

# Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District Plan

Prepared by the  
City of Tampa Planning Department

August 2021



Hillsborough County  
City-County  
Planning Commission



Hillsborough MPO  
Metropolitan Planning  
for Transportation



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## The Planning Team

Please thank our Planning Team

### Tampa City Planning Department

- Randy Goers
- Stephen Benson
- Frank Hall

### Tampa Development & Growth Management

- LaChone Dock
- Eric Cotton
- Melanie Calloway

### Mobility Department

- Danni Jorgenson

### Legal Department

- Cate Wells
- Susan Johnson-Velez

### Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission

- Melissa Zornitta
- David Hey
- Shawn College
- Jay Collins

### Metropolitan Planning Organization

- Beth Alden
- Gena Torres

### Hillsborough Area Transit Authority

- Justin Willits

### USF School of Architecture

- Taryn Sabia

## Meeting Participants

The following individuals participated in at least one of the three virtual community planning meetings held between October 2020 and June 2021.

Michael Abraham	Hannah Dodd	Emma Lawler	James Ransom
Brenda Allen	Jordan Eddy	Jan Lewis	Lorenzo Reed
Chazaric Allen	Jonathan Fagerlund	Stephen Ley	Alexander Rivera
Leo Alvarez	Lourdes Falcon	Wenya Li	Joseph W. Robinson P. E.
Arlene Aranha	Jeanette Fenton	Brenda Lindsay	Kiana Romeo
Facunda Arenas	Stephanie Ferrell	Stan Loper	Matti Rukholm
Errol Bacchus	Sarah Fry	Dina and Randall Marshall	Sandra Sanchez
Benjamin Baisden	Lanette Glass	Missy Martin	Jennifer Scher
Sean Baraoidan	Yassert Gonzalez	Elvin Martinez	Becca Scheuer
Debora Barr	Floy Graves	Melisa Martinez	Ashlyn Shrewsbury
Joshua Blackman	Gary Hartfield	Lynn Marvn Dingfelder	Octavia Smith
Bryce Bowden	Dave Heaslip	Jerry Mason	Carolina Smith
John Bowden, Se.	Jared Heath	Harriet McCray	Eric Smith
Michael Braccia	Bruce Heisler	Kevin McDonald	Kandice Stevens
Ken Brackins	Anthony Hendrickson	Leroy Moore	Kostas Stoilas
Senoia Brantley	Andre Hill	Andrew Moore	Elle Tallent
Jarrold Bray	Jeanette Hordge-Smith	Mitali Naik	Gena Torres
Nellie Brinson	Shernita Houston	Christina Newcomb	Dominick Traina
John Brown	Malcolm Houston	Robin Nigh	Philetha Tucker-Johnson
Audette Bruce	Tina Hurless	Jesus Nino	Wanda Vinson
Benjamin Buckley	Qi Jin	Jason Noble	Horace Walker
Rick Caldevilla	Melody Johnson	Dustin Pack	Andrea White
Melanie Calloway	Trey Johnson	R Eric Pages	Rico Williams
Maria Castillo	Noel Johnson	Christina Paylan	Janice Williams
Ana Cheng	Toi Johnson	Diana Persaud	Kavon Willingham
Chloe Coney	Kevin Johnson II	Guttenberg Pierre	Bobby Wilson
Madeline Correa-Soler	Delphine Jones	Matthew Pleasant	Maggie Winter
Fran Costantino	Hamilton Jones	Carole Post	Vondalyn Wright
Eric Cotton	Matt Kamenitsa	Amy Price	Wanda Wright Walker
Heather Delafield	Spencer Kass	Alvin Pulley	Tina Young
Darren Diaz	Janice Katz	Taylor Ralph	Chris Zambito
Nikki Diaz	Kari Knowles	Carlos Ramirez	
Erica Diaz	Joshua Lavine	Michael Randolph	

## Focus Group Participants

The Planning Team also met with the following individuals in small group meetings.

Brenda Allen	UPA Contractors
Michael Braccia	Bay Street Commercial Realty
Rick Caldevilla	Caldeco Air
Kathleen Couillard	Resident
Dawn Dominci	Tomlin St. Cyr Real Estate Services
Jonathan Fagerlund	SecureWorkComp
Willow Ferrelli	Acre Commercial Real Estate
Andrew Goodenough	Resident
Rep. Dianne Hart	FL House or Representatives & East Tampa Business & Civic Assoc.
David Heaslip	Related Group
Roy Hellwege	Pilot Bank
David Iloanya	Tampa Housing Authority
Francis Jennings	Resident
Delphine Jones *	West Riverfront Crime Watch Group
Matthew Juaire	Bay Cannon Beer Company
Jerry Mason	Pilot Bank
Leroy Moore	Tampa Housing Authority
Yuly Niera	Resident
Sadie Bigham-Perry	Resident
Carlos Ramirez *	North Hyde Park Alliance
Michael Randolph	West Tampa CDC, Inc.
Joseph Robinson *	West Tampa CDC, Inc. Vice-Chair
Sandy Sanchez	Armory Gardens Neighborhood
Anthony Serrano	West Tampa Chamber
Jeffrey Sigma	
Bobby Wilson *	Old West Tampa Neighborhood
Ben Wright, Owner	Foster's Barber Shop
Marlon Wright	Health Matters
Dr. Vondalyn Wright	Health Matters
Tina Young *	Project LINK, Inc.

\* Member of the West Tampa CRA Community Advisory Committee



# Executive Summary

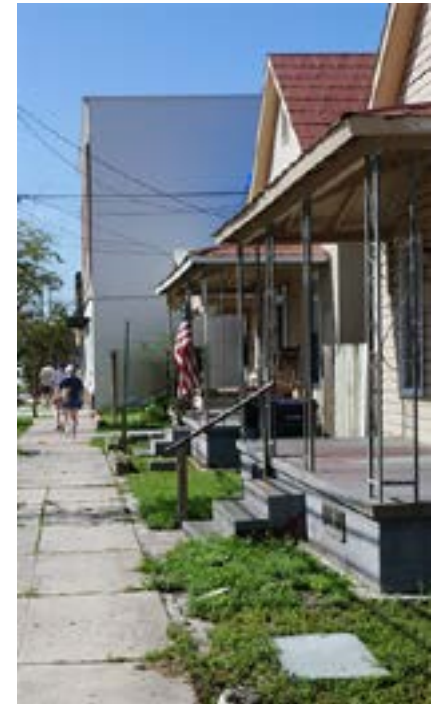
The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District Plan makes proposals to strengthen Main Street and Howard Avenue as a neighborhood commercial district. Its strategy is to focus on the redevelopment along a 1-mile stretch of Main Street from North Armenia Avenue to North Boulevard. The Plan also includes the commercial center at Howard and Main and extends 0.5 mile along Howard Avenue from Green Street to Beach Street.

The plan promotes the evolution and development of the area while protecting traditional pedestrian oriented patterns, established historic character, and existing businesses and residents of the area. The Neighborhood Commercial District Plan establishes a vision for the area and identifies specific improvements that will position the District a vibrant, mixed-used neighborhood commercial center.

The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District Plan is the result of an eight-month long process that involved residents, business owners, architectural students, planners, engineers, designers and non-profit organizations. An implementation plan provides the framework to taking recommendations and turning them into reality.

## Key Recommendations

1. Create a regular cleaning program to maintain the appearance and cleanliness of the District.
2. Install new streetscape along Main Street and Howard Avenue.
3. Acquire land for future redevelopment opportunities that will support the District.
4. Sponsor an annual development forum to showcase the opportunities and encourage connections that might result in development projects.
5. Encourage catalyst projects that will spur additional redevelopment.
6. Create a Neighborhood Safe Zone where local businesses, organizations, residents and other interested stakeholders work together to look out for potential crime.
7. Create a brand around the District's history and celebrate its architectural character and the neighborhood through historic preservation market, plaques and stories.
8. Add additional murals to the District, particularly those that celebrate the history, culture or neighborhood.
9. Support local entrepreneurs, business owners and the neighborhood through grant programs that will allow these stakeholders to participate in the transformation of the District.
10. Apply the success of the Main Street America program to the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District in the areas of marketing, promotions and creating a brand.
11. Create physical connections to the West River area and the waterfront to allow residents to easily move between the areas and to take advantage of the river amenity.
12. Sponsor local festivals, farmer's markets, art walks, concerts and other events that will bring the local community together, while attracting visitors to the District.
13. Turn alleys in the assets by removing debris, cleaning and mowing and improving the alley roadbed. Look for opportunities to install art, attractive lighting and creating new pedestrian/bicycle paths.
14. Complete a parking master plan for the District.
15. Acquire land for additional parking to support the continued redevelopment of the District.



## Introduction

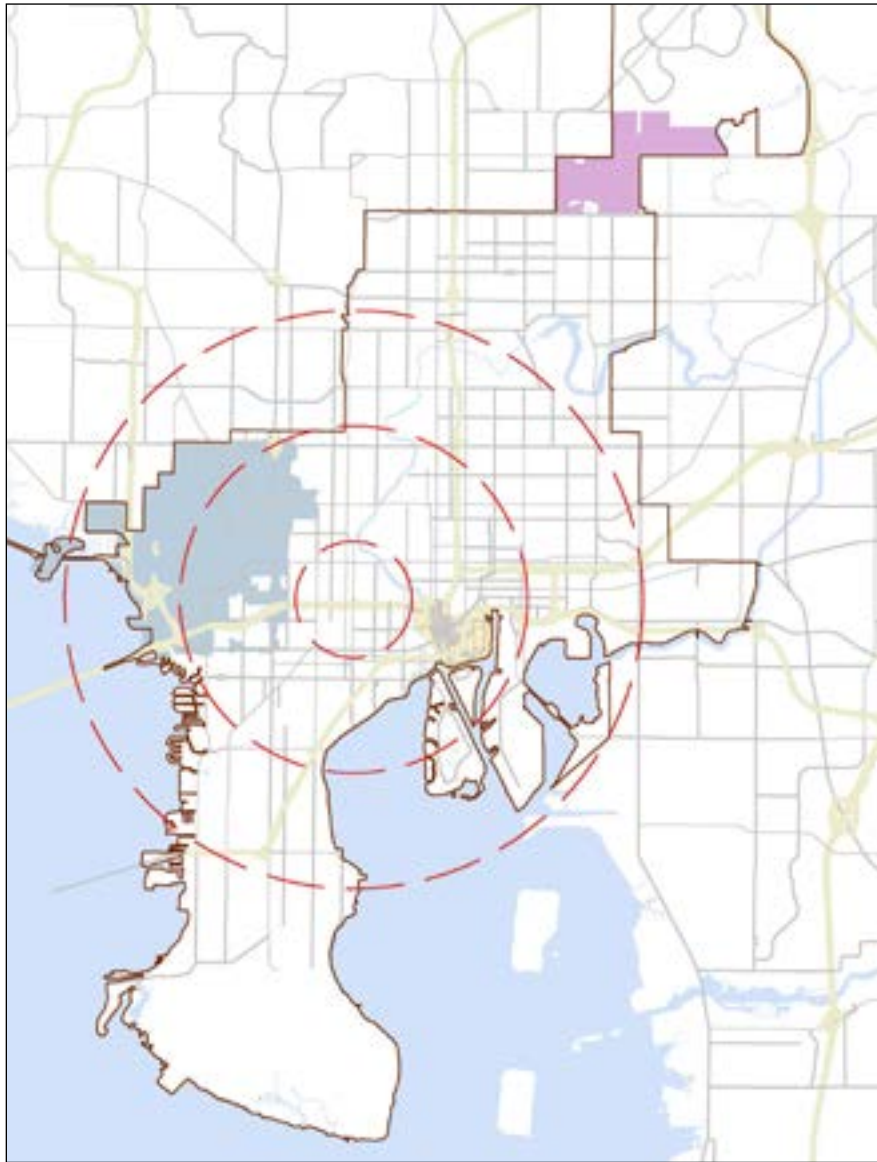
# Purpose of the Plan

At the heart of Tampa's neighborhoods are their small commercial districts -- the places where businesses, residents and visitors come together to interact and form the cultural, social, and economic bonds of a community. Neighborhood commercial districts emerge in many forms and can serve different functions. Some districts have rich historic and multi-generational cultural legacies, and others have formed just recently along major transportation thoroughfares. Some districts benefit from strong economic activity and others experience systemic challenges with vacancies and blight. As the economy reacts to major changes in the commercial real estate market and shifts in brick-and-mortar retail trends, it is critical that Tampa renews its focus on the building blocks of small businesses by creating a strong environment for economic activity. There is a clear role for the City to address this need by providing urban planning services to elevate these districts to their greatest potential.

In 2020, the City of Tampa launched a pilot project to create plans to enhance and preserve the quality of neighborhood commercial districts. The purpose of these plans is to establish a vision and road map to achieving the vision expressed by the community. The City Planning Department is responsible for leading planning activities in neighborhood commercial districts. Each plan involves working with the community to build upon and strengthen each district's unique identity.

While the plan suggest actions within the surrounding neighborhood, the focus of the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District Plan is the District itself. The Plan evaluates physical, economic and social conditions raised by those who live and work in the corridor, and identifies several strategies to improve conditions in the district.

## Regional Setting



The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District is located about 1 mile west of the Hillsborough River, north of Interstate-275. The District is less than 3 miles from Downtown / Channelside, the Westshore Business District, Raymond James Stadium, Ybor City, Hyde Park & Bayshore and many other major activity centers. Tampa International Airport is only 4 miles away. The District is also conveniently connected to the major regional centers via I-275.

## The Study Area

The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District (the District) is located along Main Street and Howard Avenue in West Tampa. Along Main Street, the study area runs approximately 1-mile from Armenia Avenue to North Boulevard. Along Howard Avenue, the study area starts at I-275 and extends north about 1/3 mile to Beach Street.

The District includes the blocks north and south of Main Street and the parcels that abut Howard Avenue. The District encompasses approximately 82.1 acres, of which 57.8 acres are parcels and the remaining 24.3 acres is right-of-way and alleys. The entire District is located in the West Tampa Community Redevelopment Area.

The District traverses two communities - the established Old West Tampa neighborhood and the evolving West River community. These communities are home to approximately 3,000 people, of which 53.3% is African-American and 38.4% is white. Thirty-eight percent reported being Latino.

There are 1,433 housing units in the two neighborhoods, with 460 units in West River and 973 housing units in Old West Tampa. Old West Tampa is nearly built out with single-family homes; whereas, West River is undergoing a major transformation with more than 2,400 multi-family units planned or under construction.

The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District accounts for 19.9% of the total land area of both neighborhoods. East of Rome the existing land use of the District is multi-family residential and vacant land. West of Rome Avenue, the pattern is primarily commercial, residential and governmental. The core of the business district is home to construction support businesses, restaurants, personal services, churches, non-profits and some retail.



The District, primarily along Howard Avenue, is home to some of the best examples of historic architecture in Tampa. In all, there are 55 historic eligible structures in the District (and another four in close proximity). The structures provide an indication of the District's role and prominence as the historic commercial center for West Tampa.

For a long time, the District was in decline, but in recent years, new investment, businesses and renovations have emerged. The huge investment at West River is leading this transition. Things are changing. People are optimistic. Anticipation and hope for the future is growing.

The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District is ready to reclaim its position as the vibrant community and commercial center for West Tampa. The strategies in this plan have been developed, in concert with the community, to achieve this objective.



# Community Engagement

The Covid-19 Pandemic limited in-person communication throughout the planning process. Still, the Planning Team, was able to create an open and inclusive process using virtual meetings, on-line surveys and email communication tools.

The Planning Team hosted three large virtual community meetings. The first two meetings provided opportunities for public input into the development of the plan. The third virtual meeting allowed participants an opportunity to comment on the initial ideas for the District.

In addition to the virtual community meeting, the Planning Team held small group and one-on-one meetings with property owners, business owners, residents, neighborhoods and city and government staff to better understand the dynamics, issues and opportunities affecting the District.

An online survey was administered by the City Planning Department and allowed the Planning Team to compile quantifiable data on residents wants, needs and perceptions of the District.

The Planning Team, along with students from the USF School of Architecture, conducted a walking audit of the district. The team also spoke with pedestrians and some business owners while conducting the audit.

The University of South Florida School of Architecture made the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District a focus of a Master's level architectural class. Students delivered a critical academic assessment and provided design options to improve the function and appearance of the District.

The Planning Team used the findings and results of these engagements to shape the community themes and recommendations in this plan.

## Virtual Community Meetings

The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial Planning effort publicly kicked off at virtual open house on October 7, 2020 at 7:00 PM. Sixty-four (64) people attended this first meeting. The Planning Team introduced the Neighborhood Commercial District Planning Program, shared initial observations and invited participants to share their ideas and concerns related to Main Street and Howard Avenue. At this meeting, the planning team looked for high-level input, ranging from initial impressions to "Big Idea" concepts.

Attendees were also asked to answer 5 broad questions about their vision for the corridor on their desired vision for the District, the strengths and weaknesses and the issues that need to be solved. A summary of their responses is shown in these graphics.

The second meeting was held on December 9 at 7:00 PM. This meeting provided a status report of activities, and a



summary of the survey and question feedback received. This forum also introduced urban design proposals for the Main Street Corridor that were prepared and presented by Graduate Students from the University of South Florida.

### Upgrade the Design and Appearance

Clean up the area – Preserve historic buildings – Address abandoned buildings – Add murals - Better landscaping – Decorative Lighting

### Make it Safe and Secure

Create feeling of safety – Eliminate drugs and crime – Address homelessness – Stop loitering – Make it Walkable - Start a Clean Team

### Improve the Business Climate

Eliminate barriers – Expedite permitting -- Include black businesses – Keep local businesses -- Find investors willing to improve buildings – Retain current businesses

### Improve the Retail Mix

Encourage family-oriented businesses – Diverse mix of uses – More activity



## Walking Audit

On September 2, 2020 students from the USF School of Architecture, City staff and Planning Commission staff conducted a walking audit of the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District. The audit documented existing conditions in the district through images, graphics, video and notes. The findings of the walking audit can be found on the City of Tampa Planning webpage at <https://www.tampa.gov/city-planning/main-street>.

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*“Overall, the walk is comfortable enough due to shade and scale of the surrounding structures. It is also visually interesting due to historic facades, parks, awnings etc. However, there is a scope of improvement in the technicalities like sidewalk conditions, pedestrian signals etc. Alleyways pose a great potential to improve walkability and porosity of the space. Underutilized parks, inconsistent shading conditions are observed.*

*There is a potential of improvement in the conditions. Corner lots are interestingly inviting and more of these can be achieved. Puddles, improper leveling, and curb cuts needs improvement. Storm water drainage appears to be an issue besides, consistent landscaping and street furniture. The area has a tremendous scope of improvement in terms of its character."*

--- USF Walking Audit

## Community Survey & Focus Group Meetings

In an effort to gather input from a broader audience and provide opportunities for individuals who were unable to attend the public meetings, an on-line survey was developed. The survey was open from early September 23, 2020 to October 3, 2020. During this time, 53 surveys were completed. Over 58.5% of respondents frequented the district's shops, businesses, community facilities and nearby schools. Forty-three percent identified as a pedestrian. More than 26% called themselves a cyclist. Over 11% of respondents owned property along Main Street, with nearly 15% describing themselves as an owner, operator or employee of a business in the district. Less than 6% identified as a transit user.

The survey asked questions related to strengths, weaknesses, change, as well as the current and future identity of the district. The survey also included questions related to the following topics. The survey results can be found at <https://www.tampa.gov/city-planning/main-street>.

More than 21% of the survey respondents identified as residents of the Old West Tampa. MacFarlane Park and North Hyde Park received just under 16% each. Approximately 58% of respondents identified as a citizen who frequents the district's shops, businesses, community facilities and nearby schools. About 43% identified as a pedestrian. Over 26% identified as a cyclist. Eleven percent owned property owner in the District, with nearly 6% owning a business. Less than 2% identified as a transit user.

Twenty-five phone, Zoom and in-person interviews were conducted through February of 2021 to supplement the raw data gathered through the survey. Each participant brought a unique perspective. Their ideas and proposals often varied, but the overarching themes had two common elements (1) build on the historic character and community pride and (2) encourage economic development without displacement.

## University of South Florida Collaboration

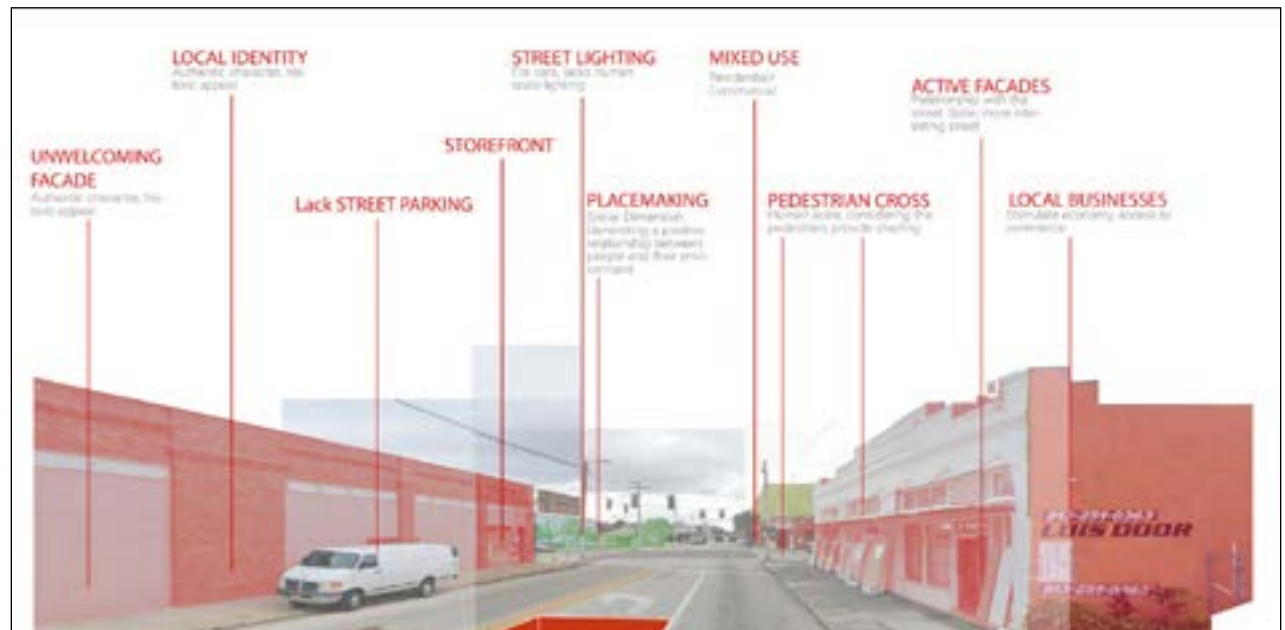
The Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission partnered with the University of South Florida's School of Architecture & Community Design to task a group of graduate students with creating independent visions for the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District. These reports were created as part of the Fall 2020 Semester "Streets and Blocks" graduate-level urban design course to serve as inspiration and bring new, fresh ideas into the planning process. Many of the observations and ideas of the students are integrated into this planning effort. The class was led by Professor Taryn Sabia, Ed.M., M.Arch, MUCD.

### Course Description:

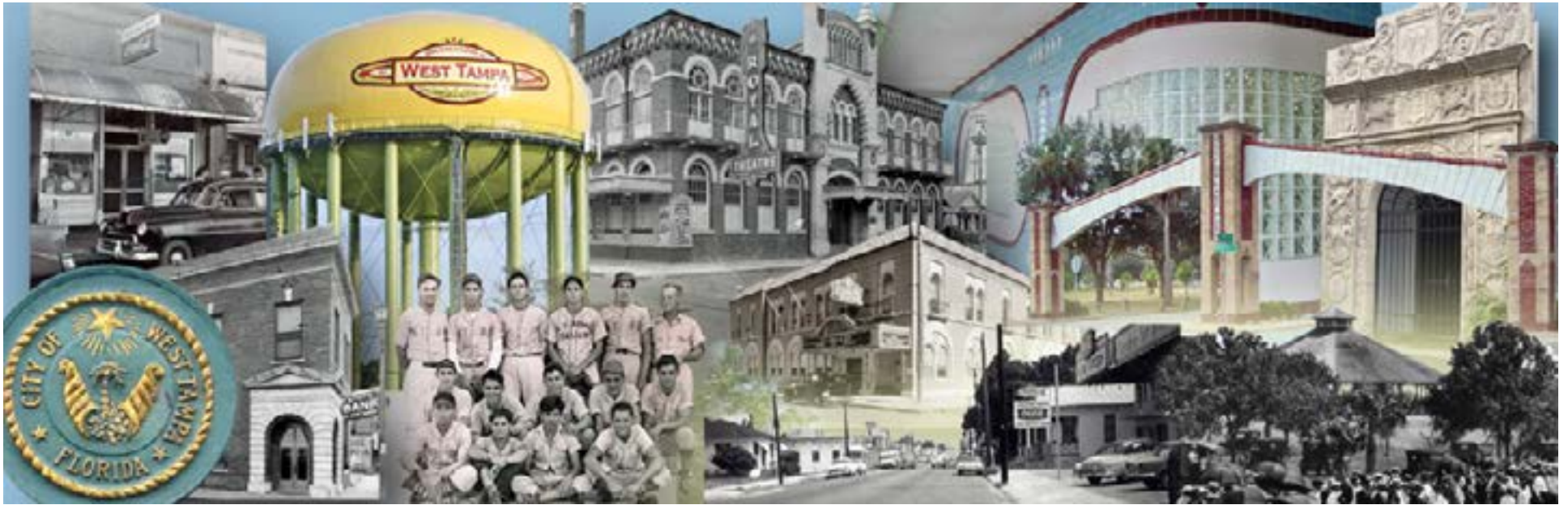
*Many cities across the United States are rethinking they way they design streets. The singular purpose of moving*

*traffic is no longer meeting needs of communities. Streets provide access: to jobs, commerce, activities, amenities, and neighborhoods. Making up 30-35% of public land, streets serve an important part of the public realm. The course considers Context: Infrastructure, Amenities, Assets, Access, Safety, and Place-based disparities (gaps in access to food, transportation, health care, and neighborhood amenities).*

*Through a partnership with the City of Tampa, students have an opportunity to actively engage city staff, elected officials, and the community to develop "Street Room Design Components" to improve selected Neighborhood Business District Corridors within the City of Tampa.*



## Vision for the District



The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District will be an attractive, vibrant commercial district that reflects the community's rich history and culture. It will be safe, walkable, connected, thriving and beautiful.

Main Street and Howard Avenue will be a place where residents and visitors gather to socialize; and where the residents can access the goods and services they want without the need to leave their neighborhood.



# Community Themes

Several messages emerged from the community engagement process. These messages directly form the recommendations for the plan. The planning team consistently heard these themes.

## Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District Community Priorities

### Improve the Appearance of the District

This calls for placing a higher priority on the maintenance and appearance of the District, - clean it up and make sure it stays clean. A clean and well maintained district is the first step in creating a place that attracts residents and visitors. Upgrading the streetscape - the design, feel, materials, trees and lighting contribute to creating a positive visual impression.

### Address Vacant Buildings and Lots

At the time this plan was being developed there were 48 vacant parcels (5.3 acres) and 15 vacant businesses at 27,000 square feet. These vacant lots and buildings represent opportunities to spur new growth in the district. Targeted land acquisition for redevelopment, encouraging catalyst projects (projects that can spur additional development) and hosting an annual development forum are ways in which redevelopment can replace the vacant lots and stores.

### From Safety to Security

This theme explores several actions that can make the District more secure, such as, improving the condition of the public realm, continuing security cameras and the regular police patrols. Sponsoring regular neighborhood cleanups, cleaning and monitoring the alleys, encouraging more development, designing buildings to minimize unsafe hiding places and the places where illegal dumping can occur, and creating a neighborhood safe zone.

### Preserve and Connect with History

The District has some of the best examples of historic architecture in the city. Efforts to preserve these assets should continue. Creating a brand around the district's history and architecture can pay off in later years. Adding historic preservation plaques and markers is a way of commemorating local residents and stories and including them in the revitalization. Murals are another way to celebrating the District's history.

### Supporting Existing Stakeholders

There are a variety of local funding programs for local commercial property owners and residential property owners to allow them to make improvements to their properties. In addition, there is a program for neighborhood organizations to make improvements in their community. Furthermore, the Florida Small Business Development Council provides assistance to entrepreneurs and the West Tampa CDC assists entrepreneurs and prospective entrepreneurs in business development.

## Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District Community Priorities



### Image and Branding

The Main Street America Program (<https://www.mainstreet.org/home>), established through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, provides lessons that can be applied to the District to build economic vitality, promote the district and showcase its assets. Creating an effecting image and brand for the district and connecting the District to the surrounding and emerging markets can provide opportunities for long-term growth.

### Connect to West River

The West River development project offers a significant growing market to support new and existing businesses in the District. The physical connections to West River can be strengthened through streetscape improvements, new street trees and transforming alleys into pedestrian and bike trails. The objective is to link residents in the District to the Hillsborough River. Adding new public spaces where appropriate and improving existing parks is also recommended.

### Involve Existing Residents and Businesses

Tapping into the local energy is critical for allowing community success and preserving local culture. For example, having the local community (residents and businesses) be part of locally initiated farmer's markets, festivals, food truck rallies, art fairs, and other local events in the Main Street area. These events serve to bring the community together. Prospective entrepreneurs can showcase their talents (crafts, food, etc.) at these events and if successful, gain the confidence to start a business. Well marketed local events can unite the community, spur local entrepreneurs, showcase West Tampa's unique culture and attract visitors. Young creative mind of West Tampa should be embraced and encouraged to participated in the revitalization of Main Street, through internships, jobs appreceticeships; and allowing them to showcase their creative spirts through technology and other mediums.

### Turning Alleys into assets

There should be an effort to turn the District alleys into asset. Establishing a regular cleaning and mowing program is a high priority. Restoring the alley roadbed, to make them more useable should be considered as a capital project. Alleys do not have to be drab. They can include art, murals or decorative lighting that will make them interesting places to walk. There is also an opportunity to convert one alley into a pedestrian and bike trail to better connect the District to the West River area and the river.

### Parking

Through the community engagement portion of the Plan, parking was identified as being inadequate for the District. A lack of parking is a major impediment to successful redevelopment. This theme emphasizes completing a detailed parking plan, retaining existing city land and seeking additional parcels for parking lots or future parking garages. The idea is to build a supply of parking that can support the long-term growth of the district.

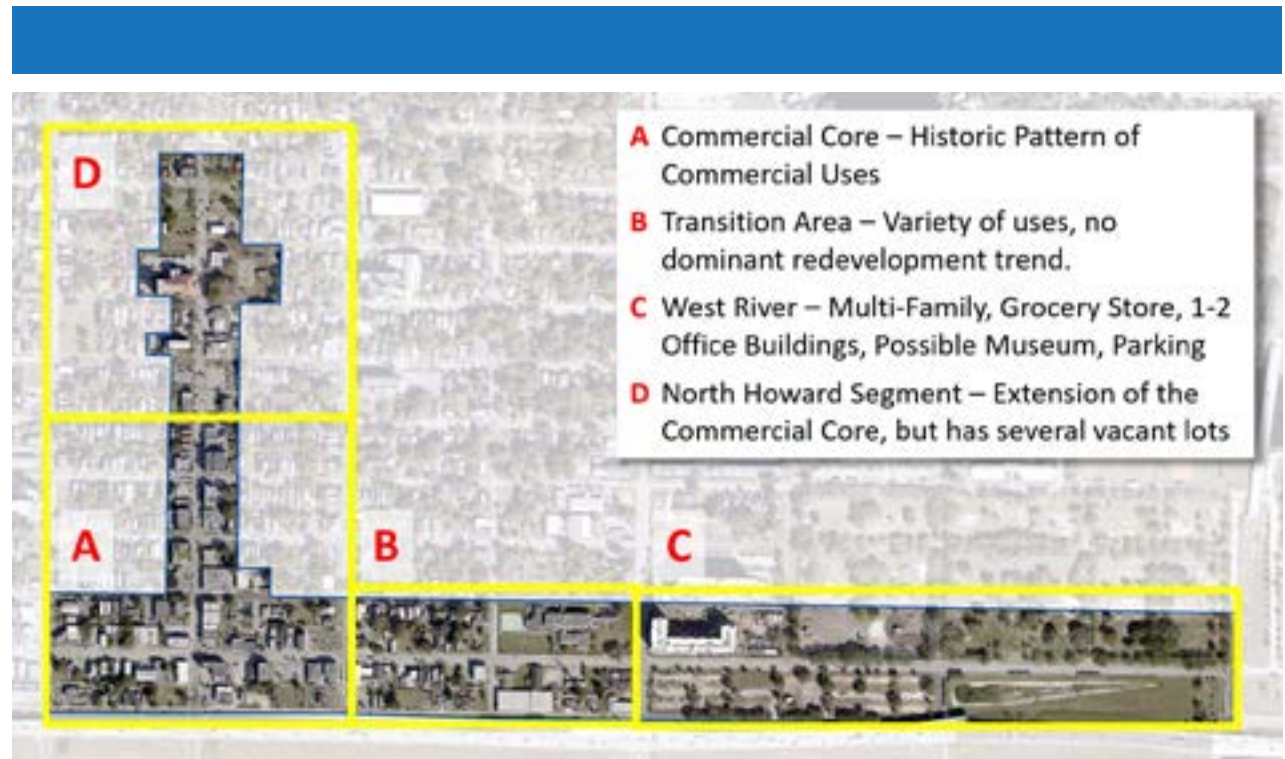
# Character of Development

Within the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District, there are four different character areas, which call for a different response.

The first of these character areas is the **Historic Commercial Core** bounded by Armenia, I-275, Walnut and Albany Streets. This area is where the largest concentration of the historic structures is located. While there are some vacant lots, there is a high level of building density and a good urban fabric. The strategy in this area is to build upon the history, promote compatible development on the vacant lots and create a high-quality place for human interaction and economic development.

The area along Main Street from Albany to Rome Avenue is called the **Transition Area**, because there is no dominant theme. There are several single-family structures, a few church properties, some office, storage areas and an elementary school. It will take the next few years for the future character of this area to evolve, typically in response to new investment or a development decision that can spur additional and supporting development. This area is a critically important link between the Historic Commercial Core and the West River area. The strategy for the Transition Area is to seek ways to improve the pedestrian connections along Main Street, while redevelopment opportunities evolve.

The **West River area** of the corridor is undergoing a major transformation. The blocks along the north side of Main Street are under construction for multi-family development and a grocery store. The south side of Main Street is planned for retail, office and possibly a museum. And of course, this portion of Main Street is part of the larger West River and Rome Yard redevelopment project. This area will continue to produce a lot of economic and pedestrian activity. The strategy for this area is to make sure that, as development



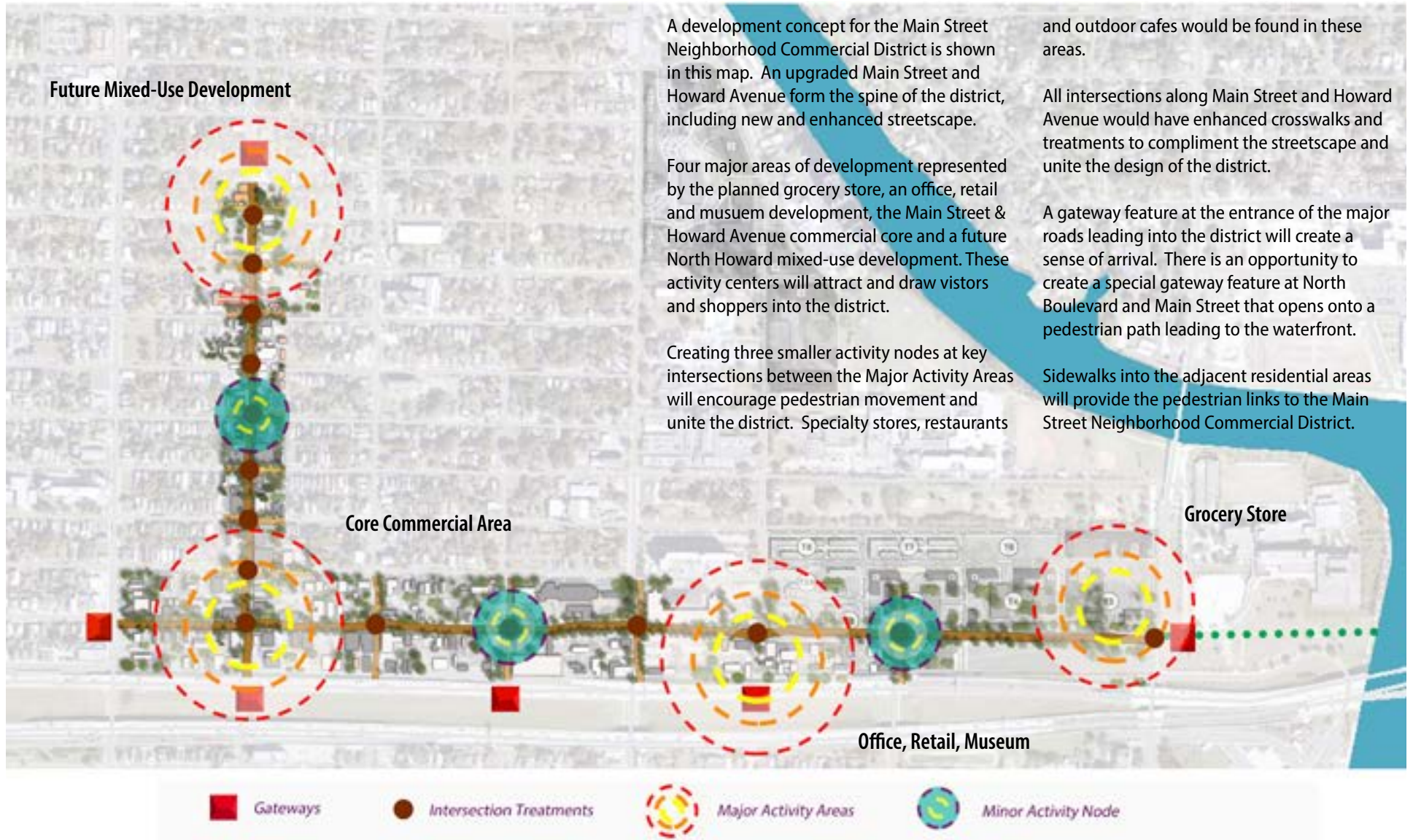
proceeds, it includes pedestrian oriented design features and that it seeks pleasant pedestrian linkages to the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District.

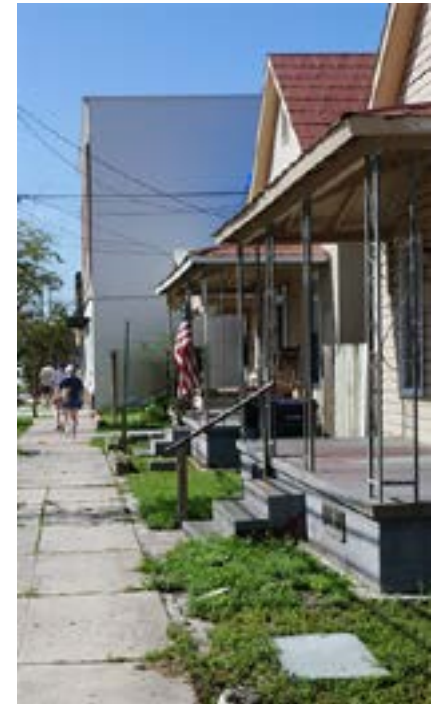
The **North Howard Area** is an extension of the commercial core. It has many more vacant lots, than the area south. Because of the number and size of the vacant lots, this area has high redevelopment potential. The form and character will be driven, in larger part, by new development. The strategy for this area is to seek redevelopment projects that add value to the district, but that are designed to be compatible with the historic character of the District. The Howard Avenue corridor should develop with a unified theme supporting the historic character.





# The Concept Plan





## Strategies and Ideas

# The Streetscape

In 2011, the City of Tampa established a Complete Streets program so that all modes of transportation can share the road safely. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorist and public transportation users are able to safely move through and across a complete street.

Specific designs for Complete Streets can vary, as each one may be as different as the corridor in which it travels. For Main Street and Howard Avenue, there are many opportunities to create a street that fosters all forms of movement, while at the same time, providing a place for commerce and human interaction to flourish. Elements for the Main Street and Howard Avenue streetscape are numerous and may include one or more of the following:

- ✧ Enhanced crosswalks
- ✧ Gateway treatments and public art
- ✧ Sidewalk treatments (cleaned and repaired)
- ✧ Street trees and landscape elements
- ✧ Street furniture (public or private)
- ✧ Trash and recycling receptacles
- ✧ Curb bump-outs or push-outs (curb extensions)
- ✧ Comfortable public transit stops
- ✧ Bicycle lanes (or widened motor vehicle lanes)
- ✧ Public utility elements (poles, manholes, access boxes)
- ✧ Private business items (newspaper boxes, menu boards)

The actual design of the Main and Howard streetscapes are beyond the scope of the plan, as such plans involve design and engineering professionals. However, this plan does provide some general concepts on which to create a more detailed streetscape plan for the District.

## Street Zones

The streetscape may include a variety of elements such as vehicle travel and parking lanes, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, street trees, tree border areas, street furniture, bicycle parking, bus stops, utility lines, accent planting and signage. Since streetscapes can include so many elements, it's helpful to divide them into three zones.

The Sidewalk Zone is the “front porch” of every business and residence. This zone is a transition zone where pedestrians exit from cars to enter businesses that front along the street. Larger sidewalk zones can also accommodate outdoor cafes, sidewalk sales, street performers and other commercial uses. Along Main Street, the sidewalk zone is 5 or 7 feet deep. In the commercial core, the sidewalk extends the full distance, but about mid-block, east of Albany, an approximate 2-foot landscape strip abuts the curb line.

The Parking Zone allows convenient parking for shoppers who travel by car to the commercial area. This zone allows for short-term loading zones and transit stops. A parking zone can also provide a higher sense of security for people walking along the sidewalk, as it provides separation from traffic. The parking zones on Main Street are 10 feet each.

The Roadway Zone, or vehicular zone, accommodates the movement of motor vehicles and bicycles through a streetscape. On Main Street, the roadway zone is 20 feet.

While each zone is distinct, the zones often overlap and interact with each other. Pedestrians crossing the street interact with all of the zones. Street lighting located in the sidewalk zone overlaps the parking and roadway zones and intersections often contain traffic control devices located in the sidewalk zone. Bump-outs, crosswalks and curb ramps help define safe pedestrian crossing areas in the roadway and parking zones. Buses use the parking zone to pick up transit patrons from the sidewalk zone.

An understanding of the relationship and interaction of the desired activities within the three zones to the physical configuration is vital to creating a successful Main Street and Howard Avenue public realm. The USF School of Architecture conducted an in-depth analysis of the District's public realm, which is available via the City Planning webpage (<https://www.tampa.gov/city-planning>).. The analysis discusses the many characteristics of the District and its ability to attract pedestrians, residents, and business patrons.





## Streetscape

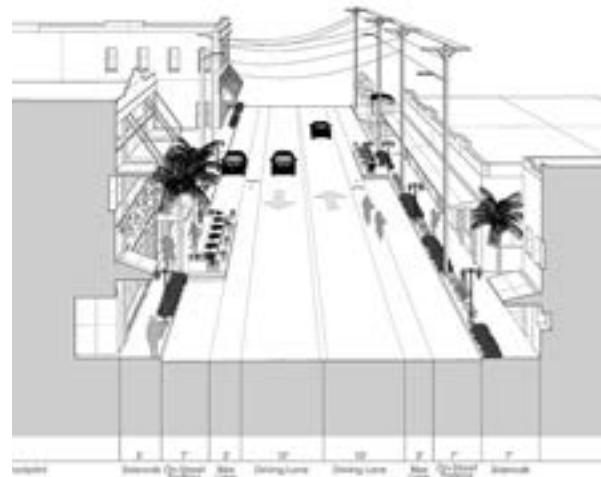


Existing streetscape conditions, showing lack of pedestrian amenities, shade, trees and visual interest.

**Adding Parklets.** A Parklet converts one or more on-street parking spaces into people-oriented places. Parklets introduce new streetscape features such as seating, planting, bicycle parking, or elements of play. They encourage pedestrian activity by providing a space that breaks from the flow of pedestrian traffic, which is especially beneficial in areas that lack sufficient sidewalk width or access to public space. Parklet can create room for sidewalk cafes, sitting and gathering in close proximity to a restaurant, without affecting pedestrian movement in areas where the sidewalks are narrow.

Parklets are becoming an acceptable feature in urban environments. There are two parklets in Downtown Tampa.

Below is graphic prepared by USF Graduate Students depicting two parklets along Main Street. The images to the right show installed parklets.



## Main Street

**Upgrade Main Street streetscape.** Applying the complete streets concept to Main Street will result in a much greater pedestrian experience and an environment that can support redevelopment.

In this concept illustration, the roadway is returned to its historic brick pattern. It not only supports the history of the district, but a brick roadbed can slow traffic. Curb extensions are added to the intersections and shade trees are placed in the bulb-outs. The power lines and poles have been relocated (underground). Salcines Park is activated as the central gathering place for the District.

Bike paths could be added, as well as seating, new pedestrian lighting and wayfinding signs. Cost will be a factor as any movement of the curb line or undergrounding utilities can dramatically affect the costs. A streetscape plan that details the design, features, components and the cost is the essential first step.



There are also some improvements that can be made immediately to improve the environment, such as providing trash receptacles, seating, lighting.

and restore historic brick streets. Main Street would be an ideal candidate for this project. It could jump start a larger streetscape project.

The City's Mobility Department is creating a Brick Street Reclamation Pilot Project that would strip away the asphalt



## Main Street

An example of a street design that promotes walking and pedestrian movement. Concept image courtesy of the USF School of Architecture School Student Project.

seat-



Proposed Main Street and N Albany Avenue Intersection Illustration



## Howard Avenue

Howard Avenue, north of I-275 has some of the City's richest historic structures and architectural detail. From the Alessi Bakery Building to the Sicilian Club and the Macfarlane building, there are numerous reminders of Tampa's past located within a 6 block stretch of Howard Avenue.

There is a consistent rhythm of structures from Main Street to Spruce Street, but beginning at Spruce, the number and size of vacant parcels increase. Of the estimated 48 parcels that front Howard Avenue, 7 are vacant. Six of those parcels are located north of Walnut Street. These parcels represent opportunities for new development.

Howard Avenue is a north-bound, one-way, two-lane road with parking on each side of the travel lanes. Sidewalk widths vary by blocks, but generally 6-8 feet in width closer to Main Street.

In the possible future depiction by students from the USF School of Architecture shown on this page, the vision for Howard Avenue includes signage, painted curb ramps and street cross walks, new intersection treatments, way-finding signs, public art integrated into bicycle racks, lights, historical marker, street furniture, fences and waste bins. Bulb-outs provide locations for landscaping and trees, and designated areas for buses to pull-off. Attractive pedestrian level lighting illuminates the street.

New infill structures are introduced to create a sense of enclosure. The street is framed with shade trees. The building facades are designed to encourage interaction with people, whether its window shopping or creating an inviting entrance into the store. Awnings provide shade where it's not possible to place a tree. Balconies provide interesting way to activate the corridor.



## Howard Avenue Resurfacing

In November 2021, Howard Avenue will be resurfaced. The pedestrian curb ramps will be reconstructed at various locations to meet ADA criteria. Shared-lane markings for cyclists will be centered in the right lane. New push-button activated rapid flashing beacons at will be installed at the crosswalks. The existing brick pattern pavement will be retained at Spruce Street, Cherry Street, Palmetto Street and Beach Street. The unused on-street planters / curb extensions will be removed, and the speed limit will be reduced from 40 miles per hour to 35 miles per hour.

This project will improve the safety along Howard Avenue, but more will be needed to improve its visual appeal. The trees should be replaced with a species that will provide greater function and attractiveness.

With the removal of the curb extensions, there is an opportunity to install something new and more attractive. In the short run, temporary planters or painting could be added to provide visual interest and added safety at intersections.



Large planter used to mimic bulbout effect.



Awnings and shade trees improve pedestrian comfort.



Infill development with an outdoor cafe to activate the sidewalks.



## Address Vacant Lots

Due to its location, proximity to emerging areas and the considerable amount of vacant land and buildings, the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District is primed for redevelopment. The ideal situation is to guide and attract the type of development that will benefit the community at large, grow the tax base and create other opportunities.

The image to the right illustrates how promoting redevelopment can have a major impact on the District. The streetscape improvements are carried through with the brick street, curb extensions, new trees and on-street parking. The vacant lot on the left is shown as a redevelopment project, perhaps an office or residential structure with retail on the ground floor. The building frames the street and adds a sense of enclosure, which can make the street feel more secure.

The vacant and boarded structure on the right is shown as a renovation, with restored windows and a retail shop, now open for businesses and bringing life to the street.



### Benefits of Redevelopment



The strategy requires willing partners at all levels - property owners, business owners and residents - to look at the possibilities for the future of the District. The City of Tampa Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is one of the primary entities that can facilitate that kind of discussion,



## Catalyst Projects

**Seek Catalyst Projects.** Catalyst projects create change. They advance the vision, create jobs and promote economic opportunities. Some catalyst projects can dramatically increase the tax base, which in turn increases the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) trust fund, which can be used to support additional CRA redevelopment initiatives.

A redevelopment trust fund is the depository for tax increment revenues. The trust fund receives the incremental increase in real property tax revenues resulting from redevelopment and uses it to pay for public improvements needed to support and encourage new development. Funds allocated to this trust fund can only be used by the CRA to finance community redevelopment activity undertaken pursuant to the approved redevelopment plan.

The West Tampa CRA can use its redevelopment focus and powers to acquire land for redevelopment or enter into partnerships with willing developers/property owners to develop catalyst projects.

Examples of catalyst projects include:

- ✧ Major streetscape improvements
- ✧ Boutique hotel
- ✧ Themed projects (i.e., arts, museum, restaurant, etc.)
- ✧ Mixed-use residential developments
- ✧ Key services – pharmacy, bank, medical offices, services
- ✧ Parking Lot / Parking Garage
- ✧ Elementary School Redevelopment

## Development Forum

**Annual Development Forum.** One way to actively engage the redevelopment process is through an annual development forum. The forum brings together property owners, lending institutions, real estate professionals, developers and others to learn of the development opportunities in the area. The ultimate objective is to facilitate connections between willing sellers or landlords and investors, businesses and developers.

The Westshore Alliance and the Tampa Downtown Partnership have hosted development forums for many years. Their success can provide lessons learned for the West Tampa CRA.



## Land Acquisition / Land Banking

**Targeted Land Acquisition.** At the time this plan was written, there were 48 vacant parcels in the District, west of Rome Avenue, totaling 5.27 acres. There were also 15 vacant business locations with 27,263 SF.

The vacant land and businesses represent opportunities for new investment. The CRA has the power, under state law, to acquire land for redevelopment. It should begin seeking willing sellers of land that can be used for catalyst projects or to hold in reserve for future development opportunities.

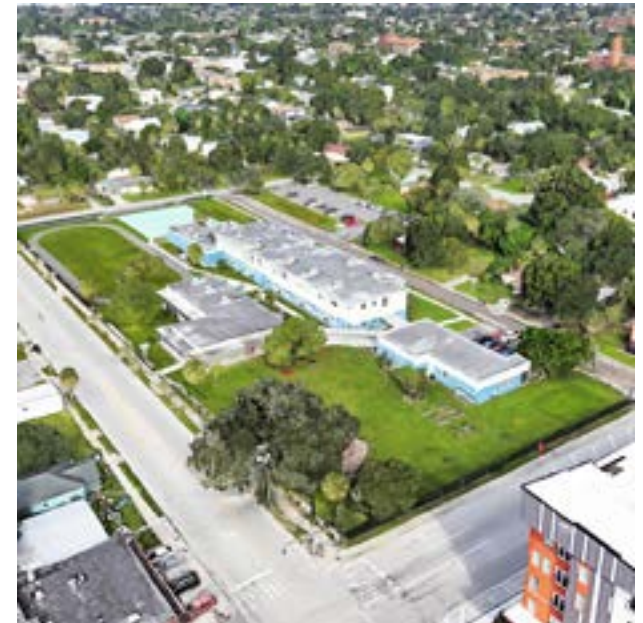


## Dunbar Elementary School

The pedestrian environment of the north side of the block between Rome Avenue and Freemont Street needs improvement. The 600-foot security fence of Dunbar Elementary along Main Street with very minimal shade is not conducive to a comfortable pedestrian experience. There are several trees along the fence line, but it may take years before they develop into something that provides benefits of shade.

One way to improve the experience is to add a mural along the fence to provide a more attractive setting. Adding pedestrian oriented lighting should also be considered. Working with School officials, there may be opportunities to reconfigure the fence itself to create a more open and inviting setting.

The West River Project will include an examination of the potential reconfiguration of the existing school sites. That analysis should also include this site to provide insights into future design options that could benefit the District.



# Business, Property Owner and Entrepreneurial Support

One of the key messages that came out of the public engagement process was to include existing businesses, property owners and homeowners in the revitalization of the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District.

The **West Tampa CAC** provides a forum for existing property owners, businesses and entrepreneurs to voice their opinion on the redevelopment of the District. In the past year, business owners and residents along Main Street and Howard have coalesced into a **Main Street Business Advocacy Group** for the District. This forum provides opportunities for businesses to be connect directly with city staff on issues related to the District. In addition to these forums, there are several programs that are available for each group that will further this objective.

## For existing commercial property owners

The **City of Tampa Community Redevelopment Agency** is developing the following programs to support existing commercial property owners located within the West Tampa Community Redevelopment Area.

- ✳ Upstairs Residential Conversion Grant Program (Proposed) - Matching grants to encourage residential units above ground floor retail/commercial of existing structures.
- ✳ Vanilla Shell Grant Program - Grants to encourage commercial property owners to rehabilitate the interior ground floor of their building into nearly finished space. It offers flexibility, initial cost savings for the tenant, and allows small businesses to quickly open for operation.
- ✳ Ready Use Site Infrastructure Grant Program (Proposed) - Matching grants to prepare a site to make them safer, more attractive, and redevelopment ready.

- ✳ Restaurant & Food Services Grant Program - Matching grants to attract and assist full-service restaurants, and other food service establishments to locate within the CRA areas.
- ✳ Business Enhancement Micro Grant Program - Grants to incentivize business owners located within the CRA areas to make building, structural, and site improvements to their property.
- ✳ Facade Grants & Loans - Matching grants to assist property owners in improving the appearance of their storefronts.

## For existing residential property owners

- ✳ Residential Exterior Improvement Grant Program (Proposed) - Matching grants to homeowners to help with exterior home improvements, landscaping, and front yard improvement.

## For existing neighborhood organizations

- ✳ Neighborhood Group Special Projects Grant Program - Grants to incentivize neighborhood groups to come together for the betterment of their community and make aesthetic improvements to neighborhoods.

## For existing businesses and entrepreneurs

- ✳ The **Florida Small Business Development Council** assists existing and emerging businesses, through no-cost confidential business consulting, information, and low-cost training. The organization assists entrepreneurs in a variety of business areas, including: marketing, business certification, capital access, market diversification, developing strategic business plans, export services, and web optimization. Many of the training programs are free and available on-line ([www.sbdctampabay.com/](http://www.sbdctampabay.com/))
- ✳ The **Center for Non-Profit and Community Development** provides capacity building and organizational development to nonprofits that result in measurable social outcomes. The Center, together with the West Tampa CDC, will provide business support and entrepreneurial training at the planned West River Workforce Training Center.



# Image and Branding

An understanding of the existing and emerging market can help businesses realize strong growth without using expensive mass media options. The local West Tampa market is strong enough today to support a variety of businesses. And that market is growing. Businesses can take advantage of nearly 19,000 residents that currently live within 1 mile of the Main Street and Howard Avenue intersection. Another 7,300 new residents are expected to locate in this area in the next 5 years, not to mention approximately 9,000 University of Tampa students that will live on campus or in close proximity. Consider the population of the existing neighborhoods:

✱ Old West Tampa:	2,042
✱ North Hyde Park:	3,466
✱ West Riverfront:	2,286
✱ Armory Gardens:	1,393
✱ MacFarlane Park:	9,659
Total Population:	18,846

In addition, future plans and development projects point to a potential 38% percent increase in population.

- ✱ When complete, the West River project will be home to nearly 5,000 people.
- ✱ Approximately 711 units are currently under construction along and near Rome Avenue in North Hyde Park. An additional 1,800 people will reside in this area.
- ✱ New apartment construction along Howard Avenue south of Cypress will result in about 500 residents.

Finally, Downtown Tampa, Hyde Park, Midtown and the Westshore Business District are conveniently located to the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District.

**Local Marketing Ideas.** Some ideas for individual businesses seeking to reach the existing and emerging local market include:

- ✱ Maintain the appearance of the business. Keep it clean and professional. A business that is unkempt or untidy gives customers the impression that this is how the owner will conduct business.
- ✱ Look for opportunities to get involved in neighborhood functions.
- ✱ Consider having a customer appreciation party.
- ✱ Seek out neighborhood gatherings and find ways to support the event.
- ✱ Don't miss the opportunity to welcome new neighbors to the District. Build connections.
- ✱ Create buzz about your business.

**Neighborhood Serving Businesses.** In regard to serving the local community, the District should include a good selection of businesses that residents need or would go to on a regular basis, such as a pharmacy, coffee shop, restaurant, barber shops, hair & nail salons, dry cleaner, bank, etc.

These uses provide every day value to the neighborhoods, and more importantly, they are the foundation of building and reinforcing a sense of community. When residents frequent businesses in their own community, the chance of running into people they know increases, which in turn creates opportunities for dialogue and connections. These interactions can go a long way in advancing safety and security as well, as residents and businesses have regular opportunities to reinforce a sense of community. Additional neighborhood serving businesses would enhance this dynamic.

**National Main Street Program.** For 70 years, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has led the movement to save America's historic places. A privately funded nonprofit organization, it builds stronger communities through preserving the future. One of its programs is Main Street America, a community-driven, comprehensive methodology to revitalize older, traditional business districts. The underlying premise of the Main Street approach is to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation appropriate to today's marketplace. The Main Street Approach advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community.

The Main Street Approach encompasses four distinct areas — Design, Economic Restructuring, Promotion, and Organization. A key benefit of the approach is that it shifts the organizational and promotion activities from the individual business owners to a single organization that can plan and implement on behalf of the District. Business owners are busy enough running their own operation. A Main Street entity can take the lead in ensuring the District is clean, organizing events, marketing and coordinating programs.

The West Tampa CRA would be the likely entity to take on the Main Street facilitator role. It could be a sub-committee of the CRA focusing specifically on the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District.

# West River Linkage

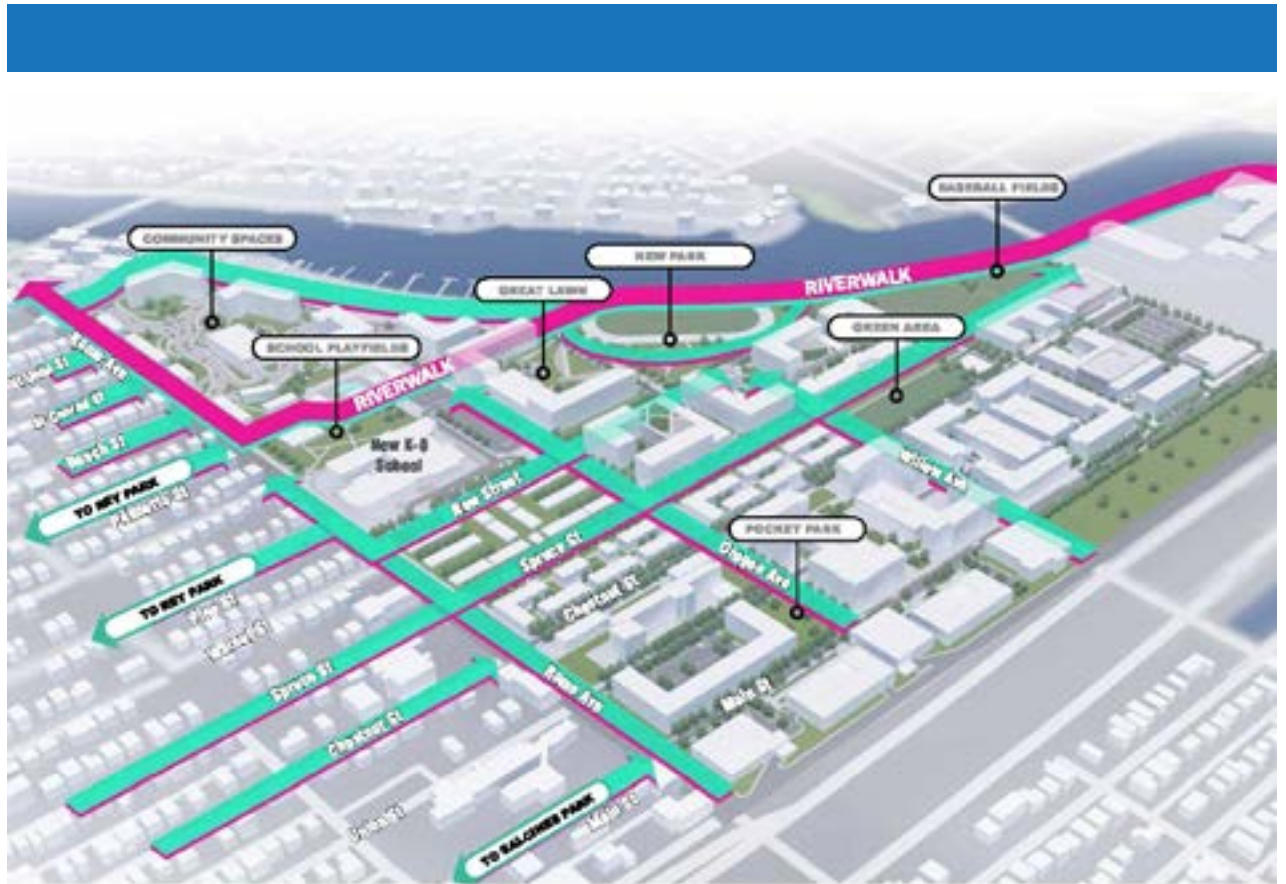
**Business Linkage.** It is highly beneficial that the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District position itself to take full advantage of the opportunities of the ongoing redevelopment at West River.

The proposed redevelopment of the Rome Yard will consist of 954 mixed-income units along with 30,000 SF of commercial space and 24,000 SF of community space. This, in addition to the current construction of more than 1,600 mixed-income units and commercial space at West River, provides a significant economic impact.

Consider just the Rome Yard redevelopment where the total development costs are projected to be approximately \$263 Million. The project will create an economic impact of \$394 Million within the West Tampa Area. During the construction phase, Related Urban Development Group, LLC will hire an estimate 1,859 workers, resulting in new job in the West Tampa area.

At times during the construction phase, the 1,859 workers will seek coffee, breakfast, lunch and after work drinks with co-workers and dinner. The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District should establish itself as the “go-to” place for the for these opportunities.

Effectively reaching this market can jump start and sustain the revitalization of the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District for the next several years. This is where the “Main Street” Approach can provide value. By marketing directly to the construction company, offering discounts to workers, organizing deliveries during lunch, etc., businesses can increase their chance of gaining a share of this business. Individual businesses can certainly do this on their own, but having an organization do it on behalf of the district provides greater value and can maximize the opportunities.



**Physical Linkages.** In terms of the physical linkage, Palmetto Street and Cherry Street offer a direct path through Fremont Park to Rey Park and Howard Avenue. This connection should be enhanced over time with shade trees and pedestrian lighting to connect the District to West River. As the illustration above shows, the pedestrian path to the West River Riverwalk starts at Rome Avenue at the MLK Community Center.



# Celebrate the Past

West Tampa's history is rich and should be honored and celebrated as the District continues to redevelop and grow. The preservation of the historic structures is one way to celebrate the past, but there are also opportunities to integrate the memories of the past into the District as part of a living story telling element.

**Architectural Preservation.** Several programs exist geared towards architectural preservation within the District. The City should continue to support and encourage the preservation of historic structures in West Tampa, especially within the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District. Existing programs should be expanded and focused on increasing participation.

**Historic Preservation Designation.** While there are pros and cons to adopting a formal historic preservation ordinance, property owners should consider the merits of such in protecting the District's assets. The historic character of the District is one of its strongest assets and may require additional protection against future development pressures.



**Public Art & Murals.** The City has seen a proliferation in the use of public murals. These artistic displays are affordable and highly impactful ways to introduce themes and imagery that reconnect the past to the present. An ongoing mural program where local artist can add to the Main Street District is encouraged.

**Historic Markers.** Many residents of the community have lived in the neighborhood for multiple generations, and their memories underscore the strong emotional and personal connection these individuals have to the West Tampa community. There is an opportunity to integrate and preserve their stories into the physical redevelopment of the District.

Using images provided by residents of places they remember from the past (like the one of Patrone's), framed commemorative plaques can be created and displayed in businesses in the District. Some could be fixed on buildings and some could be placed within a structure where they can be seen by patrons. Visitors coming to the District or into a business will be treated to a snapshot of the recent past.

Involving the local community in creating the plaques and stories ensures the history of community and its people will remain a fixture in the district.





# Tap the Local Energy

A core message from the community was to develop strategies to involve the local community in the redevelopment of the District. There are several ways in which the local business can participate in the transformation, including:

**Farmer's Markets.** A regular farmer's market held in Salcines Park and Ysolina Street would provide opportunities for local businesses to introduce products or crafts and establish a following. A Farmer's Market is also a great way to signal the transformation is beginning and to stimulate interest.

**Local Events & Festivals.** Similar to a farmer's market, larger locally sponsored events & festivals can attract people to the district where they can shop or eat at a restaurant. The festival itself can also be an outlet for local businesses to participate. A monthly draw event (e.g. history work, art show, music, outdoor play, etc.) which encourages residents

and visitors to celebrate local art and culture throughout the evening is another way to involve the local community. Small events sponsored by a restaurant or in connection with an opening of a business contribute to building the District's image as a place for the community to go.

While many events start small, over time they can grow to become signature events attracting hundreds or thousands, much like many other Tampa community festivals.



## Local Energy

**Teen Business Mentoring.** The Parks and Recreation Department launched a new Teen summer program at the Rey Park Community Center. This program is the first of its kind and will be a model for future teen programs in the City. Involving teens in the revitalization of the District reinforces a connection between them and local businesses. A program could be structured that would allow owners to introduce teens to their business, talk about how it works and the opportunities and requirements of working in or starting a small business. For teens, it's an opportunity to learn what's involved in running a business. The experience could lead to a job or open a business pathway for teens.

**Digital Marketing.** Today's teens are highly interested in short form digital media, the type that is seen on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and other social media platforms. Why not channel that interest into creating short form videos with Main Street Commercial District Businesses as the backdrop? A program of this nature connects teens to business, provides a channel for their creativity and allows them to pursue and refine their short form media skills. The videos could spark interest in the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District. It could also lead to actual compensation for teens by businesses that see a result in the social media campaigns.

Digital marketing is not only confined to teens. It is a growing part of many national companies and should be considered an option in promoting business and community events in the District.

**Webpage.** A Main Street District Webpage (and social media page) should be created to highlight and promote the businesses and events occurring in the District. Today, nearly every community and business organization has a web presence so that customers can find them.





# Value the Public Realm

The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District is fortunate to have a variety of public spaces and parks within the district and nearby. The inventory includes Salcines Park, Rey Park and the Fremont Street Linear Park located 2 blocks east of Howard Avenue. These public spaces should be updated, activated and improved to better serve the community, especially as the resident population in the district grows. In addition to these city parks, there is a privately provided and maintained open space at Main Street and Albany Ave.

**Parks Master Plan.** In 2021, the City of Tampa Parks & Recreation Department began a major update to the Parks Master Plan that will inventory most parks in the City and recommend improvements to support the local communities. The plan will be completed in 2022, which will provide a detail cost roadmap to improving these assets. Members of the community, as well as the West Tampa Community Advisory Committee (CAC) should actively participate in this planning effort to ensure the plan reflects the future community needs.



**Seek to Acquire the Private Open Space.** The private park located at Main Street and Albany Avenue has evolved into an asset for the community. If the parcel ever becomes available for sale, the City or CRA should acquire it to ensure it remains part of the public park inventory and available to all residents. As a city park, it would also be maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.



**General Cleanliness.** Absentee property owners, vacant buildings and lots, and homelessness have contributed to unkept and unsanitary conditions in some spaces. The District needs regular cleaning. Downtown Tampa and Ybor City benefit by their respective 'clean teams'. The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District would also benefit by having regular trash pick-ups, washing down sidewalks and public spaces, sweeping the sidewalks, etc. Whether its a full-time crew or a contract to provide enhanced services, the District's appearance would benefit greatly through enhanced cleaning services.



**Connection to MLK Center and the River.** Linking Rey Park with Fremont Linear Park, the MLK Center and the West River River Walk will provide an important and pleasant pedestrian connection. The basic connection is already intact; however, some sidewalk segments may need repairs. More trees should be planted along Palmetto and Cherry Streets and pedestrian scale lighting should be considered to create a more visually pleasant walk.





# From Safety to Security

A review of crime statistics over the past three years reveal that crime has declined, and thanks to efforts by the Tampa Police Department and community leaders, the District is safer today. Achieving a safer community is a step towards a broader, more profound goal of feeling secure in the public space.

Security is knowing children can play outside on the front steps. It's being able to meet with friends, talk and laugh about their day. It's a mother being able to give her child a hug goodbye as they go off to school. Long time residents of West Tampa remember a community that looked out for each other and made them feel secure.



**Continue regular police patrols.** One of the most effective deterrents to crime in recent months has been efforts by the Tampa Police Department in patrolling the West Tampa Neighborhood Commercial District. These efforts should continue.

**Install Security Cameras.** The West Tampa CAC has installed cameras in the District and has plans to install others. Over time, the cameras can act as a deterrent.

**Create a Neighborhood Safe Zone.** A neighborhood safe zone is modeled after the successful Neighborhood Watch Program, which mobilizes the community to look out for crime and alert police. But rather than covering a full neighborhood, the Safe Zone would be focused on the commercial district and properties in close proximity. It would include businesses, property owners, churches, schools, organizations, police and other stakeholders. Regular meetings and the use of digital tools to stay connected would allow all stakeholders to watch out for potential crime situations. Neighborhood Safe Zones must be initiated by the residents and businesses. It's success relies on the active participation of its members.

**Regular Neighborhood Cleanup.** Keeping the neighborhood clean is one of the easiest to reduce nuisance crime and property damage. It's said that one broken window



encourages more windows to be broken, so a clean environment and a commitment to maintaining the cleanliness of the public realm can help to project a safe and secure environment. This also goes along with ensuring there is an adequate number of trash receptacles and a regular trash removal service to maintain the cleanliness of the District.

**Clean and maintain the alleys.** The alleys have not been adequately maintained. Some have been used for illegal dumping and criminal activity. A focused effort to clean and increase the visibility and sight lines through the alleys is critical.

**Employ an "Eyes on the Street" approach in design.** Buildings should be designed and sited to minimize obstructions or "hiding-places". Applying the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design has shown to make people feel more secure in their environment. The concept is already integrated into the West Tampa Overlay District. As the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District evolves, benefits of applying these principles will be realized.

**Vision Zero.** Promoting safety on the streets is also part of creating a more secure district, especially for pedestrians of all ages. The City's efforts to create safe pathways, reduce speeds and provide proper traffic control measures need to be integrated into the development of the District.

**Encourage more development.** Encouraging more development in the district, whether new construction or remodeling of existing structures, brings workers to the area and increases the number of eyes on the street. Once the construction is over, the businesses open with full-time employees, which again adds maintains a level of activity that can provide a feeling of security.

# Turn Alleys Into Assets

Nearly every block in the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District is bisected and served by an alley. Alleys are not quite a street, but they do provide access to commercial and residential properties. They're not private, but they're not public enough to feel protected. In some areas, the alleys have been backdrops to crime, filled with trash or overgrown with brush and weeds.

For the District to reach its full potential, the alleys must be improved and evolve into something more than just the space between buildings. With a little creativity, the Main Street and Howard Avenue alleys can be transformed into places of connectivity and community pride.

**Alley Cleaning & Mowing.** The immediate priority is a regular clearing, cleaning and mowing program. Visual site lines should be reestablished to eliminate hidden areas where illicit activities might occur. The roadbed should be restored. Lighting should be considered to eliminate hiding places. The objective is to create safe, clean passageways.

**Alleys of Art.** Across the nation, alleys are becoming valuable places for community creativity. Creating works of art are ways to bring the alleys to life. This builds upon on efforts in West Tampa to place murals on walls of public spaces and buildings. The space above the alleys offer opportunities to install "floating" art pieces or decorative lighting, which can also act to make the space feel safer at night.

**Bike Trails.** A bike trail could be installed in one of the alleys providing a connection from the District to West River.

**Potential Public Spaces.** All of the alleys appear to serve homeowners or businesses, so they cannot be permanently closed. Over time there may be opportunities, through redevelopment, to use a portion of alley as a public space.





# Parking As A Driver

The availability of adequate parking is critical to the long-term viability and growth of the district. A 2007 parking study conducted by the City of Tampa Parking Division concluded there was a need for nearly 1,300 parking spaces to support the build-out of the Howard & Armenia corridors (from Columbus Avenue to Cypress Street). Adequate parking increases the value of residential, retail, multifamily, and commercial property.

Currently, parking in the district is provided on-street and off-site on private property. There is a small lot at Ysolino and Union owned by the city that can accommodate up to 15 cars. There have been calls to reduce parking minimums as a way to support redevelopment, but cars need to park somewhere. Without an overall strategy, parking shortages will only be exacerbated as development occurs

**Parking Master Plan.** The Infrastructure Sub-Committee of the West Tampa CAC plans to commission a new parking study to determine current and future parking demands. The study should include a review of the current parking requirements and provide recommendations on how to provide, regulate and fund adequate parking to support the district's long-term development.

The popularity of ridesharing may offset the need for some parking as users opt to use this form of travel. The parking study should include potential ridesharing implications. Design of future development in the district should include pick-up and drop off zones to encourage the use of ridesharing.

**On-Street Parking Markings & Control.** On-street parking exists along Main Street and Howard Avenue. On Main Street, the spaces are not marked. Undesignated parking locations can be potentially hazardous and can create obstacles for emergency vehicles. The spaces are also not regulated. Users can park in an on-street space all day, which in effect, removes the space from the inventory that nearby businesses rely upon. On Howard Avenue, the spaces are marked but the lines have faded. The street resurfacing project will restore these markings. Below is an illustration of a repaved Howard Avenue with on-street parking.



**Metered Parking.** The City currently manages metered parking within several neighborhoods in the City. Parking meters encourage turnover and continuous availability of public parking spaces for visitors and guests. Typically, fees collected are reinvested back into transportation infrastructure. As interest and related investment increases along the corridor, metered parking may become a viable option.

**City Parking Lot.** The City should retain ownership of the lot at Ysolino Street and Union Street (shown in yellow in the image below) for at least until the parking plan is completed. The site could be used to provide a small amount of public parking in the short run. In the long run, the parcel could be part of a larger redevelopment project that could act as a catalyst for the district or as a parking garage.



View of the City parking lot on Union Street



## Parking

**New Parking Lot / Garage.** A central public parking lot or garage can do much to support development of the district and preserve its historic character. Having a supply of parking allows development to be designed within the historical zero-lot line pattern, since the businesses can shift the parking requirements to a central lot or garage.

Acquiring additional land adjacent to the City's lot located at Ysolino Street and Union would provide a start towards creating a central parking location. Assuming there are willing property owners, acquisition could be funded by the CRA and repaid via development agreements, parking revenue or even a special services district. As the district grows, a parking garage could be constructed to address the added demand. The garage would be architecturally integrated into the character of the District and could include space for retail, services or restaurants on the ground floor.

The two image to the right and top show the existing site and a massing illustration of a parking structure (provided by the USF School of Architecture). At the bottom is an image of what a parking garage might look like with retail shops along the ground floor. Obviously, the height, scale and design of the structure will be different, but this image provides an example of what is possible.

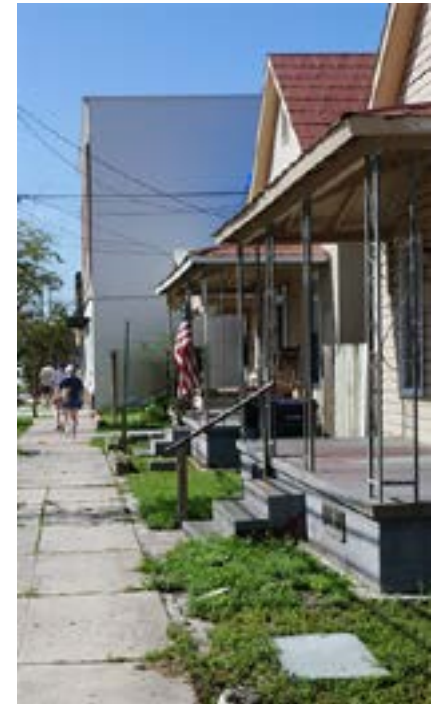




## Parking

**Green Street.** The parcels that line the north side of Green Street offer additional locations for off-street parking. The pattern is similar to what is seen in Ybor City, with buildings fronting along 7th Avenue and parking provided behind the structures in both, private and public lots. Green street provides direct access to the Interstate and would not funnel traffic through residential areas. There are several vacant lots along Green Street, but none owned by the City. The CRA should seek opportunities to acquire sites along Green Street for future parking.





## Plan Implementation & Monitoring

The West Tampa CRA is the likely lead entity for the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District. The implementation plan outlined in the following pages identifies 58 specific implementation activities. Fifteen actions are already underway (25.9%).

The implementation plan also serves as an annual monitoring and reporting tool. Each year, progress can be recorded in the notes section. Existing tasks can be modified as the District evolves and new tasks/actions can also be added as needed. In this way, the implementation plan can serve as a dynamic tool to support the long-term redevelopment of the District.



## Streetscape Improvements

Strategy	Timeline	Notes
1. Develop a Streetscape plan for Main Steet	Not Started	The Mobility Department is looking into creating a pilot project to remove pavement and restore underlying brick streets. This pilot project could help with the overall funding of a larger streetscape project.
2. Secure Funding	Not Started	
3. Complete the streetscape improvements	Not Started	
4. Install Parklets at strategic locations	Not Started	
5. Complete Howard Avenue repaving	In Progress	Design has been completed. Project to begin in November 2021.

## Redevelopment & Infill

Strategy	Timeline	Notes
1. Integrate new catalytic projects into the District	Not Started	
2. Conduct an annual Main Street Development Forum	Not Started	
3. Acquire land within the district for redevelopment purposes	Not Started	
4. Alternative designs for the site of Dunbar Elementary Site	Future Action	Considered a long-term opportunity; however, improving the appearance of the fence & sidewalk could begin sooner.
5. Improve the pedestrian connection at Freemont and Rome	Not Started	
6. Continue large scale redevelopment projects currently underway at West River, the Rome Yard and along Rome Avenue.	In Progress	

## Existing Business, Entrepreneur and Property Owner Support - CRA Grant Programs

Strategy	Timeline	Notes
1. Upstairs Residential Grant Program	Proposed	
2. Vanilla Shell Grant Program	In Progress	
3. Ready To Use Site Infrastructure Grant Program	Proposed	
4. Restaurant and Food Services Grant Program	In Progress	
5. Business Enhancement Micro Grant Program	In Progress	
6. Facade Grants and Loans	In Progress	
7. Residential Exterior Grant Improvement	Proposed	
8. Neighborhood Group Special Projects Grant Program	In Progress	

9. Support Local Entrepreneurs	Not Started	
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## Image and Branding

Strategy	Status	Notes
1. Implement a National Main Street Program	Not Started	
2. Employ local marketing efforts	Not Started	
3. Encourage businesses that will serve nearby residents	In Progress	
4. Create connections and promotions to the West River and Rome Yard development	Not Started	
5. Conduct local surveys of residents, employees and businesses to develop a responsive business mix	Not Started	
6. Create a dedicated website for the District	Not Started	
7. Consider a story telling map of the District	Not Started	

## Celebrate the Past

Strategy	Status	Notes
1. Emphasize and encourage preservation of the architecture	In Progress	Through the West Tampa Overlay
2. Consider a local historic preservation ordinance	Not Started	
3. Initiate a local historic plaques or marker program	Not Started	
4. Add Public Art and Murals that reflect the history and culture of West Tampa	In Progress	

## Parking as a Driver

Strategy	Status	Notes
1. Develop a parking lot along Green Street	Not Started	
2. Complete the Main Street Parking Plan	Not Started	
3. Stripe on-street parking spaces	Not Started	
4. Add Metered Parking	Not Started	
5. Expand the city parking lot	Not Started	
6. Construct a new central parking garage	Not Started	

## From Safety to Security

Strategy	Status	Notes
1. Continue regular Police Patrols	Ongoing	
2. Install security cameras	In Progress	
3. Create a Neighborhood Safe Zone	Not Started	
4. Clean and maintain Alleys	In Progress	West Tampa CRA has initiated a program to mow and clean alleys in North Hyde Park and Old West Tampa.
5. Employ Eyes on the Street in Design	In Progress	
6. Encourage more development	In Progress	

## Value the Public Realm

Strategy	Status	Notes
1. Conduct regular cleaning and maintenance of the public realm	Not Started	
2. Contract with a provider to provide enhanced cleaning services	Not Started	
3. Participate in the Parks Master Plan	Underway	
4. Acquire the private provided park (if it becomes available for sale)	Not Started	
5. Improve Connections to West River & the Water	Not Started	
a) Main Street	Complete	
b) Alley from Howard to Rome	Complete	
c) Rey Park to West River Street Connections	Complete	
d) Pursue an east-west transit connection	Not Started	

## Tap the Local Energy

Strategy	Status	Notes
1. Complete Regular clean ups of the District	Not Started	
2. Organize regular Farmer's Market	In Progress	
3. Sponsor Local Events & Festivals	Not Started	
4. Create a Teen Business Mentoring Program	Not Started	
5. Promote opportunities for short-form digital videos that promote the district and involve local residents/businesses	Not Started	

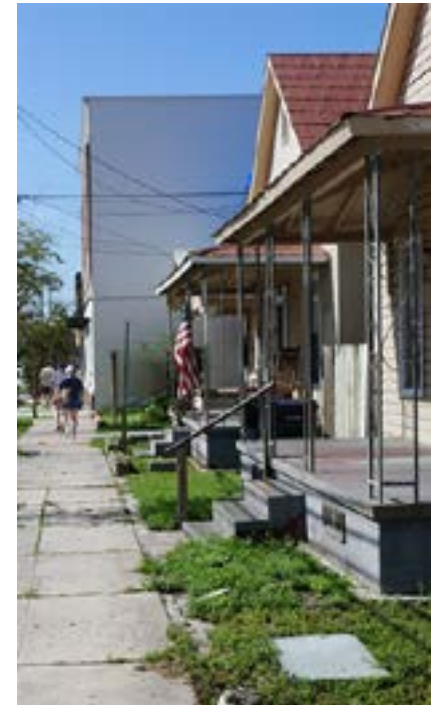


## Turn Alleys Into Assets

Strategy	Status	Notes
1. Provide regular alley clean ups	In Progress	
2. Install art in alleys - consider a pilot project	Not Started	
3. Use alleys to create pedestrian connections and walkways	Not Started	
4. Create a bike trail through alleys linking the district to West River	Not Started	
5. Evaluate opportunities to use alleys as a public space	Future Action	

## Public Engagement

1. Collaborate with Not-for-Profit Organizations to provide social services support.	Not Started	
2. Foster ongoing communication and support between businesses, residents and the Old West Tampa neighborhood association to empower decisions and actions to address issues and strengthen the community.	Not Started	The Main Street Business Advocacy Group could take on the role.



## Summary of Conditions



## Existing Land Use



The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District covers 82.2 acres. East of Rome the existing land use of the District is multi-family residential and vacant land. The existing land use pattern west of Rome is primarily commercial, residential and governmental. The core of the business district is home to construction support businesses, restaurants, personal services, churches, non-profits and some retail.

The surrounding neighborhoods of Old West Tampa and West River combine for 414 acres. Old West Tampa is 238 acres, while West River is 176 acres. Old West Tampa is comprised primarily of single-family uses, while West River is comprised of multi-family, school facilities, recreation facilities and vacant land. The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District accounts for 19.9% of the total land area of both neighborhoods.

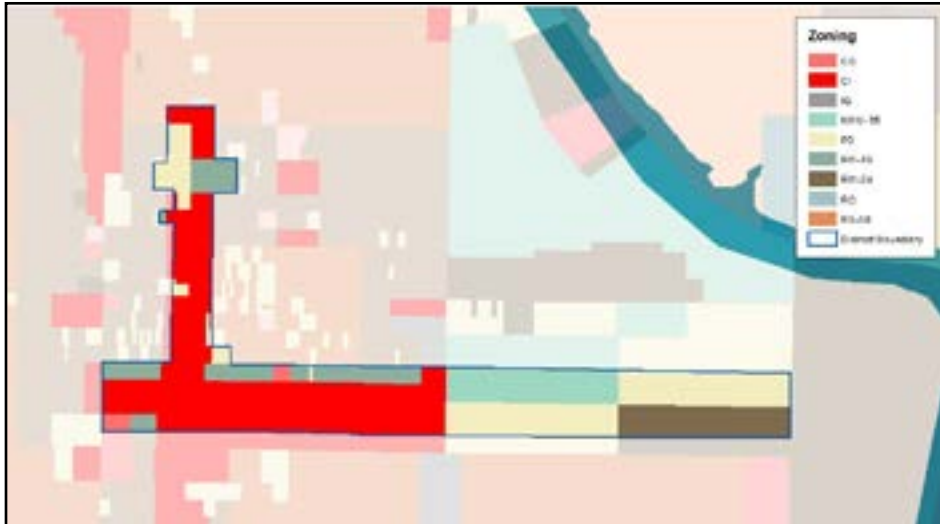
## Future Land Use



Rome Avenue is the dividing line for future land use. West of Rome Avenue, 25.5 acres have a future land use classification of Community Commercial - 35. This plan category promotes medium/density horizontal and vertical mixed-use and single-use commercial and residential uses. Approximately 5.64 acres west of Rome Avenue is planned for Residential-35 or Residential-20. Residential-35 is appropriate for multi-family uses, while Residential-20 is more oriented to single-family and townhomes. Approximately 1.55 acres has a Recreation and Open Space future land use designation.

East of Rome Avenue, the future land use shifts decidedly to more multi-family, with 20.4 acres designated Neighborhood Mixed Use - 35. This plan category promotes single-family and multi-family uses, neighborhood serving office and commercial uses. An additional 5.9 acres is also designated as Residential-35.

## Zoning



Nearly half of the District is zoned Commercial Intensive (CI) which provides areas for intense commercial activity, permitting heavy commercial and service uses. As the map illustrates, the CI zoning is located west of Rome Avenue. East of Rome, the zoning is PD, NMU-35 and RM-24. Residential 16 (RM-16) rings much of the CI zoned parcels. RM-16 provides primarily for low-medium density residential uses, including single-family and two-family developments, at an increased density. Multiple-family development may be permitted through the special use permit procedure.

The District, west of Rome Avenue, is also within the West Tampa Overlay Zoning District. The purpose of the overlay district is to insure that all types of new infill development and major renovations is compatible the existing character of development.

## Natural Features



The Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District, like most of the Old West Tampa and West River communities, is located at near sea-level, thus it is generally flat with mild slopes. Other than numerous trees, the District is fully urbanized, with no natural features. Just outside the District, however, is the Hillsborough River, which is the City's most important natural resource.

With the completion of the Tampa Riverwalk on the east side of the river, the City has moved forward with plans to construct a riverwalk on the west bank of the river, connecting the West River community to Bayshore Boulevard and across the river into downtown. Creating strong pedestrian and bike connections from the District to the riverwalk will provide positive benefits for residents and business owners.

The intersection of North Boulevard and Main Street is a natural choice as a gateway to the riverwalk, as well as Palmetto and Cherry Streets which connect Rey Park to the West River community and the pedestrian connection leading to planned riverwalk.

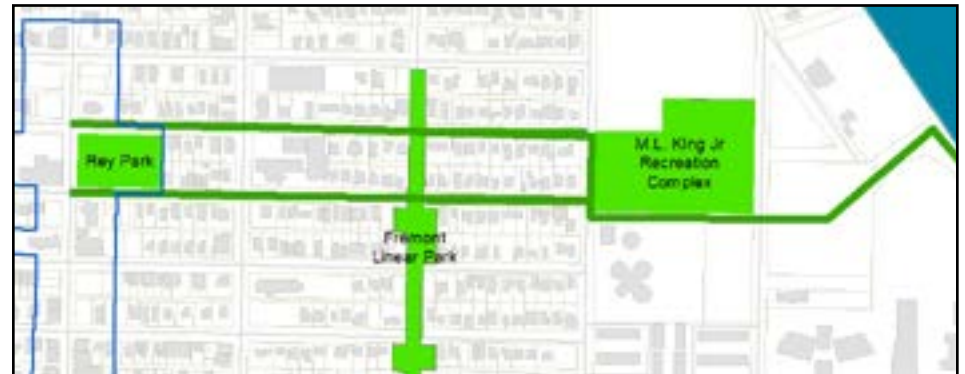
## Multi-modal Network and Transportation Safety Project (Build Grant)

In 2020, the City of Tampa was awarded \$24 Million from the BUILD federal grant program to construct a 12.2 contiguous mile path along the west side of the Hillsborough River, mirroring the successful Tampa Rivewalk on the eastern bank. The project will create a pedestrian and bicycle path from Columbus Avenue, along the river, to Bayshore Boulevard. In addition to the construction of the West Riverwalk, the project will include adding complete street enhancements to Rome Avenue from Platt Street to Palmetto Street, enhanced pedestrian/bike crossings at Stewart Middle School and the MLK Community Center, and creating living shorelines along the river at Tampa Prep and Blake Trail.



Just south of Rick's on the River, the West River riverwalk will traverse west to connect with the MLK Center at Rome Avenue. This connection forms a desirable pedestrian gateway for residents of Old West Tampa and the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District. In particular, Cherry Street and Palmetto Street become important pedestrian connections, linking Rey Park, Fremont Linear Park, MLK Center and the riverfront.

Cherry Street and Palmetto Street are neighborhood streets. Additional street trees and pedestrian scale lighting would enhance the pedestrian experience. In addition, improvements to Fremont Linear Park should also be considered.



Palmetto Street





## Transit Service Changes

### EXISTING



### PROPOSED



The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority provides bus service throughout Hillsborough County. HART plans to change the local fixed-route transit service on Route 7 via Main Street and Howard-Armenia. This change will benefit residents and businesses along the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District.

## Status of Rail Service



The 2002 Environmental Impact Study undertaken by the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority identified a locally preferred option for rail transit in Hillsborough County. The system is approximately 20-mile in length connecting downtown Tampa north to the University of South Florida, south to the SoHo District and west to the Westshore Business District.

The system will connect along Main Street between North Boulevard to Armenia Avenue. If constructed, rail service along Main Street will spur another wave of development. Although a long-term project, it is important for stakeholders of the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District to monitor the status of rail transit service as plans evolve.

## Structure Use



West of Rome Avenue, there are 144 structures, of which 54 (37.5%) are residential structures, 30 commercial buildings (30.8%), 17 service related (11.8%), 15 retail/restaurant structures (10.4%) with the remaining 28 structures comprised of offices, churches, government/schools and miscellaneous uses. For the most part, the residential structures are sited behind the structures that face Main Street.

East of Rome Avenue, the area is undergoing reconstruction. One high-rise residential structure is completed, another four are under construction with plans for a grocery store, retail center and an office building.

## Infrastructure and Utilities

**Wastewater** – The rehabilitation of the existing wastewater pipelines along Howard Avenue has been identified as a future capital improvement need. However, this project is not part of the current capital budget. When that project does occur, it could provide the opportunity to install new streetscape along Howard and underground the utilities.

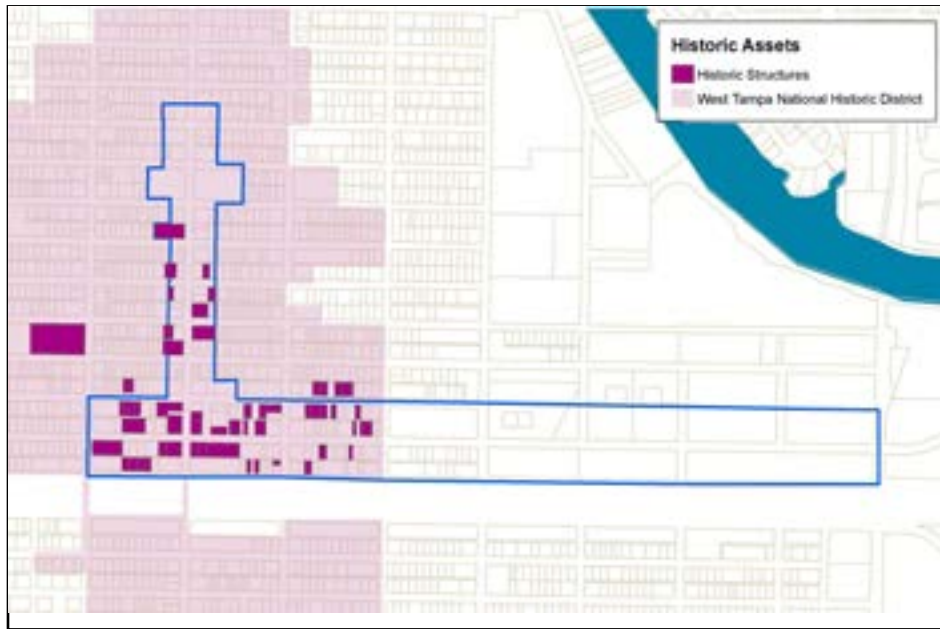
**Potable Water** – Several pipe segments in and near to the District have been identified for replacement in the future, including: 2" and 12" 1962 cast iron piping along N Armenia Ave, 2" 1945 cast iron piping at W Beach Street, 2" cast iron piping at W Palmetto St, 4" 1920 unlined cast iron piping at W Cherry St, 24" 1951 cast iron piping at N Oregon Ave and the 6" 1920 cast iron piping at N Delaware Ave. However, these projects are currently not funded.

**Stormwater** – All of the runoff from both onsite and offsite drainage areas are collected in closed storm drain (sewer) systems via roadway curb inlets and eventually discharge to the Hillsborough River. The Stormwater Department has one active project in the general area – the Cypress Street Outfall project to the south. The project consists of constructing a large box culvert system. The project starts at North Blvd and West Cass Street then makes its way to N Rome Avenue to Kennedy Blvd. There is also a segment on Gray St from Rome Avenue to Tampa Avenue. The Department has recorded flooding at Rome Ave and Main Street where there currently is no existing stormwater system. This situation could be alleviated by installing a pipe down Main Street to tie-into the existing system at Main and Willow.

**Electrical Transmission** – The major overhead electrical transmission lines running along the west side of North Blvd and the north side of W Main Street. As funding is identified, it would be desirable to locate these lines underground.

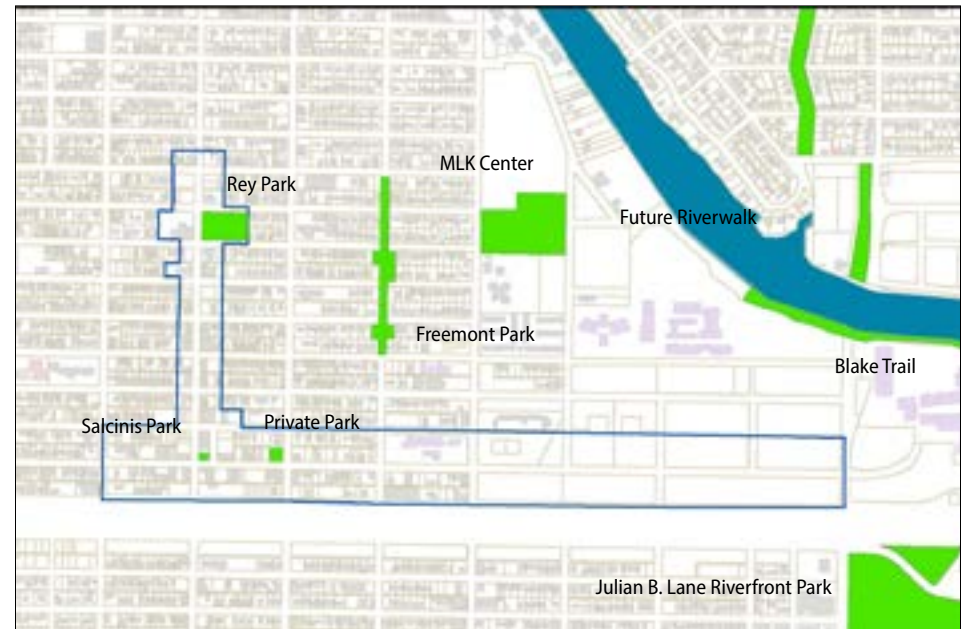
**Natural Gas** – Natural Gas is available throughout the study area through TECO Peoples Gas, with a major trunk line running along West Main Street.

## Historic Resources



There are 57 parcels in the District that have a historic structure. A portion of the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District is included in the West Tampa National Historic District. There is no local historic district.

## Parks and Recreation



There are 2 public parks in the District and four parks in close proximity. Salcinis Park is a small plaza located at Howard and Main and serves as a central gathering place. Rey Park at Howard and Palmetto Street includes a community center and playground.

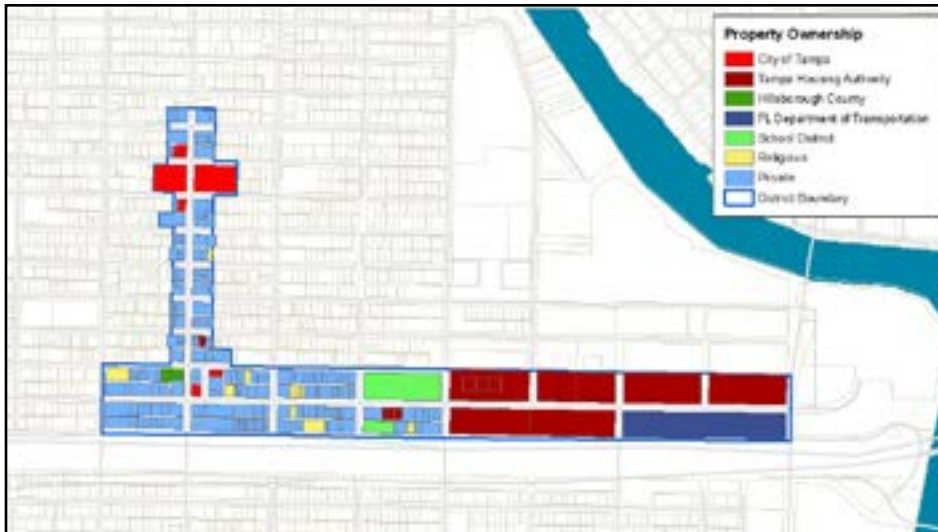
The Freemont Street Linear Park is outside of the District and offers passive park opportunities. Further to the east is the Martin Luther King Center, which includes enclosed basketball courts, a pool and playground.

The Blake Trail provides a pedestrian/bike trail from North Boulevard to Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park. The 35-acre waterfront park includes soccer/lacrosse fields, tennis courts, multi-purpose courts, playground, restrooms, community center/boathouse, boardwalks, docks, multi-use trail, walking trail, picnic shelters and parking. In addition, there is a privately provided and maintained open space at Main Street and Albany Ave.

To the extent possible, these parks should be updated, enhanced and connected with pedestrian / bike facilities.



## Property Ownership



The District contains 209 parcels totaling 57.8 acres. Of this, approximately 32.8 acres (56.7%) is owned by public or quasi-public entities. The remaining 25 acres is held in private ownership. The average size is 0.27 acres. The largest parcel is 5.90 acres. The smallest parcel is 0.02 acres. The larger parcels are found east of Rome Avenue. There were also 15 vacant business locations with 27,263 SF.

- **State Government (5.9 acres)** – The notable parcels include the land used by for a stormwater retention area by the Florida Department of Transportation.
- **County Government (0.37 acres)** – The Hillsborough County Library - West Branch located at Howard and Union street is the only county holding in the District. In the the West River Area, the County owns approximately 6 acres that is used as a neighborhood service center and health clinic.
- **City Government (3.4 acres)** - The City of Tampa owns 6 parcels in the District, including Rey Park, Salcines Park and the site where the Hillsborough Education Foundation is situated. The City also owns approximately 16 acres in the West River area that is part of the Rome Yard Redevelopment project.

- **Hillsborough County School District (3.4 acres)** – The School District owns 2 parcels along Main Street, at Rome Avenue. One parcel is used for Dunbar Elementary and the other is used for storage. The District also owns 23 acres in the West River.
- **Tampa Housing Authority (19.6 acres)** - The Tampa Housing Authority owns 14 parcels along Main Street that will be used for multi-family and commercial development. In addition, THA owns another 23.4 acres north of Union Street in the West River Area.
- **Private Development (25.0 acres)** - There are 184 parcels held by 131 private property owners. Twenty-eight (28) property owners own multiple parcels, but no one private owner holds more than 1 acre in the district.

## Neighborhood Completeness



The term “complete neighborhood” refers to a neighborhood where one has safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life. This includes a variety of housing options, grocery stores and other commercial services, quality public schools, public open spaces and recreational facilities, affordable active transportation options and civic amenities. An important element of a complete neighborhood is that it is built at a walkable and bikeable human scale, and meets the needs of people of all ages and abilities.

Although there are challenges, the Main Street Neighborhood Commercial District has several assets that make it complete neighborhood. Consider the following amenities that located within District. These amenities show that the District is becoming a much more diverse and complete neighborhood. Redevelopment efforts should seek to broaden

### West Tampa Community Assets

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| * Gas Stations               | * Community Center  |
| * Churches                   | * Non-Profits   |
| * Library                    | * Schools   |
| * Restaurants                | * Laundry Mat   |
| * Services                   | * Grocery Store and Pharmacy (planned for West River)                         |
| * Post Office                | * Single-Family uses within walking distance                                  |
| * Barber Shops & Hair Salons | * Multi-Family mid/highrise uses within walking distance (under construction) |
| * Professional Offices       | * Sidewalks   |
| * Gyms                       |   |
| * Plazas                     |   |
| * Parks                      |   |