

Ybor City Vision Plan Report Highlights

Vision Statement

Ybor City, a National Landmark Historic District, is a unique urban community melding beautiful historic architecture, a celebrated multi-cultural heritage, a bustling “main street, creative businesses, and livable neighborhoods into one of Tampa Bay’s most desirable places to live, work, visit and be entertained.

The Situation

Ybor City is at a crossroads. The historic core, centered on 7th Avenue, has made considerable progress in revitalization through aggressive efforts made over the past 15 years. Two parking garages, a streetcar line connecting it to downtown Tampa, a retail center and a number of other new developments have transformed it from a neglected inner-city area to one of the Tampa Bay area’s best known entertainment districts. Unfortunately, it also suffers some notoriety as a result of this. A concentration of bars and nightclubs has contributed to a negative image of Ybor City, as well as displacing other uses that might activate and enliven the district during the daytime and make it a more attractive destination for business and leisure alike. While certain uses such as office and hotel do fairly well, the retail environment is weak, and the financial performance of many of the properties is below par. Despite the relative weakness of the historic core, the areas surrounding it have seen a recent surge in residential development.

Plan Highlights

- Formation of a Community Improvement Team of interdepartmental representatives responsible for coordinating actions and enforcement mechanisms designed to support the plan.
- Creation of a special assessment district in the historic core area to focus on funding street front space lease incentives and additional parking improvements.
- Enforcement of existing wet-zoning regulations as well as proposing some expanded measures to control aggressive solicitation off-premises, allow for spreading out the closing time crowds, limiting drink specials practices, and establishing more rigorous standards for the appearance and performance of the street fronts.

- Extension of the existing streetcar line to loop through the growing residential areas in the eastern and southern portions of the study area, thereby increasing potential access and ridership.
- Consolidation of public parking in an additional parking garage near the east end of the 7th Avenue corridor, allowing for infill development to occur on several existing surface lots, including some currently owned by the City of Tampa.
- Supporting the rehabilitation of historic structures through incentives for preferred tenants as well as matching grants for façade improvements.
- Continued restoration of brick streets and streetscape improvements.
- Allowing for selected increases in height and density in return for certain amenities that help to support the vision.
- Keeping 7th Avenue open to vehicular traffic at all times, but limiting the self-parking during weekend evenings so that the space could be used for additional café tables, queuing lines, street performers, or valet parking drop-offs.
- Providing matching funds for private development to make improvements to Centro Ybor to create a new civic plaza to act as the heart of Ybor City and to strengthen the pedestrian connections between 7th and 8th Avenues.
- Support the continued infill of residential uses through calmer, pedestrian friendly streets (particularly 21st and 22nd Streets, as the truck traffic is diverted to the planned Cross-town Connector), improved law and code enforcement, and appropriately located parks and open space.
- Support the creative industries and professions through lease incentives, more outwardly directed programs by HCC, and the implementation of an area-wide Wi-Fi network.
- Promote centralized marketing and management for the district which could entail establishing a merchant's association to coordinate merchandising and retail/tenant mix and an industry association of bar and night club owners to set standards for promotion and conduct.
- Consider alternative and creative revenue sources to implement the Vision Plan such as impact fees, development usage fees and parking in-lieu fees.