Gateway Business Council Review
Issues and Progress
May 2015 – March 2017

I. Employee Attraction and Retention

Many employees live in Tampa and other areas outside of St. Petersburg. The long commutes affect employee attraction and retention.

- Determine where Gateway employees live and assess connectivity improvements that can be made between residential areas and the Gateway District.

✓ Several new multifamily projects opened in the Gateway area adding 839 units total: The Reserve II at 540 Trinity Lane, Peridot Palms at 10589 Gandy Blvd N, and Aura @ 4th at 10980 Oak Street N.

II. Transportation

The Gateway area is very car-centric which creates isolation between various developments and possibly deters young professionals from moving to the area.

- Explore a walkability plan for the area that integrates with the bike trail system.
  o Trail system improvements
    ✓ The City of St. Petersburg’s Transportation and Parking Management Department shared plans to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Carillon Park, along Roosevelt Blvd, and along 28th Street N. This project includes adding “sharrows,” adding a second right turn lane into the business park from Roosevelt Blvd, and resurfacing streets in Carillon Park.
    ✓ Bike share implemented in downtown with 30 stations and 300 bikes.
    ✓ The City adopted a Complete Streets policy and is in the process of implementation.
    ✓ The Cross-Bay Ferry pilot program launched in November 2016 and runs through April 2017. Initial numbers and feedback show the project has been successful and the City is looking to continue the ferry as a permanent transportation option between St. Petersburg and Tampa.

- Improve connectivity between downtown and Gateway.
- Support ride sharing programs and toll lanes from Tampa to St. Petersburg.
• Tampa Bay Express (TBX)
  - Chris Steinocher, President and CEO of the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce, discussed the importance of supporting the TBX project and asked businesses to join in. TBX is a proposed system of express toll lanes that will be added to existing interstate routes giving drivers the choice of paying a toll in order to enjoy a faster commute.

• Increase connectivity in the Gateway area.

  o Gateway Express Project
    ✓ The Gateway Express project will provide major improvements to the Gateway corridor by linking I-275 to US-19, the St. Pete-Clearwater Airport, and the Bayside Bridge via a tolled expressway.
  
  o Gateway/Mid-County Work Plan in Pinellas SPOTlight
    ✓ Whit Blanton, Executive Director of Forward Pinellas, shared his organization’s priorities and plans for projects in the area. One of Forward Pinellas’ major focus areas is Gateway and they are creating a master plan for the area that will focus on safety, land use, and multi-modal access.

  o PSTA Plans
    ✓ Heather Sobush, Planning Manager at PSTA, shared details of PSTA’s present and future goals - projects and planning efforts such as multi-phase system redesign, bus rapid transit, regional express routes (including express service to Tampa), and increasing frequency on core routes.

III. Future Development

*The Gateway District lacks a “sense of place” in addition to residential options for young professionals and families.*

• Support the Echelon City Center development.

  o Chris Eastman, Chief Development Officer and Senior VP, along with Steve Kurcan, Project Manager, presented the Echelon City Center development plans. They illustrated how the project integrates with the existing Gateway area and highlighted the positive impacts the development will bring to existing employees and residents.

• Increase residential options for the Gateway area:

  o Explore the potential for a family-friendly residential development adjacent to Gateway, similar to Westchase in Tampa.
• Incentivize investment in the city’s existing housing stock, especially in neighborhoods along 4th Street North, to meet today’s population demands.

• Promote development along 4th Street North as it connects to the Gateway area and support more retail.
  
  o Retail analysis
  
  ✓ The city conducted a land use assessment of the Gateway area noting areas of existing retail and highlighting areas where retail opportunities exist. There are some key areas for retail, including the Town Center concept in Carillon Park and the Toytown site. An increase in residents, combined with a strong demand from businesses, will support additional retail and restaurants.

IV. **Events and Community Building**

*There is an opportunity for place-making in Gateway to make it a more unique and attractive area to live and work. Currently the area becomes a “dead zone” after work hours which prevents more retail and restaurants from establishing themselves.*

• Event ideas:
  
  o Farmer’s market
  o Food truck rally
  o Marathon
  o Music festival
  o Movie night

• The City will host a group of interested Gateway members for a follow-up meeting on event planning.

V. **Workforce Development**

*There is a need for a local labor pool with desirable entry-level skills.*

✓ Connect with CareerSource, USF, SPC, PTEC, etc. to learn about resources available for workforce training.

• Determine resources for recruiting high-level executives and bilingual employees