicle trips.

- No shared car services exist in Tampa. With current trends and easy parking, it is unlikely that a shared car service could thrive or even survive in Tampa.

- City infrastructure, and to a large extent City culture, is unfriendly to pedestrians and hostile to bicyclists and leads to unhealthy life styles.

- Neighborhoods, while strong, do not connect with other neighborhoods (nor the city as a whole) as well as in many cities. Major arterials often serve as moats around neighborhoods. Many higher-income residents view the areas south of Kennedy Boulevard more desirably than the areas north of Kennedy Boulevard and Kennedy Boulevard itself. Those residents are not necessarily supportive of cultural and bricks-and-mortar measures that could better connect those neighborhoods.

- The large institutions, University of Southern Florida (USF), University of Tampa, Busch Gardens, MacDill Airforce Base, Tampa International Airport, and the Port of Tampa, provide some of the most significant economic anchors and engines for the city and they help provide Tampa's cultural identity and a sense of place. However, they are often not connected with the greater community and are not integrated into the urban streetscape. USF was a commuter campus that has developed a large residential presence, but its presence in the community feels more like a commuter college than an

integrated community member. USF is located on the outer edge of the city, with a minuscule downtown office presence.

- Except for Busch Gardens, Tampa is not generally on the tourist circuit, although nearby beaches outside of the city limits certainly are. Visitors to Busch Gardens do not generally extend their visits to other Tampa destinations. The city is far more successful at attracting corporate and business travelers to its downtown and convention center. Even Tampa residents do not always identify Tampa's tourist opportunities and resources, in spite of Tampa's obvious resources like the Hillsborough River, the Bay, Ybor City, and its museums and cultural attractions.

- Planning for large (category 5) hurricanes is relatively new. Although such efforts clearly now have the attention of Tampa government and its design community, much of Tampa's existing infrastructure and development is not ready for a category 5 hurricane. Efforts to plan infrastructure for likely sea level rise and for the increased severity and frequency of hurricanes as a result of global warming is even more limited. Storm and sanitary sewers and systems and other infrastructure often remain in place for a century, which suggests that they should be designed around likely sea levels, floods, and storm surges of the future.

- Interest in energy efficient buildings is rapidly growing, especially by government

agencies, but Tampa is far from a leader in this area.

- New development typically includes provisions to address stormwater, but treatment of stormwater from existing facilities is extremely limited.

- While landscaping and tree planting and replacement standards are generally exemplary, landscaping in parking lots lags behind many communities.

- Natural weather patterns limit problems with poor air quality, but the large number of vehicle trips generated and the remaining industrial legacy create air quality and health problems.

- Tampa has made great strides in taking advantage of its abundant waterfront opportunities (bay and river), but there is an amazing opportunity as yet unfilled to capitalize on these resources and to connect these resources to be part of residents' everyday lives.

Community and Social Equity Challenges

- Poverty and low levels of education attainment are rampant. Poverty has remained "stubborn" in spite of extensive efforts to address it. Many of Tampa's jobs are low wage jobs, much of the workforce does not have the education and skills necessary for higher skill/higher wage positions, and it is often

> Tampa residents told us that Tampa needs to provide much better connections to nature, neighborhoods, and institutions. We agree. Hence the identification of this Sustainable Design Assessment as Connecting Tampa. This title reflects the need for a focus on community connectivity: the physical connectivity of its transportation system and then more amorphous social, economic, cultural and community connectivity. As one resident said, "We need to connect the intelligence and the power in the community into a greater good."

difficult to retain young educated college graduates. Tampa serves as an immigrant gateway, which has greatly improved cultural diversity and provides a steady low wage workforce, but creates challenges towards creating a well educated workforce.

- Neighborhood empowerment can sometimes create "not in my back yard" problems in conflict with larger community goals.

- Suburban areas inside and outside of the city are not integrated with the urban core area. Many City and County residents can spend most of their time working, living and playing without coming downtown or even understanding the economic importance of downtown to the overall health of the community.

Economic Challenges

- The recent economic downturn has reduced the sales price of commercial and residential properties, led to the failure of some proj-

ects, increased foreclosure rates, and significantly stressed municipal finances.

- Tampa's economy provides relatively diverse and many somewhat recession-proof employment opportunities (especially the Port of Tampa, and Eds and Meds). Unfortunately, few large corporations call Tampa their headquarters, and there is a deficit of jobs to challenge and attract the best educated young people and provide wage competition to Miami and Atlanta and other large urban centers.

- Tampa does not have enough jobs to serve its large immigrant workforce and the large proportion of its workers with relatively low education attainment.

City Leadership

Tampa has much of the technical expertise to address sustainability in both public agency staff and the private sector consulting community.

The City and the County, however, have not yet embraced the concepts, although interest in downtown neighborhoods, transit and green energy has been building.

Mayor Iorio, whose current term ends in April 2011, is committed to light rail and downtown revitalization and embraces the importance of these changes if Tampa is to achieve greatness. She appears willing to use political capital to deliver. Although not aggressive enough for some critics, she is working on putting a light rail funding scheme on the ballot in 2010 and has verbalized an understanding that an urban transformation needs fundamental changes beyond simply building the bricks and mortar parts of a rail system. On her website, she identifies six goals for the city:

Invest in Tampa's Neighborhoods
Advance the quality of life in Tampa's neighborhoods by delivering outstanding services.

Economic Development in Our Most Challenged Areas
Transform East Tampa into a community of vibrant residential, business, recreational, social and cultural life through the implementation of a strategic economic development model, focused on neighborhood assets that can be replicated in other challenged areas within the City of Tampa.

Downtown as a Residential Community
By 2010, our Downtown will have multiple, distinct, mixed-income neighborhoods recognized as a safe, pedestrian oriented urban community servicing individuals and families.

Efficient City Government Focused on Customer Service
The City of Tampa will become a model of government efficiency and effectiveness, delivering the highest quality of services at the best possible value, while providing outstanding customer service in all areas of operations.

City of the Arts
Tampa will be a place that celebrates the works of artists, writers, performers, film makers and all forms of fine and commercial arts professionals, providing opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages to enjoy and be enriched by a wide array of creative pursuits while encouraging the growth of creative businesses.

Making Regional Mass Transit a Reality
The City of Tampa will work on a regional basis to create a mass transit system consisting of both rail and enhanced bus service to serve future generations.

Tampa has amazing natural and human-built resources, a diverse and exciting population, culturally rich neighborhoods, a promising urban core, and an assurance of on-going growth. It also has its share of land use, environmental, economic, and social equity challenges.

The Connecting Tampa process identified six overarching and necessary objectives to help Tampa become a leader in sustainability and become a great city. The American Institute of Architects Sustainable Design Assessment Team (AIA SDAT) thinks that Tampa is making progress in each of these areas. This report identifies both where the SDAT thinks Tampa is on the right track, as well as additional opportunities for improvement.

1. The Vision Thing

Tampa needs to articulate and share a short and focused vision for the community, city boards, and the development community. The vision should build on the comprehensive plan and the Mayor's strategic plan. This vision should be made a part of EVERY public policy discussion. Tampa's new comprehensive plan aims to create a livable city. It does so, in part, by building on four shared community goals: Resilience, Respect, Livability, and Prosperity. The resulting comprehensive plan has very strong policies. In practice, however, there should be a much more clearly articulated consensus community vision.

Based on consultation with residents during the SDAT process and a review of Tampa media and web postings, it appears that a relatively small percentage of Tampa residents are even aware that the City has a new comprehensive plan, much less understand what it stands for. Both the Planning Commission and the City worked hard to involve the community through extensive community meetings, public hearings, and news articles. In spite of that, however, we found very little awareness of the plan or its vision from participants in the SDAT process, as well as from people we chatted with throughout the City. Most government professionals and development community members in Tampa are unable to distill the comprehensive plan down to a simple and understandable vision.

Sustainability, planning and visioning is simply not part of Tampa's every day story. Even Tampa's own website, "City of Tampa News and Public Notices," rarely includes stories of sustainability, planning and vision when those stories should be appearing daily. Engaging the community requires a constant dialogue.

The Mayor's own web site includes a brief strategic plan and six strategic focus areas. This is not a community vision and not an agenda for every public process, but is the clearest single focus in any of Tampa's city or planning commission documents and is a springboard for moving forward on a shared vision.

A consensus vision does not need to be a legally-binding comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to Florida law. What it does need to be is a starting point for community consensus and the playbook that would be consulted for every public policy discussion. Tampa may need to amend their comprehensive plan in order to provide for new transit and new neighborhood planning models. Regardless of whether the plan needs to be amended or not, the consensus vision should create an agenda for Tampa to move forward.

2. Building a Transit-Friendly City Requires More Than Light Rail

Tampa needs light rail, which it is moving towards, but light rail can't be done in isolation; it is dependent on capital and operating financing, political support, and in some areas significantly different land use and transportation patterns. Tampa needs to continue to think about what it takes to be a great city, and then develop light rail and transit-oriented development to support its greatness.

Developing light rail is a transformative step for Tampa. The regional conversation about light rail, with the Mayor's strong support, is advancing.

However, rail must be far more than a transportation option superimposed on a car-oriented city. Rail must also be a new way to orient the city, or else rail will fail and traffic congestion will continue to worsen. Dense residential and mixed use development, with far fewer parking spaces than is common now in Tampa, should

Tampa is working to be more sustainable. Developing green buildings, advancing light rail, improving Hillsborough River and Tampa Bay water quality, and adding downtown residents, to name a few actions, are steps in the right direction. Moving forward, sustainability in Tampa must include:

- An environmental and land use focus on reducing energy and natural resource demands from buildings and transportation; designing infrastructure and private capital investments for sea level rise and increased storm frequency and intensity; reducing dependence on single-occupancy vehicle trips; making streets more transit, bicycle and pedestrian friendly
- A social equity focus on empowering neighborhoods; improving environmental justice; providing transit services that serve everyone's needs; and providing educational opportunities for all
- An economic focus that builds wealth for all; strengthening Tampa's existing economic engines; developing more local entrepreneurs; and relocalizing services and the economy when prudent.

Tampa is addressing many, but not all, of these items.

be located within walking distance of every rail node to provide the critical mass necessary to support rail. This involves rethinking development and making sure that development frames arterial streets, especially at rail nodes. Make those streets desirable places to live, work, shop, and play, not simply places to do business.

3. Complete Streets—The Car Does Not Define the City
Streets must be designed around, as well as respect, all modes of travel that use them: trucks, cars, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians. Tampa already focuses on vehicles, but too often at the

expense of bicycles and pedestrians. If we expect residents to make connections across neighborhoods, without jumping in their cars, it must be safe and desirable to walk. People who would not think of driving in other cities drive in Tampa because the street network calls out and says "Come drive me. You would be nuts to walk or bicycle in this city."

People who are accustomed to walking 50 feet from their house to their car, and 500 feet from parking to work, should not be expected to walk greater distances to and from rail unless the City becomes far more inviting for pedestrians and

bicycles. This requires rethinking what makes a street embrace all transportation needs, even bicycles and pedestrians.

Tampa has the third highest rate of pedestrian fatalities in the country for cities over 100,000 (6.04 fatalities per 100,000 people per the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2003). As a result of the danger, many Tampa residents do not walk short distances that they might in other cities, adding to congestion and the car-oriented culture. This should be unacceptable to the citizens of Tampa. Seattle, only slightly larger than Tampa, has a pedestrian fatality rate of one-sixth of Tampa.

4. Neighborhoods are the Building Blocks of the City
Tampa's great neighborhoods need to be better protected, organized and developed so that they can help make the city better. Although some redevelopment and infill in existing neighborhoods is appropriate, most new development should be focused downtown and in the under-invested major corridors throughout the city.

This is consistent with the recommendations in Tampa's new comprehensive plan and Tampa's efforts to empower neighborhood organizations. In many communities, there is a concern that better organized neighborhoods will lead to more NIMBY ("not-in-my-backyard") battles. In the short run, this can be true. But in the long run, it will be the neighborhoods that have built community consensus that will be able to

identify their needs, and understand how new development can strengthen both neighborhoods and the city. One measure of successful neighborhood empowerment is when neighborhoods embrace development proposals that strengthen the greater Tampa economy and its neighborhoods.

All of Tampa's neighborhoods have great strengths, but they still need improvement. Many Tampa neighborhoods can benefit from selective reinvestment, infill, and renewal, but the core of almost every neighborhood in the city should be preserved and enhanced, not redeveloped.

On the other hand, urban arterials at the edge of neighborhoods all over the city are under-invested, car-oriented, and create moats that separate neighborhoods. These areas, along with downtown, should get the lion's share of new growth in Tampa in the coming decades. Dense residential and mixed-use development that frame the streets can change the character of these corridors, house Tampa's new residents, and add a much needed vitality to adjoining neighborhoods.

5. The Magic of Arts, Culture, and Water

Tampa must be more than a series of neighborhoods. Downtown and urban arterials, which should be the growth centers for Tampa's new residents, should be more than housing and commercial areas. Arts, cultural activities, street life, and a connection to water can serve as the magnets that hold the city together. Art and cultural activities and events that bring large numbers of residents and visitors downtown and into urban core areas are transformative.

Tampa needs to expand its focus on an urban core (including downtown, Channelside, Ybor City, and adjacent urban neighborhoods) to enhance a "there-there." Tampa has made great strides in improving these urban areas and opening up public access to the waterfront. Except for the working waterfront, every single inch of Tampa Bay and the Hillsborough River in the urban core should be accessible to the public. Arts and cultural events should bring residents and tourists alike into the urban core every day, especially on weekends. Although Tampa has made impressive progress with improved access to the waterfront and hundreds of arts and cultural events, most Tampa residents do not include the urban core area for purposes other than work. They must want to come here if Tampa is to be a great city.

Tampa has always had strong neighborhood and community cultural events. New development along the arterials must enhance this. In areas where the arterials create dividing lines between neighborhoods, redevelopment should not only make streets easier to cross (traffic safety), but also more desirable to cross (attractive and desirable places) to knit neighborhoods together. Continued focus on neighborhood commercial services, arts and cultural activities, artist live/work space, and community parks, schools, and

libraries are a must.

Tampa's new comprehensive plan and City investments are clearly working to achieve this. There is certainly, however, always opportunity for more progress.

6. Plan and Implement

Just as a clearer city-wide vision knits the city together, neighborhoods need a community vision for what they should look and feel like. This vision should create certainty and predictability for the City, neighborhoods, and the development community.

Tampa's current pilot project, Community Planning through Form Based Code, should be a model for every neighborhood in the city. However, the focus for existing core neighborhoods a few doors in from arterials should be on the necessary revisions to existing codes and on public investments, and not on form-based codes.

Arterials throughout the city should no longer be developed as the car-oriented parking lot-focused developments that were for many years. Most of these arterials do not serve their abutting neighborhoods and create dead areas in the urban fabric that are unsafe for anything other than cars. What is needed instead are new development patterns that are friendly to pedestrians, bicycles, and neighborhoods, as well as new light rail, bus rapid transit, improved traditional bus service, and a sense of community.

The Community Planning through Form Based Code approach is the best way to achieve this transformation, with neighborhoods sharing the driver's seat. It is also the best way to change the dynamic of opposition to every development, which is driven in large part because development is not consistent with a community or neighborhood consensus.

With neighborhoods driving a Community Planning through Form Based Code process, the new planning and code approach should provide predictability and certainty for everyone. The City should strive to build the necessary political and legal consensus whereby the only Comprehensive Plan amendments, zoning changes, and variances granted would be those consistent with this process. The process should then result in assurances of what is allowed and what is not. Any other amendments, zoning changes, and variances create unpredictability that is unfair to neighborhoods and to the development community.

Likewise, the development community needs more certainty and a stronger single point-of-contact within the city, and a clear time line for comments from each department. This will ensure that all department comments and concerns are heard and addressed while providing consistency and certainty to the development process. Government is generally transparent, but some in the regulated development community continue to find the process confusing and unpredictable.

The Vision Thing

The city comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of the good life. -Aristotle, Politics

While providing for the bare needs of life, Tampa built a wonderful downtown and neighborhoods. As the city grew, commerce increased and the daily needs of citizens were met. In trying to maintain and build on meeting the needs of the community, a great port, airport, and road system were built. However, with the expansion of the transportation system, the threads of a great community began to unravel. The transportation system of the city has demaged the elements of a community which create the livable city. Tampa's conundrum moving forward is how to build the good life while continuing to meet the basic needs of the community with its existing built environment.

A common vision needs to be articulated for the community

Important and significant efforts have been made to create a vision for the community. The Mayor has clearly and succinctly articulated a mission: Tampa will be recognized as a diverse, progressive city that is celebrated as the most desirable place to live, learn, work and play. The Planning

Commission has its livability themes in the comprehensive plan: Resilience, Respect, Livability, and Prosperity. But when community members, city and community staff, and representatives of

Tampa does beautifully with the grand gestures.
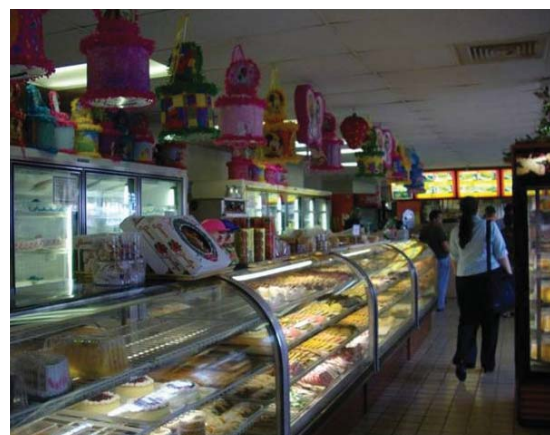
She needs to do equally well with the small gestures which nourish the heart and soul of a community.

stakeholder groups were asked about a vision for the community almost none were able to repeat the vision, or principles, or values of the community as articulated by the Mayor, the Planning Commission, or community members.

The dominant form of the community should be the water and the neighborhoods, yet for many visitors it is the highway and arterial roadway system. Few residents consider this one of Tampa's best assets. Community members love and value the natural environment-- the Hillsborough River, the Bay, the bike paths and walks along the Bay, the parks, the wildlife, the trees and the opportunity to be in nature. They also love their neighborhoods, people and their diversity, and the history. Intimate, human scale interactions with the natural and built environments clearly speak to the heart and soul of the community of Tampa.

Creating a clearer vision should be easy because it largely exists in the comprehensive plan and on the Mayor's mission statement. The comprehensive plan admirably attempts to be this vision, but while it serves a critical and legally mandated role, it (and arguably any comprehensive plan of most cities) is too long, too inaccessible, and too open to different interpretations to be able to serve this role.

The common vision may be drawn from the comprehensive plan and the Mayor's articulation of goals, but the vision needs to be based on the elements of the community that are held most dearly by her people. The vision needs to be agreed to and embraced by the government structure including the mayor and city council, city staff, county staff and other government institutions; the principle institutional decision makers and stakeholders of the community; and the residents of the community.

The shared vision should be a constant reference point and a flexible action framework

When competing interests, short term interests or private gains interfere, a shared vision which has been commonly accepted will steer the effort in the right direction. Times will change and different opportunities will assert themselves, but if the framework for action is flexible it will be possible to continue moving toward the vision. The comprehensive plan partially serves this role, but it is too inaccessible to the public, given the input received during the SDAT process and a review of media and web postings.

Government and key institutions must do a better job of coordination and communication

The future of the city will be dominated by private sector investors, government decision makers, the University of South Florida and medical institutions, the port of Tampa, the airport, the military, the downtown community, neighborhoods, and new development. It is clear that the neighborhoods, while consulted and more empowered than in many large cities, are less effective than they could be. Without a unifying vision of the future of the community, the competing interests of other institutional decision makers will continue to splinter the city.

The Tampa Downtown Partnership sponsored the Downtown Vision and Action Plan, and is taking great steps to create a downtown community, improve transportation links, rehabilitate buildings, and develop an economic development corporation. These items are all necessary, but not sufficient to create a great downtown.

Residents and local property owners who have rebuilt the downtown, who can walk to buy their groceries and visit a drug store and dry cleaner in their neighborhood, as well as eat good food and be entertained, will make sure that the community is prosperous and safe.   In addition to focusing on large improvements discussed in the downtown vision and action plan, the focus of the revitalization of this and any neighborhood should include incremental yet comprehensive steps developed and motivated by local residents and property owners that are designed to bring

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Tampa has an exemplary record of attempting to engage the community and its neighborhoods. Neighborhood and Community Relations has published "Neighborhood Guidelines," "How to Start a Neighborhood Association," and the "Neighborhood Planning Self Starter Guide." They offer a Neighborhood Mini-grant program, and participate in over 650 meetings annually to assist neighborhood associations and community events. The City actively participated in the recently completed comprehensive planning effort. The new Community Planning through Form Based Code is a model for community engagement. The Mayor's website provides the only clear list of planning goals. And yet, a shared common vision of sustainability is still missing.

life to the streets. There have been numerous and exemplary efforts, supported both by increasing market demands for downtown living and by government actions. Two decades ago, few urban pioneers would want to move downtown. Today, downtown continues to attract residents and providers of synergistic downtown needs. While city government cannot create a market demand by itself, more actions need to be done to increase downtown's potential.

The neighborhoods need to continue to have as loud a voice, and be as critical to decision making, as any of the other key institutional decision makers, but they also need to participate constructively in the conversation. Tampa works diligently and generally successfully to get neighborhoods to the table. Given the relatively unorganized nature of the neighborhoods and the large number of residential stakeholders,

however, there is a tendency for neighborhoods to get involved late in the process, after initial planning has occurred. Neighborhoods then fight development proposals, hence the sense of NIMBYism. To avoid this, neighborhoods need to be involved early to assure their voices are part of the decision-making process and not given a veto over and over again. The Community Planning through Form Based Code initiative offers just this opportunity.

The land use decisions made by the governments are complex, opaque to outsiders, time consuming, and appear to not be based on a commonly-held vision. It appears that communication is not as strong as it could be, not because of a lack of effort by in-the-trenches staff, but because of a lack of shared mission and shared vision. Examples:

• State statute imposes a planning process

which is very difficult. The new comprehensive plan is very good and anticipates light rail, yet it does not adequately address land use changes necessary for light rail to be a success. At times, the plan also ignores the limits to city resources, making some of the implied promises of the plan misleading.

• The city has adopted efforts to establish a single-point of contact for permits, and yet some in the regulated community remain frustrated by how hard it is to get final sign-off from different departments on specific aspects of a project.

The City's current Community Planning through Form Based Code is a model of how to do this right. Unlike the older models previously used, it gets neighborhoods involved early in decision making. Then, once those decisions are made, a clearer path to implementation is created.

The City and the Planning Commission must do a better job of integrating and coordinating all planning that is consistent with the comprehensive plan's advocacy of better-integrated proactive planning. As a first step the city council, in conjunction with city and Planning Commission staff, could convene a working group to assess the problem. Regular meetings should be held between key and senior city and Planning Commission staff, as well as the city council, to review the status of the planning process, permitting decisions, and how they affect movement toward a common community vision. The

The City of Tampa and the Planning Commission have, without exception, incredibly talented and dedicated staff experts in their field. The lack of communication and coordination has more to do with institutional problems, not staff failings. To ameliorate this situation, discuss and re-examine the role of an independent planning commission (if any at all), the city's responsibility to respond early and often to any planning commission plan, the planning commission's responsibility to engage the city, and how to take limited city resources into account.

model of working with an independent planning commission outside of city government is not commonly used in other jurisdictions. It is worth having an on-going discussion of whether this model should be modified in any way.

Partnerships with the University of South Florida, Tampa International Airport, the Port of Tampa, and MacDill Air Force Base are all strong, but can be expanded
The University of South Florida, for example, has a very significant commitment to sustainable growth and could play an important role in supporting Tampa. In fact, USF reports that community engagement is one of its four principle goals. The faculty of USF is a tremendous asset to the city, and some members of the faculty are very excited and interested in participating in the City's process. However, integrating and syncing the University's interests with those of the City and the neighborhoods will be a challenge. The Mayor and the University President could begin by holding a summit to explore opportunities for increasing the collaboration between City Government and the University in

improving the quality of the neighborhoods adjacent to USF, and in expanding USF's presence downtown. All universities, including USF and University of Tampa, are in symbiotic relationships with their host cities. Some universities have gone further to enhance livable city partnerships (e.g., Yale University and University of Pennsylvania's downtown investments).

The faculty and students are eager to be part of a sustainable Tampa. Tampa should harness this enthusiasm and strive to be a University laboratory for community-based research. Developing this concept and building a center for community-based research will need private funding. For this laboratory to exist, the City should provide political support to the University to aid in identifying funding sources.

It is important to better integrate the city and the university transit systems. While both the city and the university report that they have sufficient transit, some users disagree and there may be room for improvements. With the recommendation to build the first stage of a transit

system from the University of South Florida to the downtown area, focus should be given to the USF community and its environs, as well as one or two neighborhoods along the transit line.

The City supports and is making progress in all of these areas, and continued focus in these areas will be critical.

Bring a light-rail transit system into an overall community vision
Regionally, a dialog regarding the benefits of light rail and how it will be paid for is already going on. As this process advances to identifying the system routes, the top priority for community planning for form-based code should be along the likely light rail corridors.

Light rail, if it is to be successful, will require rethinking everything about Tampa's vision and its development model. Greater density along rail corridors is necessary to provide the critical mass to allow rail to survive and thrive, and to take advantage of the modal shifts possible with rail.

Communicate
Institutions and groups have been discussed in the context of the roles they play in the present and future of the city. Citizens—and people talking to people—are at the heart of the success of the community. Tampa has a wealth of interested, excited and passionate individuals, many of whom have played important roles in creating exciting elements of the City. They need to be challenged to create the good city and good life

Tampa yearns for. Continue to engage them.

Support neighborhoods and put people first
Invest in community organizing. Use the arts as a way to engage and empower people to build stronger neighborhoods. Advance a citizen academy or city school program for residents that would provide them with an opportunity to meet with and understand what different city and county departments do, and so that they will understand how they can become engaged. Private sector and economic development partners should be invited to be involved with community organizing. Their involvement will send the message that organizing is about building the greater community, not simply addressing the most local issues.

Putting people first means recognizing that people are the greatest resource. It means being aware of environmental justice so that no neighborhood becomes the dumping ground for locally unwanted land uses. It does not mean sacrificing the good of the entire community and its economy to NIMBY opposition.

Building a Transit-Friendly City Requires More Than Light Rail

Founded in 1887 Tampa is a young city – vibrant, energetic, exuberant, and ambitious. It is a city proud of its rich cultural heritage, diverse economic base, and abundance of natural resources, that yearns to compete in the global economy. However, global cities compete fiercely to attract the most successful industries, top institutions, and citizens from around the world. Tampa has the assets to eventually enter this stage.

Historically, Tampa's urban form has emerged from transformative infrastructure investments. The development of the railroad system and port triggered the formation of a town center surrounded by urban villages. Later, the expansion of the port, coupled with the establishment of the airport and construction of highways, resulted in the development of multiple employment clusters, fragmenting neighborhoods and sparking the beginnings of suburban sprawl. Today Tampa finds itself at a crossroads where the city has the opportunity to shape the next form into which it will evolve. It can continue its patterns of unsustainable expansion and keep its neighborhoods disjointed and isolated. Or, it can build an intermodal (light rail, rapid bus transit, traditional bus) transit system and provide a catalyst for the development of a multi-polar city with a high level of connectivity.

Tampa's current unsustainable growth pattern has caused the city to sprawl outwards at the cost of its natural assets and the destruction of its agricultural land. These patterns limit Tampa's ability to reach its goals for the future. The time has come for Tampa to ease into urban maturity. The City is faced with tremendous prospects, and now is the time for it to seize those opportunities.


Densify the Urban Core
Tampa's urban corridors are ripe for densification and retrofitting. These large tracts of land provide a prime location to provide housing for the incoming population. The major corridors can be redesigned as connectors, or as seams, that re-knit the existing neighborhood fabric. In addition to providing new housing, these corridors can house essential services for the members of the established neighborhoods they border. They can offer residents grocery stores, restaurants, and other places to shop within a five-minute walk from their front door. This will help reduce traffic and automobile dependence, as well as allow densification without changing the scale of neighborhoods in which Tampa takes so much pride. This solution only defines those neighbor-

strategy for
transit oriented development

hoods' edges and boosts their value by increasing their proximity to services.

Downtown Tampa is in need of comprehensive redevelopment. While some places in downtown function quite well, as a whole this area still needs help and presents a prime opportunity for the City to take control of its destiny. Currently, it is easier for residents to live far away from the City and drive to work than it is for them to live close to downtown and walk or take public transportation. Tampa must consider building an intermodal transit hub downtown, not only as part of its first leg of public transit expansion, but also as a strategy in densifying the urban core. The urban core must be repopulated in order to bring life back to the city and draw stores, restaurants, and services – uses that, so far, have found it easier to locate themselves at large, sprawling, suburban malls.
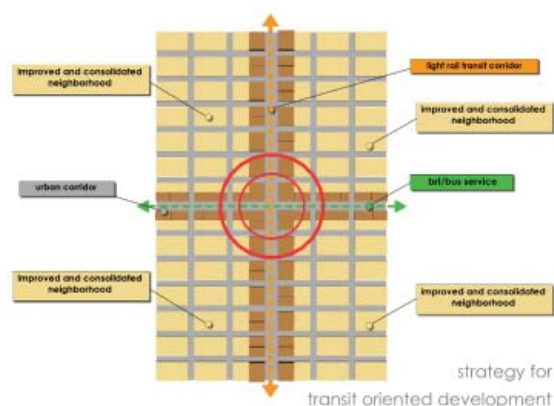
Tampa's unfinished core will require attention beyond simply adding new museums or aquariums, as important as those institutions may be. Downtown Tampa is in a state of transition, there is a poor overall public realm throughout much of the city, and the core has been taken over by excessive parking- both structured and surface. Vast pockets of flat concrete/asphalt do little to entice residents to move back downtown. The city cannot let property owners wait for the day when someone will pay them millions of dollars for their parking lots. Tampa needs to fill in the empty pockets with mid-scale buildings. The City should offer incentives to businesses and developers to relocate to the downtown area. This should include both tax incentives and, more importantly, the reduction or elimination of parking requirements (if there is demand, private sector parking will become available to meet it).
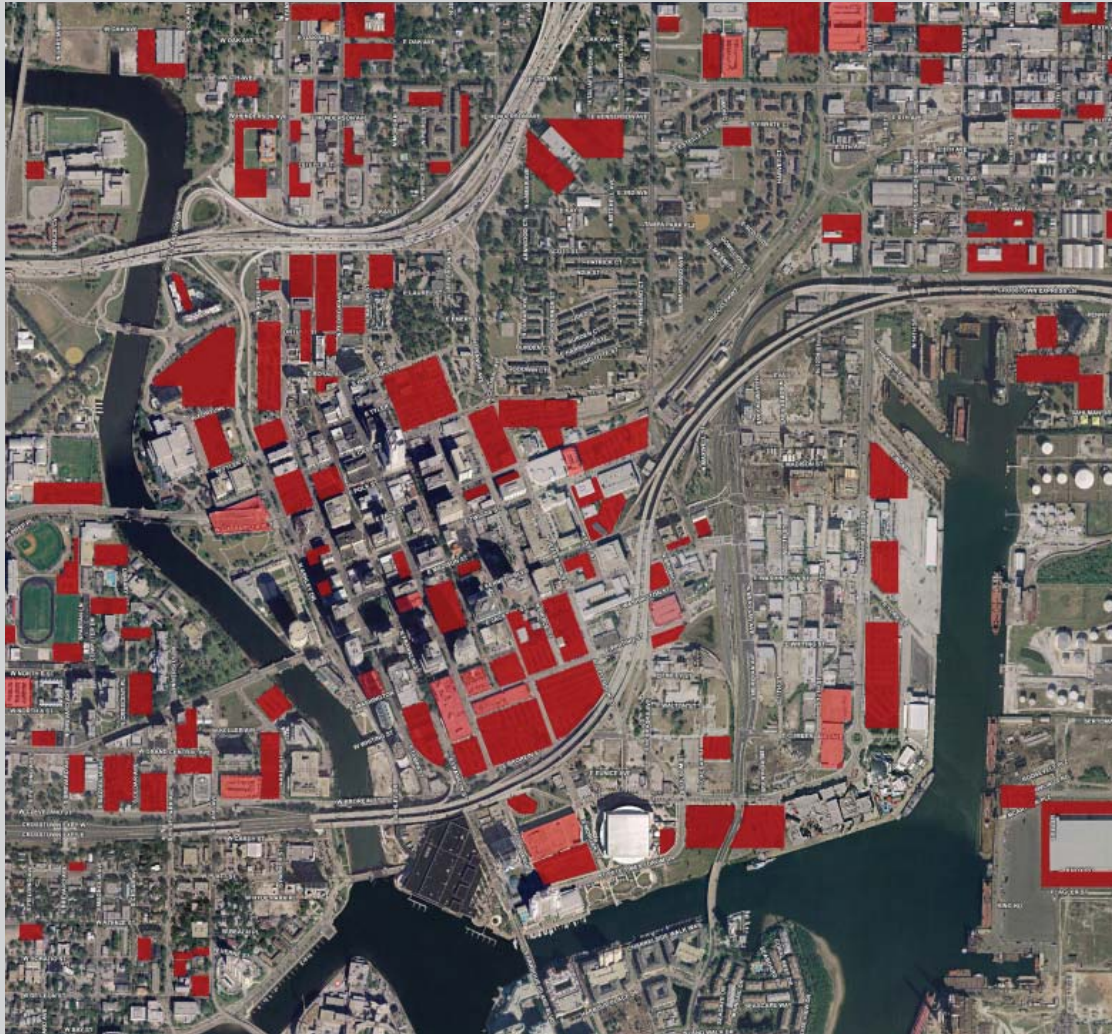
Instead of having a green city filled with tree

lined streets and pocket parks, downtown Tampa could be called the grey city covered with paved parking lots. The City must create memorable places downtown. There is a lack of public/civic open space in both the City's inner core and its surrounding neighborhoods. Reintroduce public/civic spaces throughout both the downtown and the urban villages. For example, Lykes Gaslight Park, next to the police headquarters, provides an excellent example of how pocket parks add to the urban environment in ways that parking lots cannot. The City could help incorporate these ventures by promoting them as celebrations of cultural diversity and multiethnic heritage. Done simultaneously, these efforts could spur a redevelopment of the downtown that is in accordance with the City's overall long term goals.

Connect with Each Other
Tampa also faces the challenge of disconnected neighborhoods and economic activities. Many urban villages have completed neighborhood redevelopment plans, but these plans do not address neighboring communities, or how to connect to the area's surroundings. As these neighborhoods keep to themselves, the areas in between have fallen into corridors of "no man's land."

Streets such as Columbus Drive stretch for miles with very little development on either side. Strip malls or other single-story, low density use do not foster pedestrian activity and instead provide an uninviting visual environment. Similarly, large tracts of abandoned warehouses between
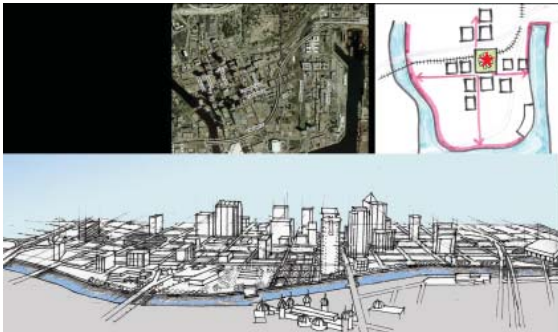
Downtown Tampa has a parking problem—too much parking and parking in all the wrong places. Parking in a downtown area has three elements:

Structured Parking- Downtown has great structured parking facilities that meet most parking needs, with some that are attractive structures.

Surface Parking—Downtown has far too many surface parking lots. Tampa needs to reassess and dramatically reduce the number of required parking spaces. Almost every surface parking lot could, and should, be converted to parks or redeveloped. Downtown would be more attractive and yet not have a parking shortage. The City should impose a moratorium on all new surface parking lots, convert half its municipal surface parking lots to parks, and offer the remainder for redevelopment as the market absorbs them. The top priority should be no parking lots on any street corner—that is where buildings and parks go.

On-Street Parking—Tampa does not have enough of these. On-street parking provides the most valuable parking spots for businesses and is the most desirable strategy to prevent pedestrians from feeling like they are walking on a highway. Tampa should examine every downtown road without on-street parking and consider which roads can spare a lane to allow for on-street parking.

the port and its adjacent communities create an ominous environment. Coupled with excessive truck traffic generated by the port, which uses neighborhoods such as Channel Side as points of access, people are weary about moving back to more urban neighborhoods and downtown. For district plans to work, especially for areas like Ybor City and Channelside, the City needs to think about the village not as an isolated com-

munity, but as a piece within a broader intercon- nected context.

Tampa has both the imperative and the op- portunity to improve connections and mobility between employment/economic centers, residen- tial areas, and other key destinations. The City can help augment the functional proximity of supporting land uses by, for example, providing better connections between R&D and medical centers, and the University of South Florida. Major employment centers such as Downtown, West Shore, the Airport and USF do not have strong connections between one another, or with the residential neighborhoods that house many of their workers and students. These poor

connections not only contribute to Tampa's automobile dependence and growing traffic concerns, but also isolate these centers from each other rather than foster a collaborative environ- ment. By improving both public transit and the pedestrian environments along these routes the City will contribute immensely to the residents' ease of travel. Furthermore, if Tampa can create transit connections between R&D centers, the MacDill Air Force base, and other attractions such as Busch Gardens, it will allow visitors to move about and explore more easily, expanding its tourism economy. The City would no longer be the airport town that people pass through on their way someplace else, but rather a place that

Divisive infrastructures present a difficult challenge for Tampa. In the 1960s the construction of the Crosstown Expressway, I-257 and I-4 sliced neighborhoods and isolated downtown from its surrounding urban villages. While correcting these mistakes in a manner similar to Boston's depression of the Central Artery is not possible for Tampa, the effects that this fragmentation has had on these communities need to be carefully considered and addressed. The underpasses of these massive dividers should be looked at as urban design opportunities, where visual improvements can be implemented. Further, the new planned connection of the port to I-4 should be carefully mitigated as it will have the same effect as the highways of the 1960s.

visitors can move to and from easily, and explore during their visits to the region.

Tampa's residents are hungry for these new con- nections to develop as they desire to live in a world class city. Creating these links will require comprehensive, coordinated efforts, but many connections are already partially in place. For example, USF has an internal transportation system that links with HART buses. Expanding that linkage, facilitating less daunting pedestrian
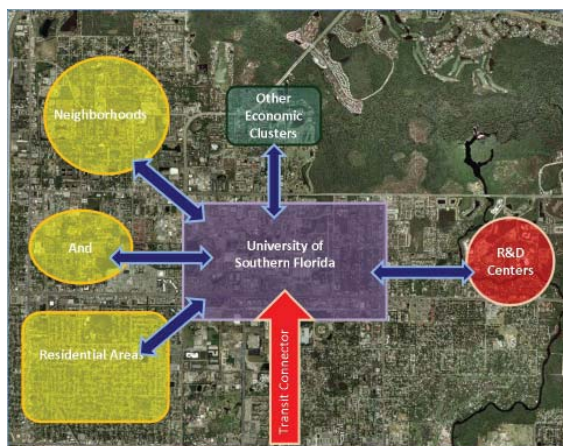
connections at these locations, and publicizing them to neighborhoods, R&D centers, and other economic clusters, is a short-term improvement that could be made while more substantial infrastructures are being developed. Additionally, softening edges and removing barriers between USF and its surroundings will help improve neighborhood relationships. By weaving the edges together, as other universities such as Berkeley or Harvard have done, Tampa will continue fostering a work, live, play environment beyond its urban core.

Connect Via Transit and Light Rail
The current social and political climate in Tampa is ripe for a light rail transit system. Existing CSX-owned rail tracks give Tampa a head start in this ambitious endeavor. To be competitive as a global city Tampa must build an integrated multi-modal system that combines bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail transit (LRT), and even-

tually a commuter rail with buses, the trolley, taxi and jitney services, and high speed intercity rail.

In reviewing the Transit Concept for 2050, as well as some material from TBARTA, members of the SDAT believe that Tampa has developed a thoughtful, visionary plan that should be implemented. The City should consider the first phase of implementation to be a LRT alignment that connects USF to Downtown, to West Shore and the Airport. This is only a slight modification of what is presented in the 2050 Transit Plan, but it is important that the Airport be directly connected to the three major economic and educational centers in Tampa by a single transit line.

The City should direct future development along the transit line, creating so called Transit Oriented Developments (TOD). The TOD's should be located at key station points that include denser mixed-use centers with employment, residences, and services for the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, Tampa will need to plan for remote parking lots and reduce at-work/city parking facilities in order to encourage people to utilize the new transit infrastructure. As soon as the alignments are finalized the City can begin land banking and establishing flexible form-based code.

Since transit lines are not built overnight, the City should take advantage of lead time and construction to build more support for the project and its future phases. Tampa will need to launch a public relations campaign to help change residents' perceptions of and dependence

on automobiles. Agencies should publicize existing transit so that residents will both begin thinking about using the current system, and so they can see the benefits of the new system and how it will promote convenience and ease of use. At focus groups conducted during the SDAT visit to Tampa, it seemed that many residents were not aware of existing programs such as the HART Ride Program and the existence of WiFi on express buses, and were equally unaware of where to find bus schedules or other transit related information. These are excellent and established programs that the City should begin promoting right away.

Embrace Existing Assets
As Tampa looks to the future, and thinks about what it must accomplish, it is important that the City continue to remember its tremendous assets that cities around the world envy. These assets provide Tampa with the foundation to be a great

LESSONS FROM DALLAS

About 15 years ago, Dallas faced challenges similar to Tampa. The city was sprawling out of control and highways were being built and expanded in the middle of functioning, stable neighborhoods. Residents were completely dependent on their cars and scoffed at public transportation. Eventually, traffic became overwhelming, commutes from suburban villages to downtown became unbearable, and highways began to look like elongated parking lots. Dallas finally decided to invest in a light rail transit system. The transit system quickly became so successful that Dallas keeps expanding it to meet the growing demand. Businessmen and blue collar workers alike traded their automobiles for a monthly commuter pass.
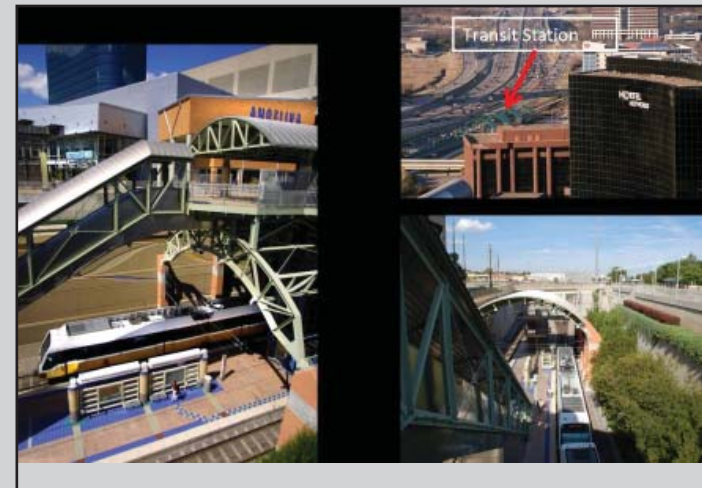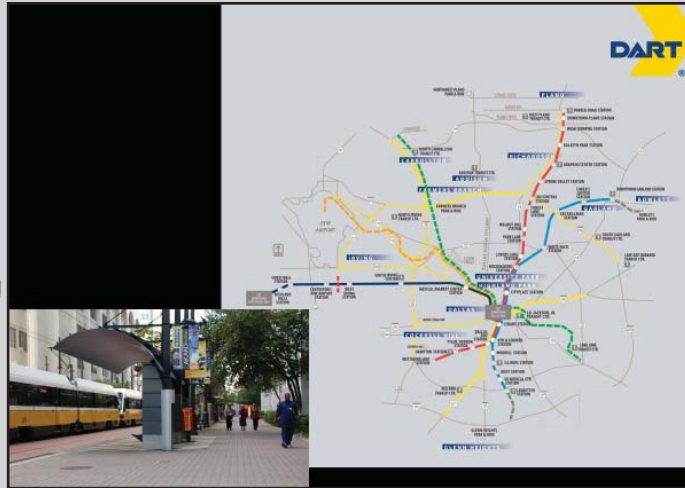
city. It should not strive to acquire the latest hot commodity from another city, but rather promote its own strengths that make it unique. For example, Tampa is blessed with a diversified economic base, shielding it from the severity with which economic crises can strike. Tampa's industries include the airport, the port, military bases, a top university, tourism, and proximity to other destination spots such as Busch Garden. In order to reach its goal of being an international city, Tampa needs to connect and redevelop its existing assets. The city is part way there.

Untapped natural resources provide another set of interesting challenges. Much of Tampa's waterfront has been privatized, especially along the river. Tampa finds itself trying to balance the growth of the past with maintaining access to natural assets for all of its citizens to enjoy. With its port facilities contracting so close to the downtown, Tampa has new opportunities for waterfront development. At the same time, Tampa must address the environmental legacy of years of working waterfront and industrial uses and protect and restore its sensitive ecological areas. Great cities are often in close proximity to diverse environments. The City must ensure that new waterfront development dramatically improves public access to the water. In the past, Tampa did poorly in this area but in the last decade the city has made huge improvements in public access.

Finally, as this city begins to think about its next steps it must bear in mind several, imminent,

emerging threats. Rising sea level and heightened storm surges present real challenges and harsh realities for Tampa. Studies show that a one meter rise in sea level will have devastating effects for all coastal regions, inundating parts of downtown Tampa. If it keeps up its current rate of sprawling expansion, not only will the City be faced with increasing traffic and dependence on automobiles, but the associated air pollution and energy consumption will contribute to the predicted sea level rise.

Tampa is in a unique situation, however, and is in a position to prepare for the worst case

scenario. Nestled in the bay, Tampa could build a protective gateway to its bay, similar to what has been done in Venice and the Netherlands. This gateway would protect the city, its port, and much of its economic livelihood from the threats presented by global warming. While it may be argued that this type of infrastructure requires significant investments and long term planning, natural barriers already exist across much of the entryway to the bay. In essence, nature began the job and the City just needs to complete it. The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) has already conducted a Sea Level Rise Study, but adapting to rising

sea levels and increased storm surges is not even in its infancy. Most buildings and infrastructure built today will be in existence while sea levels rise, and mitigation measures can take decades to implement. The time to plan for this risk is now.

Similarly, Tampa has the opportunity to curb traffic trends and reduce future air pollution by building a transit system and establishing a green belt zone around the City's outer limits. This will help prevent the destruction of agricultural land and will encourage rerouting new growth to the downtown area or along selected growth corridors. Outside of city limits, the existing urban service boundary and county regulatory measures have not been as successful as those of many other urban areas in the country that have prevented sprawl.

Implement Infrastructure Investments
According to the Comprehensive Plan, Tampa is projected to add over 92,000 people in the next 20 years. This presents both significant challanges and opportunities for the development of a sustainable Tampa. Established, predominantly single-family neighborhoods fight the idea of increasing density within their communities. The City can use transformative infrastructures creatively to provide new housing, augment the quality of life of its existing citizens, and protect and connect its urban villages together. Combining their top-down city planning/zoning approach with a grassroots, educational, and consensus-building campaign will both
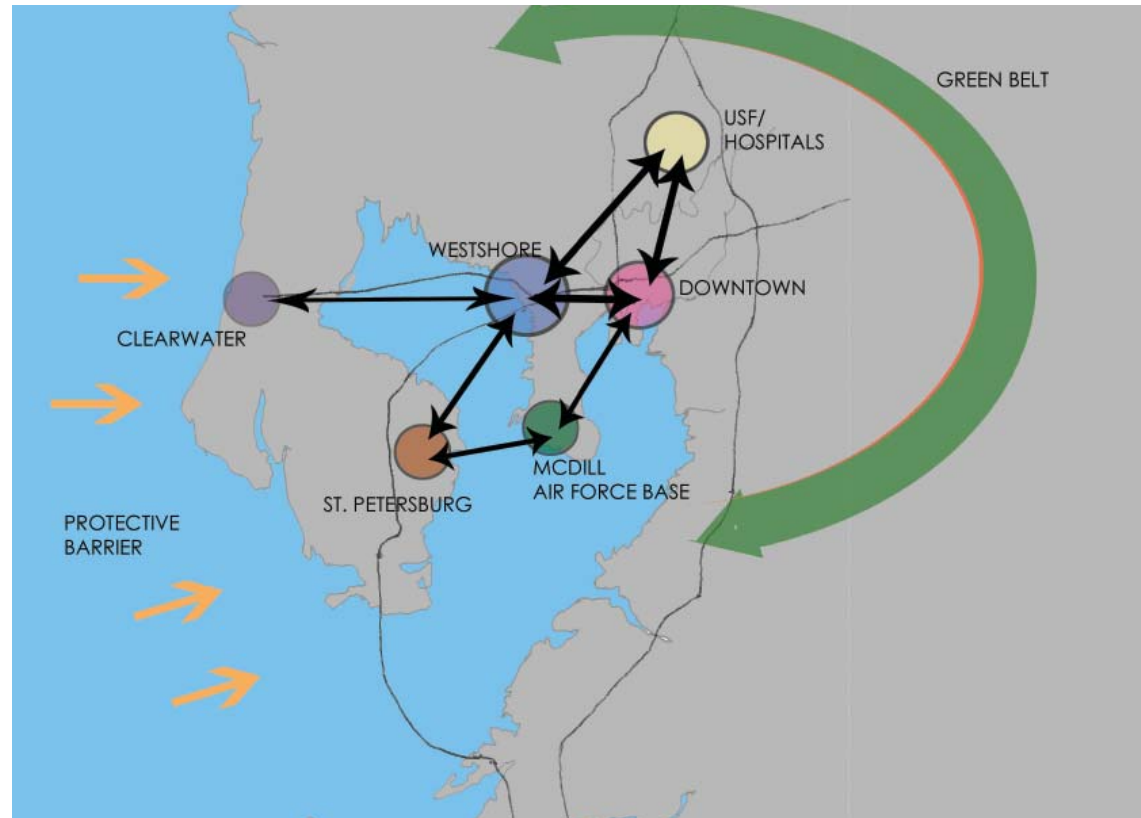
strengthen the merit of eventual solutions, and ensure the neighborhood support that is necessary for implementation. In addition to pursuing traditional financing routes, Tampa will need to continue and expand its creative financing tools for new developments, and work with private developers to incentivize new projects that advance the long-term development goals of the City.

While Tampa is committing infrastructure resources and staff time to redevelop targeted community redevelopment areas, the proposed light rail system would dramatically expand this commitment to existing urban communities and wise land use. To plan, fund, and implement infrastructure investments of this magnitude Tampa must continue and expand its efforts to develop, advertise, and use these investments as a catalyst for the next wave of the City's trans-

formation. If Tampa wants to become a player in the global economy it must use these transformative infrastructures to reconnect the social, economic, and physical fabric of the city, as well as define the new city and regional form. The City must think long term and recognize its role within the larger region; it must nurture alliances with its neighbors.

Cities are continuously evolving projects. As they morph into new built forms, new layers add to the complexity and richness of place. Successful cities invest in infrastructure to spark a transformation of the city's image. These investments will improve the overall quality of place, rediscover and enhance historic assets and natural resources, develop new and existing economic clusters, and form strategic alliances with other key cities and towns in their respective regions. If Tampa wants to emerge as a competitive global player it needs to pursue similar actions and promote its own unique character and assets. Tampa is at risk of losing its competitive position in the global economy, as it is not yet the type of great city that guarantees its role as a long-term magnet for development and investment. To move in that direction, the City needs to bring its creative energy together and come to a consensus on its long term vision. Transformative infrastructures complement private and programmatic investments to reach the goals that the City strives to meet. Tampa must think globally, act regionally, plan holistically, and engage locally to build a competitive, livable, city-region.

Complete Streets-- The Car Does Not Define the City

Tampa's surface transportation system suffers from severe congestion, high energy use due to reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, and very high rates of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities. High traffic volumes and ever widening roads create moats within the urban fabric and segregate and degrade neighborhoods. The needs of pedestrians, bicycles, on-street parking, and transit have been compromised to move the maximum number of single-occupancy cars quickly.

All over the country, and Tampa is no exception, the promise of great independence for drivers by ever increasing lane miles, which seemed to pay off for a while, is collapsing under its own weight. Tampa residents are discovering that they can never build enough road improvements to build itself out of congestion. Increasing energy prices, land prices, rates of climate change, and destabilized neighborhoods all help doom these endless road improvements.

Tampa is correctly focusing on light rail as part of the solution. Light rail will provide an alternative for many residents, and those trips diverted to light rail will get cars off the streets for those who remain wedded to their vehicles. Light rail by itself, however, cannot solve the problem. In Tampa, significantly less than a quarter of commuter trips, at best, and an even smaller percentage of other trips will be by any form of transit.

At worst, light rail will fail to work if the journey from home to rail and rail to final destination is unsafe and inefficient. Dramatically improved transit is necessary, but not sufficient, to fix Tampa's transportation problems.

Tampa Needs a Complete Streets Approach
"Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street." -National Complete Streets Coalition

Tampa is not a Walkable City or Safe City for Pedestrians

Consistent with other studies, Christopher B. Leinberger's walkability study for the Brookings Institution listed the Tampa Bay metropolitan area as the least walkable of the nation's top 30 metropolitan areas. He found the most walkable urban areas have a critical density, mixed use and compact development patterns, mature rail transit systems, and access to high quality multiple modes of travel including transit, car, bicycle, and walking. Walkability requires focusing on all of these areas.

The National Traffic Safety Administration (2003) reports that Tampa has the third highest pedestrian fatality rate in the country (6.04 deaths per 100,000 residents for cities over 100,000), almost four times the national average (1.54, NTSA 2007). Model cities like Seattle, a slightly larger city, have 1 death per 100,000. The death rates in Tampa would probably be even higher but the streets are so clearly unsafe that many people self-censure themselves and do not walk short distances that would typically be walked in many other cities.

A large proportion of trips in Tampa are less than half a mile. In many cities, these trips would be on foot or bike, significantly decreasing congestion on the streets and improving a sense of connectivity between neighborhoods. In Tampa, however, congestion, unsafe streets, street design, and blight force people into their cars. Simply helping shift the majority of these trips back to foot would decrease congestion and help create the conditions necessary for transit to thrive.

In short, Tampa needs a street network designed not primarily around single occupancy automobiles, as it currently is, but rather designed around pedestrians. Streets can still be designed to allow large volumes of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), but only when pedestrians are first fully accommodated. The benchmark should be that roads are safe enough that able bodied people always choose walking over driving for trips of up to five minutes (on foot), and usually choose walking for trips of up to ten minutes (on foot). This requires improved sidewalks, narrower lanes, narrower streets, more on-street parking, better crosswalks and traffic control devices, and traffic calming.

The model pyramid shows the ideal relative importance of each mode of travel.

Tampa has made great advances in improving pedestrian and bicycle accommodations. New bicycle lanes on arterials, multi-use trails in parks, improved sidewalks along roads, bikes-on-buses, and other efforts are a great start. The historic Bayshore Boulevard promenade and the new Tampa Riverwalk underdevelopment are world-class achievements both for pleasure uses and non-vehicular transportation. The Tampa Greenways and Trails Plan promises more great strides. Much more is needed, however, to transform Tampa into a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly city.

Tampa does not need to reinvent the wheel. Complete Street solutions are readily available
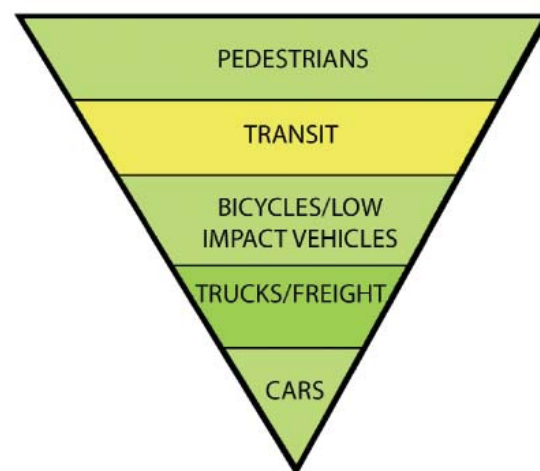
on the Internet, in literature, and with many design professionals. Within Tampa, many private sector consultants and City, Planning Commission, and MPO officials know these solutions as well as any professional in the country, but much

of this knowledge is not being translated into action. Better community dialogue and action is called for.

Maintain and Improve

Tampa has good transportation bones, with

many of its older neighborhoods laid out in an era before streets were built to serve single-occupancy vehicles. Narrow neighborhood streets, an interconnecting street grid, and distinctive neighborhoods and areas are Tampa's most valuable traditional urban assets.

First and foremost, Tampa should preserve these resources and continue to build upon these assets. Existing sidewalks should be maintained, gaps in the sidewalks repaired, the accessibility of sidewalks and curb cuts improved, and crosswalks better marked for improved visibility. The City must resist pressures to widen these streets for more through-put and to block grid street interconnectivity in the name of either more efficient street movements or misguided traffic calming.

Given limited transportation funding, the highest priority for improving bicycle- and pedestrian- friendly streets should be the most heavily traveled journeys to school and to transit access

Road Dieting

Many of Tampa's streets are so wide that they are impossible to cross safely on foot and undesirable to walk alongside. These roads encourage people to drive simply to cross the road. Dropping the number of travel lanes ("road dieting") allows for wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and parking lanes. In many cases, reducing the amount of weaving within the road and dramatically reducing the number of curb cuts makes up for the loss in travel lanes and allows the road to carry the same volume of traffic. A road is like a fire hose, it can carry enormous volumes of traffic but each curb cut or lane switch is a hole in the fire hose that dramatically reduces the volume it can carry.

points. In addition, all of the different city and county agencies involved with any aspect of school and transit development should work more closely together to ensure better coordination of these limited resources.

Build on What You Have for Immediate Low-Hanging Fruit

Making Complete Streets does not require full street reconstruction. In many cases it requires nothing more than some engineering time and a

can of paint. Tampa should immediately focus on four types of projects as the low-hanging fruit.

- When a quiet street runs parallel to a high volume arterial, focus on providing bicycle lanes and accommodations on the quiet alternative. It is much less expensive to add a bicycle lane on a quiet street where lane narrowing and bicycle lane painting is sufficient, than on a major arterial where wider bicycle lanes and sometimes physical separation is needed. A bicycle lane on a very fast moving high volume street can provide a false sense of security.

- Any through street with adequate width should be considered for bicycle lanes. Travel lanes can be narrowed to 10' wide lanes and the extra street real estate provided for bicycle lanes. Other than on very high volume and speed arterials, narrow bicycle lanes are generally still safer than no bicycle lanes, although care must be taken to avoid sending bicycles too close to the doors of parked cars.

- When insufficient width is available for

bicycle lanes, chevrons can be painted in the street lane with adequate signage to send the message to bicycles and cars that it is appropriate for bicycles to take to the lane.

- Adding on-street parking to streets without parking is generally desirable. This parking provides the most valuable spaces for neighboring businesses, calms the speed of traffic, makes sidewalks much more attractive for pedestrians, and reduces the distance

that pedestrians need to travel to cross an unsafe street. On major arterials, time-of-day limits on parking to avoid rush hour are appropriate.

Florida law requires motorists to give bicycles at least 10 feet when sharing the same roadway. One glance at the bicycle fatality rates in Tampa, or comparison between cities with high bicycle fatality rates and low bicycle usage and cities with low fatality rates and high usage, is enough to see that this law is not sufficient.

Understand Your Market
Longer term efforts to build Complete Streets require more community and political consensus and will compete with scarce capital improvement funding. This requires assessing and prioritizing needs to provide the greatest impacts. Limited assessments are currently being performed by the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County. City officials, neighborhood organizations, and private advocacy groups need to take a more active role to build the community advocacy necessary for a sea of change to Complete Streets. While capital improvements are obviously fiscally constrained, most of the resistance to Complete Streets stems not from fiscal reasons but because of resistance to do anything to slow the speed of traffic. Addressing this mindset is more of a political and consensus challenge than it is a fiscal challenge.

Many of the same factors that drive road im-

provements should be considered in building Complete Streets investments. In particular, projects should be priorities when they will provide the greatest access to school, transit, and employment. These projects best serve under-represented and impacted neighborhoods, and provide the best opportunity for modal changes to foot, bicycle, and transit.

Most importantly, not another surface street improvement project should take place that does not include a Complete Streets element.

Focus on Supportive Land Uses
The transit section earlier in this report discusses the important role of land use. The same can be said about a Complete Streets approach.

- Daily needs, food, shopping, basic services, schools, recreation, and play should be located near residential neighborhoods and near employment opportunities. Less than 20% of trips are commutes to work. The

remaining over 80% of all trips are the ones that can best be met by non-vehicle modes to nearby services.

- Development and the public realm need to be well designed for the three-mile-an-hour pedestrian, not the 40 MPH car, with buildings built to the sidewalk line and parking lots behind buildings. Life-on-the-street and pedestrian needs should be paramount.

- Remove both architectural barriers and perceived barriers that limit pedestrian, bicycle, and transit movement.

Suffice it to stress that no Complete Streets project can be successful unless land uses are supportive of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-friendly streets.

Neighborhoods are the Building Blocks of the City

Connecting neighborhoods and their residents, both physically and socially, is integral to an overall healthy city. Residents who feel connected to each other will be willing to move their city forward on a variety of issues facing the city, while cities that have disconnected neighborhoods will develop policies and programs that may be short-sighted and without the overall city at heart. Therefore, it is important to connect with each other both physically and socially.

Throughout all the discussions and meetings in Tampa, "transit" was an overwhelming and overriding topic of discussion. Neighborhood boundaries are typically major roadways, some of which are 6 or 8 lanes. As in many major cities throughout the country, neighborhoods have been split by the interstate and street systems. The Complete Streets approach, discussed earlier in this report, is as important as transit in healing Tampa's divided and separated neighborhoods.

Community organizing is a process to help neighborhood associations improve the quality of life in their neighborhood, and the City of Tampa as a whole. Unlike other areas of community development where tangible goods or services are provided, such as the construction of new homes, multi-family housing, or the development of an economic corridor, community

Rather than watching – or waiting for – people from outside a community to come in and "do things" for its residents, resident leaders actively take responsibility for the outcome of their community, and recruit neighbors to join in. When residents work together to improve their community, bonds are built that foster cultural and social understanding. Community leaders also help ensure that strong local partnerships are formed to increase resources and that time and money will not be spent on mismatched programs.
-NeighborWorks

organizing is the process by which residents are empowered to secure these tangible items.

Tampa is fortunate to have approximately 100 strong neighborhoods, each with their own unique culture, ethnicity, and history. Though each Tampa neighborhood is an "urban village" unto itself, these neighborhoods serve as the building blocks for the city.

Many Tampa neighborhoods have formal and vibrant neighborhood associations "staffed" by volunteers of residents. But there are an equal number of neighborhoods that have no formal organization, have a comparatively weak organization, or an organization that does not represent the residents. Most Tampa neighborhoods

have:

- Good partnership with the City. Most of the neighborhood associations and residents identified the City of Tampa as a good partner and reported that the City tries to consult neighborhoods wherever possible.

- Dependent relationships. An overriding theme of the conversations centered on what the City could do for the residents/neighborhood associations. If the neighborhoods desired some item, such as a pocket park, or a community garden, they relied upon the City and the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department, or other Departments and City Council to find funding and assist them through the process. If the City didn't find it to be a priority then it usually didn't happen. Few of the conversations centered on taking matters into their own hands, being self-reliant, and not assuming that the city could or should solve all problems.

- Limited capacity and involvement. Neighborhood organizations often do not have the capacity to fully involve themselves in activities that might affect them, such as the SDAT forum. Additionally, City and non-profit partners sometimes don't have the resources to fully engage the neighborhood organizations. One of the comments made during the SDAT "Neighborhood Connectivity" forum was that the people in the room are the same ones that usually attend. If the same people are attending the same
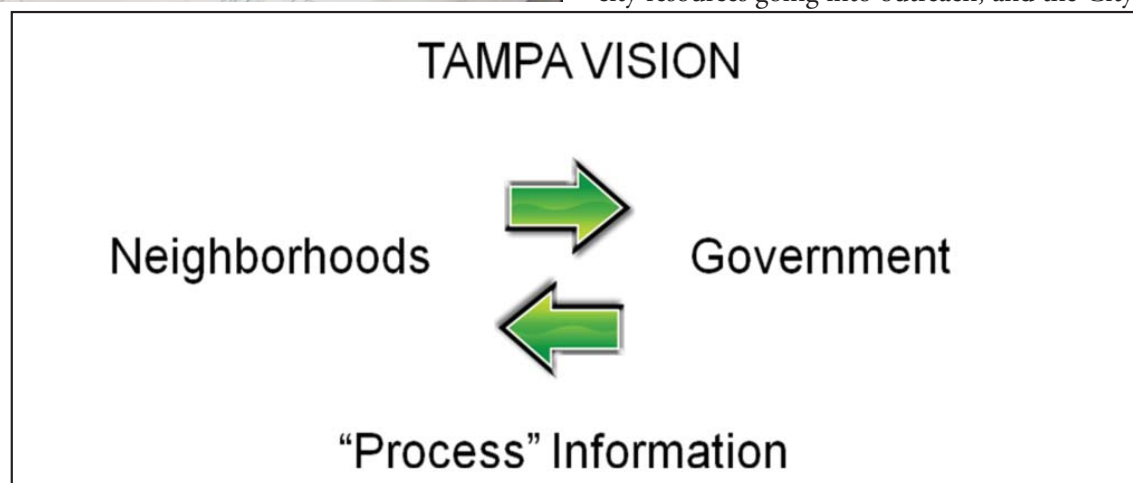
Invest in Community Organizing
Community organizing should be seen as an investment in the community. It is as important as any aspect of physical development and, in fact, should be viewed as an integral component to get to the physical development.

Neighborhoods benefit from community organizing by connecting people of diverse voices and opinions, and energizing or re-energizing a "neighborhood voice." Community organizing aids in the redevelopment or revitalization of neighborhoods by establishing "guidelines" for developers and, ultimately, partnerships.

The City of Tampa would benefit from community organizing by having increased input into the comprehensive planning process and encouraging more diverse opinions. No amount of city resources going into outreach, and the City

meetings without the inclusiveness of many of the minority or low-income neighborhoods, it is difficult to develop policies that will benefit all of the neighborhoods. In Tampa, as with most cities across the nation, some of the neighborhoods dominated by the typically under-represented minorities or working poor do not have the resources to fully participate. After having been studied and planned multiple times without seeing the tangible implementation of these plans, even residents with resources to participate often don't see the benefit.

TAMPA VISION

Neighborhoods → Government ←

"Process" Information

does a great deal of this, will ever be as effective as neighborhoods who organize and come to the table themselves to help disseminate information throughout all the neighborhoods.

To achieve this, there exists the need for organizing on two levels: at the citywide level and at the neighborhood level. There currently exists a citywide organization, Tampa Homeowners, an Association of Neighborhoods (THAN), which serves as an umbrella group for neighborhood associations. While THAN is a strong start, there is a need for a separate organization, or multiple organizations, to help the neighborhoods and their residents work cooperatively with THAN. In addition, many neighborhood organizations in Tampa are not members of THAN.

There is a delicate balance in working on policy issues without becoming political. But well-trained community organizers can traverse this potential issue by ensuring that the groups do not endorse, or appear to endorse, political candidates or parties, and instead focus work on issues that will better neighborhoods. Some areas of the country have developed "Policy Networks" to work on the policy issues with the neighborhoods. Examples of these types of networks are the Kansas City Policy Network, the Kansas Policy Network, the Northwest Missouri Policy Network, and the Lincoln (Nebraska) Policy Network. THAN partially fills this role in Tampa.

Neighborhood Community Organizing

Most organizers are active at the neighborhood community level, and are usually placed in community development corporations (CDCs). These community organizers must be located outside of the City structure in order to be effective. They may be located in nonprofit organizations, but they work on behalf of the neighborhoods and residents. Community organizers don't have an agenda of their own, or organization where they are located, but work with residents to develop an agenda for their neighborhood or city to improve the quality of life in a way that is meaningful. Several CDCs and Community Redevelopment Area efforts already exist in Tampa.

Funding for community organizing has always been difficult to obtain. Most philanthropic or corporate funders invest in specific projects that are tangible, without understanding that getting those tangible results relies on getting public/neighborhood buy-in. Over the past decade, many organizations have eliminated community organizing as one of their core programs due to reduced funding.

With a new President, and a Congress that should be sympathetic to neighborhood issues, there is a good chance that federal funding of community organizing programs will increase. Both Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Community Housing and Development Organization (CHDO) funds allow for the funding of community organizers. These funds, while

Community Leadership Institute 2008

federal, are distributed through a participating jurisdiction such as the City of Tampa.

In addition to Federal funds, organizations seeking funds for community organizing should pursue funds from the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay. Outside of Florida, other foundations interested in supporting community organizing include the Mott Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation.

While the current economic climate of 2008 is depressed, organizations should not forget to approach the local corporate community. Many national banks provide funds which may be used for community organizing, and local banks usually provide smaller, but significant, funds.

Develop Current and Future Neighborhood Leadership

Neighborhood leadership is typically comprised of untrained volunteers. These volunteers have the passion and desire to see improvements in their neighborhoods. However, many of these volunteers also must balance family and work with their neighborhood association duties, which can be daunting. Volunteer training for neighborhood organizer associations is critical in ensuring the smooth operations within each of the neighborhood associations, and in utilizing volunteer time to the fullest extent. In addition, the better the training, the more likely volunteers will be able to traverse the sometimes sensitive and political world of neighborhood relations. There are many sources of training available for neighborhood resident volunteers, including those offered by local universities and institutions. NeighborWorks America, for example, convenes Training Institutes and Leadership Institutes (see www.nw.org/network/training/programs). The Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa and St. Petersburg Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. are Metro Tampa's two NeighborWorks affiliates.

The City has a long history of supporting such efforts. In the past it co-sponsored the Neighborhood Leadership Program with USF (city involvement ended because of lack of participation). The City currently provides free transportation to the annual Florida Neighborhoods State Conference, and is now working with

CDC of Tampa to coordinate a program that will help educate and further develop neighborhood associations city-wide through available resources with NeighborWorks America.

The Magic of Arts, Culture and Water

No city, no matter how comfortable the neighborhoods or fun the places to play, can be a great city without a strong sense of place that comes from arts, cultural activities, and connections to the natural environment, which for Tampa means water.

Tampa residents speak proudly of their views

of the water all over the City, access to nearby beaches (outside of the city), and how much they like Bayshore Boulevard. For a city with an amazing connection to both Tampa Bay and the Hillsborough River, however, Tampa has not been as well connected to the water as it should. New projects underway will correct many, but not all, of these deficits.

There is ample opportunity for boat slips (wet and dry boat storage) on city-owned lands downtown that will not require any public subsidy, can improve recreation opportunities, and make downtown more attractive to new residents and visitors. As the city has been doing already, all of these projects should ensure continued and improved pedestrian access to and

TAMPA'S CULTURAL LEAP FORWARD

Tampa's current downtown cultural projects and its focus as "City as Art" are the envy of many cities and meet the need for large institutional cultural activities. Still needed are more activities that create cultural life on downtown streets, in neighborhoods, and along the Riverwalk.

- The Riverwalk is expanding. Instead of the past practice of allowing parking garages and buildings to block access to the Hillsborough River, the city is working on a continuous ribbon walkway along the entire downtown waterfront.

- The new Tampa Bay History Center, Tampa Museum of Arts, and Glazer Children's Museum will all open on the waterfront, attract people, and create a more vibrant cultural life.

- Efforts to bring art directly to the people, in parks and along the streets, continue to expand.

along the waterfront.

Downtown parking lots and buildings often block public access to the water. Along the Hillsborough River, despite all its great parks, access for the public is still very limited. Every inch of both the Hillsborough River and Tampa Bay should be available for public access (except active maritime uses), and the blueways along the Hillsborough River should continue to be expanded.

Arts and Culture

The arts are an essential component of a successful urban redesign in Tampa. The integration of arts and culture in Tampa can be divided into three overlapping subcategories.

First, Tampa is already commissioning public art as part of new public and private construction. This program is fabulously successful and, along with the Tampa Museum of Art, are starting to transform Tampa into an arts community.

Second is engaging the Tampa community in art-making and in a celebration of the historic and cultural arts of Tampa. Tampa should expand its focus upon community art and how it can enhance the vitality of the city.

Third, and related to the above, Tampa should continue to develop specific arts and cultural events that have potential to transform how people view downtown, urban neighborhoods, and parks. Lights on Tampa and other events all

THE ARTS CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS

Semi-blank or blank walls on street corridors, especially cinder block, are perfect for murals

Community organizing is not just around "place," but should also include the rich diversity in culture, history, and ethnicity of a place. Community organizers can work with neighborhoods to develop community murals to tell the story of a neighborhood's history, ethnic origins or culture. A local neighborhood vision for the mural can then be translated into a professional mural by skilled volunteers or a professional artist, or group of artists. Murals become a neighborhood asset, an outlet for local artists, a source of local pride, and a gathering place.

This mural concept was developed by school children. Artists then transformed the concepts into a mural.
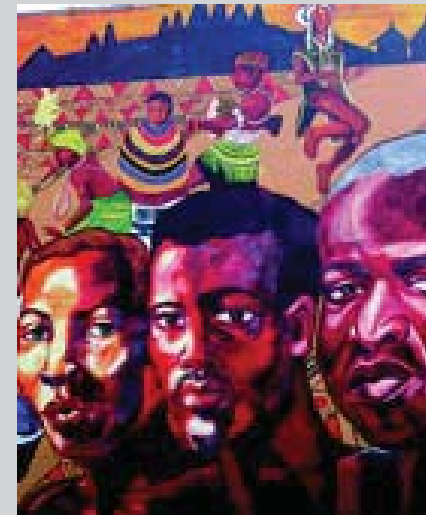
help achieve this goal. Continue efforts such as this, which help new audiences discover the city.

Tampa is clearly a leader in all aspects of arts and culture. Outdoor performance art and culture in the downtown, while strong, should play a leading role in the effort to transform the community image of downtown.

Artists and performers should be considered a critical stakeholder group for all planning efforts. Tampa residents have a keen sense of identity with their city, yet many have difficulty articulating a succinct vision for the community. The arts can assist in articulating a unique and consistent vision for Tampa by giving individuals within a community the opportunity to express themselves about issues of personal and/or community significance. Through community art-making, Tampa residents of all ages will be able to identify more clearly what is unique and special about Tampa.

One of Tampa's strengths, readily identified by most residents, is the mosaic of neighborhoods that create the city. Each neighborhood is distinct, rich with ethnic and cultural history. However, each neighborhood is relatively isolated from every other neighborhood both in terms of mobility (the ability for residents of one neighborhood to easily get to another neighborhood) and in terms of the different priorities and challenges that each neighborhood faces. Community art can be the glue that binds these diverse neighborhoods together. Community

art, as expressed by the members of various groups within the neighborhoods, will give the entire city of Tampa the opportunity to celebrate the uniqueness of each community and the common spirit that unites them all.

Art is also an equalizer. In diverse Tampa, it is easy for members of different neighborhoods and groups to harbor preconceived ideas about their brethren in other neighborhoods. When individuals within communities express themselves honestly and personally, perceived cultural and/or socioeconomic barriers can easily be broken down. The expression of art helps to remind community members of the vast commonalities that we all share.

When an individual views art, either art made by a community effort or art made individually by a professional artist, the individual forms a relationship with the art piece. Thus art can help make a plaza, a park, a transit station or a brick wall a more inviting place within a community. Art can help brand a neighborhood, or an entire city, in a positive way, thus assisting with the articulation of the vision of the city. In the way that St. Louis is known for its soaring arch and San Francisco is known for its graceful Golden Gate Bridge, the art of Tampa may help to give

the city a symbol with which to identify itself on a national, and even an international, map.

Art need not only be a permanent visual or sculptural piece to have impact. Annual artistic events, such as the Tampa Lights, help to brand the city and inspire pride and loyalty among its citizenry. In similar fashion, annual parades, ethnic fairs, important theater and dance events, or weekly poetry readings can clarify and enhance
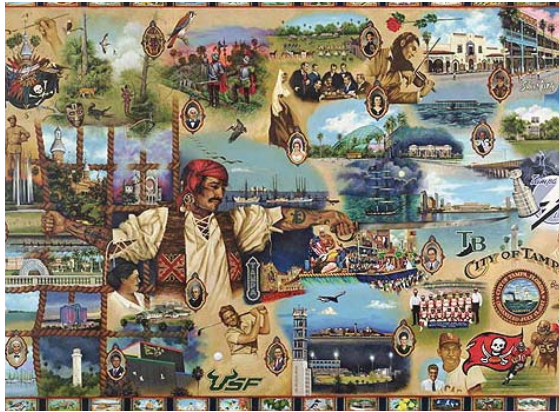
the way that a tourist or a local resident views Tampa. In the end, the city is the sum of its artistic endeavors; its identity is shaped by each artistic event.

Everyone can be involved in community art--families, senior citizens, members of the garden club, city government officials, book clubs. The broader the participation across socioeconomic lines and age groups, the more interesting the process and the more unusual the product will be. The experience of working in an intergenerational group breaks down many barriers. A nine-year-old girl, a twenty-two-year-old man and a seventy-four-year-old woman sit down to create a short dance about a hurdle each has overcome in life—and suddenly there are no age distinctions. Instead there are three creative imaginations at work. Also, the more diverse the group that participates in the art-making, the more diverse the immediate audience for the piece will be, for each participant will bring

his/her friends, contacts and family to view the finished piece.

Professional artists are essential players in the process as well. Artists are the people who can design the activities and lead a community group from beginning to end as an art piece or performance takes shape. Engaging professional artists (and paying them professional fees to complete the work) helps artists in numerous ways. Obviously, one way is that artists earn an income doing community work. But, equally important, artists learn to give back to their neighborhood and community via their art. Artists take on a new kind of artistic challenge in doing this type of art-making. The process cannot help but enrich them both professionally and personally as they venture into new territory to work with a new constituency.

Artists are often the vanguards in urban redevelopment. They move into neighborhoods that

no one else wants to live in because the neighborhoods provide inexpensive living and studio space. After artists have refurbished a neighborhood, property values often go up (sometimes so much that artists then need to leave and find new quarters for studio and living space). Ensuring that artists are a key component of the urban renewal process can ensure a better end result for the entire city.

Community Art and Transit

Although transit construction will take years to be completed, future transit stops can become lively places for public gathering, for retail businesses, and for community focus long before the actual transit is built. Public and community art, placed in these spots, will make these areas more appealing.

Once individual transit stops are planned, commissions of art for each transit stop will be an important next step for the city. Aside from sup-

SAMPLE COMMUNITY ART PROJECTS

Residents from a few different ethnically diverse neighborhoods come together to work with a dance/theater artist making quick performance sketches of the foods that residents of a particular neighborhood like to eat. For example, one group might make a piece where they act or dance being tortillas, then menudo, then sopapillas. Another group might perform being chocolate chip cookies, then pizza, then fried chicken. The residents will perform their sketches for each other and then, at the close of the evening, will engage in a discussion (facilitated by the artist or by a community organizer) about what they saw. The beauty in making art about simple things such as the foods we like to eat is that the content is easily accessible to all, and isn't intimidating to anyone. Everyone can feel knowledgeable about the subject and can participate. Yet, the expression of something as simple as food can help to bind people within one community or multiple neighborhoods together.

A community enlists a poet to help them write poems about overcoming a personal hurdle. A visual artist helps the community find ways to illustrate the poems by making drawings, paintings or collages. The resulting poems and visual art are then toured as a traveling exhibit to local schools, hospitals, the art museum, the city hall, the county courthouse, coffee shops and restaurants.

A neighborhood creates and/or enhances a local public park by making stepping stones that illustrate or describe significant icons and events within the neighborhood. The stones might describe the history of the neighborhood, "Mapping our Lives." The residents might also make sculptures, outdoor fountains, birdbaths, play areas or benches that continue the theme. The neighborhood has then made an open space that is more functional and has increased personal meaning.

A "graffiti wall" is created which neighborhood members of all ages write or paint images of their dreams for the future. The wall can be updated monthly, quarterly or annually in a special event where the neighborhood gathers and repaints new relevant images over the old ones. The event can be held in conjunction with a potluck dinner or a holiday celebration like the 4th of July.

Two neighboring communities create masks, headdresses and staffs that showcase "who they are" and what is unique about their community. They don their items, create a parade and walk to the other neighborhood. Local musicians accompany both parades.

A community, in conjunction with a consortium of artists, creates a piece of permanent, public art for a future transit stop in the local neighborhood. This art can reflect a special attribute of the neighborhood.

THE MAKING OF COMMUNITY ART

- In 2006, Mesa Verde National Park commissioned a dance for their 100th anniversary celebration, "Kiva: What Do We Hold Sacred." The dance examined the factors–rituals and activities--that kept ancient Puebloan communities together, and also those factors that led to their dispersal. It explored what activities and rituals we practice in the United States that keep us together in communities, and what activities fragment us. It examined the role of technology over the ages, and how technology changes both our culture and our sense of how we relate to one another—in a sense, changing our definitions of community. The dance was performed at multiple locations in Colorado, and included five professional dancers, two professional musicians and up to 61 community dancers ages 7-77. The ideas and expressions of the community dancers became as much a part of the dance as those of the choreographer, leading to a total community expression.

- The City of Denver commissioned artist Jonathan Borofsky to make the sculpture, "The Dancers." The sculpture drew much attention (and very mixed reviews) from Denver residents. The City then commissioned a "Dance for the Dancers" about the sculpture and its approach which was shown in three major festivals and in multiple performances for schoolchildren. An art writer for the Denver paper commented that the dance changed her view of the sculpture, and helped her enjoy the sculpture more.

SPEAKING OF DANCE performs a dance created for a historic double-staircase in an arts center. The dance tied in with an art exhibit for Earth Day.

porting artists, these new works of art will help identify each transit stop as a unique spot in the city. The art can reflect the special attributes and features of the area surrounding the transit stop. The transit stop art should be designed in conjunction with the other components that make for a pleasant, comfortable place. Shade, greenery and flowers, appropriate seating, retail establishments, bike racks, and park-and-rides will make each transit stop a desirable place to rest, and will establish these spots as gathering places for the neighborhoods. When people begin to walk or bike to these locations, congregate at these spots and patronize the local businesses there, they set patterns of daily living in motion that will ease the transition to mass transit.

As the transit plan is refined, art should play a major role in the design. A bridge over a highway that connects two communities will be much more notable and appealing to use if it is also attractive. The Millennium Bridge in Denver, Colorado runs over rail yards and connects a more residential part of Denver's down-
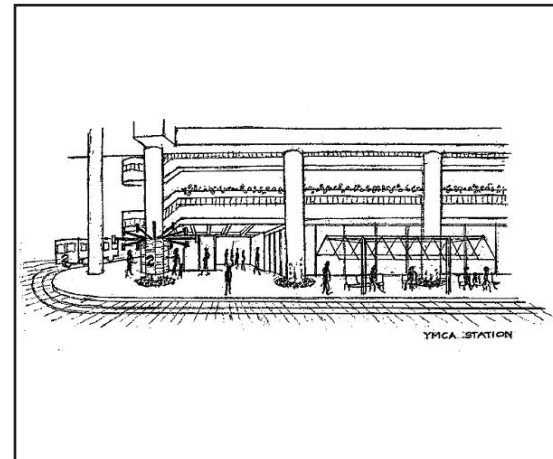
Possible transit stop configurations.
Source: Urban Charrette

Suggested Subjects for community art:
- A person/animal who has inspired me
- My favorite place on earth (or in Tampa)
- A piece of wisdom I've gained
- Something that scares me
- The ideal Tampa of the future
- My favorite foods
- A hurdle that I've overcome in my life
- Something that I treasure
- Something that makes me laugh
- And any themes around environment, equity, economy

SPEAKING OF DANCE performs "On Water," a dance exploring the vanishing natural resource of water in City Park, Denver.

National organizations/resources for community art
- Young Audiences (www.youngaudiences.org) Mission: to help make the arts an essential part of young people's education.
- Artreach (www.artreachdenver.org) Mission: "change lives through the arts" by providing access to arts and cultural experiences for underserved and at-risk people of all ages.
- Platteforum (www.platteforum.org) Mission: provides hope and direction to underserved youth who collaborate with master artists from around the world. The experience transforms the lives of the youth, the artists and the community.
- Artspace (www.artspace.org) Mission: to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations

town with a more commercial part. Because this bridge is tall, distinctive and attractive, it has become a meeting ground for friends, a place to gather and sit, as well as a place to walk a stroller or a dog. Ramps on either side of the staircases make the bridge easier to navigate for bicycle-commuters and for skateboarders and
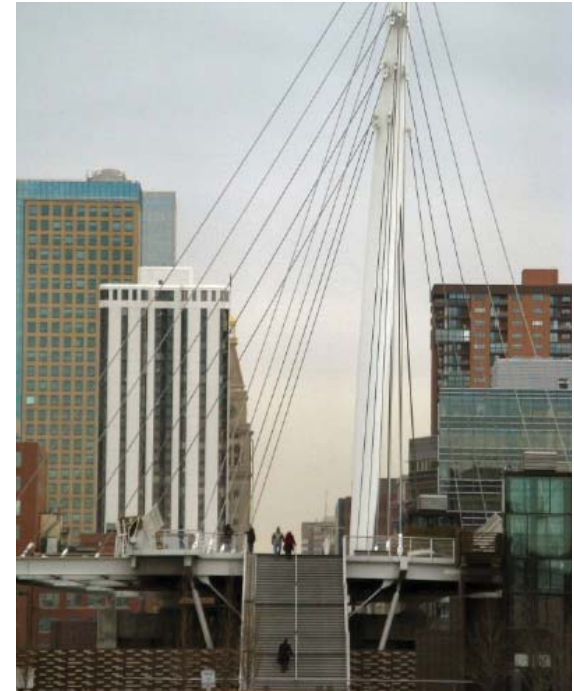
scooter-riders. Plenty of seating at the top of the bridge, as well as multiple beds for flowers, make the Millennium bridge an actual destination, instead of just a place to cross over quickly. These features, together with good lighting, make the bridge a safe and pleasant place to relax, as well as a way to get from one place to another. Similarly, BP Bridge and Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park, both designed by Frank Gehry, are equally important at transforming the feeling in downtown Chicago. At least some of Tampa's future rail system shouldn't just include public art, it should be public art.

Tampa has many lovely historic buildings, notably the many old cigar factories, which are not currently in use. Ideally, as these buildings are redeveloped, some of the space could be renovated into art centers and community centers. New zoning incentives devised for this purpose, housing tax credits, historic tax credit and CRA money can help the projects pencil out. Those buildings that are close to future transit lines should be renovated first. Funding these kinds

of enterprises can be costly; a non-profit organization called Artspace can help. Artspace's mission is to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations.

Cultural philanthropy also plays an important role in neighborhood revitalization. City and regional funding of arts projects leverages increased contributions from private and corporate organizations. Public funding from the city does not have to be large, but should be significant enough to show that the city values the art projects that are in process there and wants to see them grow. While funding (public or private) is very helpful to the creation of art, artistic work can go on successfully with little or no funding as well. Often artists and their cohorts must think of new ways of recruiting, marketing, and retaining supporters and participants, and must involve actions like bartering, trading and sharing in order to complete their work successfully. Art redevelopment, like any other form of urban

End Ad Hoc Planning
Tampa issues a couple dozen plan amendments, dozens of zoning changes, and hundreds of zoning variances every year. This resembles an ad hoc regulatory system more than planning.

Working with adjacent neighborhoods and city-wide stakeholders, form-based code along the major arterial roads (the areas that desperately need to be redeveloped) should spell out what those areas should look like. Then, allow that development and no other. City Council and all government stakeholders should agree to approve plan amendments and zoning changes only to implement the community vision and form-based codes. No other plan amendments. No other zoning changes. No other variances.

redevelopment, is a process. During the initial stages of reassessment, it is important to recognize that the process of arts and urban renewal is never complete; it will grow and be refined in our generation, only to be continued in our children's and grandchildren's generations.

When engaging in this process, it is essential to keep an open mind. Challenge everyone to think "outside of the box" and to venture into places that are outside of their comfort zone. Also, be cognizant of the possibility that detours in the path may ensue. Wonderful ideas that have worked magnificently in a community for five years may stop working well in a sixth and seventh year. The ideas are still excellent, but the community has evolved and new strategies are necessary to address the new needs and interests of the changing community. To paraphrase the words of a great contemporary philosopher, as we work in community revitalization through the arts, we need to celebrate each step in our process as if it were the entire process, and then take the next step. If we reject each step because it is not the whole process, then we will never achieve the completed process.

"It means to sing each verse as if it is the whole song, and then sing the next verse!"

—Arthur Waskow

Plan and Implement

Tampa has many opportunities to move towards its destiny in the coming months and years.

With a citywide comprehensive plan now in place and, we hope, a clear and concise consensus vision coming out of that plan, the next planning step is to move on to community-based (neighborhood level) planning.

Implement Community Based Planning through Form Based Code throughout the city

The City's pilot project for Community Based Planning through Form Based Code is exemplary. Tampa is on the right track with this effort; it should become the framework for neighborhood planning to revise and implement the comprehensive plan.   The process of working with neighborhoods, community organizations, and diverse stakeholders to identify their future is critical, though actual form-based code should be implemented along major arterials and not deep within existing neighborhoods.

Form-based code is a powerful tool for expression of a common community vision and for expediting the permitting system, particularly when sufficient work has been done in gaining commitment to and acceptance of the process. It requires planners, developers, and politicians to all think differently as well as view their role in the process differently. A significant amount of work needs to be done in advance for this type of approach to zoning to be successful. Complete the current pilot project, fine tune the approach, and then implement it across the board. Use a community engagement process to find the areas most ready and interested in using form-based code.

Community Based Planning through Form Based Code is the best way to plan and implement the comprehensive plan in Tampa. For this effort to be most effective, however, the other key points discussed above (create a clear

community vision; commit to light rail; plan streets as complete streets with the needs of the pedestrian first; commit to strong neighborhoods; and consider arts, culture and water in every planning effort) must all be integrated into the effort. Otherwise form-based code will be a distraction from the big picture challenges.

Connecting Tampa: Short Term Next Steps

- Create a clear consensus vision based on the Tampa Comprehensive Plan.

- Expand friends-of-Tampa efforts (e.g., Urban Charrette) to champion good design and community engagement.

- Expand multi-media coverage of planning and design.

- Plan kick-off community events leading up to the election campaign for a vote on light rail.

- Identify at least one downtown street for a complete street approach and convert a travel lane to a parking lane and bicycle lane with simple pavement markings.

- Identify at least one city-owned downtown parking lot for conversion to a public park, in a place where a park would be appropriate. There is already a history of this (e.g., Lykes Gaslight Park, County Center Park, and Cotanchobee Park), but more is needed. There are too many surface lots downtown and not enough parks.

- Identify opportunities for greater collabora-

tion between neighborhood groups, faith-based groups, and other local community development organizations.

- The Tampa Downtown Partnership should identify at least one new arts and cultural activity in conjunction with downtown food establishments to build interest in downtown and the waterfront.

- Invite the Mayor to raise the profile of Community-Based Planning Through Form-Based Code in her travels and public speaking engagements.

- Expand efforts to identify a single point of contact for all permits to ensure clear communication between staff and applicant. Work with a regulated community to identify how to improve the effort.

- Implement improvements to the development review process that integrate recommendations from development community focus groups, without reducing substantive regulatory protection.

Connecting Tampa: Long Term Next Steps

- Talk-the-talk and walk-the-walk. Putting sustainability FIRST is critical and its concepts should be a part of every policy and community discussion. The Mayor, City Council, and city administration, including the City's new Green Officer, should make sure that every major policy discussion

includes a discussion of impacts on community sustainability and the comprehensive plan. Every decision should also include findings on the effect of that decision on sustainability and walkable urban areas.

- Focus on light rail and adjacent development with laser intensity. Keep it on the front burner.

- Eliminate the gap between environmental protection and economic development. Sustainable development means improving the environment and the economy. Environmental advocates should be supporting dense development along arterials, and economic development advocates should be focusing on development which is sustainable in the long run.

- Arts and culture can't just be about museums and venues, which Tampa does so well. Increase the focus on events that build bridges between the neighborhoods and bring in people from outside the downtown area.

- Complete Community Based Planning through Form Based Code in every neighborhood, focusing first on the corridors

- Educate and empower neighborhoods to fight for the development they want.

In so many ways, Tampa is on the right path to sustainability. The City and its partners are

embracing sustainable economic development, supporting neighborhoods, and planning for light rail. The transformation of the waterfront, downtown, and the arts, all early stages, is breathtaking. Tampa is creating a model that will be emulated for neighborhood planning through form-based code. Even in challenging economic times, Tampa is moving forward.

There are still many untapped opportunities. Much more can be done to reclaim the streets to make them safe and friendly for bicycles and pedestrians, build more sustainable land use patterns that reinforce downtown, the neighborhoods, and future light rail and other mobility options, and collaborate to build Tampa's sustainable future.
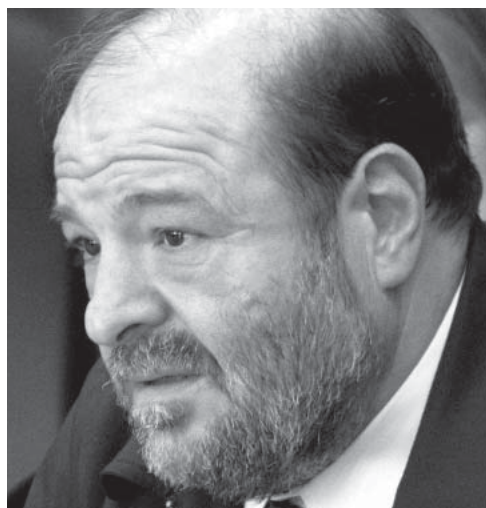
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Antonio Di Mambro, FAIA--Urban Design and Transit Oriented Development

Antonio Di Mambro is principal of Antonio Di Mambro + Associates, Inc, where he practices architecture, city planning and urban design in the United States, Puerto Rico and Italy. His areas of expertise are the planning, design, and implementation of large-scale physical developments; housing and neighborhood revitalization strategies; universities and institutional campuses; transportation and infrastructure projects; waterfront facilities and urban parks. Antonio was a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University in 1987. He has taught at MIT, Pratt Institute, the University of Miami, and the International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design at the University of Urbino in Italy. He is a Fellow with the American Institute of Architects. Representative projects include: urban design services for the Monumental Core Plan of the Nation's Capital; redevelopment plans for low-income communities; campus master plans for the University of Puerto Rico; a long range strategic plan for the city of Dallas, Texas; a 1,400 acre waterfront park for the city of Venice, Italy; a $1.2 billion Modernization Program for Logan Airport Boston, Massachusetts; the urban design component for the $1.5 billion Circumferential Transit Line, Boston, Massachusetts; and comprehensive urban design plans for the cities of Caguas and Cayey in Puerto Rico.

Mary Hooper--Community and Institutional Connectivity

Mary Hooper is in her third term as Mayor of Montpelier, the capital city of the State of Vermont and is Representative-Elect in the Vermont House of Representatives. As Mayor, Mary work has focused on a pedestrian friendly downtown, thriving businesses, intact residential neighborhoods surrounded by parks and open space, and strong institutional partnerships. Mary also founded and directed the Montpelier Downtown Community Association; served as Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor and Industry; and served as the executive director of the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts. She is co-chair of the Washington County Hunger Council, vice president of the Vermont College of the Fine Arts, a member of the Montpelier Energy Team, and a member of a state effort to prepare communities for escalating fuel and food costs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
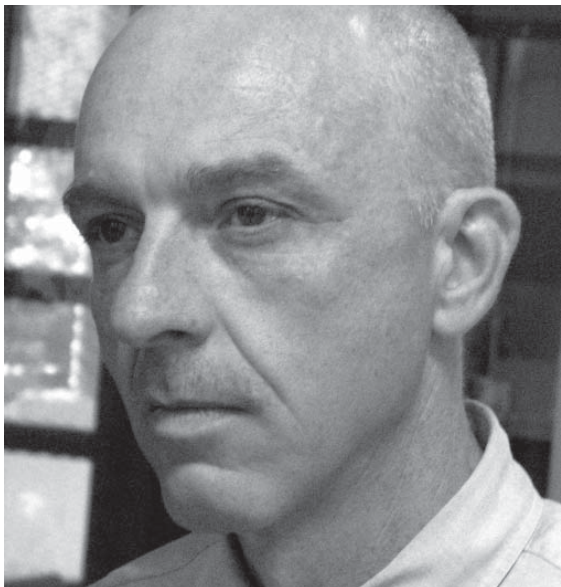
Michael Snodgrass--Neighborhood Connectivity

Michael Snodgrass is the executive director of NeighborWorks in Lincoln, Nebraska, a non-profit, community-based housing organization dedicated to community revitalization through an active partnership of resident leaders, private businesses and public officials. He serves on the board of the National NeighborWorks Association and the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka Previously, Michael served as program director of Neighbor-hoodsNOW, the flagship program of the Greater Kansas City LISC. Michael began his career in community development working on developing single-family homes and multi-family units in the urban core of Kansas City Missouri. From 1999 to 2005, he was president and CEO of Community Housing of Wyandotte County, Inc., building that program to staff of 20 with a $10.5 Million annual budget. He has developed and/or rehabbed several hundred housing units during his career and has led several economic development initiatives. Michael also served on the board of the Downtown Coalition in Kansas City, Housing Choices Coalition, and Kansas City Kansas Housing Authority. He received the Trailblazer Award for his work on redeveloping blighted neighborhoods and has worked on policy issues in Lincoln, Kansas, and the State of Missouri on eminent domain and other issues affecting community development and neighborhoods.

Deborah Reshotko--Artist and Art as Urban Transformation

Deborah Reshotko has been a professional choreographer and dancer for 30 years in New York City and Denver. She has created over 100 dance works. She founded and serves as artistic director for the Denver non-profit modern dance company, SPEAKING OF DANCE, which brings dance to the community and the community to dance. Deborah has been commissioned to make dances by the City of Denver, the Colorado Symphony, the Denver Art Museum, the National Park Service, and Rose Medical Center, including site-specific dances for municipal parks, outdoor sculptures, historic buildings, and Mesa Verde National Park. She includes community members and her professional company in her work, exploring such themes as "What is a Family," "Transmitting Wisdom Across Generations," and "Working for Peace." Deborah has taught at the University of Colorado and Iliff School of Theology. She was awarded two National Endowment for the Arts grants for work in community arts. Deborah also served on the Mayor's Task Force for Creative Spaces and chaired Denver's Performing Arts Subcommittee in 2006.

Marsha Garcia--AIA National Staff

Marsha Garcia is outreach manager for the AIA's Center for Communities by Design. She previously worked as a project manager for the AIA Committee on the Environment, Design-Build Knowledge Community, and Center for Building Science and Performance. Previous to the AIA, Marsha was the senior coordinator of professional development at the University of Oregon's Ecological Design Center at the School of Architecture and Allied Arts; assistant manager, LEED Workshops at the U.S. Green Building Council; and an interior design assistant at Bartelomei & Co.

Giuliana Di Mambro—Research, Graphic and Writing Support

Giuliana Di Mambro is a planning researcher at Antonio Di Mambro + Associates, Inc, where she is currently working on the South Dallas Action Plan and the strategic plan for Cidra, Puerto Rico. She previously worked at an economic consulting group in New York City.

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Tampa Project Partners

AIA Tampa Bay
City of Tampa
Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission
The Urban Charrette

Tampa Project Sponsors

The Beck Group
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Tampa Downtown Partnership

Urban Charrette Board

The Urban Charrette, the primary local sponsor of Connecting Tampa, is a local grassroots design collaborative comprised of architects, planners, designers, engineers, business professionals, and other community members working towards a more sustainable Tampa Bay.

Adam Fritz, Assoc. AIA, Co-Founder
Taryn Sabia, Assoc. AIA, Co-Founder
Evan Johnson, AICP
David Hugglestone, Assoc. AIA
Kevin Kemp, PE
Renae Tvedt, Assoc. AIA

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JoAnne Fiebe
Matthew Suarez

Tampa SDAT Steering Committee

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Adam Fritz, Assoc. AIA, Curts Gaines Hall Jones Architects, co-chair
Linda Saul-Sena, Tampa City Councilor
Brian Hammond, AIA, Urban Studio Architects
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Philip Compton, Sierra Club

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SUSTAINABLE.DESIGN.ASSESSMENT.TEAM

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In 2008, The Urban Charrette, a local urban design collaborative, applied for and received a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) grant from the American Institute of Architects Center for Communities by Design. The SDAT grant program connects communities with teams of technical experts chosen to provide applied expertise to urban design problems, with a focus on social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

The Tampa SDAT, *Connecting Tampa,* was focused on the improvement of the neighborhood planning process to create a more user friendly planning framework to enable interested and committed citizens and civic organizations to take a greater role in planning for sustainability where they live.

The Tampa SDAT contained two primary components, the preliminary visit and the full-team visit. The preliminary visit was held in August 2008, during which the SDAT Team Leader, Wayne Feiden, FAICP and AIA Staff Liaison, Marsha Garcia, visited with stakeholders and discussed issues currently facing Tampa and its neighborhoods in the areas of economic development, neighborhood and social issues, transportation, and environmental protection.

Following the visit, Mr. Feiden selected a team of professional volunteers to return in November 2008 for the three-day SDAT visit. The selected SDAT Team consisted of architects, planners, an arts expert, an elected official, and a director of a community non-profit. These diverse backgrounds allowed the SDAT Team to examine community connectivity in Tampa as it related to neighborhoods, mobility, urban design, local institutions, and the arts. During the SDAT visit, a series of stakeholder meetings and two public workshops were held to collect public input. What was learned during the visit became the basis of this report, which discusses the observations of the SDAT Team made during their visit and through an extensive review of many of local planning documents. These observations are followed in the report by a series of goals and short-term next steps which are designed to help lead Tampa to grow more sustainable.

The SDAT Tampa Steering Committee has worked diligently throughout the SDAT process to ensure that this completed report reflected the history of Tampa's development as a city, and the efforts that have been completed or are ongoing that will accomplish many of the goals and recommendations included in it. The SDAT Team has distilled this information, and developed a series of innovative and implementable goals and short term next steps for us to begin to move forward on.

However, we believe that the process had inherent shortcomings which are reflected in the somewhat incomplete understanding of Tampa's political landscape and history, which is attributable to the fast-paced schedule, and the limited number of stakeholder consultations. Because of this, important issues and events were overlooked or left unexplored. Given the broad scope of the proposal and the many diverse storylines involved, the task of understanding

the physical, social, and political development of Tampa was an impossible one to accomplish in a short time frame. Accordingly we feel that a part of any outreach program moving forward should include filling out these storylines. The SDAT Tampa report should be considered the beginning of what must continue as an inclusive public engagement process to educate the community about the process that was undertaken, and further articulate the recommendations in the report, and their eventual effect on the future character and quality of our neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

The SDAT Tampa Steering Committee
June 2009