

The Redevelopment Approach for South St. Petersburg

What is the Vision of the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan? The Plan calls for revitalizing South St. Petersburg by promoting reinvestment in housing and neighborhoods, commercial corridors, business development, education and workforce development and non-profit capacity building. This will be accomplished by utilizing tax increment financing to leverage private investment in the CRA through public-private partnerships. This approach is explicitly encouraged by Florida Statutes which states that

Any county or municipality, to the greatest extent it determines to be feasible in carrying out the provisions of this part, shall afford maximum opportunity, consistent with the sound needs of the county or municipality as a whole, to the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the community redevelopment area by private enterprise.

This approach to revitalization is a significant departure from the traditional focus on public improvements that characterize prior City plans to revitalize Downtown, Midtown, Childs Park and other areas. The rationale behind these plans was that public improvements would attract private investment and job creation by enhancing the physical environment and showing the City's commitment to economic improvement in challenged areas, an approach that has worked well in Downtown but, as you will see below, has not borne the same fruit in Midtown and Childs Park.

Have there been prior planning efforts in South St. Petersburg? Between 1983 and 2015, the City of St. Petersburg has undertaken nearly a dozen major planning initiatives within the boundaries of the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Area. These include four community redevelopment plans adopted between 1983 and 2007, strategic planning initiatives for both Midtown (2002) and Childs Park (2007), corridor plans for 22nd Street and Central Avenue and seventeen neighborhood plans.

- ✓ 16th Street CRA Revitalization Plan (1983)
- ✓ Business Retention Target Area (1991)
- ✓ 22nd Street Revitalization Plan (1994)
- ✓ Dome Industrial Park Plan (1999)
- ✓ Central Avenue Tomorrow Plan (1999)
- ✓ Dome Industrial Park Pilot Project Site Redevelopment Plan (2000)
- ✓ Midtown Strategic Planning Initiative (2002)
- ✓ Tangerine Avenue Redevelopment Plan (2003)
- ✓ Childs Park Strategic Planning Initiative (2007)
- ✓ Dome Industrial Park Redevelopment Plan (2007)
- ✓ Central Avenue Revitalization Plan (2012)
- ✓ Seventeen Neighborhood Plans (1991-2014)

Each of these plans called for "place-based" public investments funded by a variety of sources, such as the City's general fund, federal funding through EDI, CDBG and other sources or state agency grants, and were designed to improve the physical environment, improve infrastructure

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and increase amenities in South St. Petersburg to attract private investment. Some of these public investments are described in the next section below.

Have these Planning Efforts Worked? Yes, to the extent that public investment has made the CRA attractive for private investment. Since 1999 more than \$430 million (nominal dollars) has been invested by the City of St. Petersburg, Pinellas Schools, the federal government and other public agencies. Many of these investments resulted in a substantial improvement in the CRA's quality of place by improving parks and recreation facilities; landscaping/streetscaping of major commercial corridors such as 22nd Street and 16th Street South, Central Avenue and 49th Street; acquiring land and providing infrastructure; renovating public buildings; and investments throughout South St. Petersburg to improve and expand its housing stock.

The City has invested over \$178 million since FY2000 in South St. Petersburg, with more than \$55 million expended on housing development and support, nearly \$15 million in transportation and trails, and \$101 million in amenities and infrastructure such as parks and recreation facilities, water utilities, sidewalks and road resurfacing. The School Board has spent \$216 million building two new schools in the CRA and substantially renovating several others. Finally, the United States Department of Labor opened the \$40 million Pinellas Job Corps facility.

Below is summary of major "place-based" investments made in South St. Petersburg by the City of St. Petersburg, school board, federal government and other public agencies.

Public Facilities

- ✓ Renovation of former Mercy Hospital and construction of Johnnie Ruth Clarke Clinic
- ✓ Renovation of Jordan Elementary School for Head Start Facility
- ✓ Construction of James Weldon Johnson Library
- ✓ Renovation of Boys and Girls Club at the historic Royal Theater
- ✓ Renovation of Manhattan Casino
- ✓ Construction of Retail Store at 16th Street South United States Postal Service Facility
- ✓ Pending Acquisition of Dr. Carter G. Woodson Museum

Housing and Neighborhood Investment

- ✓ Childs Park Housing Investment
- ✓ Jordan Park Housing Complex
- ✓ Neighborhood Stabilization Program - East
- ✓ Neighborhood Stabilization Program - Central
- ✓ Neighborhood Stabilization Program – West
- ✓ Rebates for Residential Rehabilitation

Recreation Facilities

- ✓ Clam Bayou Restoration, Bike Trail and Recreation Improvements
- ✓ Construction of Childs Park YMCA and Athletic Field
- ✓ Renovation of Childs Park Athletic Complex (2005) and addition (2010)
- ✓ Childs Park Recreation Center Pool
- ✓ Childs Park Lake

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- ✓ Pinellas Trail
- ✓ Booker Creek Trail
- ✓ Enoch Davis Center Expansion
- ✓ Dell Holmes Park
- ✓ Renovated and Expanded Thomas “Jet” Jackson Recreation Center and Wildwood Park
- ✓ Pending Campbell Park Skate Park
- ✓ Lake Maggiore Dredging

Transportation and Streetscaping

- ✓ 22nd Street South Streetscaping and Utility Relocation
- ✓ Tangerine Avenue Intersection Improvements
- ✓ Tangerine Avenue Utility Undergrounding
- ✓ Grand Central Avenue Streetscaping
- ✓ 49th Street Streetscaping
- ✓ African-American Heritage Trail
- ✓ 16th Street South Streetscaping
- ✓ Roser Park Drive Retaining Walls and Corridor Improvements
- ✓ PSTA Transit Hub at Central Avenue
- ✓ Childs Park Sidewalk, Traffic Calming and Streetscaping Improvements

Land Acquisition and Site Preparation/Public Private Partnership Development

- ✓ Tangerine Avenue Community Redevelopment Area Land Acquisition and Infrastructure Investment (now Tangerine Plaza/Walmart Grocery, GTE Credit Union and Family Dollar)
- ✓ St. Petersburg Commerce Park Land Assembly (development pending)
- ✓ Unibake Land Acquisition/Disposition (Lantmannen Unibake expansion)
- ✓ DIP Pilot Project Acquisition (now Pinellas Job Corps)
- ✓ Manhattan Casino Acquisition (now Sylvia’s)
- ✓ Atherton Oil Remediation (available for development)
- ✓ Carr Property Acquisition and Disposition (T2theS development pending)

Educational Facilities

- ✓ Thurgood Marshall Middle School
- ✓ Perkins Elementary
- ✓ Reconstruction of Gibbs High School
- ✓ Reconstruction of Campbell Park Elementary
- ✓ Reconstruction of Douglas Jamerson Elementary
- ✓ Academy Prep Center of St. Petersburg
- ✓ St. Petersburg College Achievement Center
- ✓ St. Petersburg College Midtown Campus
- ✓ U.S. Department of Labor Job Corps Facility

As a result of prior planning and public investment in the CRA, has the South St. Petersburg community seen economic improvement since 2000? No. In fact, the economic conditions for families have gotten worse. Since 2000, South St. Petersburg has persistently lagged behind the rest of the city across all income measures. Be it median

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household, median family, married couple or per capita income statistics, South St. Petersburg residents have roughly attained 50 percent to 75 percent of the citywide measure (see Table 1.1). Moreover, during the first decade of the 21st century, when the real incomes of most St. Petersburg (and indeed, American) households stagnated or declined, South St. Petersburg households suffered an even greater decline.

TABLE 1.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics in South St. Petersburg CRA and City, 2000 and 2012

	2000		2012	
	CRA	City	CRA	City
Unemployment Rate	10.7%	5.2%	17.2%	10.8%
Income Measures				
Median Household Income	\$30,948	\$45,989	\$28,419	\$44,756
Median Family Income	\$35,158	\$57,422	\$34,088	\$57,702
Married Couples	\$52,207	\$69,561	\$51,376	\$73,119
Female Householder	\$19,487	\$33,104	\$25,707	\$32,574
Per Capita Income	\$14,756	\$28,057	\$14,438	\$27,825
Median Non-Family Income	\$20,915	\$32,724	\$22,107	\$32,262
# Households on Food Stamps or SNAP			3,777	13,472
% of population			11.2%	5.5%

Source: **Unemployment:** U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000 and ACS, 2008-2012 5-year estimates Table DP03. **Income:** Census 2000, QT-P33: Income in 1999 by Selected Household, Family, and Individual Characteristics and U.S. Census Bureau. 2008-2012 ACS 5-Year Estimates Tables S1903: Median Income in the Past 12 months; B09010: Receipt of SSI, Cash Public Assistance Income, or Food Stamp/SNAP in the Past 12 months. In 2012 dollars.

An even more alarming measure is the persistence and high level of poverty over time and across age groups in South St. Petersburg, where poverty rates for the total population, children and seniors has been at least twice that of the citywide rate since 2000. With nearly 45 percent of children and teenagers below poverty and the understanding of poverty's impact on childhood development and health, it is imperative to direct City resources in the most impactful manner to improve the prospects of the next generation of working adults in the CRA.

Not even higher levels of educational attainment immunize people from poverty in South St. Petersburg. When comparing poverty rates and educational attainment, since 2000 poverty has increased among high school and college graduates in both South St. Petersburg and citywide.

TABLE 1.2 Poverty Characteristics in South St. Petersburg CRA and City, 2000 and 2012

	2000		2012	
	CRA	City	CRA	City
Poverty				
Total Population	29.1%	13.3%	32.6%	16.1%
Under 18	39.7%	19.5%	44.9%	23.1%
65 and older	23.4%	10.8%	23.8%	11.9%
Poverty by Education Level				
Population 25+ below Poverty	22.8%	10.9%	24.8%	12.7%
Less than High School Graduate	11.9%	4.2%	36.0%	27.5
High School Graduate or Equivalent	7.2%	3.4%	27.0%	15.8%
Some College/Associates Degree	3.1%	2.3%	18.0%	10.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	0.5%	1.0%	9.6%	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. Table PO 87-Poverty Status in 1999 by Age. Census 2000 Summary File 4. PCT-145 - Ratio of Income in 1999 to Poverty Level by Age by Educational Attainment for Population 18 years and over. U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2008-2012 5year Estimates. S1701 - Poverty Status in Past 12 months.

Notwithstanding poverty's impact on even the well-educated described above, educational achievement has made some progress in South St. Petersburg. Although educational attainment

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levels in South St. Petersburg have not yet reached citywide levels, Table 1-3 below demonstrates substantial improvement in the last decade. Since 2000, residents of South St. Petersburg without a high school degree have declined by 34 percent. Post-secondary educational achievement has also improved in both the CRA and St. Petersburg proper. Within the CRA, the population with at least a bachelor’s degree has risen by 82 percent since 2000. While still trailing the city in percentage of residents with a post-secondary degree, South St. Petersburg’s rate of increase in educational performance eclipses that of the city since 2000.

Table 1.3 Educational Attainment in South St. Petersburg CRA and City, 2000 and 2012

	2000		2012	
	CRA	City	CRA	City
Education (Population 25+)				
<HS Graduate	37.3%	18.1%	24.8%	12.2%
HS Grad or Equivalent	33.3%	28.0%	37.7%	29.0%
Some College/AA Degree	22.1%	31.1%	24.1%	30.7%
Bachelor’s Degree	4.5%	14.8%	9.5%	18.6%
Master’s/Professional or PhD	2.8%	8.0%	3.8%	9.4%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	7.3%	22.8%	13.3%	28.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000. QT-P20-Popgroup. Total Population: Educational Attainment by Sex. U.S. Census Bureau. 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table B15002: Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over.

Why has the City taken a different approach to revitalizing South St. Petersburg than it has with past plans?

As can be seen from the dire economic conditions facing South St. Petersburg residents, the decades-long public investment in South St. Petersburg has simply not altered the economic prospects of families. No doubt that these public investments have made South St. Petersburg safer and more attractive than if they were never made in the first place. Furthermore, the City will continue to improve and expand the public facilities, infrastructure, and amenities for South St. Petersburg to solidify the foundation on which future development rests. But funding these public improvements with tax increment revenues will not be the focus of the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Plan. Instead City Administration is shifting the City’s redevelopment paradigm for South St. Petersburg from one of public-driven investment designed to attract private investment to one of direct financial partnerships with small businesses, property owners, education and workforce development providers and homeowners to revitalize the CRA.

Expanding access to capital to small businesses and homeowners is a hallmark of the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan because it is essential for growth and job creation. Yet small business lending nationally (<\$1 million loan) has been in decline for two decades, a trend exacerbated by the Great Recession and its aftermath. Where in the 1990s small business loans made up one-half of a bank’s total number of loans, it now makes up less than 30 percent. Moreover, nearly two-thirds of all small businesses loans are denied with an even worse percentage in Florida. Dun and Bradstreet reported that more than 80 percent of small business loans in the Sunshine State were denied in the first half of 2015, forcing many to rely on personal assets to fund business growth.

To help bridge this lending gap and spur development and job creation, the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan is focused on expanding capital for private investment. Through a series of

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programs for business, residential and workforce development requiring a recommendation by the South St. Petersburg CRA Citizen Advisory Committee and approval by City Council, TIF revenues from the South St. Petersburg CRA will be invested annually to support private and non-profit projects to implement the Redevelopment Plan. These programs will be regularly monitored and measured for effectiveness to determine their impact on future investment. On February 4, 2016, City Council will be taking action on the first ten programs with more to follow in the next year or so. These programs are

- **Redevelopment Loan Program** provides funding to a South St. Petersburg loan pool to support the lending efforts in the CRA by the City's financial partners.
- **Commercial Site Improvement Grant** provides matching grants to commercial property owners that upgrade their building façades, landscaping, lighting, loading and service areas and other features of their sites visible from the public right-of-way.
- **Commercial Building Interior and Tenant Improvement Grant** provides matching grants to commercial property owners for interior upgrades with a focus on projects that remedy degraded building systems and extend the economic viability of the building.
- **Commercial Revitalization Program** provides grant awards to projects that enhance established business districts by redeveloping properties, decreasing vacancy rates, adding to the tax base, creating jobs, leveraging private sector investment, and improving the quality of life for surrounding neighborhoods
- **Residential Property Improvement Grant** supplements the City's annual investment in the "Rebates for Residential Rehabilitation" but is focused on incentivizing the substantial renovation of multifamily housing (defined as three or more units in a building).
- **Affordable Multifamily Housing Development Program** provides an annual rebate on increases in ad valorem taxes for all applicable Pinellas County taxing authorities for developers of affordable multifamily housing in the South St. Petersburg Community Redevelopment Area (CRA).
- **Workforce Readiness and Development Program** provides annual funding to accredited educational and job training providers, such as Career Source, St. Petersburg College and Pinellas Technical College, to prepare CRA residents for job opportunities with emerging St. Petersburg jobs through training, education and job placement.
- **"Paint Your Heart Out" Program** provides funding to the City's Neighborhood Team to help property owners in targeted areas of the CRA refurbish and refresh the exterior of their properties. The Program encourages collaboration with volunteers and non-profit and for-profit entities to leverage the City's TIF contribution.
- **CRA Grant Match Program** utilizes TIF revenue to provide a local matching share for federal, state foundation and other grant applications that would implement programs and strategies identified in the South St. Petersburg Redevelopment Plan.

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- **CRA Property Acquisition and Preparation Program** utilizes City of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County TIF revenue contributions to acquire properties and consolidate and prepare development sites to promote housing and economic development.

Why are the South St. Petersburg Plan goals and objectives so general? The development of the goals and objectives for the South St. Petersburg Plan was guided by two considerations. The first is a need for flexibility to respond to changing opportunities. Because of the heightened legal status of community redevelopment plans (CRP) any activities undertaken by the City under the auspices of the CRP must be consistent with it, or the CRP must be amended. Consequently, goals and objectives that are general in nature are a hallmark of the City's community redevelopment plans (CRPs), and frankly, by many other communities as well operating under the same legal restrictions. The City's CRPs provide policy guidance and direction on their intent without specifying the when, where and how they are to be implemented. This approach, embodied in the South St. Petersburg CRP, allows the City to be responsive to market opportunities where they occur and not be hamstrung by an overly rigid CRP that may be in conflict.

Avoiding plan amendments may seem like a minor concern, but the City's experience with the Intown Redevelopment Plan is a good lesson on the perils of being too specific when writing a CRP. Adopted in March 1982, the Intown Plan embodied a top-down planning approach by specifying what land uses could be located on what block and at what intensity for each block throughout the 300-acre Intown Redevelopment Area. It would take only one month after the Intown Plan was adopted before this approach would backfire when the City amended the Plan to increase the office square footage allowed in the Webb's City area. But this would still not be enough. Just nine months later in January 1983, the City would amend the Plan to allow still more office square footage for Webb's City. Amendments to the Intown Plan would become commonplace in the following decade with fifteen plan amendments by 1992. Considering that each plan amendment requires a recommendation from the local planning authority, two meetings of City Council, and ultimate approval from the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, the 60 to 90-day delay for bureaucratic processing alone could scuttle an investment opportunity. This experience has guided the City's preparation and development of five successive redevelopment plans.

The second and most important consideration when developing the South St. Petersburg Plan is that, unlike the City's other CRPs and plans for the area, the private sector, not the public sector, will be the principal redevelopment actor in the CRA. The underlying philosophy of the South St. Petersburg CRP is to incentivize the private sector to invest in the CRA by "directing the vast majority of TIF revenues generated from the South St. Petersburg district to provide direct assistance for private investment in residential and non-residential redevelopment in the form of grants, loans, ad valorem tax rebates or other vehicles that help businesses leverage capital from diverse sources." As such, developing specific goals and objectives for the private sector to accomplish is fruitless since private investment opportunities may not present themselves in the manner, location or time that CRP specifies. Making the South St. Petersburg Plan flexible allows the City to be nimble and responsive to development opportunities as they arise. Contrast this approach with that of the City's other revitalization plans in South St. Petersburg, which were

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driven by public investment in community facilities, amenities and place-making activities. Being project driven, it is not surprising that these plans tended to have had more specific goals and objectives simply because the City was the driving force and could identify when and where, for instance, a recreation facility, housing complex, library or streetscaping should be built. That being said, the TIF funded programs will have target goals in terms of measuring and monitoring private improvements and investments that are induced by public TIF investments.

It has been said that the Plan lacks any reference to focusing on our community's strengths, culture and assets. Is this the case?

No. The Neighborhood Impact chapter discusses for two pages the assets available and notes that the Plan “will build on many assets and opportunities and help improve the likelihood of success for the redevelopment plan. First, the CRA is located just outside the Downtown Business District and in close proximity to the downtown medical center, St. Petersburg College Downtown Campus, and the University of South Florida-St. Petersburg (the St. Pete Innovation District). These anchor institutions not only provide critical services to St. Petersburg and the region but they also are employers and customers for the CRA’s residents and businesses.

The CRA has also undergone significant area-wide planning and corridor revitalization efforts priming the pump for future success. South St. Petersburg contains two Florida Main Streets (Deuces Live and Grand Central), a program aimed at preserving and revitalizing Florida’s historic commercial corridors.

In addition, the CRA features numerous workforce training and educational resources including: Pinellas Job Corps; St. Petersburg College’s Midtown, Downtown and All State campuses; and the Pinellas Technical College. The area has several high performing public magnet schools, including Perkins Elementary School, Lakeview Fundamental Elementary School and Thurgood Marshall Middle School.

The CRA has strong recreational facilities providing amenities to its many neighborhoods, with eleven parks and five recreation centers. The Pinellas Trail, a 38-mile recreation trail, and the Clam Bayou Trail provide opportunities for walking, running, and biking. Other area assets include the Roser Park and Historic Kenwood neighborhoods, both listed on the National Register of Historic Places...”