



The Tampa Riverwalk

2012 Annual Report



2012 Annual Report

In crafting Tampa Riverwalk's 2012 annual report it was incredibly easy to create an alliteration of words beginning with the letter "C" to best describe this year's compilation of colossal achievements for our concourse on the waterfront.

This year Tampa's Riverwalk saw both construction and completion of two segments, major contributions, a new plan for commerce, historical commemoration and the granddaddy of all conventions. We introduced new methods of communication; extended hearty congratulations; avoided a major calamity; and probably most notable, received funding for completion of Phase I of the Riverwalk Master Plan. As this is being written the contract for completion is being crafted!

The June 19th announcement that Tampa won an \$11 million federal grant to complete the final links of the Riverwalk was great news for the Riverwalk and the City of Tampa. The Department of Transportation TIGER grant was a credit to the leadership of Mayor Buckhorn, our congressional delegation and city staff.

The money will bring to reality the decades-long dream to line our downtown riverfront with a seamless pedestrian trail to add ambience, energy and character to the city's center.

The funding will complete our 2.6-mile Riverwalk from the Channel District to the northern end of downtown near Tampa Heights. Specifically, it will fund Riverwalk's overwater connection between MacDill Park and Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and for the design and construction of the Walk north of the Straz Center to Water Works Park. Construction is expected to be complete in February 2015 and April 15 respectively.

Having the city's political and civic leaders follow through on such an ambitious effort — especially during these tough economic times — speaks to the new regard for downtown, and to what's possible when the city thinks big and sticks to its vision.

While the TIGER grant allows us to complete Phase I of the Riverwalk it does not, however, allow for many of the amenities we'd like to see along the waterfront so fund raising continues.

This year the city moved a step closer to developing a downtown conceptual master plan by selecting AECOM as the consultant to lead the charge on this essential planning over the next several years. This was important to the Riverwalk, as the project's Phase II master planning is folded under this umbrella. By combining all the aspects of downtown planning together, a comprehensive blueprint will be forged through public input, to integrate the many outstanding urban components concentrated in the downtown area. Through this effort, Riverwalk priorities will be established to guide the next decade of additions, improvements, linkage and programming. They include: more comfort (shade and seating); more things to do (dining, retail, events and water activity); more art and programming; keep safe and clean; more way-finding signs between downtown core and waterfront; and, better connections to neighborhoods, trails

and transit options. Perhaps the most significant is the development of the Riverwalk on the west side of the river from Bayshore to Rick's on the River.

On March 6th Steve Anderson and Riverwalk's Historical Monument Trail Steering Committee announced the first six inductees. The first selection for the Trail was not an individual, but a group: the earliest mound-building Indians to settle the area. The other trailblazers immortalized were Henry B. Plant, who gave the railroad and the Tampa Bay Hotel to the city; Vicente Martinez-Ybor, who led the cigar industry and founded Ybor City; Clara Frye, a nurse who operated a hospital for African-Americans at her home; James McKay Sr., Tampa Mayor who founded a shipping company that connected Tampa to Cuba; and Eleanor McWilliams Chamberlain, a women's rights activist who started Florida's first organization to seek the vote for women in 1893.

Through the course of the summer local sculptor Steve Dickey created bronze busts of each and on December 11th they were unveiled and placed along the Riverwalk to educate the public about the rolls and events in which these pioneers participated to shape the history of the Bay Area.

Initial funding for this project came from a private donation to Friends of the Riverwalk. In the summer Hillsborough County awarded Riverwalk's Historical Monument Trail a \$120,000 matching grant through its historic preservation funding program. Future funding will come from private and corporate donations as well as from grants.

Ultimately, there will be more than 30 honored historical persons represented and two or three full-sized statues commemorating significant events. Additionally, historic informational markers and displays will be spread along the length of the Riverwalk. Collectively, these beautiful busts and statues will "tell the story" of Tampa and instill an even greater sense of pride in this community.

Friends of the Riverwalk introduced two new events to Tampa this year...both of which involved a bit of friendly competition...as well as music and family fun.

In May, for the first time ever, executive chefs from Tampa Bay restaurants fired up their grills in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park to vie for the title of serving-up, *The Best Burger of the Bay* at *Burger Showdown*.

Mayor Bob Buckhorn was the honorary chair (of course) and Jack Harris was MC (obviously) when the heat was turned-up on the competition for the *Best Burger* title and the *People's Choice Award*, voted on by the thousands of foodies in attendance. Additionally there was a category to determine the *Best Other-Than-Beef (O.T.B.) Burger*.

Sharpening their knives in anticipation of the Showdown were chefs from: Datz Deli; Hula Bay Club; Lee Roy Selmon's; Champions Bar & Grill; Green Iguana Bar and Grill (first place overall); Ashley Street Grill (first place O.T.B.); Burger 21; BGR Burger (first place people's choice); and, Aramark at the Tampa Convention Center.

A silent auction offered-up a trip to New Orleans, a private yacht outing for a party of 20, and a package from Riverwalk's newest resident, the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts.

Additional sponsors included: TBO.com, the Tampa Tribune, WFLA, Anheuser Busch, and Diageo.

In November Friends introduced *RiverFest*, featuring *Steve Otto's 23rd Annual Chili Cook-Off* and chart topping music duo *Trailer Choir*, also at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park. This exciting new event benefited both Friends of the Riverwalk and the USO.

The Cook-Off featured two dozen local teams competing for three prizes while family activities and over a dozen teams competed to determine who makes the best salsa in the Bay.

Riverfest was sponsored by SunTrust Foundation, Yacht StarShip, Tampa Tribune, WQYK, TBO, WFLA, Anheuser Busch and Red Cat Winery.

The fund raising year ended with a series of cruises. Thanks to the generosity of Capt. Troy Manthey the proceeds from the Yacht StarShip's *River of Lights Christmas Cruise* benefited Friends of the Riverwalk.

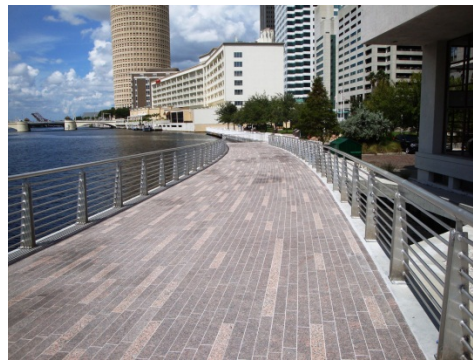
As we closed the year, the redevelopment of Water Works Park's Phase I was nearing design completion and was scheduled to go out for construction bids. This phase includes the Riverwalk connections to existing sidewalks to West 7th Avenue on the north and Doyle Carlton Drive on the south. After completing the connections, the park will be opened until the construction on the east side of the park begins.

Following is a compilation, complete with colorful photographs of the before mentioned as well as additional 2012 happenings along the Riverwalk.

Construction and Completion



CapTrust Segment Under Construction



CapTrust Complete



Brownstone Property Complete



Brownstone Segment Under Brorin Complete

2012 saw the completion of two major sections of Riverwalk overwater segment around the CapTrust building and including the overland segment on the Brownstone property.



Mayor Buckhorn, city administration, a future river-walker and Friends of the Riverwalk Board cut the ribbon at the completion of the overland Brownstone Property segment of the Riverwalk May 25th.

Contract



Illustration of the connection between MacDill Park and Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park which will be made possible in great part by the TIGER Grant contract received this year.

Commemoration

Now nestled along Tampa's Riverwalk are the first six bronze busts of the new Historical Monument Trail which tells Tampa's story through the accomplishments of noteworthy people and the significant events that have shaped the history of the area.

The first six inductees, unveiled last month by Mayor Buckhorn and Friends of the Riverwalk vice president Steve Anderson, are:

- Mound Building Indians, the First Floridians;
- Henry Bradley Plant, brought rail and the Tampa Bay Hotel to Tampa;
- Eleanor McWilliams Chamberlain, Florida's first suffragist;
- James McKay, leader and early developer of the city and its maritime industry;
- Vicente Martinez-Ybor, brought the cigar industry and developed Ybor City; and,
- Clara Frye, Nurse and early founder of hospital care for African Americans.



Bust of James McKay at Convention Center



Mayor and Steve Anderson unveiling bust of Henry B. Plant

Crew, Canoes, Kayaks and Cruises

Riverwalkers enjoy all watercraft of all shapes and sizes up and down the river as well as in the channels and at the port.



The Port of Tampa is home to five cruise ships sailing in and out of Tampa Bay on a regular basis. The Riverwalk provides safe travel for pedestrians staying in downtown hotels in advance of their departures.



Culinary

Foodies are drawn to the waterfront by a series of events each year sponsored by our stakeholders.



In April chefs come together for Taste the Best of Tampa Bay on the Riverwalk at the Straz Center



The food truck craze has lead the Sail Pavilion to regularly host Food Truck Rallies.



The StarShip fleet of dining yachts grew in 2012 and now includes, Yacht Starship, StarShip II and StarShip Blue. The boats sail regularly offering dining cruises of interest as well as a myriad of holiday voyages.

Community

City Parks along the Riverwalk hosted over 200 events in 2013. Annual celebrations of community pride as well as weekly and monthly events draw thousands to the riverfront.



One of many popular events of the Black Heritage Festival was staged in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park in January.



In the spirit of legendary pirate Jose Gaspar, hundreds of pirates invade the Riverwalk and the city streets to the delight of thousands the last weekend of January 2012



The Ninth Annual Tampa Bay International Dragon Boat Regatta at Cotanchobee Ft. Brooke Park and the Tampa Convention Center drew 70 teams in April



A local Yoga studio sponsors Sunset Yoga in Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park every Sunday



Rated as one of the finest outdoor fine arts festivals in the country, the Raymond James Gasparilla Festival of the Arts attracted 300 accomplished artists to Curtis Hixon in March



Mayor Buckhorn's Inaugural River 'O Green Celebration turned the Hillsborough River a fine shade of Shamrock in Celebration of St. Patrick's Day, March 17th



In April Curtis Hixon was the site for a second year of Chillounge, an upscale evening for music lovers and event seekers.



In its annual agreement with the City of Tampa the Florida Orchestra played in free concert in May at Curtis Hixon



In the summer months Friends of Parks & Recreation sponsored Screen on the Green, a series of family movies at Curtis Hixon Park.



The annual July 4th drew thousands of celebrants to Channelside Bay Plaza, Cotanchobee Ft. Brooke Park and the surrounding environs.



In September the Chick Fil-A Stampede came to the Riverwalk for the first time featuring a 5K and a one mile family walk



Also new to Curtis Hixon Park this year, OktoberFest 2012 which featured traditional German game, food, fraulein and fun.



Cotanchobee was the site of VegFest in October which featured good-for-you-foods as well as vendors offering nutritional educational materials

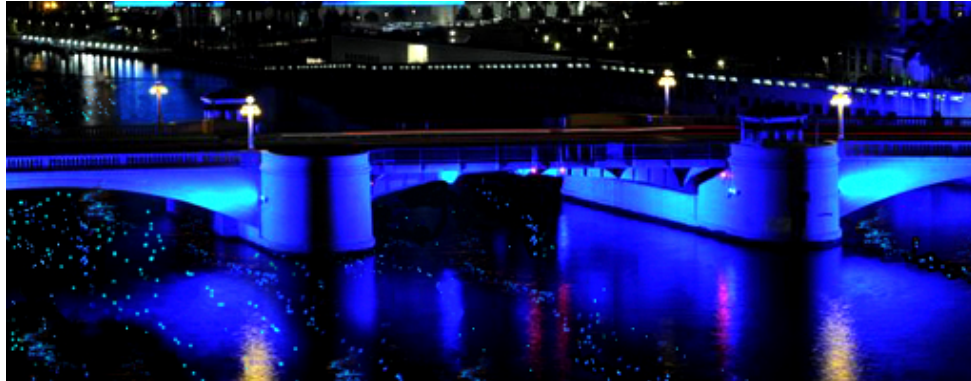


Being a pet friendly environment serves the Sail Pavilion well. The Humane Society regularly stages events here allowing precious four legged Friends to enjoy the Riverwalk too.



Thousands joined the Mayor at Bicycle Bash in Cotanchobee Ft. Brooke Park in November. The event was previously held in Pinellas County but moved in 2012 to the Riverwalk.

The 2012 Class of Leadership Tampa Bay hosted a free, one of a kind event along the banks of the Hillsborough River to benefit Voices for the Children of Tampa Bay. On December 8th ten thousand illuminated 3" river lights were be released into the Hillsborough River transforming Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park into a spectacular destination for a night of food, music and fun.



Commerce

Great strides were made in 2012 to increase retail opportunity along the Riverwalk. The Development Committee of Friends of the Riverwalk compiled an inventory of available sites for vendors and stake holders to develop commercial opportunity on the waterfront. Additionally, a vendor manual was outlined for further, future development with the potential to allow those with entrepreneurial spirit the opportunity to vend food and merchandise on the Riverwalk.



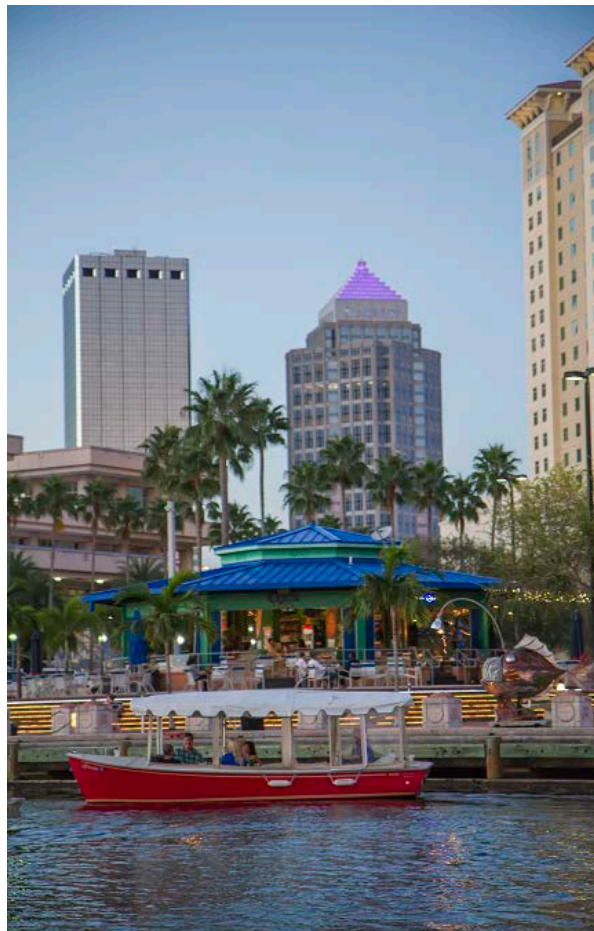
City Bike Tampa continues to lease bikes from the under-bridge between The Marriott Waterside and the Convention Center



Captain Larry provides water taxi and tour service along the Riverwalk



The Tampa Convention Center reconfigured its coffee shop into Bay Bistro Riverwalk which will serve a full menu adjacent to the Sail Pavilion and the Riverwalk.



Mid-year, commercial Realtor, avid boater and entrepreneur Josh Dohring opened an Electric Boat Rental operation at the Convention Center.

Conventions

This year the city of Tampa hosted two most prestigious conventions in the county. It was only the gathering of the Republican National Convention that could be touted as more important to the future of our region than the annual convention of Meeting Planners International. Additionally, Tampa Bay and Company hosted thousands of smaller, though equally as significant meetings to Riverwalk venues.



Meeting Planners International boasted a temporary two story tent in Cotanchobee Ft. Brooke Park as a waterfront party venue for its conventioners



In August, the Republican National Convention elected Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney at the Forum



Republican National Convention party venues also included Events at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park

Contributions

Donations from the private sector are the foundation of the work accomplished by Friends of the Riverwalk. Donations received allow FoR to create a comfortable environment along the water as well as to communicate a sense of place and direction.

Major contributors to Friends of the Riverwalk in 2012 include:

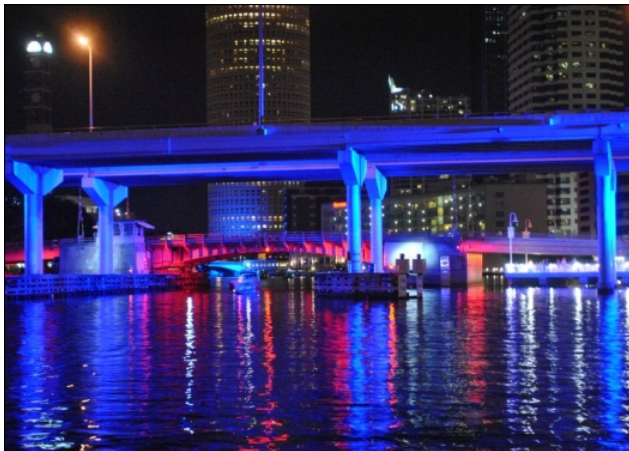
Columbia Restaurant Group
Bethany Leytham
Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, LLP
The Frankle Family Foundation
Yacht StarShip
SunTrust
SunTrust Foundation
Steven A. Anderson & Family
The Gonzmart Family
Doug Cohn and Tampa Bay Trane
Beck Group
Bright House
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Ferman Motor Car Company
Verizon
Florida Blue
Florida Merchants Association
Hillsborough County
EventFest
Owens Realty Services
Tampa Electric/Peoples Gas
Bush Ross, LLP
Couch Family
Tampa Downtown Partnership
Johnson Bros.



The Ferman Motor Car Company donated money to install signing at the Sail Pavilion's new plaza.

Tampa Electric/People's Gas contribution to the City's Art Board enabled the long-time dream of lighting downtown's iconic bridges to become a reality. Artist Tracey Dear, who illuminated the bridges in Chicago, as well as the Wrigley Building was contracted to create the project called Agua Luces, Spanish for water lights.



A generous contribution by the Gonzmart family and the Columbia Restaurant Group provided the match for a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission grant that made possible docks offering nine tie-ups and a water taxi stop on the Garrison Channel at the History Center.



Bush Ross joined Friends of the Riverwalk at the Corporate Level.



Riverwalk's Banner Program in conjunction with the Florida Merchants Association is but one way Friends of the Riverwalk raises money to complete the project.

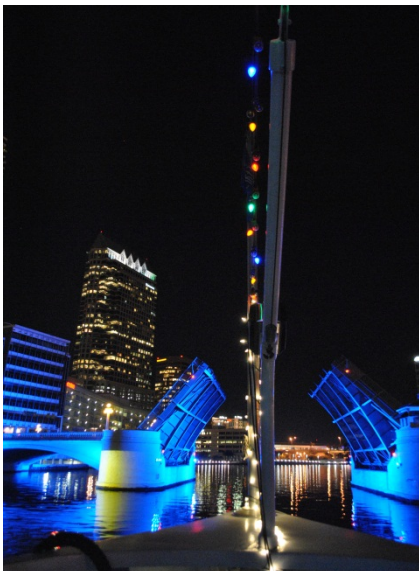
Competitions



In July, the Red Bull Wake Board Championship was held in Seddon Channel attracting a slate of athletes and live television coverage to the Riverwalk at the Convention Center.



Friends of the Riverwalk staged Tampa Bay's first ever Burger Showdown in May. The event raised operating funds for the organization, attracted 15 area restaurants to vie for three burger titles. While Green Iguana took the title of Best Burger of the Bay, and BGR the People's Choice Award, Riverwalk's own Ashley Street Grille captured the title of Best Other than Beef Burger (OTB) Award.



The Yacht StarShip owner, Troy Manthey, contributed a portion of every ticket sold for the River of Lights Christmas Cruises to Friends of the Riverwalk.



Challenge Nation in November is but one of many relay races and executive scavenger hunts to include Riverwalk as a part of their experience.



In November Steve Otto's 23rd Annual Chili Cook-Off became an integral part of RiverFest 2012, the second major fund raising event sponsored by Friends of the Riverwalk

C.R.E.W.



Commercial Real Estate Women's ARTLOUD project landed this creative catch on the Riverwalk at the Sail Pavilion

Calamity



In June Tropical Storm Debby's winds lashed Tampa Bay for several days creating a lot of drama but little damage to the Riverwalk

Canines

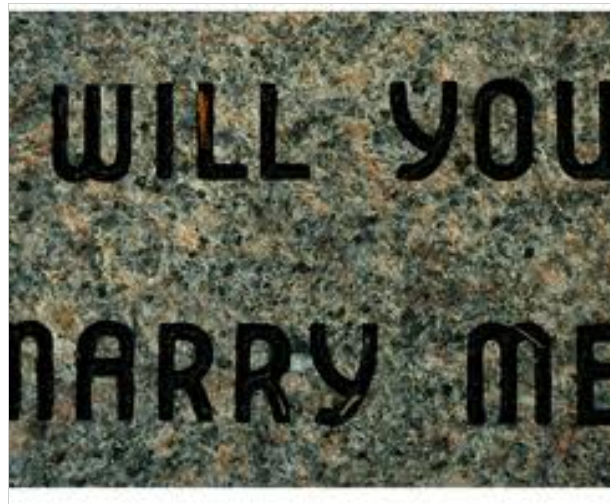


Sail Pavilion Named *Creative Loafing's* "Best Eatery Where You Can Take the Family Dog".

Congratulations

Friends of the Riverwalk's Paving the Way fund raising effort continues to be a popular way for Tampa's residents and visitors to commemorate and celebrate as well as provide a revenue stream for Friends of the Riverwalk. In 2012 127 personalized pavers were engraved along the Riverwalk.

The Riverwalk become quite the destination of those who are ready to pop the big question at the Proposing Bench. The Riverwalk's a very popular site for wedding ceremonies too.





Communication

As an attraction to locals as well as to those visiting Tampa Riverwalk for the first time communication of information in many forms is critical.



In January Mayor Buckhorn, “Voice of the Riverwalk” WFLA anchor Gayle Sierens and Friends of the Riverwalk Board and staff, made the first official call to Verizon’s Audio Tour. The mobile device tour gives users access to cultural, educational and historical information about the Riverwalk and its surrounding environment. Additional contributions USF Students in Free Enterprise and the Florida Communications group made this possible.

Because the audio tour system offers great flexibility, the Riverwalk is able to add supplementary tours and special family programming in the future.



Friends of the Riverwalk Executive Director, Roger Kurz leads a tour of the Riverwalk for Do the Local Motion. Each year dozens of Riverwalk tours are given to special interest groups to augment the Verizon Audio Tour.



The City of Tampa's Riverwalk Manager, Lee Hoffman, worked closely with AECOM as they crafted the InVision Tampa master plan in 2012. The plan, released in November called for completing the Riverwalk on the east and west sides of the River, enhancing the existing Riverwalk with shade, retail and restaurants, creating more things to do on the waterfront and making better connections to neighborhoods and in to the center city.

Click, Click, Click



In March 2012, the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts moved to the Cube at Rivergate Tower. The proximity of FMoPA's location to the Riverwalk is a catalyst for shutter bugs with all degrees of talent as seen in the following...



Riverwalk at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park



Site of overwater construction to begin in 2013



Tampa Bay History Center and Cotanchobee Ft. Brooke Park



MacDill Park on the Riverwalk



Straz Center for the Performing Arts



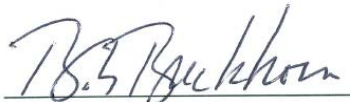
Tampa Convention Center at the mouth of the Hillsborough River

2013 is already continuing the celebration and construction noted during 2012. The grant agreement with the Federal Department of Transportation to complete two major Riverwalk sections was signed in late December. This signed agreement gives the City the ability to put out the construction bid for the gap between MacDill Park and Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, and the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the design work of the section from the Straz Center north to Water Works Park

If all stays on track, the construction of the overwater link between the parks will be completed in December 2014, and the Walk from Straz to Water Works Park in February 2015, which will then create 2.4 miles of completed waterfront Riverwalk!

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.

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



Bob Buckhorn
Mayor
City of Tampa



Dan Mahurin
President
Friends of the Riverwalk, Inc.