



# The Tampa Riverwalk 2011 Annual Report



Rendering of Riverwalk from USF Park to MacDill Park - Currently Under Construction

## 2011 Annual Report

We've opened the last two Annual Reports with the word "Grand" as the primary adjective to describe the year because of grand openings at the Tampa Bay History Center, the Columbia Café, South Plaza and the Riverwall, Sail Pavilion, Heroes Plaza, and the cenotaph Ceremonial Space in 2009 AND Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Tampa Museum of Art, Glazer Children's Museum and 845 feet of additional Riverwalk along Curtis Hixon in 2010.

While those years were made up of Grand Openings, this year can best be described as GRAND PROGRESS in the continuation of the Riverwalk through additional funding, construction projects, completion of design and activities along the Riverwalk.

2011 was a great year for bricks and mortar. The city began a two-segment construction project consisting of the Brorein Street Underpass and another 360 feet of on-grade walkway north of the underpass. Working with Brownstone Tampa, LLC, the seawall restoration at the end of Whiting Street and on the west side of the CapTrust building began, allowing the construction of the CapTrust overwater segment to start in early 2012. The City also completed the design of three more projects: the Riverwalk docks behind the History Center, the pathway from the rear of the Straz Center to the Cass Street crosswalk, and the Harbour Island Bridge connector to the Riverwalk at the Sail Pavilion. The contractor has been selected for the latter and should commence work in early 2012. Seeking every opportunity for funding, the city submitted TIGER and Transportation, Community System Preservation Program grants totaling \$12,792,750.

With regard to activities along the Riverwalk, this year got off to a bodacious beginning. The Riverwalk was *Protected by Pirates - ARRHHGH* - when over 40 Friends of the Riverwalk volunteered to work a beverage booth at the Gasparilla Pirate Invasion January 27<sup>th</sup> raising in excess of \$10,000 for the operating budget.



Friends of the Riverwalk at Gasparilla

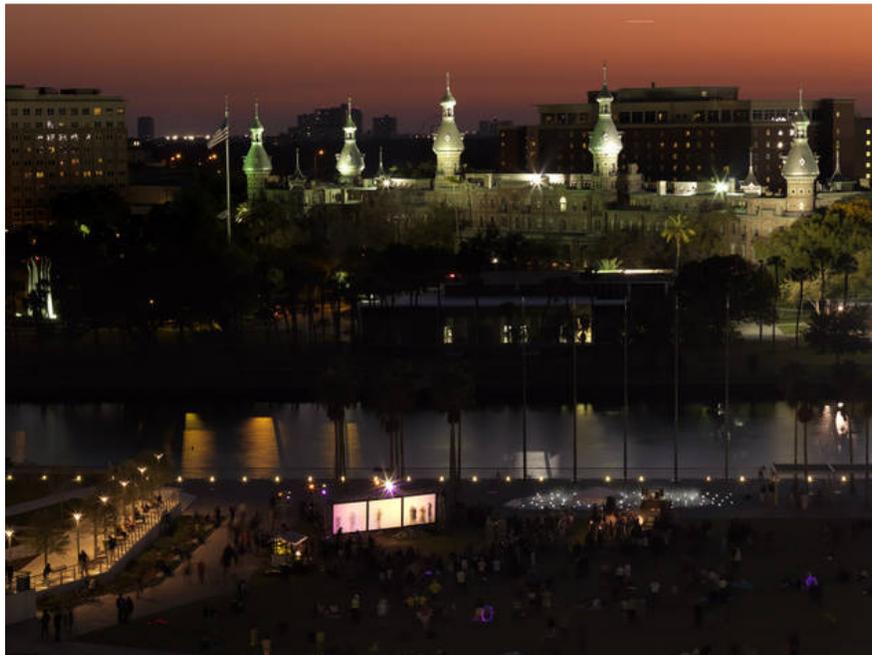
Thanks to funding from Southwest Water Management District and Friends of the Riverwalk, Tampa's first portal debuted on the Riverwalk February 19<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with *Lights On Tampa*. The Portal is a digital gateway through the arts providing an ever-changing and engaging platform for cultural and educational opportunities.

Content on the Portal will be expansive. In addition to commissioned artwork, a wide net is cast to include content from archival sources, scholars, health and environmental specialists. A companion website is in development.



**Riverwalk's First Portal at Curtis Hixon**

*Lights On Tampa 2011* was staged in and around the Riverwalk and Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park in February. *Shadow Plays*, a performance and participatory event allowed for the exploration of light, with improvisational interaction and movement. Susan Taylor Lennon, of the University of Tampa and Jennifer Rosoff, of the Creative Movement Company, brought the ancient tradition of storytelling and entertainment to life with shadows creating a visual mirage.



***Shadow Plays in the Shadow of the Minarets on the Riverwalk***



In the early spring respected Tampa artist Taylor Ikin painted “Reflections” to highlight Mayor Iorio’s accomplishments and tenure in office. The original of the piece was gifted to the Mayor though rights of the painting were given to Friends of the Riverwalk. Prints of “Reflections” were created and are for sale to benefit Friends of the Riverwalk.

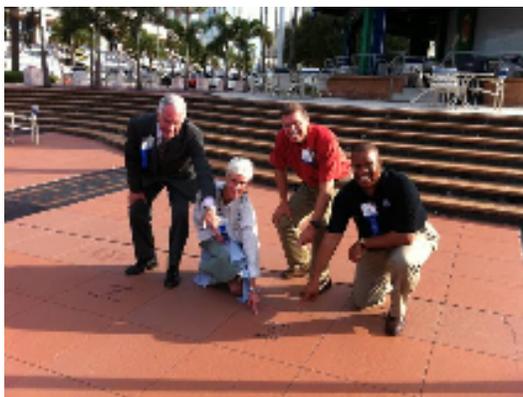
Annually, the Riverwalk hosts a myriad of fundraising events for area not-for-profits, including March 24<sup>th</sup>’s *Riverwalk for Wishes* benefiting the Sun Coast Make-A-Wish Foundation. Also, through the course of the year, Riverwalk staff spoke at gatherings of diverse public service organizations such as the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Hyde Park Rotary Club, and the Beach Park Woman’s Club.



As her last official public act in office Mayor Pam Iorio joined city leaders March 29th to break ground for both the Brorein Street underpass and the segment of the Riverwalk across the Brownstone property (formerly known as the Trump property). These segments add 550 feet to the Riverwalk and are expected to be open to the public in May of 2012. Additionally, work began on constructing the Whiting Street/CapTrust seawall.



**THANK YOU Mayor Iorio!**



**Tampa Bay & Company Supports the Riverwalk**

Tampa Bay and Company supports the Riverwalk's *Paving the Way* fundraising campaign by purchasing customized, engraved pavers at the Convention Center's Sail Pavilion to welcome major conventions such as the Armed Forces Communications & Electronics Association to Tampa Bay. An updated Riverwalk sign package at the Convention Center installed in 2011 helps conventioners visiting the city enjoy and better understand the history of our waterfront and the many diverse entities visible on the Riverwalk.



**Mayor Buckhorn Continues the Push to Completion of the Riverwalk**

As a candidate, Mayor Buckhorn chose the Riverwalk for many of his campaign photos. Riverwalk's completion was a commitment he made during his campaign and as mayor he continues the project's support as evident in his public championing of the walk and his efforts lobbying federal funding sources.

In early April the Florida Orchestra performed in an open concert at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, kicking off the annual *Friday Extra Concert Series*. This performance was just one of dozens free concerts along the Riverwalk this year including REALM's popular monthly *Rock the Park* concert series at the Tampa Museum of Art.



**Friday Extra - Now a Tradition on the Riverwalk**



**Taste the Best at The Straz**

April 16<sup>th</sup>, *Taste the Best of Tampa Bay* benefiting the David A. Straz Center for the Performing Arts attracted an international crowd of gourmands who dined on a cornucopia of cuisines prepared by noted local chefs.

Also on April 16<sup>th</sup>, just down the Riverwalk, *Chillounge Night Tampa 2011* debuted in Kiley Gardens. The popular event which is staged on both sides of Tampa Bay, drew a sold-out crowd on a crystal clear evening.



**The New *Chillounge Night Tampa* on the Riverwalk**

Preliminary work to restore Ulele Spring began in Water Works Park May 19<sup>th</sup>. Approximately \$300,000 of spring restoration, new Riverwalk construction, and park

improvements were completed in Waterworks Park in 2011. Additionally, the environmental study from Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, north to Water Works Park at the river's bend, was begun making this future segment of the Riverwalk eligible for federal funding.



Ulele Spring and Water Works Park – A Future Great Destination

Friends of the Riverwalk introduced a new membership program in June with levels ranging from \$100 to \$5,000+. Members receive discounts to attractions, hotels and restaurants adjacent to the Riverwalk as well as semi-annual member-mixers. In addition, personalized pavers along the Riverwalk continue to give the community ownership of the project. *Paving the Way to Completion of the Riverwalk* sold over 150 pavers in 2011 raising in excess of \$15,000.



Engraved Pavers Continue To Be a Popular Way to Support the Riverwalk



Beautiful Tampa Sunset on *NoShooz*

Bringing activities and retail opportunities to the Riverwalk continues to be a top priority. In 2011 entrepreneur and owner of Tampa Bay Sailing Tours, Josh Dohring began docking *NoShooz* on Tampa's Riverwalk between the Tampa Convention Center and the Marriott Waterside. *NoShooz*, a 36-foot Catamaran, offers regularly scheduled sunset cruises as well as private, customized charters.

Tampa's second annual Vegfest was relocated to the Riverwalk at Cotanchobee Ft. Brooke Park. The one-day event is part of a national series to inspire healthy living.



Vegfest at Cotanchobee



Interpreting the Artistic Beauty of the Waterfront

Local and visiting artists regularly come to the Riverwalk to capture the city skyline and nature's bounty. Bikers, joggers, runners and exercise enthusiasts of all levels of talent and commitment also enjoy the Riverwalk's proximity to the water and lush parks. Mile markers along the walk are a dream of our future.

In late July Tampa hosted Dragon Boat Races' Pan Am Games and in the first week of August the 10th International Dragon Boat Federation World Championships (IDBFWC). Opening ceremonies for the IDBFWC took place in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park on the Riverwalk. In the five days following, Dragon Boat teams from around the world paddled the waters of the Seddon Channel in grueling competition. The event attracted over 2,000 athletes representing 50 teams from 18 nations. Local Dragon Boat teams continue to gather regularly along the Riverwalk for regattas and social gatherings.



Dragon Boat World Championships in August



United States Wins the Gold!



Is it a Riverwalker or a Skywalker?

One of the attributes of the Riverwalk that spreads word of mouth and brings people back are SURPRISES. We have them in the form of educational elements, playgrounds, events and an occasional out-of-this-world parade. A great example of this is pictured above. Riverwalk might have been a bit pedestrian for these visitors from another galaxy but they eventually made their way to the Tampa Bay History Center's October 4<sup>th</sup> grand opening of *Out of this World*.

Water Works Park, previously mentioned, is a new addition to the Riverwalk that will host many, many events in the future. It has great shade, abundant space and offers a beautiful view of downtown. Tampa Heights hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Oktoberfest in Water Works Park October 14-16. The event featured traditional German music, dance and libation under festive tents and along the tree shaded waterfront. The city is in the process of developing plans for the park's final build-out.



**A Big OOM-PAH at the New Water Works Park**

Wildly popular Red Bull Flugtag returned to the Riverwalk October 8<sup>th</sup>. Once again this wonderfully wacky event drew record crowds and diverse entries from across the country.



**GERONIMO!**

The Riverwalk is referred to as the “grand connector” of the City of Tampa. No better example of this is when events occur at the newly named Tampa Bay Times Forum and attendees visit popular restaurants or watering holes accessible via the Riverwalk prior to or following the event. On November 12<sup>th</sup> Taylor Swift performed to a sold-out audience in the renovated arena. The facility now features state-of-the-art technology and innovative architectural designs, and hosted the NHL Tampa Bay Lightning schedule and over 150 family-oriented events in 2011. *Photo credit Tyler Tjomsland, the Times.*



Taylor Swift in Concert

Thousands lined the Riverwalk to view the Tampa Attractions Association’s annual *Holiday Lighted Boat Parade* December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. For the first time, the parade traveled from the Channel District, around Harbour Island, up the river to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and back.



Tampa's Floating Holiday Light Show



Dual Fireworks Displays Ring in 2012

Chamber of Commerce weather set the stage for New Year’s Eve extravaganzas at Channelside Bay Plaza and Jackson’s Bistro. Both celebrations were capped-off with fireworks ringing in 2012. *Photo Credit Chris Zuppa, The Tampa Bay Times.*

Events such as New Year's Eve punctuate the Urban Land Institute's 2011 report citing the city's need to complete the Riverwalk's east bank project and future opportunity for expansion of the walk to the west banks of the Hillsborough River. The ULI report has set the stage for a federally funded master plan for the Nebraska-Hillsborough Corridor. This is the 4-mile area that includes the downtown area and allows the city to proceed with the Riverwalk Phase II planning. Questions included in this project are: What are the overall priorities for the Riverwalk expansion? How do we better activate what is already in place? What is the relative importance of the following: adding shade structures; expanding north of the Straz Center; adding docking facilities; providing better linkage to the downtown interior; making more connections; developing restaurant and retail space; adding the pier at the Convention Center; completing the Cass Street/CSX railroad underpass; building pedestrian bridges; and developing the west side of the Hillsborough River. These questions and more will be discussed in the 2012 Master Plan.

2012 is already continuing the GRAND PROGRESS experienced in 2011. The continuation of the link between USF Park and MacDill Park, introduction of the Verizon Riverwalk Audio Tour, announcement that The Columbia Restaurant Group has been selected to develop a steak and seafood restaurant in the Water Works Building in Tampa Heights and, of course, preparation for the Republican National Convention in August are just a sampling of the year ahead.

Philanthropic support from individual and corporate donors will continue to play an essential role in ensuring the Riverwalk meets community needs. You can make a difference – support the Tampa Riverwalk with your financial gift, or by volunteering and advocating for the Riverwalk. For more information, call 813-731-4508 or go to [www.thetampariverwalk.com](http://www.thetampariverwalk.com).

The City of Tampa and the Friends of the Riverwalk thank all those who have made 2011 such a year of great progress.



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Bob Buckhorn  
Mayor  
City of Tampa



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Dan Mahurin  
President  
Friends of the Riverwalk



**The *Riverwall* Welcomes All to the Tampa Riverwalk**