Chapter 4 - Public Realm

An important element of the Channel District's Strategic Action Plan addresses the development of enhancements to the public realm. Public realm elements include those community assets that increase a sense of place and improve the pedestrian experience for the neighborhood. Sidewalks, shade, public art, street furnishings, lighting, decorative pavement, and parks/open space are all examples of typical elements considered within a well-designed environment.

Existing Vehicle Dominated Street

4.1 OVERVIEW

The Channel District's individual streets include varying conditions for pedestrian and enhancement design that have occurred over a long period of time. However, the District's street network and anticipated future development presents an opportunity to provide a consistent high-quality design throughout the entire District.

Limited Public Realm

Recent public realm improvements within the District include those undertaken by the City of Tampa and Port Authority along Channelside Drive. This corridor currently provides a significant level of community identity including the Florida Aquarium, private development, and public parking structures. The construction of Meridian Avenue improvements along the west side of the Channel District will dramatically change the area's identity and will contribute to continued interest in redevelopment. Previously a 2-lane local street, Meridian Avenue has been widened as a 6-lane divided roadway to provide access to the Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway

The remaining local street network provides a connected north-south and east-west grid pattern throughout the Channel District. The grid pattern provides multiple access and connection points through the area and to Channelside Drive and Meridian Avenue.

New Scale – Limited Public Realm

4.2 CIRCULATION ROUTES

Local circulation conditions and modes of travel greatly affect the comfort level and ability of people to move within an area. The Channel District is fortunate to have multiple

transportation modes available and new development should acknowledge these important elements. The data collection and analysis of the existing circulation patterns were undertaken at the project outset, see Figure 4.1.

4.2.1 Vehicular Routes (see Figure 4.2) –

The District's vehicular routes are comprised of both state roadways and local streets. State regulated facilities include Kennedy Boulevard/SR 60 and Meridian Avenue. State regulated facilities typically include an increased limitation upon the placement, design and maintenance responsibilities of enhancement design.

a. Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway – This limited access facility is elevated through the study area and current improvement plans include construction of additional elevated commuter directional lanes within the current right-of-way. New and direct access to the facility will occur through the Meridian Avenue corridor, and the entry / exit ramp north of Twiggs Street.

b. Meridian Avenue – This former 2-lane local street is currently being re-constructed and widened to a 6-lane divided facility that provides new and direct access from the Channel District to the Cross-Town Expressway. Its development includes significant enhancement design, creating a memorable edge to the Channel District.

c. Kennedy Boulevard (SR 60) – This facility has long been an important transportation connector through the community, linking the Westshore and Brandon areas to the Central Business District. Its state roadway and maintenance designation limits both the type and placement of enhancement elements within the right-of-way to ensure FDOT compliance with design standards.

d. Local Streets – The remaining local streets provide an inter-connected grid system that connects east-west to Channelside Drive and Meridian Avenue, and north-south to Twiggs Street and Channelside Drive. The two north-south corridors, 1tth and 12th Streets, provide the opportunity for on-street public parking. The east-west streets provide connection to Channelside Drive and Meridian Avenue and should be designed to assist traffic flow while accommodating safe pedestrian movements.

4.2.2 Public Transportation Routes (see Figure 4.3) –

Public transportation will fill a vital need as the District develops. The limited roadway system and parking capacity currently envisioned would reinforce the need for multiple public transportation modes that provide regular access to and from the central business district and Ybor City.

a. TECOLine Streetcar System – The streetcar line parallels the south and east sides of Channelside Drive and provides the Channel District with an extraordinary opportunity to support redevelopment

Streetcar Platform

activity with rail transit, and transit oriented development. The 2.5-mile streetcar line links the Central Business District and Ybor City. The Channel District is located near the mid-point of the system and has direct access to the downtown and Ybor City streets.

b. HART Bus Routes – The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority provides bus service within the district along the 12th Street corridor and links the central business district to Ybor City.

c. HART Trolley Service – The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority provides rubber tired trolley service from the Central Business District to the Channelside development. It is anticipated that additional trolley service will be extended into the District as more project are completed.

4.2.3 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes (see Figure 4.4) –

a. Meridian Avenue Multi-Use Trail – Part of the Expressway Authority's Meridian Avenue improvement is a widened multi-use trail being constructed along the west side of the right-of-way. This trail will provide a pedestrian and bicycle connection to the Central Business District from the west side and Cotanchobee / Ft. Brook Park

b. Tampa Riverwalk – The City's Riverwalk project is envisioned to run along the Hillsborough River and Garrison Channel and link the Central Business District to the Channel District at the Beneficial Drive bridge. Extension of this facility along the waterfront is not possible in the Channel District due to port security issues. However, extension along Channelside Drive is possible, creating an east side pedestrian and bicycle connection to the Florida Aquarium, public parking, and future development.

4.2.4 Gateways (see Figure 4.5) –

a. Channelside Drive Corridor – Several important community gateways exist along the corridor. At its southern end, the Beneficial Drive and Meridian Avenue intersection provides a key location for major identity elements. It is an epicenter for major activity (i.e. St. Pete Times Forum, Channelside development, Cotanchobee / Ft. Brook waterfront park, and Florida Aquarium, etc.) in the area. At the Cumberland Avenue traffic circle, Channelside Drive provides a significant defined space that could be enhanced by surrounding development and elements. Finally, Channelside Drive also includes a gateway near the elevated Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway and is an important symbolic entry.

b. Meridian Avenue Corridor – Construction of the redesigned street corridor creates new community gateways for side streets that connect to the Central Business District. The new boulevard provides gateways at the Twiggs Street, Kennedy Boulevard (SR 60), and Whiting Street intersections. Meridian Avenue has been designed to include significant enhancement elements. Coordination of recommended materials and District wayfinding signage with the Meridian streetscape design is important.

4.3 VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

As part of the community participation process, the design team engaged workshop participants in a visual preference exercise during the first public meeting. The intent of the visual preference survey was to identify a palette of appropriate design treatments, for use in the Channel District, through a consensus building approach. Participants were provided with alternative visual images for streetscapes and varying design palettes for street furnishings: including 1) Existing, 2) Traditional, 3) Industrial, and 4) High Tech.

4.3.1 Design Elements –

Each of the four design palettes included the following elements which participants were asked to rank.

Pedestrian Friendly Street Elements

a. Streetscape – The local street network is undergoing replacement as new development occurs and is required to improve the conditions. Local street right-of-way is limited to 60 feet typical width. Creation of an improved urban street cross-section should include wider sidewalks, designated crosswalks, on-street parking, landscaping, and narrow drive lanes.

Public Art Element

b. Street Furnishings – The quality of the local street experience can be affected by the placement of street furnishings. Street trees located to create a pedestrian canopy and provide shade; street lights that provide both pedestrian and vehicular safety; benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, water fountains, etc. that provide comfort and gathering locations along the corridors are important and need to be designed into the corridor rather than placed as an after thought.

c. Pavement Options – The quality of the pedestrian accommodation in paved surfaces needs to be recognized. Use of architectural pavers or poured concrete surfaces is important to emphasize important pedestrian movements. Crosswalks, intersections and other areas of high activity should be enhanced through use of these systems to provide interest.

d. Public Art / Gateways – The use of iconic elements and public art accommodation is possible throughout the Channel District. The City of Tampa's Public Art Program ordinance requirements have been extended into the area and should be expanded to

provide additional use and interest to public spaces. The District has a strong connection to local artist community that should be accomplished within the Plan. Support of local artists through managed programmed spaces.

e. Urban Parks – Access to public open space is important in an urban environment. While existing development patterns and conditions limit the opportunity for large open areas, the opportunity for smaller, urban pocket parks and courtyards should be considered. Placement of these open spaces can provide localized respite for residents, employees, and visitors.

4.3.2 Survey Results -

Participant responses were tabulated and identified a consensus desire to create a new theme for the Channel District based upon a "High Tech" design palette. A series of design palette elements are identified in Figures 4.6 and 4.7. A high treatment level for the public realm design elements were desired to create a uniform set of criteria to be implemented through either private development or publicly funded improvements.

Urban Park Elements

4.4 PRELIMINARY DESIGN CONCEPTS

The following preliminary design concepts were developed to represent proposed public realm enhancements to be refined and undertaken within the Channel District. The content of each design represents elements that ranked high in the visual preference survey responses from the public workshop, and which represent high quality, desirable public design. The intent of these concepts is to generate initial representations and cost estimates that will be used in future budgeting and design refinement and implementation.

4.4.1 Streetscape Concepts -

a. Channelside Drive – This key corridor provides significant community identity and vitality through the adjacent publicly owned facilities and transportation systems. However, existing pedestrian accommodation and supportive land use is limited. Enhancement to the corridor is recommended to increase pedestrian activity, extend active land uses along the east side of the right-of-way, and support increased transit use. Additionally, an opportunity exists to extend the Riverwalk trail system along the east side of the Channelside corridor. This walkway would extend pedestrian use northward along the corridor and support transit as well as promoting active, mixed-use development along the Port Authority and City owned lands, see Figure 4.8.

b. Kennedy Boulevard / SR 60 – This corridor provides direct connection between the Central Business District and Ybor City / Brandon. It is depicted as a 5-lane urban cross-section. As a state regulated facility, placement and maintenance of design enhancements must comply with FDOT design standards. Current private development projects adjacent to Kennedy Boulevard include a significant retail land-use that will attract people to the general area. It is important to accommodate safe pedestrian

crossings to ensure that the corridor doesn't create physical barriers for pedestrians within the District, see Figure 4.9.

c. Twiggs Street – This corridor provides a direct connection between the Central Business District, the Channel District, and Channelside Drive. Additionally, it will provide access to the Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway. It is depicted as a 4-lane urban cross-section with on-street parking provided on the north side of the right-of-way. The south side of the right-of-way accommodates a planned 10-feet wide City urban trail, see Figure 4.10.

d. Interior Streets – The remaining interior street corridors provide interconnections throughout the District. North-south street are depicted as a typical 2-lane urban cross-section, with on-street parking on both sides of the right-of-way. East-west streets are 2-lane urban cross-section with a continuous left turnlane and on-street parking on one side of the street. Pedestrian crosswalks and mid-block crossings are proposed to provide safe and convenient pedestrian movements, see Figure 4.11.

4.4.2 Public Art / Gateways Concepts -

The development of public art is an excellent opportunity to recognize the importance that artists have played in the reemergence of the Channel District through the use and display of public art as community icons. Expansion of the City of Tampa's Public Art Program ordinance is recommended to include and increase provisions for future Channel District development. The continued presence of the local artist community should be encouraged through managed programmed spaces. In deed, the design and accommodation of public art as District markers, public open space features, and integration of artist space within private development construction are high priority recommendations. Figure 4.12 depicts gateway elements that could be developed through artists design competitions and funded either through private or public funding.

4.4.3 Urban Park / Open Space Concepts -

The importance of a variety of readily available public open spaces has been shown to be a critical issue in the creation of quality urban neighborhoods. Urban parks and public spaces will need to be created in the District to accommodate the needs of its residents. Tampa's existing citywide recreation/open space criteria requires 3.5-acres of use per 1,000 population. However, this standard may not be appropriate or possible for urban neighborhoods. The Channel District is part of a sub-area that includes the Central Business District and Harbor Island. This sub-area has experienced increased population and will continue for the foreseeable future. Provision of additional recreational/open space lands will become increasing difficult to accommodate as urban redevelopment occurs.

In response to this unmet need, the City and private development interests together will need to create additional open space for future residents. Programming for future locations requires an understanding of proposed development patterns and variability in the size, scale, and configuration of development projects. As part of this planning process, the provision of new public open space is envisioned to occur within the sub-areas of the District, see Figure 4.13. A series of conceptual open space forms were developed to illustrate the potential size and character of these public spaces, see Figure 4.14.

4.5 OPINION OF PROBABLE COSTS

A conceptual estimate of probable cost of the improvements discussed above has been established. As the reader will note, over one-half of the total cost is allocated to land acquisition. An important goal of this plan is to encourage the provision of public open space of varying size and scale by private development projects. This is proposed to occur through the use of bonus FAR and/or building height. See table below.

Table 4.5 Estimate of Public Realm Improvement Cost

Type of Improvement	Estimated Cost (2006 Dollars)
Specialty Paving	$4,150,000
Site Furnishings	$2,950,000
Lighting	$5,300,000
Landscape	$1,600,000
Park Land Acquisition	$30,000,000
Park Improvements	$7,000,000
Riverwalk[1]	$3,900,000
Gateways	$1,500,000
Estimated Total	**$56,400,000**

[1] Portions of facility located within CRA boundary only.

4.6 PUBLIC REALM POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are actions / activities required to implement the above identified public realm enhancement improvements:

4.6.1 City of Tampa Actions -

- Adopt and implement relevant provisions of the Strategic Action Plan.
- As a matter of stated public policy, establish a consistent neighborhood design character for the entire Channel District.
- Require new development to implement the basic design elements contained herein.
- Utilize tax increment revenue to provide unmet community-related Public Realm improvements.
- Encourage the creation and implementation of public art, public open space, waterfront access, and other Public Realm elements not otherwise provided through entitlement bonus provisions.

4.6.2 Private Actions -

Provide the improvements through incentives or regulation that are immediately adjacent to and/or serve the proposed development. Examples of these improvements that could be accomplished by the private sector are:

- Design and construct quality projects that implement provisions of the Strategic Action Plan.
- Utilize bonus design elements in development projects to create vibrant and livable spaces, and assist in the delivery of public amenities to Tampa's unique urban waterfront community.

4.6.3 Other Institutional Actions -

The magnitude, scale, and immediate need for some of these infrastructure improvements make their completion a very high priority. This will require the close coordination of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Port Authority:

- Emphasize the creation and maintenance of strategic partnerships with the Port Authority, and other local and regional agencies and organizations to implement provisions of the Strategic Action Plan.

4.6.4 Phasing of Recommendations -

To implement the proposed SAP Improvements, we suggest the following one and five year strategic recommendations are made:

a. First Year –

- Prioritize and schedule Public Realm improvements.
- Establish funding mechanisms for Public Realm improvements, including initial TIF revenue stream.
- Establish an appropriate reimbursement program with developer agreement model for Public Realm improvements made by private development that exceeds minimum requirements.
- Undertake preliminary design and initiate permitting of the Public Realm design elements.
- Begin process of utilizing Public Realm design standards for implementing private sector Public Realm design as soon as possible.
- Manage work proposed by private development to ensure coordination and completion of Public Realm elements.

b. Five Year –

- Complete work that is not committed (i.e. included within a Developers Agreement) to be undertaken by private development.
- Ensure that the major street corridors (i.e. Channelside Drive, Kennedy Boulevard , and Twiggs Street) Public Realm enhancements are completed.
- Ensure that public open space / park allotment occurs within each sub-area.
- Manage work proposed by private development to ensure coordination and completion of Public Realm elements.

c. Ten Year –

- Work not done in areas that are / were expected to be done by developers.

4.7 PUBLIC REALM PHASING

A specific phasing plan cannot be established for the every project need identified in the District, as the improvements will be driven in large part by private developer and public infrastructure projects. The proposed projects listed below represent both area-wide preliminary design plans and individual street corridors that require improvements. The area-wide plans should build upon the SAP planning data, be developed in conjunction with the public infrastructure final engineering design and constructed concurrently where possible. The following general Phasing Plan should be considered:

4.7.1 Phase One -

a. Preliminary Infrastructure Design Plans (Area-wide systems) – provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for enhancement systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

b. East Madison Street (1,000± L.F.) – coordinate with private development improvements to implement SAP provisions for a 2-lane facility with on-street parking, decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developer coordination

c. South 11th Street - East Cumberland Avenue to East Whiting Street (850± L.F.) – coordinate with private development to implement SAP provisions for a 2-lane facility with on-street parking, decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developer coordination

d. South 12th Street - East Cumberland Avenue to Channelside Drive (850± L.F.) – coordinate with private development to implement SAP provisions for a 2-lane facility with on-street parking, decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developer coordination

e. East Whiting Street - Meridian Avenue to Channelside Drive (850± L.F.) – provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a 2-lane through with continuous turning movement, and decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

f. North 12th Street - North of Twiggs Street (750± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a 2-lane with on-street parking, decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

g. Twiggs Street - Meridian Avenue to North 12th Street (750± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a mill overlay and enhancement of the existing facility to implement SAP provisions, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

4.7.2 Phase Two –

a. Beneficial Drive – Channelside Drive (East) to Garrison Channel (550± L.F.) – coordinate with private development for a mill overlay and enhancement of the existing facility to implement SAP provisions.

- Developer coordination

b. Kennedy Boulevard – Meridian Avenue to Channelside Drive (North) (1,000± L.F.) – coordinate with private development for a mill overlay and enhancement of the existing facility to implement SAP provisions.

- Developer coordination

c. South 11th Street - Whiting Street to Kennedy Boulevard (1,200± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

d. South 12th Street - Cumberland Avenue to Kennedy Boulevard (2,000± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

4.7.3 Phase Three -

a. Channelside Drive – Meridian Avenue to Adamo Drive (5,100± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a mill overlay and enhancement of the existing facility to implement SAP provisions, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

b. East Washington Street - Meridian Avenue to Channelside Drive (900± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a 2-lane through with continuous turning movement, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

4.7.4 Phase Four -

a. East Cumberland Avenue – Meridian Avenue to Channelside Drive (800± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a 2-lane through with continuous turning movement, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

b. E. York Street – Remaining Improvements (850± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a 2-4 lane facility, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

c. E. McKay Street – Remaining Improvements (400± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a 2-4 lane facility, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

d. E. Harbor Street (850± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a 2-4 lane facility, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services

e. North 14th Street (700± L.F.) - provide preliminary design, costs estimates, and final design for systems that are not contemplated to be completed by private development for a 2-4 lane facility, with decorative lighting, street trees, pedestrian crosswalks, and street furnishings.

- Developed in conjunction with preliminary engineering design (30% plans)
- Preliminary cost estimates (10% contingency)
- Final engineering design (60%, 90%, 100%, Final plans)
- Construction services