

St. Petersburg Florida

September 29–October 4, 2013



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Forging Connections for a Vibrant Downtown Waterfront

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About the Urban Land Institute

THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;

- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and
- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 30,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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About ULI Advisory Services

THE GOAL OF ULI'S ADVISORY SERVICES program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's advisory services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are

able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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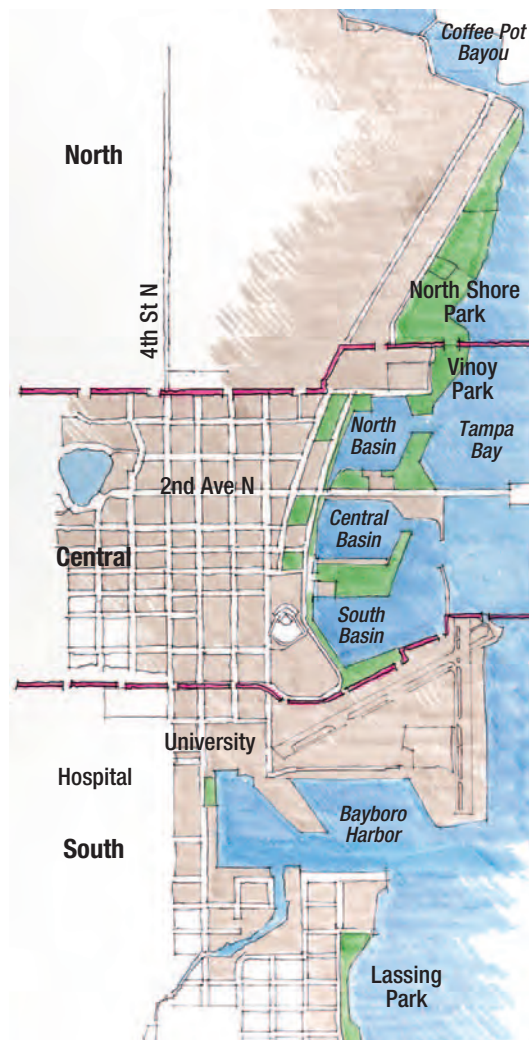
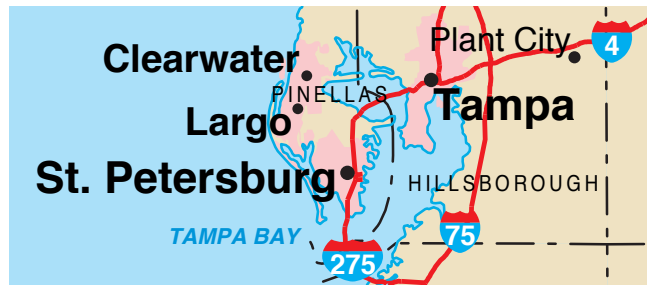
Background and the Panel's Assignment

LOCATED ON A PENINSULA in Pinellas County, with the Gulf of Mexico to the west and Tampa Bay to the east, the city of St. Petersburg—known to locals as “St. Pete”—is Florida’s fourth-largest city and the Tampa Bay region’s second largest. The population of the Tampa Bay Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is 2.8 million, with St. Petersburg comprising 247,000. Cofounded by General John C. Williams and Russian-born Peter Demens, the city developed in the absence of an industrial base, unlike other cities of the time. Rather, the city has benefited from its ports and abundance of natural and recreational amenities, which have historically attracted residents and land booms.

St. Petersburg’s high quality of life has allowed it to evolve from a retirement and tourist town to a diverse, economically vibrant community. The road network is a grid system of local and arterial roadways, with transit service in the form of local buses provided by the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority. The Howard Frankland Gandy Bridges connects the city to nearby Tampa, while both Interstate 375 and Interstate 175 feed into Interstate 275 as the primary regional connection into downtown.

Downtown Waterfront

Home to 7,829 residents, St. Petersburg’s downtown waterfront is located between Interstate 275 and Tampa Bay. The downtown waterfront has remained mostly untouched by private development since its establishment in the early 1900s. Further protection of the downtown waterfront was established in the 1980s through sale and lease limitations that were added to the City Charter. The panel’s study area is the generally continuous seven-mile public waterfront beginning in the north with the Northeast Exchange Club, continuing with Coffee Pot Park at 30th Avenue North, and ending in the south at Lassing Park at 22nd Avenue South.



Area map.

The panel's study area.

Today, the downtown waterfront is a cherished asset of locals and visitors alike, a cornerstone of the city's quality of life, serving as both a community amenity and an economic driver. The downtown waterfront is a unique multiuse open-space, arts-and-culture waterfront amenity creating an impressive eastern edge to St. Petersburg's downtown.

The Panel's Assignment

The city of St. Petersburg asked the panel to evaluate the downtown waterfront and identify its competitive advantage in the context of the adjacent downtown area and the Tampa–St. Petersburg region. More specifically, the panel spent time with the complete array of downtown waterfront assets, ranging from open space to facilities such as Al Lang Field and Albert Whitted Airport, to determine how they contribute to the long-term benefit of the waterfront, St. Petersburg's residents, and visitors. The panel's effort involved evaluating the following issues, among others: how the waterfront affects downtown development, what urban design concepts can benefit the waterfront's development, what transportation links are needed, and what potential economic opportunities emanate from the waterfront. All helped provide additional context as the panel studied the waterfront.

Observations and Vision

THE ULI TEAM HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to survey a number of planning and marketing-related documents. The panel also interviewed more than 120 people representing a cross section of the downtown waterfront and St. Petersburg communities. In addition, panel members bused, walked, and biked around downtown and the waterfront during their stay in St. Petersburg.

What Have We Learned?

The downtown waterfront's history and evolution over time culminated in a one-of-a-kind urban fabric that enriches the downtown experience. However, its proximity to downtown creates both opportunities and challenges, and for this reason the protective nature of the community has gradually become an instinctive reflex. A great deal of information was gathered dealing both with the physical nature of the downtown waterfront and the community's value system influencing its governance. Much was learned, and ten of the more important insights are listed here:

1. The downtown waterfront is a true treasure and core asset that the community has done an excellent job in elevating, thus reflecting the value system and uniqueness that is St. Petersburg. The vision exhibited in remarkable fashion in the early 1900s is alive and well today, a tribute to the strong protective value the community shares today.
2. The waterfront's strength is its diversity of use: from preserving quiet open spaces and hosting large community celebrations to serving as a learning center with research and development and university facilities.
3. The waterfront not only is an important part of St. Petersburg's past with a rich history but also will continue to be a cultural and economic driver contributing to a prosperous future.
4. The downtown waterfront's economic impact goes well beyond its boundaries—into St. Petersburg and the Tampa Bay region. The waterfront can leverage economic activity because of its inherent contribution to overall quality of life, thus generating commercial, residential, dining, and entertainment investment.
5. Any change on the waterfront must be consistent with the community's evolving values and priorities, meaning it must reflect increasingly diverse voices and points of view.
6. Change will occur for the waterfront. Given strong community ownership of this valuable community enterprise, change must be deliberate, involving a full engagement of the community if it is to be accepted. This is not easily accomplished; the turmoil and consternation caused by recent discussion of rebuilding the city pier speaks to this point. The community must organize itself in a manner that manages and reinvests in this asset, simultaneously informing and seeking input from its stakeholders.
7. The open space on the waterfront should range in use from tranquil and passive to inspiring and active. Open space needs to be carefully programmed to ensure this spectrum of uses is accommodated in a manner that benefits the long-term health of the waterfront and its patrons.
8. A notable, healthy contrast exists between the north end and the south end of the waterfront. The community benefits immensely from this contrast. Careful attention should be given to how to best ensure that both ends of the waterfront continue to support the dynamic set of uses and interests.



Albert Whitted Park and Albert Whitted Airport on the downtown waterfront.

9. The pier is an issue needing a solution. The pier and its adjacent land should be viewed as a high-value public asset that complements and benefits from the vitality of Beach Drive and downtown.
10. Finally, a clear, problematic disconnect exists between the uses north of Al Lang Field and those in the south. Over time, this contrast must be addressed with a reconfiguration of land, roads, and trails. Property owners, including the University of Southern Florida (USF) St. Petersburg, Albert Whitted Airport, and port users, will be affected as existing land use footprints are modified. This area, in contrast with all other parts of the downtown waterfront, should be viewed as a “reconfiguration zone” in which land, links, and community assets are reconfigured in a manner that ensures this part of the waterfront serves the community as well over the next 50 years as it did in the previous 50 years.

The panel’s overriding premise is that all improvements in this well-protected community space need to be consistent with the community’s desire to emphasize public use and activity. For this reason, the panel does not recommend private investment resulting in exclusive activity along the downtown waterfront. A fully accessible waterfront has been the litmus test for past development and should be for future investment, and the community understands such investment can include everything from a well-manicured public park to a growing public university that serves as a future economic driver for St. Petersburg.

The range of opportunities to continue to activate the downtown waterfront for future use is limited only by imagination.

Key Observations

Key observations of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for preserving and enhancing the downtown waterfront emerged from the panel’s synthesis of the review materials and interaction with the waterfront and its stakeholders, helping establish a framework for the panel’s recommendations. They are summarized in the following five categories:

- Big picture;
- Infrastructure;
- Quality of life;
- Signature features; and
- Getting it done.

Big Picture

The downtown waterfront is the crown jewel of St. Petersburg and Tampa Bay, in large part because of its pioneering park system. However, 40 percent of the waterfront has limited or no public access: major parts of the waterfront are taken up by the airport, a soon-to-be-commissioned water reclamation facility, and the U.S. Coast Guard and Army Reserve facilities. Furthermore, despite being a cherished asset for over 100 years, 25 years have passed since the area was master planned, during which time the demographics and needs of the community have dramatically shifted.

Looking ahead, the future health of the waterfront is tied to St. Petersburg’s ability to capture a greater percentage of this growth in the region. Yet branding and marketing efforts to expand and recruit economic drivers and train local workers needed to help grow the city’s economy are limited and not strategically deployed. This absence is apparent in the city’s lack of a coordinated marketing effort directed to economic drivers such as the creative arts and

high-tech community, despite having immense potential to attract them.

Infrastructure

The city has historically funded a majority of waterfront maintenance and operation costs. Better yet, the revenues from potential improvements could offset the level of support needed from the General Fund. Indeed, the bay itself is becoming healthier and is increasingly used for swimming and boating, but beaches need replenishment and basins need maintenance and protection. Despite 25,000 spaces in downtown parking garages and adequate space on surface streets near the waterfront, the area lacks enough transit, trolley, and pedestrian connections to enable and encourage critical movement from downtown to the waterfront.

Although St. Petersburg hosts an abundance of facilities for recreation, entertainment and culture, tourism, and health and education, these amenities are like pearls without a necklace. Little in the way of signage and wayfinding helps visitors understand their location and the diversity of local amenities. Similarly, because of the short-term nature of the Charter-restricted lease terms, the investment capital required to create exciting new facilities along the waterfront cannot be attracted, despite ample location opportunities.

Quality of Life

The downtown and its waterfront parks are the community living room of the city, but the opportunity to maximize the use of the open-space resources is diminished by single-purpose roadways and surface parking. The waterfront parks are home to a large number and wide variety of events that draw substantial crowds locally and regionally, often numbering in the thousands. Because so many of these programmed events take place close to residential neighborhoods rather than in the more accessible downtown, neighborhood residents are negatively impacted while other waterfront parking goes unused. Still, the waterfront's prized activities and events do appeal to a wide cross section of the community, but the upscale food and beverage offerings along Beach Drive are not



View of the downtown waterfront from the North study area.

complemented by more family-oriented options at a lower price point.

The experience of the waterfront is what makes St. Petersburg unique, but this experience does not extend into downtown, because connections between downtown and the waterfront are minimal and fragmented. Similarly, the city offers many affordable housing options and a great lifestyle, yet they remain untapped.

Signature Features

The downtown waterfront is generally seven miles of greenbelt with multiple basins delivering diversity, drawing residents and visitors alike for its vistas, trails, and wide range of activities. The scale and separation of the basins from one another, however, makes visiting more than one difficult, and the condition of the grounds and restroom facilities is of concern to many.

Although art can be found at indoor venues, it is not a visibly defining element of the waterfront because the museum collections are hidden in facility interiors. Outdoors, the public art collection is relatively small compared with those of other cities.

Despite having one of the largest marinas in the state, the waterfront is not meeting its potential to expand visitor-serving boat slips.

Al Lang Field, however, is a notable example of city, county, and private sector collaboration. The success of soccer and international baseball are testament to this, but the current configuration limits flexibility, creating a barrier between downtown and the waterfront.

Furthermore, extension of the airport runway may accommodate larger planes, but the airport's location and configuration limit connectivity between the hospital, the university, and the central waterfront that is crucial for the city's future growth.

Getting It Done

As evidenced by the abundance of passion and ideas for improving the waterfront, its protection enjoys unanimous support. However, as witnessed through issues over the pier, efforts to collaborate within and across public and private entities are strained and contentious, often resulting in a drawn-out planning process and referendums during which little gets done through compromise for the community's overall good. The broad-based coalition of organizations funding the ULI panel represents the possibility of partnership, but the community is clear about its willingness to challenge public leadership without that partnership. Enhancing such partnership, therefore, must be crucial in the implementation process. Both the city and the stakeholders need to take ownership of the implementation process and concentrate on getting things done effectively—together.

A regional mass transit network with well-located routes and transit stops will foster much needed economic growth for the downtown waterfront, the downtown core, and St. Petersburg, but whether the multilevel city and county agencies are equipped to provide the necessary levels of cooperation remains unclear. The recent history of the pier has created the opportunity for a new beginning, but a more formal organizational structure is needed that is more inclusive, that is transparent, and that has an effective process for planning, community involvement, and governance to face the complexity of issues affecting the entire waterfront.

Economic and Market Scan

UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

that affect the study area can help decision makers, the community, and planners identify the potential and pressure for future land uses. ULI believes that successful urban planning and land use policy can best be described as public action generating desirable, widespread, and sustained private market reaction. Therefore, Advisory Services panel reports typically have their foundation in market realities and economic development possibilities. It all begins with a macro to micro view.

America in 2013

ULI conducted a survey collecting views on housing, transportation, and community that provides an important benchmark on American attitudes and expectations around community choices. The survey, "America in 2013," indicates that Americans value safety, walkability, and transportation options. Key findings include

- Desire for shorter commutes;
- Need to wider housing choices; and
- Preference by more than half for neighborhoods close to shops, retail, and employment.

Although daily transit use remains low, income and education factor into the greater desire for more transit options: 60 percent of high-income earners (over \$75,000) and those with postgraduate education are in this group. People's choice of where they move now includes greater proximity to jobs, housing, shopping and entertainment, transit, and greater diversity of housing choices and community demographics.

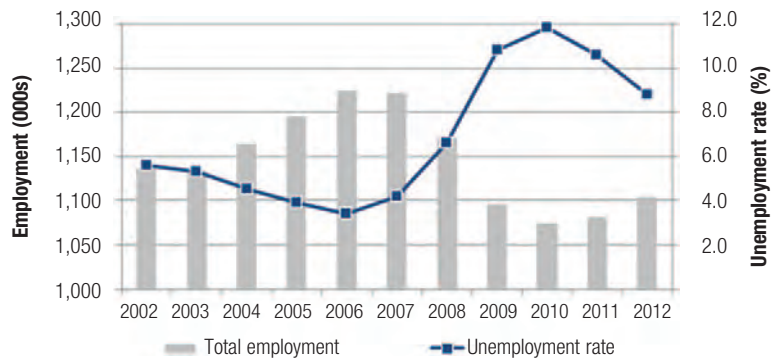
Regional Dynamics

After Miami and Orlando, the Tampa Bay MSA is the third-largest metro area in Florida. St. Petersburg is one of many economic centers within the Tampa Bay MSA, a region that currently employs more than 1.1 million people in a broad range of industries.

Regional Economy

The region experienced significant expansion during the nationwide housing boom, with total employment reaching 1.22 million jobs in 2006. In part because of a large concentration of jobs related to the housing industry—for example, financial services, back-office administrative support, and construction—the Tampa Bay MSA was significantly affected by the market crash and subsequent recession. Since reaching peak unemployment of 11.8 percent in 2010, the regional economy is slowly gaining momentum and is on track to return to employment levels last observed in the early 2000s.

Total Employment and Unemployment Rate, Tampa Bay MSA, 2002–2012



Sources: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

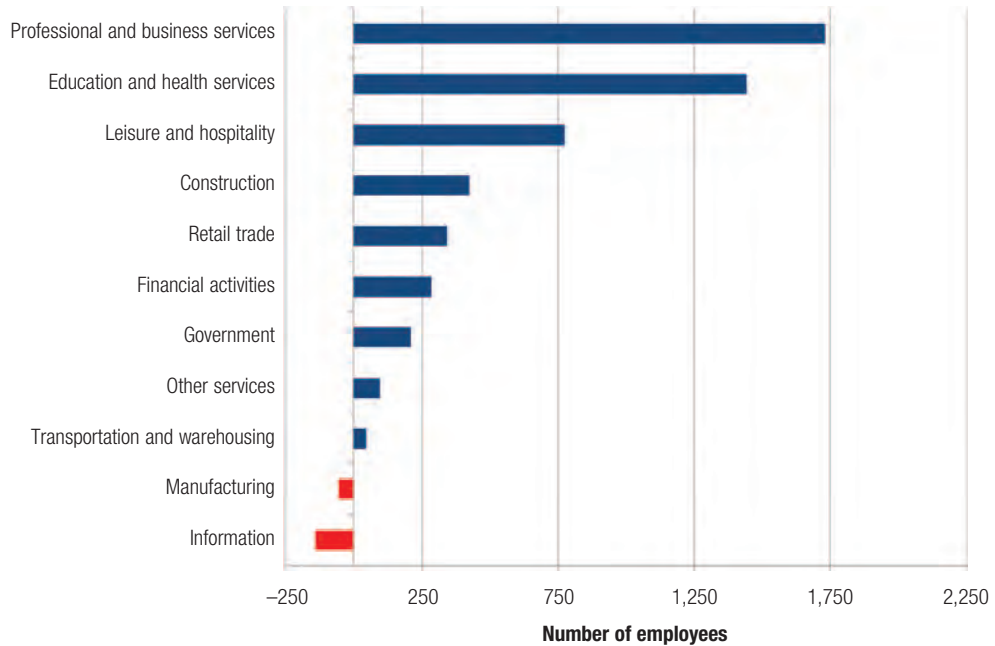
Employment Projections

Employment projections specific to Pinellas County indicate a diversification of the local job base that will enhance economic resilience and benefit established employment areas. The county is projected to add approximately 5,400 jobs between 2012 and 2020; 3,950 of those jobs (77 percent) are in key sectors already clustered in downtown St. Petersburg, including professional and business services, health care and education, and leisure and hospitality (see figure below). Downtown is well positioned to capture

this growth given its proximity to a talented labor force and a strong base of walkable amenities, compared to more autocentric employment centers elsewhere in the region.

To understand St. Petersburg's position in the context of the region, the panel compared demographic data that define three broad trade areas: the Tampa–St. Petersburg–Clearwater MSA, Pinellas County, and the city of St. Petersburg (see figure on facing page).

Projected Job Growth by Industry Sector, Pinellas County, 2012–2020



Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Demographic Data of Three Trade Areas

Demographic characteristic	Tampa–St. Petersburg–Clearwater MSA	Pinellas County	St. Petersburg City
<i>Population</i>			
2010	2,783,243	916,542	244,769
2012	2,811,726	915,680	243,804
2017	2,914,454	914,625	243,252
<i>Annual growth rate</i>			
2010–2012	0.45%	–0.04%	–0.18%
2012–2017	0.72%	–0.02%	–0.05%
<i>Households</i>			
2012	1,165,278	414,951	108,272
2017	1,200,638	415,394	108,376
2012–2017 annual growth rate	0.60%	0.02%	0.02%
2012 average household size	2.37	2.16	2.19
2017 average household size	2.39	2.15	2.18
<i>Median household income</i>			
2012	\$42,628	\$40,543	\$38,067
2017	\$51,039	\$48,486	\$44,859
2012–2017 annual growth rate	3.67%	3.64%	3.34%
<i>Per capita income</i>			
2012	\$25,343	\$26,935	\$24,697
2017	\$28,314	\$30,468	\$27,961
2012–2017 annual growth rate	2.24%	2.50%	2.51%
Average net worth	\$391,612	\$402,331	\$297,588
<i>Median age (years)</i>			
2012	41.60	46.80	42.20
2017	42.20	48.10	42.90
<i>Households by income</i>			
2012 average household income	\$59,736	\$57,849	\$53,483
2017 average household income	\$67,311	\$65,445	\$60,556
2012–2017 annual growth rate	2.42%	2.50%	2.52%
<i>Educational attainment</i>			
25+ years, bachelor's degree or higher	25.40%	26.70%	26.90%

Source: ESRI.

The future growth trends suggest the city does not have the advantage compared with the rest of the region. As the estimates suggest, the loss of population seen from 2000 to 2010 in the city will continue in the future as young residents move out and older residents age out. However, despite population loss, the data also indicate continued household growth through migration of retirees or empty nesters to the area.

How can St. Petersburg attract more residents to the area? Jobs and housing options become critical components of lifestyle choices when choosing where we will live. The current population in St. Petersburg is middle-class, moderate-income singles and families whose housing choices are limited by the existing product in the market, much of which does not meet the needs of today's discerning buyers and renters.

More important, a dramatic shift is taking place in each of the various age cohorts in the region (see figure). Households of seniors will continue to grow whereas younger generations (i.e., college age and mid-to-late-career professionals with and without children) continue to migrate out of the region.

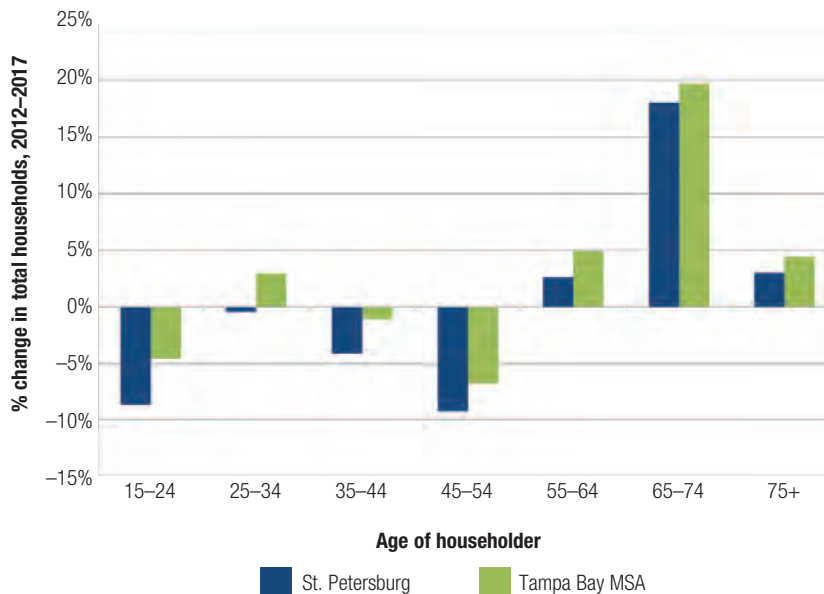
The only exception to this regional migration trend, however, is young professionals, 25–34 years of age, who are indeed moving to the region—but not to St. Petersburg. Why? St. Petersburg's greatest opportunity is to capture this age group by marketing its downtown lifestyle, but it must provide the housing choice and the other elements previously described.

Business Attraction and Innovation

Employment drives local economies and land uses. The key to business attraction is the talent dividend. This includes education from kindergarten through grade 12, as well as postsecondary education undergraduate and graduate studies. The areas of science, technology, engineering, and math are key drivers to the future workforce. This is often defined by educational attainment—with the target demographic for business attraction being young adults, 25 years of age and older, with a bachelor's degree or higher. Based on the demographic information, St. Petersburg has the highest concentration of this workforce in the region—most notably, the highest percentage (6.7 percent) with master's degrees. In St. Petersburg, this concentration is likely driven by the medical cluster and the university. USF St. Petersburg offers 23 majors, 26 minors, and 17 master's degrees in the areas of medical and life sciences, environmental and marine sciences, education, arts and culture, and tourism. Therefore an opportunity to attract students and businesses to the downtown and waterfront areas will provide talented workers and opportunities for employment.

With an enhanced and sustained balance between jobs and housing in the downtown and waterfront areas, the daytime population of employees will add additional customers to shops and restaurants, thus strengthening retail in both downtown (Central and Second avenues) and the waterfront (Beach Drive). This expansion of daytime and resident population will provide added lifestyle options and fiscal benefits to the city.

Household Composition in St. Petersburg and Tampa Bay MSA



Economic Impact of Visitors

Historically, St. Petersburg has attracted new residents through tourism. Visitors became homebuyers, business owners, and local consumers. This pattern continues today. Whether for the purpose of employment or lifestyle, these new residents come from within and outside the region. Most recently, the 2012 data from the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area Convention and Visitors Bureau on the Tampa Bay Region suggest it is the top U.S. feeder market in 2012, followed by the Northeast. These data also note an influx of foreign visitors from Latin America (+39.5 percent), Europe (+10.7 percent), and Canada (+6.8 percent).

Tourism has shown steady improvement with the 2012 winter season increasing visitors by 4.3 percent and expenditures by 7.4 percent, which brought more than \$1.5 billion in to the regional economy. Overall, hotel occupancy for this period was 78.2 percent. The question is how much of that impact should be captured locally in St. Petersburg? The waterfront drives it all. Currently 445 hotel rooms are planned or under construction in St. Petersburg. Discussions with local hotel operators during the panel's interviews suggest that demand exists for additional hotel room and meeting room space.

Additional information regarding employment, migration and tourism, and its impact on real estate land uses is discussed for each segment of the study area. The goal of scanning the economic and market realities of the study area is to identify areas that are underperforming and to frame opportunities to expand the city's competitive advantages to create balanced and sustainable growth.

Planning and Development Concepts

THE PANEL WAS ASKED TO IDENTIFY St. Petersburg's competitive advantage in attracting new investment and the contribution of the downtown waterfront toward that advantage. The waterfront's location and public space drive value. The waterfront contains three distinct regions, which the panel designated as North, Central, and South, respectively, with a vibrant hub made up of the University and Marine Science Cluster, aptly nicknamed the "Innovation District," overlapping the lower Central and South study areas.

Panel recommendations are shaped and influenced by the market, which is undergoing a dramatic shift. After two generations of "drivable suburban" development of single-family housing subdivisions, strip malls, and office parks, a new market is emerging for human-scale, walkable, mixed-use environments. St. Petersburg has already seen this "new urban" lifestyle emerge as employers, especially in creative businesses, find their talented workers want to live, work, and recreate in a walkable place—the downtown core. Millennials, empty nesters, and retiring boomers are the fastest-growing segment of the housing market. More is to come. In urban development, more—if done right—makes "place" better and better.

The competitive advantage of the panel study area is the basic pattern and historic infrastructure for mixed-use, mixed-scale development that is already in place. This pattern includes intentional public spaces—a network of sidewalks, Williams Park, and the greatest asset of all, the green public parks and waterfront. As a "green necklace," the public waterfront creates relief and a place for gathering, art and sports events, music, exercise, public art, people watching, biking, and walking for everyone. St. Petersburg has a long history and many successes to build on. It should build on that history of success for future development by harnessing the potential of local

demographic shifts and economic activity, particularly in the Innovation District and downtown core.

North

The North study area extends from the northernmost point at Coffee Pot Bayou to Vinoy Park to the south. The North study area includes the Historic Old Northeast, Snell Isle, and many important active and passive recreational areas: Flora Wylie Park, the North Shore Aquatic Complex, Gizella Kopsick Palm Arboretum, and Vinoy Park, all traditionally host to numerous public events. This area also includes the beach on Tampa Bay, tennis courts, and three surface parking lots.

The panel concluded that this well-established neighborhood requires no major changes to streets, trails, or transportation. Rather, the primary objective for this neighborhood is preservation and enhancement, with the application of appropriate coastal resiliency strategies like those applied to the rest of the waterfront, because much of this area is affected by sea-level rise.

The panel's recommendations here include the following:

- Preserve and enhance the beach.
- Refocus major events from Vinoy Park to the Central waterfront study area.
- Rehabilitate and replace public bathrooms.
- Redevelop surface parking with pervious pavement.
- Allow food truck, kiosk, and pop-up food facilities.
- Link parks and downtown facilities to each other, emphasizing pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- Maintain and improve the scenic drive.

Climate Adaptation and Coastal Resiliency

As a coastal community, St. Petersburg is faced with the challenge of rising sea levels brought about by climate change. Rising sea levels exacerbate the frequency, intensity, and scope of devastation caused by natural hazards—particularly flooding, wave forces, and storm surges. With the highest point in St. Petersburg only 61 feet above sea level, even modest sea-rise projections illustrate a formidable future for the city, absent an appropriate long-term climate adaptation and coastal resiliency strategy.

Seasonal flooding already impacts low-lying coastal neighborhoods in St. Petersburg, such as the Historic Old Northeast. As the city grows, larger residential and commercial areas beyond the waterfront and upland are left vulnerable to these natural hazards. Thorough implementation of proper adaptation and resiliency strategies will help not only preserve, but also protect the community's economy, habitat, people, and infrastructure.

Population growth and continued development expose the city to more risk and will cause the cost of natural hazards to grow worse. An appropriate climate adaptation and coastal resiliency plan to protect the city minimizes flooding costs, lowers insurance premiums, and drives down the cost of doing business in the city—all while enhancing economic development and improving quality of life. Preservation and protection of the waterfront means future generations can enjoy the city locals take pride in and visitors have come to love.

To minimize the impact of sea-level rise, the city must look to strategies focused on flooding, wave forces, and storm surges. Among the strategies used, here are some to consider:

- Research and understand new insurance requirements.
- Reestablish, maintain, and promote native vegetation along the coastline.
- Implement planning management tools such as setbacks and buffers, and zoning plus development regulations and incentives.
- Improve access to education and information, particularly through coastal monitoring systems, advisory notices, and evacuation plans.
- Coordinate neighborhood plans with city and regional strategies.
- Link outcomes of site analysis, vulnerability assessment, and resilience enhancement to the waterfront planning process.

For more information, see *After Sandy*, ULI's recent report on lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy, www.uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/AfterSandy.pdf.

Central

The Central waterfront, an area stretching from the Vinoy Hotel on Fifth Avenue North to Fourth Avenue South near Al Lang Field, is the center of activity on the downtown waterfront and includes the city pier. The main themes of this area are to maintain and enhance public use, recognize synergy and improve integration with downtown, improve multimodal connectivity, and plan for a more diverse population and environment.

Connections

Transportation attitudes and requirements are changing, and an increasing number of cities are responding to the demand and planning multimodal environments. This investment will create a 21st-century vibe by providing transit options that support walking and biking and improve the connection of major community assets, such as Williams Park, the downtown core, the waterfront and pier, USF St. Petersburg, All Children's Hospital/Johns Hopkins Medicine, the Marine Science Cluster North, and southeast neighborhoods. The pier upland will allow for use of approximately six acres of park by removing public parking, reinforcing downtown by pulling the economic impact and activity of the waterfront. "Lost" parking will primarily be replaced by the existing inventory of downtown parking. Visitors will arrive in the downtown core, park, and move



Two possible fixed-rail transit lines could include an east-west connection on Second Avenue North from Mirror Lake to the pier, and a north-south connection on Fourth Street from Williams Park to 22nd Avenue South.



A movable bridge like the one pictured here can help better connect this area to the waterfront for active use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

to the waterfront on high-quality pedestrian streets or a fixed-rail transit system. Additional parking inventory will be added in the core, over time, as needed.

Fixed-Rail Transit. The panel recommends installing two new streetcar lines to connect major assets in the community and create a new armature for redevelopment. One potential line would run east–west on Second Avenue North from Mirror Lake on the west to the end of the city pier on the east. The other line would run north–south on Fourth Street from 22nd Avenue South to Williams Park on the north. These new lines should be integrated with the larger transit and light-rail plans in the region.

Add Transient Boat Space. The panel agreed the waterfront has too few places for visiting boaters to dock. It proposes increasing transient dockage in all three harbor and marina areas. A limited number of new spaces should be created at the north (Vinoy) and south (Pier) edges of the Vinoy basin, along the north edge of the central basin, and at the northwest corner of the south basin.

Build a Pedestrian Swing Bridge. A movable bridge will help connect the disjointed gap in public waterfront space by linking the south end of Vinoy Park and the north end

of Spa Beach Park. The movable bridge can also serve as an aesthetically pleasing artwork that enhances the waterfront.

Support Bike-Share Programs, and Improve Bike Parking and Bike Lanes. Biking will become a larger part of mobility in the downtown and waterfront areas. Plans for a local bike-share program will increase the visibility and availability of this option. Protected bike lanes and additional bike parking should be provided throughout the downtown core and waterfront.

Urban Design Considerations

Redesign Bay Shore Drive. The panel advises redesigning Bay Shore Drive, from the Vinoy Hotel on the north to the Dali Museum on the south, into a “convertible” street. A multipurpose paved section set at the elevation of the park will allow automobiles when appropriate but enhance walking and biking daily. When closed to traffic, the street becomes an extension of the adjacent parkland, bringing people and activity right to the water. This new multipurpose space, adding six-plus acres, could serve as a new or extended location for the Saturday Morning Market.

Restore Human Scale to Streets. St. Petersburg, like almost all U.S. cities, has seen streets and roads dominated by the automobile take the right-of-way and provide little to support pedestrians and bikes. Street and right-of-way improvements that cater to pedestrians and bicyclists dramatically change the character of a place. This difference is evident in downtown as one moves from the intimate streets of the Historic Old Northeast, the downtown core, and Beach Drive to the larger streets of the south end near the museums. All future street improvements should seek to rebalance the modes of movement and restore a human scale to the streets. Broad, tree-lined sidewalks enhanced with plantings, offering ample bike parking, and abutting on street parking on smaller streets, should become the standard. All streets should be “complete streets.”

Create Better Street Frontages. Pedestrians will walk long distances if the walk is comfortable and interesting. Consistent, properly scaled, landscaped streets and inter-



Two different street frontages in the study area, with an example of a preferable design on the right. Care should be taken to ensure that street frontages are both aesthetically pleasing and functional for the pedestrian.

esting, transparent, active frontages are needed to create an attractive pedestrian environment. St. Petersburg has many examples of good frontages, but others need improvement. The city should be vigilant when approving new projects to ensure that street frontages are attractive and active. When building programs have limited capacity to create great frontages (for example, parking garages, large users with one or few entries), shallow liner building should be used to create better frontages.

Rename First Street as University Way. To improve the identity, visibility, and connection of the university to the larger community, the city should consider renaming First Street as University Way. The panel feels this change would bring the institution into the consciousness of the residents and visitors who come to the downtown core and central waterfront, connecting the two.

Create Better Signage and Wayfinding. The panel recommends creating a new logo or graphic identity for the downtown waterfront to support a new brand identity for downtown St. Petersburg and support a new wayfinding system throughout the downtown and waterfront. Not only will this help change the old image of St. Petersburg, but it will also help visitors navigate the many offerings in the area.

Park Improvements and New Public Space

Expand Public Art. The city has a good start on a public art program that should be encouraged to expand throughout the downtown and the waterfront. One public art opportunity for a major art installation, subject to com-

munity approval, is the previously mentioned pedestrian swing bridge. This would further connect biking and walking along the waterfront edge.

Rethink the Pier. The panel advises a modest approach to the pier, but recommends demolishing the pyramid, rehabbing or rebuilding it as needed, while adding fixed-rail connections, shade, and green. This will create a public space with much to offer: from simple pleasures like walking, biking, fishing, sitting, and people watching, to high-intensity programmed events such as day markets, spillover for large events, and small-scale community activities.

Create a New Medium-Sized Venue. The panel recommends reconfiguring the parking lots on the pier peninsula to make room for more open parkland. This “new land” and existing land can be used to create a medium-sized venue for multipurpose use at the west end of the pier. A new area in the center can host middle-sized programmed activities, served by fixed-rail transit. A limited amount of vehicular access and parking will be maintained for emergency access or special conditions.

Redevelop Al Lang Field. Al Lang Field presents a great opportunity to make additional connections near and to the waterfront and to create a new multipurpose venue to host current and future community uses and events. The panel recommends turning Al Lang Field into a multipurpose venue that extends beyond Beach Drive one block to the south as a convertible street and to Second Street one block east as a convertible street. The panel also recommends that Second Avenue South be designed as a con-



Above: Highlighted in green are the two underused parking lots on the pier peninsula. They offer the potential for programming community events and activities, as well as possible space for relocating some events from Vinoy Park. In combination with the redesign of Bay Shore Drive, this area can provide the community with the type of event capacity that better orients citizens and visitors to the central waterfront. Mudwars (right) is a perfect example of how to create such activity.

vertible street to provide maximum flexibility in the use of the Al Lang Field area. Extend Second and Fourth avenues east to Bay Shore Drive to restore those connections to the waterfront. Fourth Avenue should be detailed as it is west of First Street with on-street parking. The parking lot, ten-plus acres, will be reclaimed to create more park space and a more multifunctional area for sports, art, music, culture, and markets. A large portion of the area could be used as parking when needed for large functions but not exist as a parking lot the many times it will be employed for other uses.

Add Museums. The museums are an important asset that draws people to the downtown waterfront, and as such, this use should be supported, encouraged, and expanded as needed. The panel identified two possible locations for additional museums, depending on the type, size, and timing of potential new developments. The Beach Drive extension creates a site at the northwest corner of First Avenue and First Street. The Fourth Avenue extension could support a site at the southeast corner of Fourth Avenue and First Street for this purpose.

Reimagine Williams Park. The panel supports the current concept to relocate the bus transfer from the perimeter of Williams Park to a new multimodal facility for better pedestrian access, comfort, and multiuse public space. A modest cleanup of the park will prepare it to host a new



music series or other events. For example, a portion of the Saturday Morning Market could be programmed for the park, similar to the farmers market in Madison, Wisconsin.

In addition, the city should consider incentives for redevelopment, including office and residential space to encourage 24-hour occupancy of the area, adding more tax revenue for maintenance, and hard (patrol) and soft (activity) security. Duke Energy's investment in Williams Park is significant in many ways. Duke Energy has much to gain by a strong and vibrant Williams Park and therefore should be encouraged to adopt the park by contributing employee time to lead and company money to fund improvements.

Program Events. Programming and events held on the waterfront draw people, create activity, and generate economic benefits. Given the current conflicts at Vinoy Park and the number and size of the events, both expected to grow, the panel is recommending moving larger (or louder) events (hosting more than 2,500 people) from Vinoy Park to the central district. The panel proposes the suggested medium-sized venue on the pier and a large venue on the reconfigured Al Lang Field site for this purpose. Similarly, the panel feels music and event programming should be extended into reimagined Williams Park—a beautiful space, with an amphitheater, newly connected by the fixed-rail transit.



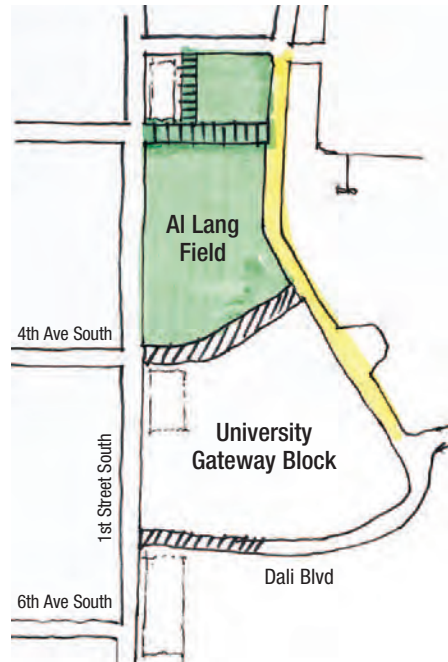
The geometry of Al Lang Field will allow its redevelopment as a multipurpose athletic field facility able to accommodate a variety of sports, including baseball, soccer, football, and lacrosse. The photograph shows a multiuse sports field organized for baseball with movable lights and fencing.

Focus on Family. The downtown and waterfront should provide more affordable activities and offerings for all residents and visitors, including young families. Food trucks, pop-up venues, and other recreation and retail services that cater to this part of the market should be encouraged to locate in the downtown and waterfront areas to increase the attraction and choices for all users.

Manage Stormwater. A best practices approach should be taken by all public and private activities on the waterfront and developed areas adjacent to the waterfront. These should include capturing and filtering runoff, reusing rainwater for irrigation, and increasing pervious surfaces in the park or parking areas whenever possible.



The farmers market in Madison, Wisconsin, shows how flexible programming can help enable Williams Park to become an active, usable space for the city to enjoy.



Increase Downtown Population and Economic Vitality

Retail/Service. Current downtown offerings reflect the market. Food, beverage, services, and specialty shops find a market downtown and in the waterfront, but the major, primary retail offerings will continue to develop elsewhere in the community. The downtown core is supported by a Publix supermarket, a strong indication of current conditions and future expectations for the housing market. This is a great amenity to attract more residents to the core.

Care should be taken to aggregate strong retail and restaurant offerings to create a lively street scene and synergy among uses. The collection on Beach Drive, and aggregation on Second Avenue and Central Avenue, together with the repositioned BayWalk will provide focused offerings that are more interesting and effectively clustered, rather than spread all across downtown.

Office. A limited amount of existing and new office users will add jobs, daytime activity, and vitality to the downtown. Efforts should be made to recruit employers, particularly those in the creative industries, to locate downtown. The

millenials and creative talent pool have shown they want to be downtown.

Housing. The city has seen the first and now second wave of the new demand for downtown housing. Although population growth in St. Petersburg has been flat, downtown population and household formation have been growing, reflecting a changing marketplace. New, growing demand exists for housing options to serve new smaller, one- and two-person households in a variety of new multi-family housing products and price ranges, from affordable flats for students and working people, to townhouses and larger flats for young professionals and empty nesters, to large, luxury lofts and condominiums for affluent residents and second-home visitors.



Mixed-use development with tall towers should provide an appropriate human-scale interface with the street.

The city should continue to encourage development of four- to six-story buildings with active ground floors to spread this residential market throughout the downtown. Doing so will have more impact than single large towers, while helping create more attractive, active, interesting frontages. The city should still permit single towers, but where possible, these buildings should have a more appropriate human-scale interface with the street.



A view of the Innovation District, including the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus and the adjacent downtown.

South/Innovation District

The panel identified the South study area as having the greatest unrealized potential for diversification, additional jobs, housing, and economic vitality because of its current physical arrangements and poor connections between the downtown core and the waterfront. The panel recognizes that the hospitals, university, and research activities in this area are key drivers of the economy and the job base that will support the continued vitality of the downtown waterfront. In effect, recommendations refer to this area as the “Innovation District” with focus on supporting these major institutions with education-specific land uses. Appropriate changes that cater to the Innovation District by fusing the downtown core with the waterfront not only will benefit the surrounding waterfront neighborhoods, but also will serve the larger regional community with connections, access, lifelong learning, and support for an innovation-powered economy.

The panel proposes two strategies for integrating the Innovation District into the St. Petersburg downtown waterfront:

- University Gateway strategy; and
- Health, education, and research (HER) strategy.

University Gateway Strategy

USF is a big part of St. Petersburg’s future. The panel recommends the following land use accommodations to

physically connect and support future growth of the university as part of the Innovation District:

■ **Gateway Block:** To create an essential gateway to the university that will help foster the university's growth, the panel proposes establishing a university frontage with presence on the east side of First Street South and south of Dali Boulevard. This involves realigning Dali Boulevard to create a rectangular parcel and identifying strategies to use the site that currently includes the terminal building. The panel recommendation allows options to infill or adaptively use the terminal and its surrounding site. In all scenarios, development on the gateway block will establish a view terminus where Sixth Ave South intersects First Street South.

■ **Infill University Housing:** This will help support USF's goal of expanding campus housing so that 25 percent of the student population can live on campus. Not only will such action meet current and projected university housing demand for students, faculty, and staff, but it will bring additional residents to live in downtown St. Petersburg. Infill development as part of the University Gateway strategy allows locations at the northern edge of the campus to take best advantage of proximity to services, retail, and other downtown assets.

Health, Education, and Research (HER) Strategy

St. Petersburg can further benefit by adopting a HER strategy of "partnerships, parcels, and connections" whereby the city helps promote integration and partnership growth among many research, science, and technology entities and takes an active role in developing the HER cluster. The current group of potential HER partners includes the following:

- All Children's Hospital/Johns Hopkins Hospital;
- Bayfront Health St. Petersburg;
- University of South Florida St. Petersburg;
- Stanford Research Institute (SRI);
- Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI);

- Center for Ocean Technology (COT);
- Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO);
- International Ocean Institute (IOI);
- USF College of Marine Science (CMS);
- United States Geological Survey (USGS);
- Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP); and
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Expanded Footprint. Second, the HER strategy requires providing opportunities for integrated land development or colocation that take advantage of the synergies among these uses and their missions as part of the Innovation District. Key to the development strategy in the South study area is a three-phase HER cluster footprint expansion.

■ **Phase 1:** The panel supports efforts to decommission and demolish the southeast water reclamation plant. In the short term, use this site to provide temporary relocation sites for some airport hangars to free an equivalent site area on the north side of Eighth Avenue South. Second, accommodations for the HER cluster's growth can be facilitated by conveying or leasing land on an equivalent site area on the north side of Eighth Avenue South to one or more of the HER cluster partners for expansion or new HER uses.

■ **Phase 2:** Phase 2 involves preparing to relocate and consolidate existing Coast Guard facilities. This can be achieved by relocating the U.S. Coast Guard from the north side of Bayboro Harbor and consolidating it with the Coast Guard's site on the south side of Bayboro.

■ **Phase 3:** Last, the panel believes the long-term future of the former water reclamation site should be expanded HER uses, which creates a contiguous parcel for expansion of the waterfront portion of the HER cluster.

Connectivity and Livability Strategies. Last, the panel concluded that connectivity and livability strategies for the HER cluster are essential and should focus on comprehen-

sive access and mobility choices for HER employees and visitors to and from the region and local destinations and services. A variety of means should be introduced, including the following:

- *Walkable proximity* to proposed regional light rail, supported by streetscape and pedestrian safety improvements;
- *“Last-mile connections”* for access by non-single-occupancy vehicles via bike share, a new fixed-route north–south streetcar loop plus multimodal facility (to the north);
- *A comprehensive wayfinding program* of signage and online resources that improve access to Poynter Park and Lassing Park;
- *An employment program* aimed at attracting and retaining local talent from the nearby and greater South St. Petersburg community; and
- *An 18-hour neighborhood*, created by narrowly focused infill development consisting of ample housing and amenities suited to highly concentrated, yet mobile knowledge workers such as researchers and staff. Additional housing is needed throughout the cluster to meet both current and future housing demand, and a critical mass of neighborhood activity—the 18-hour neighborhood. The panel feels this goal can be best supported by including Bayboro Harbor itself, developing a living laboratory, including resilient live/work design among new housing options, attracting research talent, and showcasing the future focus of the HER cluster and the Innovation District.

To take greatest advantage of these combined opportunities, new partnerships and collaborative relationships among the city, the HER entities, and other community stakeholders will be necessary to realize this vision.



The Innovation District’s University Gateway and HER strategies. The three phases of HER are labeled 1–3.

Implementation and Organizational Tools

THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE HAS IDENTIFIED a number of projects and programs that should be undertaken if the potential of St. Petersburg's downtown waterfront is to be fully realized. Some are development projects, others are management programs; some are building related, others are public-space related; some are to be planned, others are to be implemented. The panel brings a multidisciplinary view to the study, with planning work anchored in market reality, and includes strategies to design, implement, finance, and govern.

Old Model versus New Model

In the past, traditional city departments have worked in informal partnerships with the private sector. Although one can look around the St. Petersburg downtown waterfront to see the impressive results of these informal partnerships, the future calls for more, and the public and private sectors in St. Petersburg must organize themselves to be able to conceive, manage, and complete these projects and programs. It will require focus, both financial and human resources, partnerships, and communication.

Old model	New model
City carries load	City shares load
Informal arrangements	Formal partnerships
Opportunistic work plans	Strategic work plans
Project-by-project funding	Reliable funding
20th-century organizational structure	21st-century organizational structures

Five Key Delivery Organizations

The panel strongly recommends a structure that calls for five different organizations working in a coordinated manner on projects and programs for waterfront improvement:

- The current city Division of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation within the Department of Planning and Economic Development, to work on planning initiatives;
- A new Downtown Development Corporation, which would be a city agency, to work on building physical projects and developments;
- The current St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce, a private, not-for-profit corporation, to partner with the city on projects and programs primarily related to job retention and growth;
- A Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), a private, not-for-profit corporation, to partner with the city on programs to create a clean, safe, friendly, well-designed, and well-promoted downtown; and
- A Waterfront Parks Conservancy, a private, not-for-profit corporation, to partner with the city on all initiatives within the downtown waterfront parks.

Of course, current city departments, such as parks, transportation, and police, would continue to offer services downtown as well as throughout the city.

Division of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation

The Division of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation's role should be producing plans. The division should coordinate the Waterfront Master Plan in concert with other major partners and community stakeholders. Several major projects and programs, many recommended in this report, will grow out of the Waterfront Master Plan. Rather than take on all initiatives itself, the city should request partners to share the load in leading implementation efforts. The Division of Urban Planning should prepare itself to immediately undertake some initiatives arising from the Waterfront Master Plan, most appropriately two subarea

planning efforts: planning connections between the waterfront and the downtown core (along Central Avenue and parallel corridors) and planning the Innovation District.

Downtown Development Corporation

The city should consider creating a Downtown Development Corporation to focus on successfully delivering major physical development projects, modifying community redevelopment areas. The Downtown Development Corporation is a public/private partnership with a board of directors consisting of both public and private officials and a professional staff experienced at developing major projects. In addition to developing plans, it is charged with high and consistent levels of communication with various stakeholder groups.

The Downtown Development Corporation should be patterned after such entities in Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, Miami, and Orlando. Within the downtown waterfront study area, immediate projects could include development of and around the pier, redevelopment of the Al Lang Field site, reconstruction of Bay Shore Drive into a convertible fixed-rail transit connection, and the University Gateway project.

St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce

The city should request the current chamber of commerce to lead economically based planning and implementation efforts that arise from needs identified in the Waterfront Master Plan, with a focus on jobs. Such anticipated efforts would include an economic study of the Innovation District and collaborative studies with hospitals and universities on the airport and port. Last, the chamber should continue to restart and invigorate its economic development role in attracting and retaining major employers to the downtown area.

Downtown Business Improvement District

The current St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership should create a BID to provide stable, substantial funding for its work program. The BID's focus should shift from special projects to the comprehensive management and marketing of the downtown area. The Downtown Partnership already has a history of success in pursuing special projects and

is proud of being "lean and mean." However, the lack of downtown management (programs to ensure that downtown is "clean, safe and friendly") has left a significant gap in the provision of services to help make downtown St. Petersburg a world-class place.

The Downtown BID should be patterned after BIDs in coastal communities, such as Downtown Pasadena and Santa Monica, the Waikiki area of Honolulu, and other downtown BIDs in such cities as Birmingham, Charlotte, Chattanooga, Nashville, Norfolk, New Orleans, Raleigh, and Richmond. The city should request that the reimagined partnership, funded through a BID, tackle such programs as developing a brand for downtown, updating the way-finding signage program, and improving Williams Park.

Waterfront Parks Conservancy

The current Waterfront Parks Foundation represents an exciting, collaborative means of assisting the Department of Parks and Recreation in developing and managing world-class parks along the waterfront. The foundation should consider evolving into a Waterfront Parks Conservancy, moving from an organization that raises money for the parks to one that provides comprehensive management services. The Waterfront Master Plan undoubtedly will identify a number of projects and programs that need to be undertaken to improve the waterfront parks: increasing annual plantings, restoring beaches, improving access to the water, restoring watercraft rentals, and expanding public art come readily to mind. A Waterfront Parks Conservancy, a public/private partnership, would allow these initiatives to occur in innovative ways, leaving the Department of Parks and Recreation to focus on providing maintenance of parks acreage. The conservancy could be patterned after parks conservancies in Charleston, Cleveland, Jersey City, and Louisville.

Master Plan

The panel feels current processes for developing projects on city-owned property have proved to be problematic and broken. A little more than a month ago, several months—if not years—of planning efforts for the St. Petersburg Pier

ended with a 63 percent to 37 percent vote of residents, ordering the city to terminate its design contract to redevelop the pier. The referendum represented the latest in a series of planning efforts where voters have expressed displeasure, the panel would assert, over not only a proposed project but also the process through which it was developed.

Community planning efforts by their very nature are messy and difficult—even more messy and difficult when they involve the sort of “sacred space” represented by the St. Petersburg downtown waterfront. Conflict between stakeholder groups during the planning process for the St. Petersburg waterfront not only is inevitable, but also is to be encouraged. Many trade-offs occur and many balances are struck—between residents and tourists, pedestrian access and automobile access, special event noise and residential peace and quiet, needs of seniors and needs of millennials—all while remembering the past and positioning St. Petersburg for the future.

The upcoming downtown Waterfront Master Plan, commissioned by the voters of St. Petersburg, represents an exciting opportunity for the community to engage in a new planning paradigm. The scope of the Waterfront Master Plan is ambitious but appropriate. The panel suggests a process with the following features:

- All-star teams of consultants broken down into task forces based on expertise not only at master planning but also its individual components, including economics, parks, transportation, airports and ports, universities and hospitals, marine sciences, and especially, community involvement. Task forces and community meetings



are also encouraged to keep residents informed and facilitate dialogue with the community throughout the planning process.

- Wide use of community meetings and task forces, news media and social media, and one-on-one meetings with likely opponents for comprehensive communication.
- Acknowledgment that those who have blocked initiatives in the past are likely to block them in the future and that they require special attention.
- Understanding that the referendum process requires large amounts of intelligent public communication and the identification of advocacy groups.
- Understanding that the downtown Waterfront Master Plan process is the beginning, not the end, of the planning process and that the groups identified here should be called upon to partner with the city on shepherding these efforts.

Linking Downtown to the Waterfront

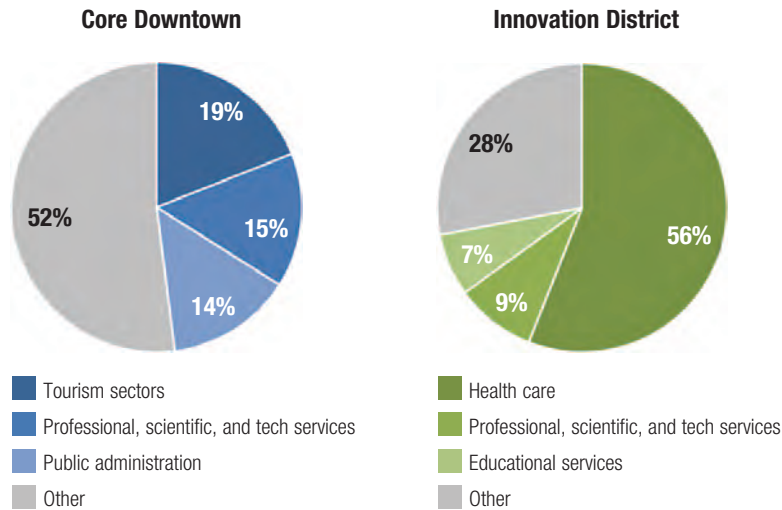
The relationship between downtown and the waterfront should not be underestimated. The panel strongly agrees that a link from the downtown economic engine to the downtown waterfront is essential for both to prosper. Because doing so is critical, the panel feels this link should be an integral part of any new master plan:

- Downtown can take pressure off open spaces by discouraging parking and vehicular uses on the waterfront.
- The waterfront can serve as a gathering place for small to large events supporting downtown businesses.
- Improved connectivity east to west and north to south will create opportunities for new investment and growth for both downtown and the waterfront.

To strike this balance, special attention should be given to coordinating transit, event planning, management, and

An icon from St. Petersburg's past, the green benches serve as a metaphor for the importance of the waterfront—a treasured asset that encourages community interaction and civic engagement.

Jobs by Sector in the Core Downtown and Innovation District



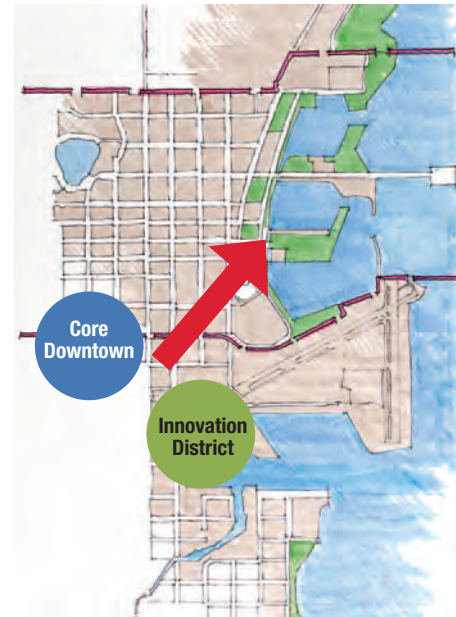
As complementary economic engines in the study area, any future plans must better address the necessary link between the Innovation District, core downtown, and the downtown waterfront.

maintenance between private investment and support services downtown. To foster these new market-driven links, the appeal of the waterfront should be complemented by private investment focused on urban-density housing, intensive office use, and new retail offerings. Support services should include parking, transit, and pedestrian links; auxiliary event spaces; and creating new markets downtown: enhanced waterfront, active marina uses, weekday and weekend events, entertainment, arts and culture, and a mix of recreation uses.

Supporting Downtown Waterfront: Management, Maintenance, and Improvements

To ensure the downtown waterfront is not only accessible but also a desirable attraction for locals and visitors alike, a Downtown Waterfront Enterprise Fund must be established. Enforcement should come from the newly minted conservancy. The fund should cover the following:

- In-town tax increment financing (TIF) with 2013–2025 development activity;
- BID for downtown and waterfront;
- Project and plan governmental partnerships (county, state, and federal);



- Event revenues; and
- Parking revenues.

Tax Increment Strategy

The downtown waterfront has a strong and growing tax base. New development coming to the downtown core should provide new resources to help the city implement its ambitious goals for the waterfront and wider community. The city should extend the downtown as appropriate to capture new revenues to support implementation of the goals and priorities established by the community. Many of the panel's recommendations could and should be financed with TIF proceeds, but not all TIF proceeds should be directed to large projects. Small improvements are also important, often benefiting from leveraged financing. To the extent possible, the city should revisit the \$50 million public financing for rebuilding of the pier to ensure public dollars are used for top-priority projects such as those proposed by the panel and future projects that reflect the wants and needs of the community.

Conclusion

THE DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT has a qualitative and quantitative impact that is regional in nature. In effect, this unique space along the waterfront, if positioned carefully, will drive investment decisions and population growth and help contribute to St. Petersburg's overall quality of life for future generations. It is an integral part of the community growth engine.

Clearly, the downtown waterfront's primary function is as a one-of-a-kind, active multipurpose recreation, event, education, arts and culture place. St. Petersburg has done an excellent job establishing the waterfront with diverse assets that capture the market's attention regardless of household type, income, or age. This broad appeal provides St. Petersburg with a competitive advantage that enables it to invest and grow in a world-class region and state.

To take full advantage of this opportunity, the St. Petersburg community must focus on the following:

- Continue to protect the waterfront from exclusive private development initiatives such as housing, larger retail projects, and the like.
- Provide ongoing assessment and programming for the waterfront's public spaces in a manner that serves the community, to better accommodate its ever-changing recreational and social needs.
- Encourage appropriate change by treating the waterfront as a living, evolving organism that responds to growth and change in the larger environment: it is not an asset just requiring another roadway, utility, or piece of playground equipment. The public and its leadership, knowing that private development and noninclusive land uses are nonstarters, should allow changes in land configuration and uses in the best interest of the

long-term well-being of the waterfront. Uses that clearly made sense 50–100 years ago should be revisited and new uses considered that will serve future residents and visitors for another five to ten decades. Change should be carefully deliberated and implemented. The question that should always be put forth is whether the change serves the broader community and improves the quality of life for St. Petersburg residents.

- Create a robust set of funding mechanisms that ensure the waterfront is maintained as a first-class asset. Currently, funding sources are limited. New funding sources should be developed, thus taking pressure off of the city's General Fund while simultaneously improving delivery in both the asset maintenance and management areas.
- Understand the downtown waterfront must be someone's or some entity's number-one priority—whether the task is guaranteeing pristine open space or providing unique and relevant cultural, arts, and education offerings to the community. The waterfront is a complex public enterprise with its museums, public facilities, varied open spaces, and water features. As such, it needs leadership and an organizational structure designed by the community to ensure that the waterfront is protected and valued, managed, and fully activated for public enjoyment. St. Petersburg must organize itself to ensure focus and accountability for a first-class, well-run multi-purpose public asset.

The St. Petersburg community is to be commended for its foresight in establishing a unique downtown waterfront and gathering place that is one the country's most unusual. The public's interest, not private interests, has been dutifully served by protecting this important asset. This public stewardship will allow this special place to have a future

that one can only begin to imagine. The waterfront has the ability to expand its arts and cultural offerings, attracting visitors from around the globe, while continuing to appeal to sailors, master swimmers, and the casual walker, jogger, and bicycle enthusiast. Better still, the waterfront has the rare opportunity to be a hub for cutting-edge research and lifelong learning—from preserving oceans to creating the latest medical technologies. The downtown waterfront is seven miles of truly amazing space.

About the Panel

Mike Higbee

*Panel Chair
Indianapolis, Indiana*

Higbee is the managing director of Indianapolis-based DC Development Group, the development wing of Development Concepts Inc., a planning and development consulting services organization founded in 1991. Higbee has worn many hats, including that of project leader, consultant, and instructor. However, he has always remained true to the cornerstone of his expertise, which is conceptualizing development and seeing it through to construction completion.

He has designed and developed numerous successful projects focused on urban environments, such as Avondale Meadows and Martindale on the Monon. A current development project he is now involved with in Indianapolis is the 150-acre site of the former Central State Mental Hospital. The Central State project will incorporate mixed-use development with strong cultural and ethnic themes.

In his work as a consultant, Higbee has used his experience to help create plans and developments that have benefited cities across the country, including the Waukegan Lakefront/Downtown Master Plan, Rockville Town Center Master Plan, Downtown Durham Master Plan, and the West Lafayette, Indiana Wabash Landing Development Project. He has also done consulting work in the United Arab Emirates assisting development companies in structuring development programs for large undeveloped land parcels.

Before forming Development Concepts, Higbee served as the director of Metropolitan Development, one of six departments within the Indianapolis–Marion County consolidated government. During his time with the city of Indianapolis, his department was responsible for the city's economic development and affordable housing initiatives. Some of the

premier projects he facilitated for the city were the Circle Centre Mall development, the Lower Canal Improvement Project, and the negotiations for the United Airlines Maintenance Facility at Indianapolis International Airport.

Stephen M. Antupit

Seattle, Washington

Fish to Water partner Antupit serves as a strategic brand adviser, tactical urbanist, and community connector on projects for people (and places) natural to the urban environment.

Antupit's extensive experience in complex urban design, master planning, and public/private partnerships (including the creation of mixed-income transit communities) is highly respected. His consulting expertise in green infrastructure and smart growth policy helps fuel the Seattle-based firm's strategic visioning and brand development practice.

Known for his passionate ability to make friends in service of an idea, Antupit is a creative force when it comes to crafting "fun with a purpose" campaigns. In all cases, his unwavering goal is the creation of socially equitable, sustainable, and economically thriving communities.

Previously, Antupit led green urbanism and strategic brand efforts at Mithun. Antupit was a founding member of CityLab7, an innovative do-tank committed to connecting people and ideas through tactical urbanism. At the Seattle Housing Authority he served as housing development manager. As a strategic adviser at the city of Seattle, Antupit created and led its transit community planning and mixed-income redevelopment teams.

Antupit holds a master's degree in urban design from the University of Washington and is a graduate of Colorado College.

Tom Gardner

Denver, Colorado

Gardner is a registered landscape architect and urban designer with 15 years of experience. He has worked as lead designer or project manager, directing multidisciplinary teams through the design and construction process on a variety of project types, including urban parks, transit-oriented developments, retail destinations, urban streetscapes, and resort hotels.

He has a comprehensive understanding for regional context, environment, and cultural surroundings and their influences on design. Gardner is currently working on his master's degree in urban design at the University of Colorado at Denver where he is focusing on transit and mixed-use designs as well as urban infill-type developments.

Gardner is a senior associate with RNL Design, a design firm that believes innovation is the minimum metric by which its work should be judged. RNL Design is committed to work toward environmental solutions that uplift spirit and improve the planet.

David Gazek

La Selva Beach, California

Gazek has over 20 years of experience in commercial, residential, and mixed-use real estate for land development, redevelopment, corporate facilities, and the turnaround of distressed assets, involving mid- and high-rise, podium, and garden construction. He is an accomplished team leader, negotiator, creative problem solver, and consensus builder, especially in the areas of strategic planning, public/private partnerships, and development management, and has a strong client/customer focus.

Currently a real estate and organizational development consultant, Gazek serves as a real estate adviser and management consultant. Most recently, he was a principal with AECOM, where he led the Real Estate Advisory Group in the western United States. Before that he was senior vice president with Federal Development, where he man-

aged the master planning, design, market and financial feasibility, and entitlements for a 340-acre, mixed-use resort on the Monterey Peninsula in California as part of the conversion of the former Fort Ord Army Base. Gazek was also senior vice president with AIMCO, where he led the development and redevelopment of apartments in the western United States (conventional and affordable), consisting of more than 10,000 units and a construction value of nearly \$700 million.

Earlier, he was a corporate real estate and workplace consultant with Sun Microsystems, engaged in portfolio planning and change management for over 6 million square feet of office space. He was also a housing development consultant with the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he helped facilitate the successful implementation of a public/private partnership to develop on-campus faculty housing.

From 1996 to 2000, Gazek was director of downtown development for the Redevelopment Agency of the city of San Jose, where he managed the division responsible for negotiating development agreements, government approvals, construction oversight, asset management, and the stewardship of several downtown programs for parking, seismic retrofits, storefront renovation, and grants for housing and commercial improvements. His team delivered over \$400 million of office, residential, retail, and hotel projects through the successful negotiation and implementation of public/private partnerships with developers and corporations.

He was also a partner with the Ratkovich Company and a development manager with Transpacific Development Company, managing the redevelopment of Cerritos Town Center in Cerritos, California; the redevelopment of the historic Chapman Market in Los Angeles; and the development of the headquarters for the Fashion Institute of Technology, also in Los Angeles. Before becoming a developer, Gazek was an urban planner and urban designer with Archisystems, William Pereira, and Gruen Associates.

He has presented at Urban Land Institute and International Council of Shopping Centers meetings and conferences and has been an instructor of urban design and planning

at the University of Southern California and the Southern California Institute of Architecture.

Michael Lander

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Lander is founder and president of Lander Group. He incorporated the company in 1984 in California and has since been active in the planning, design, and development of commercial, residential, and mixed-use real estate projects in California, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa. His experience includes land acquisition, market research, land planning and architectural design, structuring and securing public and private financing, marketing (leasing and sales), partnership formation, property management, and overall development and coordination.

Since relocating to Minneapolis in 1990, the Lander Group, alone and in partnerships with other firms, has developed and sold many successful infill residential projects and completed substantial renovations of mixed-use commercial buildings. As a partner in the urban design firm Town Planning Collaborative, Lander helped create the award-winning plan for St. Louis Park's new town center and an acclaimed design charrette for Minneapolis's Uptown district.

Lander is a member of the Urban Land Institute, the Congress of the New Urbanism, the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association, and the Minnesota chapter of the American Institute of Architects and serves on the public policy committee of the Builders' Association of the Twin Cities. He is a licensed real estate broker and general contractor in Minnesota and holds the Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) designation from the National Association of Realtors. He is a past president of the Minnesota/South Dakota CCIM chapter. Lander currently serves on the national steering committee of LOCUS.

A native of Grand Forks, North Dakota, Lander studied liberal arts at Arizona State University and the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California.

Richard Reinhard

Washington, D.C.

Reinhard is deputy executive director for the Downtown DC Business Improvement District, a nonprofit organization that works to create a remarkable urban experience in the heart of our nation's capital. The Downtown BID is funded through a special district, within which property owners tax themselves and govern how the money is spent to improve the one-square-mile BID area, which has grown from a federal office precinct to a 24/7 activity hub over the decade and a half that the Downtown BID has been in existence.

Reinhard has spent more than two decades on the improvement of cities. He directed the Infrastructure Initiative at the Urban Land Institute. He has managed urban revitalization organizations in Richmond, Buffalo, Atlanta, and Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He served as chief of staff to the mayor of Buffalo and chief operating officer of a Toronto-based real estate development corporation. He began his career as a newspaper reporter in his hometown of Syracuse, New York.

As an adjunct faculty member, Reinhard has taught planning and policy at the University at Buffalo, Emory University, Georgia State University, the University of Ulster, and Virginia Tech's National Capital Campus.

He has a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary and a master's degree from Rice University. He was a Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

Kathleen Rose

Davidson, North Carolina

Rose is president and chief executive officer of Rose and Associates Southeast Inc. She combined decades of experience as a development expert and real estate analyst to build a unique consulting practice that assists public and private sector clients. She has managed the analysis, planning, development, and marketing of a variety of retail, industrial, hotel, office, and mixed-use projects throughout the eastern United States.

She holds the CCIM designation of the Commercial Investment Real Estate Institute of the National Association of Realtors. After receiving the designation in 1989, she went on to serve on the institute's faculty and as chair on a number of regional and national executive committees. Rose also holds the designation of Counselor of Real Estate (CRE) of the National Association of Realtors. The CRE credential is awarded only to those individuals who are invited by their peers as established consultants into the membership of the Counselors of Real Estate. She is also a member of the International Economic Development Council, which confers the Certified Economic Developer Designation and is pending certification. She is also a member of the International City/Council Management Association and its affiliate the Alliance for Innovation.

Rose has authored a number of articles for a wide variety of industry trade publications covering topics including retail, development, urban planning, economic development, and related subjects. She is also often asked to speak to a wide variety of audiences on these topics. Her work in real estate and community and economic development has resulted in her recognition by *Business Today* as a top businesswoman in the Lake Norman region in 2010 and by the *Charlotte Business Journal* as among the top 25 businesswomen in 2011.

To provide living models and case studies for the firm's work, Rose is also managing partner of Urban Organic I LLC, a property company that developed South Main Square in downtown Davidson, North Carolina, a mixed-use revitalization project that was the catalyst for forming the arts district in the South Main Street corridor. Her most recent endeavor is the creation of PiES—the Project for Innovation, Energy and Sustainability, a green industries incubator to serve as a public/private partnership model for community entrepreneurial development. PiES was nominated in 2011 for the Sustainability Award.

Rob Wolcheski

Washington, D.C.

Wolcheski brings more than ten years of real estate and economic development experience to HR&A Advisors Inc.,

specializing in mixed-use market analysis, transactional financial modeling, and public finance strategy.

In Washington, D.C., Wolcheski has advised public and private clients on the economics of major public/private development initiatives. He advised the District of Columbia in the review and selection of developer proposals for complex mixed-use projects, including McMillan Reservoir and the Fifth and Eye site in the Mount Vernon Triangle neighborhood. He also served as an economic adviser to a development team responding to the District's request for proposals for the redevelopment of Hine Junior High School on Capitol Hill. Outside the District of Columbia, he has led feasibility analyses and public finance strategies in support of transit-oriented development and urban redevelopment projects in cities such as Raleigh, North Carolina; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; West Palm Beach, Florida; and Blacksburg, Virginia.

Wolcheski has also supported retail revitalization plans in cities across the United States, including Austin, Texas; Burlington, Vermont; and Lower Manhattan, New York City. In addition to market research and consumer analysis, his work on these plans included long-term development strategies with respect to infill development opportunities and tenant recruitment recommendations.

Before joining HR&A, Wolcheski was a director at the Eisen Group, a boutique real estate development consulting firm based in Washington, D.C. He managed all aspects of market analysis, financial modeling, and deal structuring for mixed-use and residential development projects throughout the District of Columbia region. Previously he worked as the finance manager in the Office of Real Estate at the George Washington University and as a project manager at Economics Research Associates.

Wolcheski holds a BS in economics from the George Washington University and is actively involved in the District of Columbia chapter of the Urban Land Institute.

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