

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sugar Hill Commons (No Ballpark Scheme)



Sugar Hill Parks (Ballpark Scheme)



CURT MOODY

Founder & Board Chairman, Moody Nolan



“ We have the opportunity to build a future for the site that pays tribute to its history. By celebrating the historical context, we create a development framework rooted in authenticity and inclusion.”

MICHAEL SORENSEN

Partner & Design Director, Henning Larsen (New York)



“ We envision a vibrant and diverse urban development comprised of multi-family housing, local retail, robust park and green spaces, cultural destinations, hotels, and a blue tech campus. The new district has the potential to be a world-class neighborhood that is distinctly St. Pete.”

CONNECTION

Establishing authentic connections on large-scale, multi-phased projects like the Trop is critically important. We have accordingly built the Sugar Hill plan around that core value: connecting form to function, design to neighborhood character, people to nature, and users to buildings. The most significant connection, however, is to the past 130 years. That is how long ago the African American community first put down roots in St. Petersburg. Workers on the Orange Belt, the railroad that put the city on the map and today is marked by the Pinellas Trail, began to settle in what became Peppertown, Methodist Town, and the Gas Plant. Those neighborhoods are gone today, victims of progress in the form of freeways and the ballpark, leaving a legacy of massive displacement, loss of cultural identity, and unfulfilled promises of urban renewal.

Redeveloping the Trop offers a chance to reckon with both the rich and troublesome legacy of the site. For healing to truly occur, there needs to be acknowledgment of the vital contributions that St. Petersburg’s African American community has made to create the city we know today. That effort includes engaging the community in a thoughtful, comprehensive, and sustained conversation about what the project can and should be. We are committed to redeveloping the Trop on the foundations of inclusion and equity, which we believe is the most fitting way to honor the history of the site. To accomplish this, we will:

- **Reconnect, Rebuild, and Remember:** Develop and foster strong connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and the vibrant history of the site. A careful balance between density and scale will be struck to provide intimate spaces and a distinct sense of place.
- **Connect Through Nature:** Create Booker Creek Park, a new public green space anchored by a revitalized Booker Creek and that stretches through the site and connects to Campbell Park to the south via elevated walkway. The creek banks will be reshaped to provide public access where children can splash in the shallow waters and hop on rocks across the stream bed.
- **Extend a Human-Scaled Downtown:** Build a central pedestrian artery that connects the site to downtown and serves as the home of the History Walk, an integrated linear museum telling the story of the neighborhoods that once occupied the site.
- **Create a Civic Stage:** Establish a new city gathering space at the intersection of Booker Creek Park and the History Walk. Fed by walking promenades, bike lanes, and green trails, the plaza will act as a dynamic, actively-programmed connective tissue, drawing residents in from across the city.

THE SUGAR HILL TEAM

The Sugar Hill team is comprised of leading local and international firms, advisors, operators, and developers who are committed to fully realizing the promise of the Trop. Our team includes:

- **JMA Ventures**, a sophisticated national developer with 30 years of complex, mixed-use project development experience.
- **Blue Sky Communities**, an experienced local affordable housing developer with a strong track record in St. Petersburg.
- **J Square Developers, Backstreets Capital, and DDA Development**, local developers with deep market connections and expertise.
- **Thomas Huggins (Ariel Business Group)**, a local leader in diversity and inclusion.
- **Gas Plant, LLC, Reverend Louis Murphy, and Roy Binger**, respected community leaders and developers for Tangerine Plaza in Midtown South St. Petersburg.
- **Henning Larsen**, an award-winning, internationally acclaimed master planning and architecture studio.
- **Moody Nolan**, winner of the American Institute of Architects' Firm of the Year award in 2021, and the largest African American-owned architectural firm in the country.
- **MANICA Architecture**, an expert in convention center and stadium design.
- **W Architecture**, an award-winning landscape architecture firm who contributed to bringing the Pier to life and has a deep understanding of St. Petersburg's natural context.
- **Behar Peteranecz**, an award-winning and leading architecture and design firm with deep roots in the local community and offices just down the street from the Trop.
- **Stantec**, a multi-disciplinary architecture, engineering, and planning firm with decades of experience in St. Petersburg.
- **ASM Global**, the world's leading operator of convention centers with over 90 locations worldwide, including signature facilities in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sydney.
- **Highgate**, a leading hotel operator with more than 160 properties under management.

THE SUGAR HILL PLAN

Redevelopment of the Trop is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. This is the time to think big, be creative, and compose a development plan that ensures the site will create equity and opportunity across the community for decades to come. We are passionate about and committed to achieving that outcome and have outlined a roadmap and vision to get there. Key elements of our plan include:

- **Workforce Development:** We are partnering with Mike Ramsey at St. Petersburg College to develop a multi-year workforce development "pipeline" model to ensure that South St. Petersburg CRA residents are aware of and, more importantly, trained to be ready for the broad range of jobs and careers that the Trop will provide. In addition, Sugar Hill team members are committed to providing mentorship opportunities to local firms and individuals throughout the duration of the project.
- **St. Petersburg Convention Center:** We are proposing a 1.1 million-square-foot convention center and associated 500-room hotel. St. Petersburg is well positioned to successfully compete with Tampa and other regional facilities. The convention center will create jobs and deliver substantial direct and indirect economic benefits to the city and county.
- **Affordable and Workforce Housing:** Blue Sky Communities, a local leader of affordable and workforce housing, is a member of the Sugar Hill team. Under both our "ballpark" and "no ballpark" schemes, 50% of residential units will be designated as affordable or workforce housing (approximately 1,000 to 1,600 total units). Blue Sky will also designate a portion of the available units for local artists to support an "Artist in Residence" program.
- **St. Petersburg Marine Science Institute:** We engaged in substantive discussions with the Regional Chancellor of USF; USF's Dean of the College of Marine Science; the head of the St. Pete Innovation District; and advisors to AltaSea, a Southern California blue economy institute, to develop a regional marine science center. Like AltaSea, a Florida center will create jobs, attract scientific and financial capital, and catalyze new technologies and businesses.
- **Food Security:** The Gas Plant neighborhood was known for its fruit trees and gardens, resources that helped feed the African American community. Today's South St. Petersburg CRA is a food desert. We are bringing fruit trees and gardens back to the site and are in discussions with USF Health and Emmanuel Roux, manager of the 15th Street Agrihub, to be the operating partner. We will also establish an on-site farmer's market that will be specifically marketed to the South St. Petersburg CRA, and provide learning opportunities for John Hopkins Middle School, Melrose Elementary School, and Campbell Park Elementary School students.
- **Small and Minority-Owned Business Inclusion:** The inclusion of local small and minority-owned businesses as part of the Sugar Hill team is indicative of the commitment and effort that will continue throughout the duration of the project.
- **Rays Ballpark:** Our Sugar Hill Parks scheme incorporates a new home for the Rays on the northeast corner of the site. We carefully studied several options and concluded this is the optimal location based on the relevant key factors. Given the existing street grid, placement of the current ballpark (which needs to remain operational), and other master planning considerations, this location on the site best accommodates an MLB-sized ballpark. The northeast corner is also proximate to the EDGE District and Central Parkway, while its topography allows the ballpark to be partially "embedded," enabling easy access to the main concourse level of the ballpark, considerations we anticipate will be important to the Rays.

THE SUGAR HILL PROMISE

If selected, we will be reliable partners to the city and community, and responsible stewards of a public trust placed in us to ensure the site becomes a reflection of St. Petersburg's history, a vision of its future, and a fulfillment of its promise as an engine of opportunity, creativity, and inspiration for all residents.