

# Jacksonville's Southbank

Technical Assistance Panel

March 29 - 30, 2016 | Jacksonville, Florida







# Preface

## About ULI

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Established in 1936, ULI has more than 37,000 members internationally representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. The North Florida District Council was formed in 2005 and has nearly 450 members in 34 counties including the cities of Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Gainesville, Tallahassee, Panama City and Pensacola.

## What are Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)?

Technical Assistance Panels (“TAPs”) are one- to two-day panels convened by the local ULI District Council at the behest of a community, public entity or private enterprise (Sponsor) facing real estate or land-use issues. The District Council assembles a panel composed of highly qualified professionals chosen for their experience with the types of issues facing the Sponsor. The interdisciplinary team of seasoned real estate professionals may include land planners, architects, financiers, developers, engineers, attorneys and brokers who are well qualified to provide unbiased, pragmatic advice on complex real estate issues. Panel members are not compensated for their time, but they are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, such as overnight lodging and transportation to attend the TAP. To ensure objectivity, panel members cannot be involved in matters pending before the Sponsor, currently work for the Sponsor or solicit work from the Sponsor during the six months following the TAP program.

## How do TAPs work?

The District Council works closely with the Sponsor to create a scope of work and convenes a panel of ULI members to address the issues outlined. The Sponsor in conjunction with the TAP committee also provides detailed background information to the TAP panelists prior to the panel session. When convened, the TAP members tour the study area, hear from those who may have stakes or claims in the outcome, and then deliberate on the issues presented. At the conclusion of its work, the panel presents its preliminary findings and recommendations to the Sponsor and then produces a written report for the Sponsor within six weeks.

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# Sponsor and Participants

## Sponsor

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## ULI North Florida

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District Council Chair

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TAP Committee Chair

## ULI TAP Committee Members

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**Shanell Davis**, Habitat for Humanity of Jacksonville

**Brenna Durden**, Lewis Longman & Walker

**Peter King**, Nassau County

**Chris Kuhn**, GreenPointe Communities

**Joe Loretta**, Genesis Group

**Nick Whitney**, Rogers Towers

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## Stakeholders

**Commissioner Lori Boyer**, District 5, City of Jacksonville

**Rafael Caldera**, Downtown Development Review Board

**Alex Coley**, Growth and Planning Chair, Museum of Science and History/Co-founder/Principal, NAI

Hallmark Partners

**Maria Hane**, Executive Director, Museum of Science and History

**Bill Killingsworth**, Jacksonville's Director of Planning and Development

**Guy Parola**, AICP, Downtown Redevelopment Manager, Downtown Investment Authority

**Kerri Stewart**, Chief of Staff, Jacksonville Mayor's Office

**Keith Tickell**, Vice President of Strategic Assets/Real Estate, Baptist Health

**Aundra Wallace**, Chief Executive Officer, Downtown Investment Authority

**Dabney Ware**, Board of Trustees Chair, Museum of Science and History

**Dr. Wayne Wood**, Founder, Riverside Arts Market

## Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Urban Land Institute, the TAP Committee Chair and TAP panelists wish to thank the following members and sponsors for their contributions:

**Guy Parola**, Downtown Investment Authority, Jacksonville

**Genesis Group**, Jacksonville

**Hopping Green & Sams**, Tallahassee

# TAP Scope

The Jacksonville Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) engaged the ULI North Florida District Council to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to study City-owned property between the Acosta and Main Street bridges along Jacksonville's Southbank. The 15-acre study area currently houses the Museum of Science and History (MOSH), Friendship Park and Fountain, a portion of the Riverwalk, River City Brewing Company and Marina, and various parking lots.

The TAP was asked to recommend:

1. A long-term vision and development program for the study area that is compatible with the Southbank District and that would promote economic growth, sound development practices, and livability;
2. Highest and best uses for the study area, including identifying a range of uses that would be compatible with existing, committed, and planned uses and public facilities within the Southbank District; and
3. Strategies for public facilities to promote mobility to, from, and within the study area and Southbank District, as well as any resulting adjustments to current land use, transportation, and recreation and open-space plans.





In making its recommendations, the TAP was asked to:

- Consider River City Brewing Company and MOSH leases on the property
- Analyze existing transportation, transit, and parking, and identify strategies to accommodate future redevelopment of the study area
- Consider supply impacts of “The District”
- Consider the Riverplace Boulevard “Road Diet”
- Identify specific strategies and tactics to promote enhanced public health in the study area and the Southbank District, based upon ULI’s “Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places,” such as specific design recommendations to promote livability
- Recommend public investment strategies that would serve as catalysts for redevelopment
- Recommend community programming (i.e., soft infrastructure) strategies to bring people to the study area and Southbank District to live, work, and play

In addition, the TAP was charged with answering the following questions:

- Is the study area currently developed with the right mix of uses?
- Does the site lend itself more to a particular type of use (e.g., retail, residential, office) or particular mix of uses?
- What are internal and external limiting factors or challenges for site redevelopment?
- Should the site have more of a relationship with the medical district on the Southbank, and if so how?
- How do you make the site a catalyst for further redevelopment and investment?
- Do the existing buildings/structures hold the site back?
- How can we maximize space-design aspects?
- How do we best utilize the waterfront and marina uses within the study area?



## Panel Process

The ULI North Florida District Council assembled a group of accomplished ULI members who have expertise in redevelopment, neighborhood planning, transportation, and urban design for an intensive two-day workshop to recommend a long-term vision and development program for the northwest corner of Jacksonville's Southbank.

Prior to convening, TAP members received information on the area's demographics and economic data, various area maps, existing land use, zoning, transportation, and Downtown master improvement plans.

Orientation on Day One included a walking tour of the study area led by Jacksonville City Council Vice President **Lori Boyer**, as well as stakeholder presentations and interviews. Stakeholders included **Rafael Caldera**, Downtown Development Review Board; **Alex Coley**, Growth and Planning Chair, Museum of Science and History/Co-founder/Principal, NAI Hallmark Partners; **Maria Hane**, Executive Director, Museum of Science and History; **Bill Killingsworth**, Jacksonville's Director of Planning and Development; **Guy Parola**, AICP, Downtown Redevelopment Manager, Downtown Investment Authority; **Kerri Stewart**, Chief of Staff, Jacksonville Mayor's Office; **Keith Tickell**, Vice President of Strategic Assets/Real Estate, Baptist Health; **Aundra Wallace**, Chief Executive Officer, Downtown Investment Authority; **Dabney Ware**, Board of Trustees Chair, Museum of Science and History; and **Dr. Wayne Wood**, Founder, Riverside Arts Market.

Day Two focused on potential strategies and solutions to the issues, and panelists formalized their observations to develop recommendations. The panelists presented their recommendations at the Museum of Science and History's Alexander Brest Planetarium. The meeting was open to the public.



# Executive Summary

The City of Jacksonville owns a 15-acre site in Downtown's Southbank District overlooking the St. Johns River. The study area is nestled between the Acosta Bridge to the west and the Main Street Bridge to the east, with Museum Circle Drive serving as its southern boundary. Along the river sits the newly rebuilt Southbank Riverwalk, a promenade that winds its way from the property to the Southbank's eastern end.

The study area is home to MOSH and River City Brewing Company and Marina. Each holds a 99-year lease expiring in 2066 and 2097, respectively. However, MOSH is seeking to expand its facility in order to broaden its appeal to a wider audience. Options include moving to another location or renegotiating the City lease and expanding on its current site.

At the center of the study area is Friendship Park, originally constructed in 1965 and modified many times including a renovation in 2010. While its 50-year-old fountain and the downtown St. Johns River backdrop have been a popular photograph opportunity for multiple generations and it is a prime location for fireworks displays, Friendship Park has seen few other opportunities for recreation or frequent use as a community gathering area. The balance of the study area is comprised of a public boat ramp, a Jacksonville Water Taxi stop, and several parking lots.

The ULI North Florida Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) was tasked with recommending a long-term vision and development program for the study area that is compatible with the Southbank District and that would promote the Southbank's economic growth, sound development practices, and livability.



The TAP reviewed existing uses of the study area in the context of the entire Southbank neighborhood and determined that the study area has the potential to be a rich and dynamic destination. It is located close to public transit and has the advantage of the river, the Riverwalk, park, marina, restaurant, and museum. However, more than a quarter of the study area is comprised of surface parking lots.

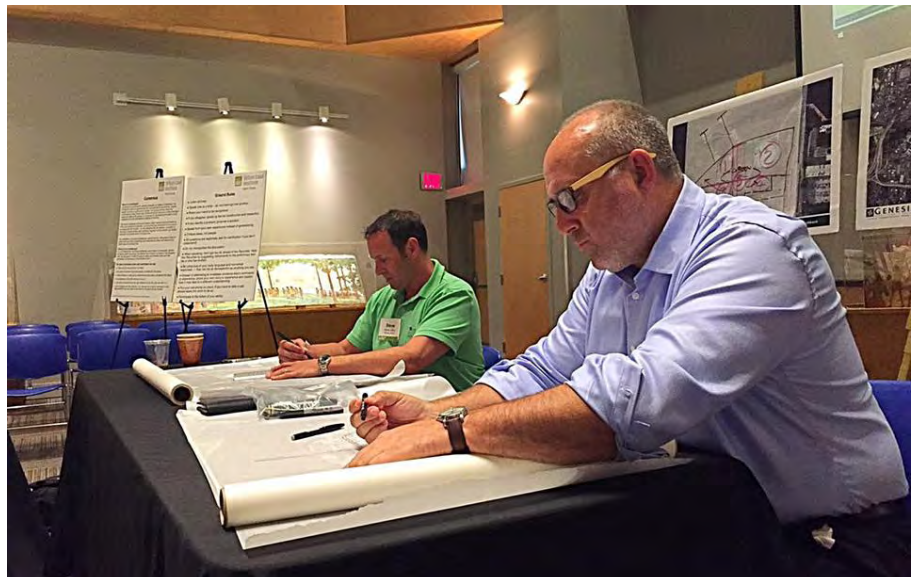
Much of the Southbank's land use is commercial and civic institutional. The Southbank's existing development pattern is based upon prioritizing the needs of the automobile and providing convenient access to surface parking lots, while sacrificing opportunities for an urban, pedestrian-level mix of uses like those found in Downtown's Northbank and in the neighborhoods of San Marco, Riverside, and Jacksonville Beach.

The Southbank also suffers from a lack of identity. Jurisdictionally, it is part of Downtown; but the Southbank is not perceived as such, nor is it identified with neighboring San Marco. If re-imagined as a separate place, the Southbank could be branded as a discrete neighborhood with its own identity and vision.

Positive changes to the Southbank are underway. A surge of new development is expected soon that will nearly triple the Southbank's population, currently at 832 residents. The District is a mixed-use development planned for the Southbank's east end. When complete, the 30-acre site is expected to include 1,170 residential units, a 150-200 key hotel, 288,500 square feet of commercial/retail space, 200,000 square feet of office space, a 4-acre park and a marina with 125 boat slips for public and private access. An additional 300 residential units are planned west of The District as part of Broadstone River House.

At the same time, Baptist Health expects to break ground in August 2016 on the Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center, one of only three MD Anderson joint ventures across the country. The new 12-story, 500,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility on Palm Avenue will greatly expand the existing campus, which includes Baptist Medical Center, Wolfson's Children's Hospital, Nemours Children's Specialty Care, and other affiliates.

Taking into consideration the Southbank's current and future development, the panel weighed the strengths and weaknesses of four possible land-use options for the study area. The TAP's preferred option for the study area is green space, cultural uses, and mixed-use development that the panel believes "pays respect" to the river while also accommodating a wider range of land uses than presently found in the study area.



## The ULI TAP Panel recommended that the City and DIA:

- Reclaim all the property along the waterfront in the study area as park space.
- Nurture an expanded cultural entity at the current MOSH site.
- Add a mixed-use development as another activity generator in order to make redevelopment economically viable.
- Relocate the public boat ramp to a different spot in the Downtown area.
- Make the green space active by adding amenities that engage visitors and maximize the experience for a variety of people, such as a skate park, playground, and fitness stations.
- Provide a water feature that enables people to interact with it; e.g., Crown Fountain in Chicago’s Millennium Park, Fountain of Rings in Atlanta’s Centennial Olympic Park. This recommendation would require either retrofitting Friendship Fountain or replacing it.
- Add regularly scheduled programming to draw people to the park and activate the site.
- Upgrade and repurpose the marina to make it a visual amenity.
- Gain control of the Acosta Bridge underpass parking lot for study area expansion.

The TAP also recommended a number of strategies and steps that the City and DIA should consider for the entire Southbank that would enhance livability, promote mobility, and make it a healthy place. These public investments can set the stage for redevelopment and help to catalyze private investment in the area:

### Enhance Livability

- Increase density and create a stretch goal for residential development in the Southbank; make provisions for workforce housing when evaluating developer requests for DRI entitlements.
- Encourage street-level retail as part of infill residential development, with particular emphasis on resident-centered services on Prudential Drive.
- Rethink Main Street by bringing the elevated portion down to grade between Prudential Drive and Riverplace Boulevard/Museum Circle Dr., making it a three-lane road with a reversible center lane and adding bike lanes.
- Provide quality open space and programming to draw people to the Southbank. This recommendation will require an entity taking responsibility for developing regularly scheduled events in Friendship Park, Treaty Oak, and popup sites.

### Promote Mobility

- Emphasize San Marco Boulevard and Prudential Drive as the central connected thoroughfares for infill development with street-level retail and design standards consistent with concepts such as “Great Streets” and “Complete Streets.”
- Slow down and re-purpose Main Street and the Main Street Bridge to calm traffic and create a more pedestrian- and retail-friendly roadway, as well as an improved pedestrian access to the bridge.
- Assess streets throughout the Southbank for a road diet to achieve the Traffic Element goals in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan for the Southbank District. But seek less-costly strategies to slow traffic on Riverplace Boulevard at this time in order to save as much as possible of the \$5 million allocated for the road diet for other goals of the Southside Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). Alternatively, the City and DIA should seek state funding for the Riverplace road diet.

- Re-establish the historic street grid to increase density, eliminate superblocks, and extend north-south streets to the St. Johns River.
- Locate a future commuter rail stop near the Baptist Health campus, the area’s largest employer, to encourage use of and leverage investment in public transit.
- Complete the multi-use trail loop, including the extension of the Riverwalk, to make the Southbank more accessible, active, and connected.
- Incentivize residential development and street-level retail around existing Skyway stations while reducing the amount of parking available to encourage use of mass transit.
- Enhance the water taxi to promote mobility to and from a redeveloped study area and reduce auto traffic over the bridges.

**Make it Healthy**

- Create a robust Southbank neighborhood using development strategies based on ULI’s “10 Principles for Building Healthy Places.”

# Building Healthy Places

ULI adopted the Building Healthy Places initiative in 2013 as a cross-disciplinary theme to promote health in planning and designing thriving communities.

**ULI’s 10 Design Principles:**

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Put People First             | Ensure Equitable Access        |
| Recognize the Economic Value | Mix It Up                      |
| Empower Champions for Health | Embrace Unique Character       |
| Energize Shared Spaces       | Promote Access to Healthy Food |
| Make Healthy Choices Easy    | Make It Active                 |



## Next Steps

The panel suggested next steps for the City and DIA to begin the process of implementing changes to the Southbank and the study area:

- The TAP found a consistent effort since 2000 to provide general direction for the implementation of area improvements in the Southbank. What is missing is a clear vision – a shared sense of what the Southbank community should become in terms of land uses, density, design, diversity, public amenities, mobility, and priorities. The DIA and other governmental decision-makers should convene all stakeholders in a community-based process to articulate a coherent and well-defined vision for the Southbank and the outcomes the community desires. Creating such a vision is essential if the Southbank is to realize its full urban potential.
- Discussions should begin immediately with MOSH and River City Brewing Company to engage them as partners in the study area's redevelopment efforts and to negotiate a win-win outcome with respect to their long-term leases.
- The DIA should be given control of all on-street and off-street public parking in the Southbank and implement a new parking strategy with market-based pricing to further the goal of making Jacksonville's Southbank a vibrant urban place.
- The DIA should manage its limited funds to ensure it has the maximum ability to implement the Southbank Vision, and leverage available funds to attract additional dollars from state, federal, and private sources.

The City, DIA, and other institutions already have planned some of the specific measures that the TAP recommends, and others may be in progress. The inclusion of such measures in the TAP recommendations is intended only to reinforce their value for redevelopment of the study area and the Southbank, and the sense of urgency that should be shown in their implementation.



# Background

Hugging the southern banks of the St. Johns River, the 15-acre, City-owned study area sits nestled between the Acosta Bridge to the west and the Main Street Bridge to the east and is bounded on the south by Museum Circle Drive. San Marco Boulevard, which runs north and south, dead ends into the study area. At the heart of the study area is Friendship Park and its 50-year-old fountain that overlook the waterway and the newly rebuilt Riverwalk, which winds its way from the study area to the Southbank's eastern end.

The City leases a portion of the study area to MOSH and River City Brewing Company. The balance of the study area is comprised of a public boat ramp, a Jacksonville Water Taxi stop, and several parking lots. The lots are used by MOSH, the restaurant, marina, and boat ramp. At the western end, a Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) operated parking lot includes 208 spaces extending under the Acosta Bridge that accommodates the restaurant's valet parking during the evenings and weekends. The JTA recently opened the lot for free public use upon Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) request.

The existing land-use pattern of the study area and its environs is predominantly commercial and civic institutional. Across Museum Circle Drive, towering office buildings connected by an elevated pedestrian walk flank San Marco Boulevard. Another parking area sits adjacent to the Acosta Bridge off ramp. Looming large just south of the study area is the Aetna Building and the Baptist Health campus, which is expanding.

## Museum of Science and History (MOSH)

MOSH is a 501(c)3 entity whose mission is to bring to life the sciences and regional history. Of its \$2.7 million operating cost, about 60 percent comes from revenue and 40 percent from city and state government funding and private support. Most visitors (60 percent) are from Duval County, 30 percent come from other Florida counties and 13 percent from out of state, mostly Georgia.

**“We don't want to lose our focus on children, but we want to be much more than that — a life-long learning center.”**

**– Dabney Ware, 2015-16 Board of Trustees Chair, MOSH**



**“I would like to see something along the Southbank that people would say ‘wow’. Surely we can build something wonderful on the river that would make people want to come see it.”**

**– Dr. Wayne Wood, Founder, Riverside Arts Market**

The museum opened in 1961 in Riverside as Jacksonville Children’s Museum and moved to its current location in 1969. The name was changed in 1977 to Jacksonville Museum of Arts and Sciences, and again in 1988 to its current name when the museum more than doubled its size and added the Alexander Brest Planetarium. MOSH has undergone several renovations and additions since then, and currently totals 77,000 square feet.

The building’s physical limitations thwart the museum’s ability to grow and broaden its audience from children to the general public of all ages. In recent years MOSH has added programs for adults, and about 37 percent of its gate comprises adults without children.

The museum began planning for expansion three or four years ago and currently seeks to triple its size. One option is move MOSH to Jacksonville’s Downtown Core. MOSH may be amenable to moving, but likes the current location. Their vision is to embrace the river by having the entrance face the waterfront and by utilizing the outdoor space available. MOSH expects to have a concept ready by its 75th anniversary in November. It is estimated that a capital campaign will run five to seven years, with another two to three years to build the new facilities.

The museum building is owned by its not-for-profit parent. MOSH has a 99-year lease on the property that expires in 2066 and pays the City \$1 per year. The current lease does not include the potential expansion area, and on-site expansion would require renegotiating the lease with the City. Parking consists of 60 spaces to the east and northeast of the museum building and 30 spaces within the River City Brewing Company lot adjoining MOSH.

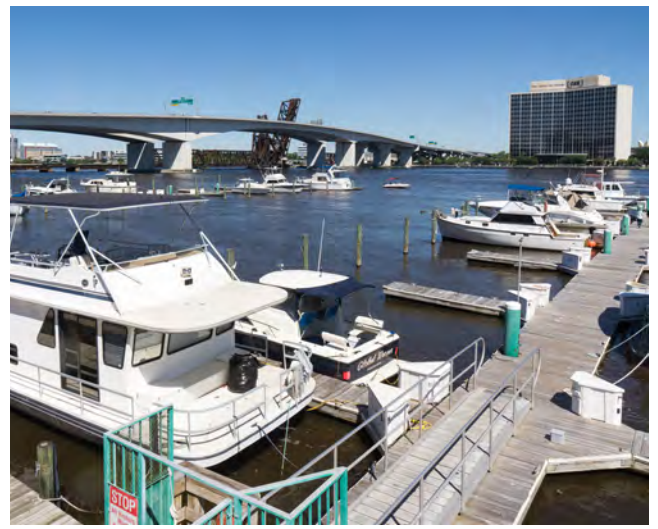
### **River City Brewing Company and Marina**

River City Brewing Company was established at this location in 1993. However, it is not the first restaurant to be located in the study area. In the 1940s a waterfront restaurant, Lobster House, sat in the shadow of the old Acosta Bridge. The building, which was built on a pier, burned down in 1962.

A new restaurant, built on land, went through several incarnations, most recently as Diamond Head Lobster House. The latter was closed in 1986 to make room for the new Acosta Bridge and reopened as Harbormasters on the site now occupied by River City Brewing Company. The new building and parking lot was carved out of Friendship Park, nearly cutting the park in half. In 1992 Harbormasters defaulted on a \$2.9 million federal loan backed by the City. River City Brewing Company opened in 1993. City and Maritime Concepts, L.C., (d/b/a River City Brewing Company) bought the building and dock from the City in 1998 and signed a 99-year lease for use of the land. The lease includes exclusive use of 175 of the 205 parking spaces available. The company pays the City a base rent of \$30,000 a year. In 2018 the rent will rise to \$40,000 annually. The lease also calls for the restaurant to pay the city a half of 1 percent of gross revenues over \$4.5 million.

The marina offers 62 slips for 20-foot boats and up to 120-foot yachts. Docking, gas, and diesel fuel are available, and it is the only place in Downtown Jacksonville for boaters to refuel. The marina is open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. Many of the slips are leased but courtesy slips are available for guests who are dining in the restaurant.

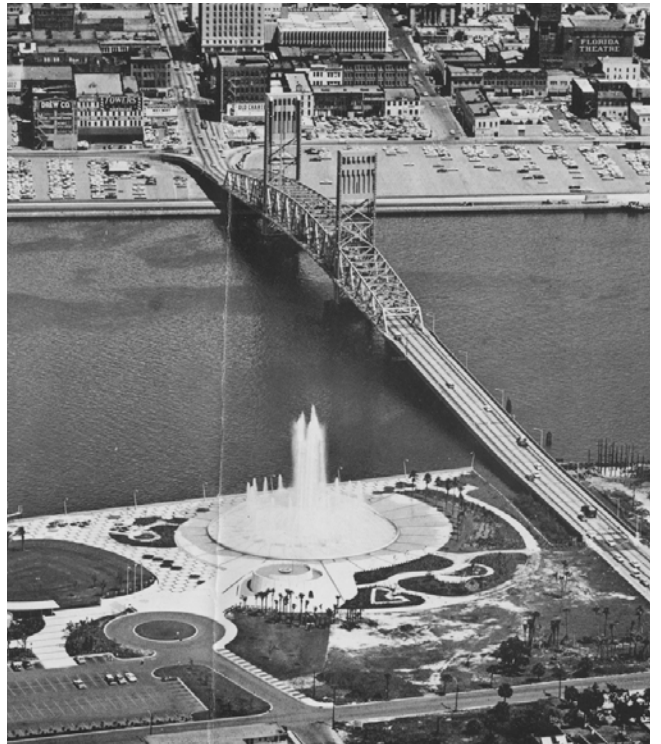
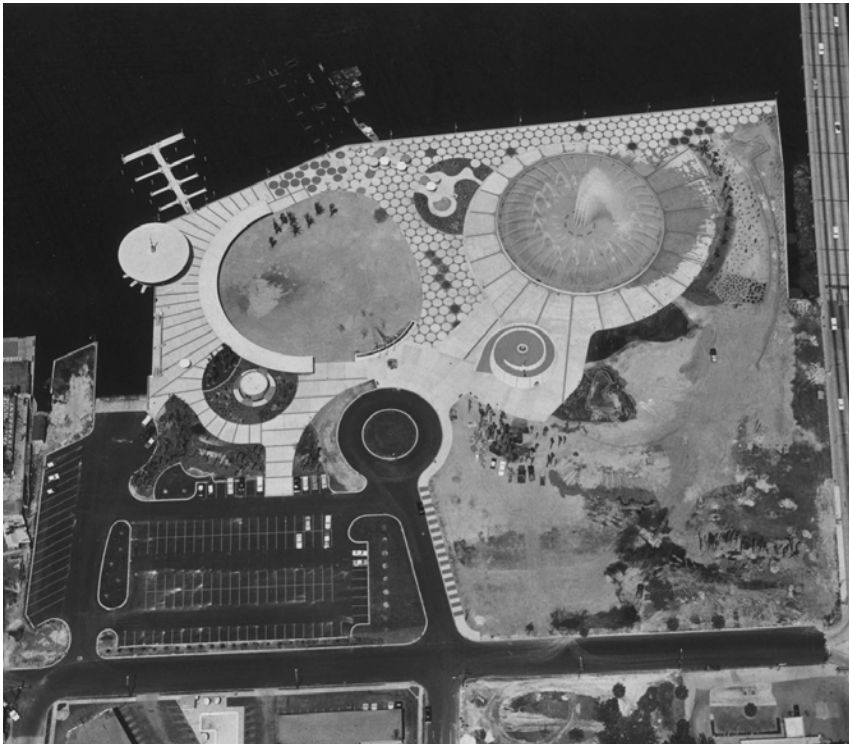




## Friendship Park and Fountain

Before Friendship Park and Friendship Fountain were built, the study area and waterfront were blighted—home to shacks and rotting piers. In the 1940s, newspaper stories described the land as a “barren stretch of spoil dirt without any marks of beauty, natural or man-made” or “unsightly marsh of rubble and pilings.” The Southside Businessmen’s Club sought to create a waterfront park and was instrumental in getting the concept approved.

The fountain and park designed by architect Taylor Hardwick cost \$1.75 million. When opened in 1965, the complex was known as Dallas Thomas Park and Marina and the Fountain of Friendship. The name was changed to St. Johns River Park in 1968, but is more commonly known as Friendship Park. The original park featured a modernistic design, flying saucer style building, and a large green space, part of which is now the site of River City Brewing Company and the adjacent parking lot. The 200-foot-wide fountain was touted as the world’s largest and tallest. It featured a 252-multicolored-light display on water shooting up as high as 120 feet at the center through 63 jets at a rate of 17,000 gallons of water per minute.



As noted above, the park was cut in half to accommodate new construction and parking for Harbormasters (See River City Brewing Company). In addition, time caught up with Friendship Fountain's mechanics. The fountain was refurbished in 1985, again in 2001, and repaired several times since then. Two of the three original pumps failed in 2005, but parts were no longer available. As a result, the fountain was operating at a reduced flow. In the mid-2000s, a City proposal to take out the fountain to make room for the relocation of Kidz Kampus from Metropolitan Park met with community resistance, and the fountain was saved from demolition.

A \$3.1 million makeover was implemented in 2010 to refurbish the park and fountain. The renovation included restoring the fountain and replacing 80 percent of the original concrete with green space. A small grassed amphitheater with stone seat walls was added along with new landscaping. Other amenities included a picnic space and new benches. Nevertheless, the existing park and fountain are underutilized public spaces, and the fountain operates at reduced capacity because only one of its three pumps functions properly.

## Public Boat Ramp

The public boat ramp is located west of River City Brewing Company at a narrow part of the St. Johns River and is the closest ramp to Downtown. It is a popular ramp, especially during special events Downtown.

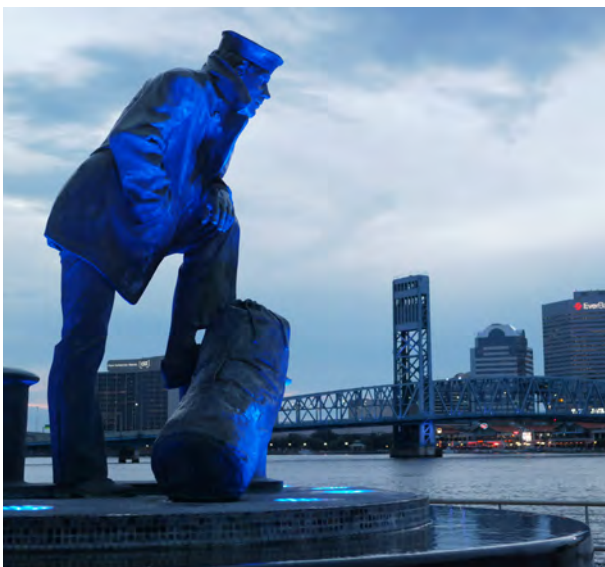
The facility is wide enough for two boats, and the vessel use rating is “A,” unlimited. However, the ramp has a steep drop off, and boaters must contend with a strong current when putting in. Parking is limited.

## Southbank Riverwalk

The Southbank’s Riverwalk was originally constructed in 1985. By 2013, the aging wood structure had deteriorated and was shut down as part of an 18-month reconstruction project. The new 4,000-foot Riverwalk, which runs from Friendship Park to the Duval County School Board building, opened in February 2015 as a concrete walkway over the river and featuring colorful paver bricks. Only four public accesses connect the new structure to the land.

The Riverwalk features benches, canopies for shade, improved lighting for safety, two floating docks, two permanent slips for dinner cruise boats, and event space. The Jacksonville Navy Memorial statue of the Lone Sailor has been given new life atop a fountain and starburst brick design. More public art, a mosaic entitled “Mirrored River: Where do you see yourself?,” adorns the space under the Main Street Bridge.

Plans are to extend the Riverwalk east into The District and from Friendship Park west and south along the water to Nemours Children’s Specialty Care. It will connect with a multi-use trail that will loop east to Hendricks and north to The District and the Riverwalk.





## Riverplace Boulevard Road Diet

Riverplace Boulevard runs east from the Main Street Bridge and turns south to Hendricks Avenue. The wide five-lane roadway serves as a fast short-cut to Downtown's Northbank District during weekdays and other busy periods, which makes pedestrian crossing difficult. The 2015 Downtown Jacksonville Community Redevelopment Plans cited more than 100 reported traffic accidents in the prior 5-year period, 42 of which involved hit-and-run. Sidewalks are narrow and the current configuration does not enhance street-level retail viability. Superblocks running east and west that are dotted with half-empty parking lots provide few access points to the waterfront and leave little connection inward from the river.

The DIA initiated a traffic-calming project in 2014 to improve safety, walkability, and bikeability along Riverplace Boulevard. A \$5 million plan approved February 18, 2016, by the Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) will reduce the lanes from five to three. Other improvements include adding crosswalks, bike lanes, bulb-outs, landscaping, seating, street parking, lighting, and wayfinding signs. Construction is expected to begin in early 2017.

## Parking

In 2007, the Jacksonville Economic Development Commission (JEDC) received a final report on parking for Downtown Jacksonville, entitled "Supply/Demand and Alternatives Analysis." Performed by Walker Parking Consultants, Inc., of Indianapolis, Ind., the report concluded that there was an adequate parking supply at that time, with only two of nine downtown districts having a weekday occupancy of 85 percent or greater of the then-available supply for that district.

Parking occupancy for the Southbank, for on-street and off-street parking combined, had one of the lowest occupancy rates, at 39 percent. However, on-street parking in the Southbank was found to have 85 percent or greater occupancy of the then-available supply, one of only two downtown districts with "problem" on-street parking on weekdays. Although the final report did not specify the planning period for the study, the future parking supply for the Southbank was projected to grow to 11,718 PS against a projected demand of 5,905 PS for a surplus of 5,813 PS. The report cautioned that surface parking lots in the Southbank and elsewhere downtown were being proposed for redevelopment so conditions should be expected to change.



The final report included a number of recommendations. The report concluded that charges for on-street and off-street parking should be based on market demand; in particular, the report found that on-street parking downtown was underpriced. The report also recommended that “peripheral parking areas” are underutilized, and a pricing strategy should be implemented to, among other things, increase the appeal of parking in these areas. Further, the report recommended that downtown parking be coordinated by a single entity that would manage publicly owned parking resources and also coordinate with private operators.

After 10 years, the data that formed the basis for this study is probably outdated. Further, the study did not take into account potential parking supply and demand from The District or the Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center. DIA informed the TAP that it is considering an update of the 2007 study.

### **Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center**

Baptist Health is a major regional health care provider with five hospitals and the largest network of physician offices in Northeast Florida. Its campus on Prudential Drive includes Baptist Medical Center, Wolfson’s Children’s Hospital, and Nemours Children’s Specialty Care.

In October 2015, Baptist Health opened the Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center in the former Baptist Outpatient Center on San Marco Boulevard. It is one of only three joint ventures with MD Anderson across the country.

Baptist expects to break ground in August 2016 on a new 12-story, 500,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility on Palm Avenue covering two blocks from Gary to Nira Street and backing up to the west side of San Marco Boulevard. A glass enclosed pedestrian bridge across San Marco Boulevard is planned to take patients from the outpatient center to the main facility. The building’s second and third floors will be stepped back and public plazas will be built on San Marco at both Gary and Nira streets. Additionally, a 650-car garage will be built between San Marco and Palm. No patient housing is planned as part of the project. An eight-foot multi-use path along Children’s Way and Nira Street will provide a connection to the pedestrian-bicycle path the FDOT plans to build across the St. Johns River and the Southbank Riverwalk near The District.



**“When fully operational, the Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center will employ about 600 highly skilled workers with an average annual salary of \$100,000,”**

**- Keith Tickell, Vice President of Strategic Assets/Real Estate, Baptist Health**

Final plans are expected to be presented to the City Council for approval in May. The projected opening date is February 2018. When fully operational, the center will employ about 600 highly skilled workers with an average annual salary of \$100,000.

Baptist is fully funding the project, but the City has provided the hospital system with stormwater credits.

### **The District**

The District is a mixed-use development proposed for a 30-acre former Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) site on the Southbank’s east end. A Healthy Town concept, the community will be designed to promote health and well being based on ULI’s Building Healthy Places initiative. Developers Peter Rummell and Michael Balanky have planned for 1,170 condos and apartments, a 150- to 200-key hotel, 288,500 square feet of commercial/retail space, and 200,000 square feet of office space. The multifamily residential buildings will feature street-level retail and include structured parking. A 4-acre park will front the St. Johns River and will include a marina with 125 boat slips for public and private access. Note: Rummell has since bought out Balanky’s interest in the firm, Elements Development of Jacksonville, LLC, which is set up to develop the project.

The Southbank Riverwalk will be extended an additional .38 miles to include the new development. Another .57 miles of jogging trails and sidewalks will be constructed throughout the site and along the border of the property creating a 7.9 mile linear walkway.

The District is planned for buildout in three phases over a span of four to six years. Construction is expected to begin this summer, with Phase I ready by the fourth quarter of 2017.

## Water Taxi

The St. Johns River Taxi operates four boats that ferry passengers six days a week from the Northbank to three Southbank locations, including Friendship Park. The water taxi has consistently lost money. Last year, the water taxi operator, Lakeshore Marina, proposed a public-private partnership to help sustain operations. Under an agreement approved by the City Council, the company is to create a marketing and sponsorship campaign, called OnBoard Jax!, to build ridership and offset costs. Money raised from corporate sponsors will be matched by the City up to \$120,000 in the first year. Current corporate sponsors are The Florida Times-Union, Jacksonville Jaguars, Omni Hotel, and St. Johns Riverkeepers.

## Skyway

The 2.5-mile-long monorail system operated by the JTA, connects the north and south sides of the St. Johns River, runs Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., and is free of cost. The system runs Saturdays and Sundays only during special events. There are three Southbank stations—San Marco, Riverplace, and Kings Avenue. The closest station to the study area is the San Marco station, which is located one block south at Mary Street and San Marco Boulevard.

The system includes 10 2-car rubber-tire trains, each with the capacity to carry 56 passengers. Average daily ridership is 5,000 per day. When the system opened 1989, ridership was expected to be 100,000 a day.

The JTA Skyway Modernization Plan is underway to replace cars and upgrade infrastructure, along with the potential expansion of the existing system.



### Proposed Commuter Rail

In September 2013, the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and the JTA Board of Directors approved the development of a commuter rail line from Downtown Jacksonville to St. Augustine. Preliminary planning was completed in Fall 2014. A station is proposed for Prudential Drive/San Marco Boulevard. The commuter service will connect to the San Marco Skyway station and bus routes.





# Analysis

## Study Area

The study area offers an opportunity for the City to bring back an iconic, open public space as a destination for residents and tourists alike. Located across the St. Johns River from the Jacksonville Landing, this keystone parcel offers stunning views of Jacksonville’s skyline and is one of the Southbank’s few access points to the newly constructed Riverwalk. The study area’s size is large enough to accommodate multiple venues without assembling additional parcels.

Because the study area is City-owned, the DIA can ensure that organizations to which it leases provide a public benefit and needed community services. A plus is that the location is accessible to public transportation via the Skyway, major highways, and the future commuter rail system. Focusing growth around transit stations will capitalize on public investments in transit by increasing ridership. Together with cultural activities and the Riverwalk, the study area has the potential be a rich and dynamic destination.

Study Area	
Strengths / Opportunities	Constraints
Riverwalk	Long Leases on MOSH and River City Brewing Company
MOSH	Fountain Limits Reconfiguration
Marina	Surrounded by Parking Lots
Confluence of Transportation	No Connectivity
Location Close to Downtown Core	
Open Space	
Visual Connection to Northbank	
City-owned	
Size	
Opportunity to be a Catalyst Project	
Underpasses can be Activated	



However, currently, the study area begs for improvement:

- The study area lacks identity; there is no sense of place.
- More than one quarter of the study area consists of surface parking lots.
- Friendship Park is static, as visitors can only come and sit to view the fountain and river,
- Friendship Fountain is passive. While it is a well-known spot, the fountain is based on a dated design concept and is limited by the inability to purchase needed parts. Only one of its three pumps functions properly.
- There is no regularly scheduled public programming to draw people to the park.
- The marina is hampered by a lack of amenities and access to shops and a choice of restaurants.
- The public boat ramp has a steep drop off, and boaters must contend with a strong current when putting in. In addition, the boat ramp prevents a continuous Riverwalk along the shore of the Southbank.

Neither the park, the river nor River City Brewing Company can be seen from the street entry. Nothing beckons visitors to enter, and nothing brands the study area as a destination, despite the fact that Friendship Park offers one of only four public access points to Southbank's premier attraction, the Riverwalk.

There are constraints that may hamper the ability to turn the study area into a destination. Redevelopment of the study area most likely will require the relocation of River City Brewing Company and will depend on the successful renegotiation of its lease, which runs until 2097.

Adding retail to the study area may be challenging. Retail typically follows rooftops. Currently, there are no residential units on Southbank's west end. A mixed-use development in the study area will face competition from the Southbank's east end. The planned supply of residential, retail, and commercial units there has the potential to impede redevelopment of the study area. The nearby District will offer more than 475,000 square feet of commercial/retail and office space and 1,170 residential units. Broadstone will add another 300 residential units to the 670 that already exist on Riverplace Boulevard. Furthermore, funding may be limited for infrastructure development at the study area and elsewhere in the Southbank due to the allocation of TIF money that may be committed for infrastructure to serve The District.

MOSH seeks to expand its facility and broaden its audience, which will require the renegotiation of the museum's lease. If the space allotted is not sufficient for such expansion, MOSH could choose to maintain the current facility as a children's museum and build another facility for adults in the Downtown Core near other cultural organizations, or simply relocate the entire museum elsewhere. The latter would require the City to find another tenant for the museum site.

Friendship Fountain is well-known in Jacksonville but appears to be underutilized. A previous attempt to remove it met with community opposition. Any move to replace or retrofit the fountain to be interactive may meet with resistance unless it is an active water feature that is part of a larger overall vision to make the park and the Southbank more attractive to families from throughout Jacksonville.



## Southbank

The study area is located in the Southbank, running from the St. Johns River south to I-95, and from the river on the west to Alamo Street on the east. Until the mid-2000s, the Southbank was dominated by office buildings. The advent of three residential towers on Riverplace Boulevard began to change the area’s character. Although only serving a population of 834, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Southbank is about to explode with new growth. The District will add 1,170 residential units, and the adjacent Broadstone River House will add another 300 apartments to the residential mix. The Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center, which is scheduled to break ground in August, will bring 600 new jobs, boosting the area’s economy. With the population growing, there is an opportunity to enhance the entire Southbank’s livability and to create greater connectivity to the river.

Nevertheless, Southbank lacks identity and definition; there is no urban fabric. Much of the Southbank’s development appears transactional with no intentionality. Development is disjointed and connectivity is lacking. While jurisdictionally part of Downtown, the Southbank is not perceived as such. Nor is the Southbank identified with San Marco, although it is that neighborhood’s front door.

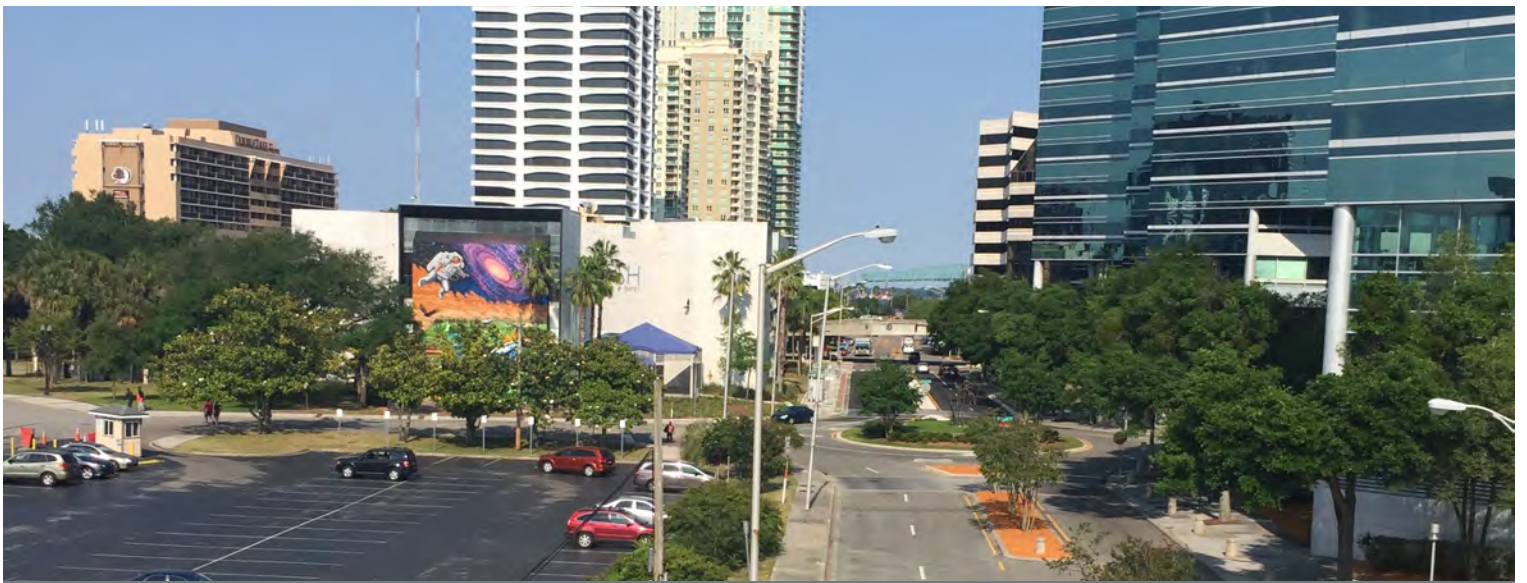
Southbank	
Strengths / Opportunities	Constraints
Riverwalk	Plethora of Surface Parking Lots
MOSH	Bridges act as Barriers
Marina	No Connectivity
Friendship Park	Lack of Historic Street Grid
Confluence of Transportation	Highways
Location Close to Downtown Core	Funding - TIF is Tapped
Medical Complex / Increased Employment	Lack of Vision for Southbank as a Whole
Underpasses can be Activated	Lack of Political Will

If re-imagined as a separate place, the Southbank could be rebranded as a discrete neighborhood with its own identity and vision. Currently, the Southbank appears to be an automobile-oriented suburban office park. Street-level retail is lacking to support residents' basic needs, such as a supermarket. Residents currently must travel across the river to Brooklyn to buy groceries at the closest supermarket. Green space for the most part is missing as is workforce housing. A key takeaway from the TAP process was the need for a clearer vision for what Southbank should be. [See sidebar: The Need for a Southbank Vision]

There is a need to slow traffic on Riverplace Boulevard for safety reasons due to the number of accidents on that street. Given the lack of retail fronting on the street, either current or proposed, the DIA should explore less expensive ways to slow traffic and increase pedestrian and biker safety than the planned \$5 million road diet. More modest traffic-calming measures would achieve the public safety goal in the near term while preserving at least some of the limited TIF funding that is expected to be available for the Southbank due to other demands.

The Southbank's street grid in general lacks connectivity and is prohibitive for pedestrians and bicycles. Highway overpasses crisscrossing Southbank serve as concrete barriers that divide the area. Underpasses are dark, dank, noisy places. Super blocks dotted with surface parking lots block the waterfront and hamper connectivity. A lack of perpendicular streets necessitated the City's payment of \$2 million for an alleyway between The Strand and The Peninsula to enable pedestrians to reach one of the Riverwalk's four access points. There is only one small sign providing wayfinding to the river. At the Chart House Restaurant one must traipse through a parking lot to get to the Riverwalk. The new, improved Riverwalk is a valuable asset to Southbank and the City. Not only does access to it need to be improved but visitors should have easy access to vendors, shops, coffee houses and restaurants, the lack of which is noted by out-of-town reviewers on travel websites such as TripAdvisor.





# The Need for a Southbank Vision

The DIA is positioned to play a pivotal role in the Southbank. The agency has regulatory authority over development through DDRB and finances publicly funded infrastructure through the CRA, which are governmental roles. Plus, under the Consolidated Downtown Development of Regional Impact (DRI) development order, DIA owns the entitlements that site developers need for individual projects. That is typically a private-sector role for a master developer. The JEDC touted this structure as “a one-stop shop—combining development rights with regulatory approval.”

There does not, however, appear to be a clear vision for the Southbank. The Jacksonville Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Element classifies the Southbank as a Central Business District, which is a malleable future land-use classification. The City has also zoned the Southbank as Central Business District with a Downtown Zoning Overlay. That, too, lacks any real definition. Furthermore, the Consolidated Downtown DRI development order relies on the comprehensive plan and zoning overlay maps to prescribe an urban fabric for the Southbank. This approach provides maximum flexibility for the market to shape the area.

There has been a consistent effort since 2000 to provide general direction for the Southbank. After a downtown visioning process, the 2000 Celebrating the River Downtown Master Plan was prepared. Its plans for Southbank development included:

“... a mixture of uses while maintaining an urban form that supports the extension of river views throughout the district and builds on the activity along San Marco Boulevard and Hendricks Avenue:

- Waterfront entertainment and hotels will continue to be encouraged along the river to echo the activity on the north bank of the river.
- A new mixed-use neighborhood will be developed on the JEA station site.
- Treaty Oak Park will be framed by differing building masses with a mix of uses.
- Office use will be encouraged south of Prudential Drive.
- Investment is needed to maintain the Southbank Riverwalk and Friendship Park.
- Transit-related development adjacent to ASE station will be emphasized.”

In 2007, the JEDC adopted the Downtown Action Plan to implement the Celebrating the River Downtown Master Plan. The action plan set forth four key objectives:

- To improve walkability
- To make downtown a destination
- To make downtown a neighborhood
- To ensure a framework for sustainable success

The plan identified 19 initiatives to realize these objectives, such as innovative parking management, workforce housing, improved wayfinding signage, a downtown marketing plan, and redevelopment of the Friendship Fountain area “with a mix of uses that attracts residents and visitors to an iconic place Downtown.” However, the JEDC’s Downtown Action Plan did not articulate an overall vision for the Southbank in general or the study area in particular.

At present, the policy guidance for downtown development is unclear: The Celebrating the River Downtown Master Plan is expressly referenced in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Element as providing the “overall guidelines” for downtown development (see Objective 2.3 and its implementing policies); however, the DIA’s 2015 Community Redevelopment Area Plan “supersedes the Downtown Master Plan which ... is repealed”, deferring instead to the Consolidated Downtown DRI development order and other requirements.

DIA has inherited a set of legal authorities that is deferential to site developers and their perceptions about the markets for office, retail, and residential development. What appears to be missing is an easy-to-understand, detailed vision of the outcomes that the community desires for the Southbank as the driver for development and infrastructure policy and implementation. Such a clearly articulated and recognizable vision is essential to guide DIA in the exercise of its public and private powers. A vision is also a good benchmark to measure progress toward desired outcomes.

The DIA and other governmental decision-makers should convene all stakeholders in a community-based process to articulate a coherent and well-defined vision for the Southbank, with narrative and graphic components and the outcomes the community desires. Creating such a vision is essential if the Jacksonville Southbank is to realize its full urban potential.



# Recommendations

## Study Area

### Highest and Best Uses

The St. Johns River and the view of the Jacksonville skyline make the study area special. The waterfront should be the focal point of the study area, and a grand entrance is essential to signal that one has arrived at an important destination. The streets should be reconfigured to eliminate the circle at San Marco Boulevard to provide a central spine with a direct sightline from San Marco Boulevard to the river. With that in mind, the TAP divided the study area into quadrants. Parcels 1 and 2 are closest to the river, and Parcels 3 and 4 abut Museum Circle Drive.

Four options were developed and discussed by the panel when evaluating potential highest and best uses for the study area. Each option maintains Parcels 1 and 2 as green space in a desire to revive the historic use of the waterfront as an active public park. This recommendation will require the relocation of River City Brewing Company and renegotiating the restaurant's long-term lease.

Possible Highest and Best Use Options for Parcels 3 & 4	
<b>Option A</b> Parcels 3 and 4 are cultural uses. That could include MOSH expansion or the addition of another cultural entity.	<b>Option B</b> Parcel 3 is a mixed-use development and Parcel 4 is a cultural center.
<b>Option C</b> Parcel 3 and 4 are mixed-use developments, requiring MOSH to relocate to a new cultural district.	<b>Option D</b> Parcel 3 and 4 are cultural, but Parcel 3 defaults to green space if a user cannot be found.

### How We Ranked the Options

Voting for the preferred option was done using a scaled system. Each panelist gave 4 points to his or her top choice, 3 points for second choice, and so on. The points were totaled with the following result:

Option	Points
A	19.5
B	29
C	18.5
D	14

### *Option B is the TAP's preferred scenario*

The panel weighed the strengths and weaknesses of the four options and chose Option B as the preferred outcome for the study area. Options A, C and D, were ranked second, third and fourth, respectively.



The TAP preferred OPTION B: Parcel 3 as mixed-use development and Parcel 4 as cultural



OPTION A: Parcels 3 and 4 are cultural uses



OPTION C: Parcels 3 and 4 are both mixed-use development



OPTION D: Parcel 4 as cultural and Parcel 3 as cultural or defaults to green space



A vibrant waterfront needs 10 great destinations, and each destination, in turn, should provide 10 things to do, a theory dubbed “The Power of 10” by the Project for Public Spaces. Option B offers the kind of diverse, layered activity that a great waterfront destination should provide and creates a healthy, interactive environment that enhances livability. It is a two-sided development that “pays respect to the river.”

Option B maintains the draw of a cultural entity, expands coveted green space, and leverages private investment by adding residential, retail, and commercial units to the tax base. Taken together, these uses create a synergy that amplifies each, making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. A vibrant mixed-use development also sets a pattern for other Southbank development and provides efficient land use. Moreover, a mixed-use development on Parcel 3 creates a place for a relocated River City Brewing Company and an opportunity for that long-term lease to receive financial benefits as an incentive to participate in a redevelopment program that includes its entire leasehold.

### **Maintain a Cultural Presence**

MOSH is a regional draw. The decision as to MOSH’s future location, either at its current site or elsewhere, depends on the museum’s aspirational vision, its internal assessment of facility needs to implement that vision, and its success at raising the funds that are essential to implement its vision. The TAP recommendation maintains a cultural element on the property, whether MOSH or another cultural center.

### **Add Another Activity Generator for Viability**

An additional activity generator for the study area is needed. A mixed-use development provides that with residential units, office space and parking over street-level retail shops and restaurants, potentially including a relocated River City Brewing Company. There are few dining venues on the Southbank.

The top three “wants” of respondents to the 2014 Downtown Employee Survey were more and better assortment of retail shops, and more and better quality restaurants, outdoor cafés, and nightlife. The Downtown Resident Survey offered similar results. The three most commonly cited improvements were more retail, especially a pharmacy, grocery or farmers market, and improved restaurant options open nights and weekends. Adding dining choices and shopping to the study area will enrich the experience for visitors and residents alike.

What’s more, given the Baptist Health campus expansion and attendant employment growth, an active live-work-play environment can draw the market toward this end of the Southbank riverfront, catalyzing additional redevelopment and investment. The market is already moving from San Marco toward “the donut hole that is Downtown,” as DIA’s Aundra Wallace noted. This redevelopment of the study area can move it along further.

### **Relocate the Public Boat Ramp**

The mixed-use development on Parcel 3 would require the relocation of the public boat ramp. Although the ramp is well used, the steep drop at the site and strong current in this narrow part of the river create conditions that are sometimes hazardous. The TAP recommends seeking a new place for the boat ramp in a less strategic location along the waterfront. Doing so would facilitate an uninterrupted Riverwalk along the shore of the study area.

### **Reclaim Green Space and Make it Active**

All of the options developed by the TAP include reclaiming green space reminiscent of a time when the park spanned the breadth of the study area. Currently, the park is passive. The presence or absence of park attributes correlates with park usage. Brick pavers, trees, and grass alone are not guarantees that a park will be highly used. People are attracted to parks to engage in specific behaviors, according to a study published in the American



Journal of Preventive Medicine. As such, there is a need to maximize the experience for a variety of people. TAP members recommend adding amenities to Friendship Park that engage visitors, e.g., a playground, skate park, fitness stations, and an interactive fountain.

### **Provide an Interactive Fountain or Water Feature**

While 50-year-old Friendship Fountain is held dear by some residents, its location, aging equipment, and static nature limit the public appeal of the study area. Parks across the country feature fun and enticing modern water features that draw crowds. Chicago’s Crown Fountain in Millennium Park is a good example of an interactive fountain that is as artistic as it is entertaining. Water cascades down two 50-foot glass block towers at each end of a shallow reflecting pool that enables people to physically interact with the water. The towers intermittently spout water seemingly from the mouths of video-projected faces from a broad social spectrum of Chicagoans.

Similarly, in Atlanta, the Fountain of Rings is the centerpiece of Centennial Olympic Park. People frolic in water shooting up from the five-ring Olympic symbol. Touted as the world’s largest interactive fountain, the Fountain of Rings has become a Georgia landmark.

It may be possible to retrofit Friendship Fountain to enable people to enter in and interact with it. However, the panel recommends it be replaced with a modern, interactive water feature.

Regular programming should be added at the park, such as festivals, markets, concerts, art shows, and other entertainment, to draw residents and tourists to the study area. Some entity or organization should be given responsibility for programming. Typically, that entity is a BID.

### **Maintain and Upgrade the Marina**

A more active park and fountain can be a draw to boaters and increase use of the marina. The TAP recommends upgrading the marina and repurposing it for transient/public use. According to Boating Industry magazine, “marinas are increasingly turning their facilities into a hub of activity. The marina of today has evolved from a mere launch point to an all-day destination.”

### **Gain Control of the Acosta Bridge Underpass Parking Lot**

The parking lot under the Acosta Bridge is underutilized. Currently, it provides free public parking and valet parking for River City Brewing Company. This area is under the governance of FDOT and JTA. Effort should be made to gain control of the space for parking, expansion of the park and/or a recreation use like a skateboard park.

**“Every site has a useful life and evolution and has to adapt to circumstances.”**

**– Stephen Lovett, ASLA, LEED-AP, Principal, ELM | Ervin Lovett Miller**

**“Placemaking is based on a simple principle: if you plan cities for cars and traffic, you will get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you will get people and places.”**

**– The Project for Public Spaces**

# Creating a Sense of Place

What creates a sense of place? Many might say architecture, streets, sidewalks, and parks. But placemaking is more than just good urban design. The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) says: “A great public space cannot be measured by its physical attributes alone; it must also serve people as a vital community resource in which function always trumps form.” Successful places are accessible, active, comfortable, and sociable.

PPS helped to launch and define the placemaking movement with its 1999 landmark book, *How to Turn a Place Around*, which was based on the work of urban planner William H. Whyte. In its book, PPS identified 11 key elements in transforming public spaces into vibrant community places. PPS’s approach focuses on bottom-up, community-based planning.

The 11 elements are:

1. The community is expert: People living and working in a place know what needs to be done and how to do it.
2. Create a place, not a design: Add elements that are inviting and comfortable, like landscaping and seating, manage pedestrian circulation, and develop relationships between retail and activities.
3. Look for partners: Local institutions, museums, schools, and others to provide support.
4. You can see a lot just by observing: See how people are using or not using the space, find out what they like and don’t like about it, add what’s missing, and keep assessing in order to evolve over time.
5. Have a vision: Determine what activities and image would make the space a place where people want to be.
6. Start with the petunias—lighter, quicker, cheaper: Experiment with short-term improvements, like seating, public art, outdoor cafés.
7. Triangulate: Locate amenities together to increase use of each; e.g., museum, playground, food kiosk.
8. They always say “it can’t be done”: Expect obstacles. Professionals have narrow definitions of their jobs. Start with small-scale, community-nurturing improvements to help overcome resistance.
9. Form supports function: Design is important, but the vision for the space must include other elements, including community input and understanding how other places function.
10. Money is not the issue: Once the basic infrastructure is in place, other elements that make it work, like benches, flowers, vendors, are less costly. Involving partners can reduce costs.
11. You are never finished: Ongoing changes of the community require attention. Amenities wear out; needs change.



# Case Study: Falls Park on the Reedy



What was once an overgrown river valley with a forgotten waterfall has become the centerpiece of Greenville, S.C.

In the 19th century and early 20th century, the land around the Reedy River falls was home to grist, textile, and saw mills that polluted the land and the river. In 1967 the Carolina Foothills Garden Club led an effort to establish a park on the site and clean up the waterway. But it wasn't until the late 1980s that a master plan was established "to restore the beauty of the area and provide a safe and welcoming gathering spot for individuals and groups." The plan featured scenic overlooks, nature trails, a land bridge, and the creation of six specialty gardens.

Still, a four-lane highway overpass, Camperdown Bridge, traversed the river, obscuring the falls and creating a barrier to public access to the green space. The City of Greenville

embarked on a redevelopment project to fully develop Falls Park "into a public garden and urban oasis of regional significance and visibility." The \$13 million initiative included removing Camperdown Bridge and replacing it with a 355-foot-long, 12-foot-wide pedestrian suspension bridge that curves around the waterfall. The one-of-a-kind bridge offers stunning views, showcasing the falls and 20 acres of terraced gardens and flowerbeds below.

Falls Park reopened in 2004 and has become the signature of Greenville. Park amenities include a park building with two levels of plazas, restaurants, picnic shelters, public art, and public restrooms. The park is a popular place for festivals, music performances, and other special events.

What's more, the City's \$13 million investment has spawned nearly \$600 million in private investment—hotels, restaurants, condominiums, apartments. Mayor Knox White said, "The park raised the bar for the community's self-identity and sense of pride."

## Southbank

### Public Investment Strategies to Catalyze Redevelopment

Public investments that improve quality of life can go a long way in promoting private investment and economic growth in the Southbank. Key are improvements that tap into the growing trend toward walkable urban neighborhoods. Investments should be designed to enhance livability, promote mobility and create a healthy, vibrant community. To that end, the TAP recommends the City and DIA invest in the following to catalyze redevelopment in the Southbank and the study area:



## Enhance Livability

### Increase Residential Density and Revisit Existing Goal

A 2015 ULI report found that livability is a key outcome of successful density. The report describes “good” density as a mixed use of land and mixed income; high-volume, reliable public transport; an overarching strategic vision; attention to social and economic needs; high quality of life and livability for residents; public and open spaces; flexibility; high quality urban design; environmental benefits; and limited impact on existing settled neighborhoods and places. The 2015 Downtown Feasibility Study recommended a goal of 10,000 residents in Downtown Jacksonville by 2035. The TAP recommends creating a stretch goal for residential development in the Southbank, beyond what is presently contemplated, and making provision for workforce housing when evaluating developer requests for DRI entitlements.

### Encourage Street-Level Retail

People will walk if they have a place to walk to. There is a serious lack of retail that caters to the everyday needs of Southbank residents, such as a grocery store, pharmacy, coffee shop, and other places where people gather and meet their daily needs. An increase in density will bring greater opportunity for retail to follow. DIA should use every tool available to encourage infill residential development with street-level shops and restaurants. In particular, the panel believes resident-centered services, retail, and pedestrian-friendly design standards should be implemented along Prudential Drive, which is the main thoroughfare connecting the Baptist Health campus on the west to The District development on the east.

### Rethink Main Street

The Southbank as it exists today is a place one drives through to get somewhere else. The elevated roadway (FL-10) is designed to bypass the area and facilitate quick entry to and exit from the Downtown Core via the Main Street Bridge. Traffic volumes are about 30,000 a day — more on game days. Main Street is neither pedestrian friendly nor conducive to residential and retail development.

# The Importance of Streets

There's a renewed appreciation in America for the importance of city streets in the public realm. Influencing this trend was Allan Jacobs's 1995 book "Great Streets" in which he identified great streets around the world, such as Paris's Boulevard Saint-Michel and Barcelona's Las Ramblas. Jacobs distilled their physical and design characteristics, such as beginnings and endings, trees, benches and other stopping places, facades, and building heights. He identified five attributes that make a street "markedly superior in character and quality": (1) contributes to community; (2) comfortable and safe; (3) encourages participation; (4) remembered; and (5) representative of a community.

A number of American cities have started "great streets" programs to marshal public/private resources to enhance their urban streets. In St. Louis, the city provides planning assistance to help neighborhoods prepare designs for street improvements. Los Angeles is coordinating capital improvement plans and other governmental programs to enhance designated streets. Austin sets aside 30 percent of parking revenues collected within the Great Streets program boundaries to provide assistance to private developers that implement streetscape standards that go above and beyond the city's minimum requirements.

## APA's Characteristics of a Great Street

Every year, the American Planning Association (APA) releases a list of "great streets" in America based on the following criteria:

- Provides orientation to its users, and connects well to the larger pattern of ways
- Balances the competing needs of the street—driving, transit, walking, cycling, servicing, parking, etc.
- Fits topography and capitalizes on natural features
- Is lined with a variety of interesting activities and uses that create a varied streetscape
- Has urban design or architectural features that are exemplary in design
- Relates well to its bordering uses—allows for continuous activity, doesn't displace pedestrians to provide access to bordering uses
- Encourages human contact and social activities
- Employs hardscape and/or landscape to great effect
- Promotes safety of pedestrians and vehicles and promotes use over the 24-hour day
- Promotes sustainability by minimizing runoff, reusing water, ensuring groundwater quality, minimizing heat islands, and responding to climatic demands

The TAP members recommend encouraging use of the Acosta Bridge as the preferred vehicular route to the Northbank District by bringing the elevated portion of FL-10 down to grade between Prudential Drive and Riverplace Boulevard/Museum Circle Drive and adding bike lanes. This would create greater open space with a strong pedestrian and bicycle connection from Treaty Oak at Jesse Ball duPont Park to the river.

This recommendation is consistent with the findings of the 2007 Downtown Jacksonville Pedestrian and Open Space Action Plan developed by the JEDC. It recommended further study to minimize "the impacts of the high-speed I-95 off ramps extending through the Southbank and across the river to Bay Street. This high-speed downtown circulation is not conducive to a livable downtown."

Main Street as a three-lane road with the center lane reversible for rush hour would calm traffic, tying in to traffic-calming efforts on Riverplace Boulevard. The Main Street Bridge is widely used by pedestrians. The reconfiguration would lend itself to greater pedestrian use, may encourage infill, help to generate retail due to increased foot and street-level auto traffic, and provide a greater sense of connectivity.

Altering FL-10 through the Southbank may be challenging because it is a state road, but the idea should be pursued, especially in light of FDOT's adoption of a Complete Streets policy and its recently released implementation plan. If alteration of FL-10 is not feasible, the underpass should be energized with artistic lighting, public art, water features, and landscaping to make the areas feel safer and inviting. The DIA should seek corporate sponsors for these projects.

## Provide Quality Open Space and Programming

Some events have occasionally been held in the Southbank (e.g., Movie Night in Treaty Oak Park, FSCJ's Jacksonville Science Festival in Friendship Park). But other than The Strand's sponsorship of weekly food trucks, there is no regular programming to draw people to the area, similar to Riverside Arts Market or Hemming Plaza. The City's Parks and Recreation Department plans river events and the Sports and Entertainment Department plans festivals. An entity must take responsibility for planning regularly scheduled Southbank events, especially at a redeveloped Friendship Park in the study area.

- Is well maintained and capable of being maintained without excessive costs
- Has a memorable character

In 2015, Jacksonville’s Laura Street was named one of five “great streets” in the country, and one of only a few so recognized in Florida. The APA called Laura Street “one of the most pedestrian-friendly corridors in Jacksonville.” Visitors can dine al fresco, participate in daily and special events at Hemming Park, and walk to cultural and entertainment venues. Planners narrowed the street to add sidewalk space and calm traffic, added shade trees with colorful uplighting and demarcated crosswalks to enhance safety and accessibility.

### **Complete Streets**

A companion movement, “Complete Streets” was launched in 2004 with the simple concept that streets should be “designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.”

Design elements of complete streets are dependent on the community context; e.g., urban vs. rural. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more. All are designed to increase safety. For example, installing raised medians and redesigning intersections and sidewalks reduce pedestrian risk by 28 percent. Roundabouts at intersections decrease the total crash rate by 35 percent, serious injuries by 76 percent and the fatal crash rate by 90 percent.

In addition to improving safety, Complete Streets encourage walking and biking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention named adoption of Complete Streets policies as a recommended strategy to prevent obesity. These policies also foster stronger, more livable communities, where people of all ages, ability and mode of transportation feel safe.

FDOT adopted a Complete Streets Policy in 2014 and, in partnership with Smart Growth America, completed a Complete Streets Implementation Plan in 2015. In April 2016, Smart Growth America also published “Best Complete Streets Policies—2015,” a compendium of complete street policies from 16 local governments around the U.S.

### **Implement a Parking Strategy that Furthers Redevelopment**

Parking should become an essential part of the strategy for redevelopment of the Southbank and the study area, based on the Southbank Vision. Several steps would be advantageous. First, the DIA should update the JEDC’s 2007 parking supply and demand study to get an accurate assessment of current parking conditions and a reasonable projection for the next 10 years. Second, any new parking strategy should be based upon market pricing for both on-street and off-street parking. Third, as recommended by the consultants in 2007, a single entity should be given authority over on-street and off-street public parking in the Southbank (and elsewhere in Downtown). Given the DIA’s responsibility for redevelopment of these areas, it would be the logical choice because it could implement a parking strategy that would further overall goals of a Southbank Vision.

### **Promote Mobility**

#### **Emphasize San Marco and Prudential as the Connected Thoroughfares**

San Marco Boulevard connects the San Marco neighborhood as well as the Baptist Health campus to the Riverwalk. Likewise, Prudential Drive is a key connector between the Baptist Health campus and The District. These roads should be the focus of infill development with street-level retail and design standards consistent with concepts such as “Great Streets” and “Complete Streets.”

#### **Slow Down and Re-Purpose Main Street and Bridge**

As noted above (See Enhance Livability), a reconfigured Main Street would divert traffic to the Acosta Bridge, calm traffic through the Southbank and create a more pedestrian- and retail-friendly roadway. This is consistent with the Planning and Development Department’s May 2014 revised Transit Element of the City’s 2030 Comprehensive Plan for the Southbank District. It recommends the elimination of the Independent Drive ramps on the north bank of the Main Street Bridge in order to “promote both streets as business streets and enhance surrounding activities.” The TAP also recommends improving pedestrian access to the bridge.

### Assess Streets Throughout Southbank for a Road Diet

The Transit Element recommends slowing traffic on gateway, business, and intra-district streets. It also calls for adding and retrofitting sidewalks to encourage walking; improving safety at intersections; and retrofitting roadways to include bicycle lanes, all of which are consistent with FDOT's Complete Streets Policy.

Since the Southbank falls under the City's Mobility Zone 10, the acceptable levels of multi-modal service are: 20 percent auto/trucks; 30 percent transit; 20 percent bicycle; and 30 percent pedestrian. The TAP recommends assessing Southbank streets for a road diet to achieve the Traffic Element goals.

The DIA should reconsider spending \$5 million on the road diet project currently planned for Riverplace Boulevard. The project has much to commend it as part of an objective to slow high-speed traffic cutting through to get to the Main Street Bridge. But as previously noted, other demands for TIF funds in the foreseeable future mean the





DIA should target its available funds for projects that promise the most successful outcomes. The panel believes less costly measures to slow traffic on Riverplace Boulevard, like speed bumps and roundabouts, would be more prudent and would save much of the \$5 million allocated for the road diet for other CRA goals. Alternatively, the DIA should seek funding for the Riverplace Boulevard road diet from FDOT's Complete Streets program.

**Re-establish the Historic Street Grid**

Two sets of streets form important components of the Southbank grid, Prudential Drive and Riverplace Boulevard going east/west and Main Street and San Marco Boulevard going north/south. Design standards should be implemented for new and redeveloped properties.

The Southbank's super blocks and lack of perpendicular streets are not pedestrian friendly and serve as a barrier to the waterfront. The TAP recommends the re-establishment of the historic street grid as proposed in the Transit Element, which specifies "A roadway grid system consisting of small blocks should be implemented, where feasible, throughout the District to increase density and improve the urban form. Streets should be extended closer to the river to improve access to the river."

**Locate Commuter Rail Stop Near Baptist Health**

The proposed commuter rail line from Downtown Jacksonville to St. Augustine has a potential station at Prudential Drive/San Marco Boulevard near the San Marco Skyway station. The TAP recommends the closest proximity to Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville is ideal as the Baptist Health campus is the area's largest employer.

**Complete the Multi-use Trail Loop**

The TAP endorses the plan to extend the Riverwalk to the west and connect it with a multi-use trail that will loop across the area south of I-95 and back north into The District and the Riverwalk at the east end of the Southbank. The initiative makes Jacksonville's Southbank more accessible, active, and connected.

**Incentivize Development Around Existing Skyway Stations**

The Skyway is the Southbank's primary transit service; however, the people mover is underutilized. When integrated within a high-density urban environment, the Skyway can provide a convenient alternative to driving to the Northbank. Incentivizing residential development and street-level retail around Skyway stations can spur greater use of the mass transit service into the Downtown Core and reduce automobile traffic. Higher density development should be encouraged in conjunction with a reduction in the amount of parking required near stations and with design standards that promote pedestrian and bicycle access, as addressed in the Transit Element.





### **Continue to Extend Skyway System as Planned**

Current plans call for extending the Skyway to The District, which is highly recommended given the project's anticipated residential density and the amount of retail and commercial space planned.

### **Enhance the Water Taxi**

The St. Johns River Taxi is a valuable asset that increases connectivity between the Northbank with Friendship Park and the Southbank Riverwalk. In addition to reducing auto traffic, the service provides riders not only with convenience but an experience being on the water. The City Council is currently matching corporate sponsorship funds up to \$120,000 during the first year of the agreement with the water taxi service. Efforts should be made to maintain and enhance the service if feasible, especially as it would promote mobility to and from a redeveloped study area. Perhaps parking in peripheral lots could be paired with the water taxi at a single attractive price that would get commuters to park in the Southbank and ride the water taxi the rest of the way to Downtown.

### **Make it Healthy**

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) adopted the Building Healthy Places initiative in 2013 as a cross-disciplinary theme to promote health in community planning, creating vibrant, attractive places that are walkable, bicycle-friendly, and designed around public transit and green spaces. According to ULI, consumer demand for healthy communities is rising, particularly among millennials. Integrating health into planning and development policy can become an economic development strategy, a tool to attract a skilled workforce and to build an innovative and sustainable economic base.

The DIA's 2015 Business Investment and Development Plan incorporates ULI's "10 Principles for Building Healthy Places" as Redevelopment Goal No. 7. With this policy direction, the City and DIA have an opportunity to create a robust Southbank neighborhood using development strategies that will enhance livability and public health:

- 1. Put People First** — Prioritize people over cars; Design the roads for multiple users; Make basic necessities and community amenities accessible by walking or biking; Bring elevated portion of FL-10 to grade; Follow Complete Streets design.
- 2. Recognize the Economic Value** — Brand/promote the Southbank as a discreet neighborhood in Jacksonville; Create an urban form that is valued by consumers; Encourage infill residential development with street-level retail; Repurpose surface parking lots to a higher use.
- 3. Empower Champions** — Identify local leadership to champion healthy development; Seek a consensus vision for the Southbank; Designate a responsible entity for community programming in public spaces (e.g., existing BID or new BID).
- 4. Energize Shared Spaces** — Re-establish the historic street grid; Redevelop Friendship Park into an active, dynamic environment; Add regularly scheduled programming at Friendship Park and other Southbank venues; Create/activate a community gathering space/pop-up parks for events like Food Truck Friday; Add food/beverage kiosks/carts to Riverwalk.
- 5. Make Healthy Choices Easy** — Make walking fun with public art and attractive streetscapes and better wayfinding; Expand the Riverwalk; Provide interconnected pedestrian and bicycle network around the river; Add bike lanes where feasible; Provide easy, safe access for people to walk or bike to the nearest Skyway station; Add amenities to Friendship Park that physically engage park-goers.
- 6. Ensure Equitable Access** — Incentivize workforce housing for inclusion in residential mix; Design for all ages and abilities; ADA-compliant; Fix broken sidewalks and remove other barriers for the elderly or disabled; Improve pedestrian access to Main Street Bridge.
- 7. Mix It Up** — Promote mixed-use development; Ensure housing for a variety of income levels; Add retail and resident-centered amenities along Prudential Drive; Develop a centralized garage parking strategy for multiple users.
- 8. Embrace Unique Character** — Celebrate the river with complementary public art; Reclaim green space at Friendship Park; Add public art, water features and other unique features to underpasses.
- 9. Promote Access to Healthy Food** — Incentivize development of a grocery store in walking distance to the Southbank's residential development; Add a farmers market to area programming.
- 10. Make it Active** — Add recreational amenities at Friendship Park for children and adults; Replace Friendship Fountain with an interactive water feature; Extend the Riverwalk and complete the multi-use loop; Provide wayfinding signage and distances to Riverwalk, Friendship Park, MOSH, marina, Skyway, parking garages; Create pocket parks; Consider creating a dog park (e.g. Riverplace Boulevard and Hendricks); Consider building a skateboard park.

## Governance

### **Ensure Continued Primacy of DIA in Guiding Development**

The DIA is in a unique position to control Southbank development, as its governance structure combines development rights with regulatory authority.

### **Maintain Control of Entitlements**

By maintaining control of entitlements for development, the DIA can ensure quality development that meets community goals.

### **Control of Underpasses**

DIA should control underpasses for parking and other amenities.

## Financing Options

1. FDOT Complete Streets funding for the road diet
2. Federal Transit Oriented Development funding
3. New Market Tax Credits
4. The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)
5. Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing
6. Parking Enterprise Fund
7. TIF Funds





# Next Steps

## **Southbank Vision**

A Southbank Vision is the best way to choose between the potential outcomes the TAP identified for the study area although the TAP recommended Option B with green space, cultural uses, and mixed-use development. Convene stakeholders in a community-based visioning process to arrive at a detailed conceptualization, with narrative and graphic components. The Southbank Vision should provide direction about specific desired outcomes throughout the Southbank, with Main Street and San Marco Boulevard as the principal north-south thoroughfare, and Prudential Drive as the principal east-west thoroughfare, connecting the Baptist Health campus and The District.

## **Renegotiate Leases**

Enter into discussions with MOSH and River City Brewing Company to engage them as partners in the redevelopment of the study area. Their long-term leases will govern possession and use of the study area for decades, unless DIA or the City raises the money to buy them out. Given MOSH's desire to seek public support for an expansion program by 2017, these discussions should begin immediately and give each lessee the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of redevelopment or the advantages of a new site.

## **Control Parking**

Parking is an important part of a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system. In an automobile-oriented urban setting like Jacksonville, control of public parking and its pricing is an essential tool to enhance livability. The TAP recommends updating the 2007 downtown parking study and developing a parking strategy to help implement the Southbank Vision. The DIA should be given control of on-street and off-street public parking in the Southbank (and throughout Downtown Jacksonville) and should implement a parking strategy that includes market-based pricing for on-street and off-street parking as well as measures to increase use of peripheral parking areas.

## **Husband Resources**

DIA should manage its limited funds to ensure it has the maximum ability to implement the Southbank Vision and other plans. For the Riverplace Boulevard road diet, seek funding from the FDOT's Complete Streets program. If FDOT funding is not available, develop a least-cost, CRA-funded alternative to achieve the public safety goal for the road diet.

Funding public infrastructure to support private development may require new strategies. According to a 2014 ULI study, "public-private collaboration is the number one way that public and private respondents anticipate new infrastructure to be paid for. Value-capture strategies and negotiated exactions were the number two and three methods, respectively." The DIA should negotiate equitable agreements with private developers to pay for the public infrastructure their projects make necessary. Don't overcommit CRA funding for public facilities to support individual private developments to the detriment of DIA's other goals.

# About the Panelists



## **David Powell, TAP Chair, Hopping Green & Sams**

David is a senior shareholder in the Tallahassee law firm of Hopping Green & Sams with a statewide practice in real estate development. He assists clients on large-area plans, master-planned communities, coastal resorts, and redevelopment projects throughout Florida. Recent projects include the 133,000-acre North Ranch Master Plan in Osceola County for Deseret Ranches of Florida, Inc., and creation of the Northeast Gateway project in Tallahassee, which includes a new I-10 interchange and a major new activity center in the city's growth corridor.

David has degrees from the University of Texas at Austin, Columbia University, and Florida State University. He is an adjunct law professor at Florida State University and has chaired or participated in a number of statewide policy reviews. In 2015, he chaired the ULI Technical Assistance Panel for Tallahassee's South City neighborhood. Prior to becoming a lawyer, he was a correspondent for The Associated Press in New York, Miami, and Tallahassee.



## **Lisa Dilts, Compspring**

Lisa has over 15 years of experience in real estate advisory and has worked with a diverse array of clients, including cities, counties, developers, national homebuilders, equity funds, and large landowners.

She started her career with Ernst and Young's Commercial Real Estate Services Group, where her primary focus was valuation of commercial properties and site selection for industrial and government users, including the National Archives and Records

Administration and Serologicals, a biotechnology company. Subsequent to her employment with Ernst and Young, Lisa worked with RCLCO, a nationally recognized knowledge solutions provider to the real estate industry. Her work at RCLCO included market feasibility studies and analysis of residential and commercial opportunities to maximize market share and financial returns. In addition, she worked for Beazer Homes as a Strategic Market Analyst, where she advised on land acquisitions, target market audiences, repositioning of existing communities, and expansion strategies.

Lisa is an active member of ULI Central Florida, serving in a leadership role on the State Product Councils, and the Women's Leadership Initiative. She is also actively involved in the Greater Orlando Builders Association and serves on the Developers Council. Lisa has a Master of Arts in Real Estate from the University of Florida, and a B.A. in Design from the College of Architecture, University of Florida.



## **Steven E. Lefton, PLA, AICP, Kimley-Horn**

Steven E. Lefton, ASLA, AICP is a Principal with Kimley-Horn, where he has worked since 1997. Kimley-Horn is a leading national engineering, landscape architecture and planning firm with an extensive resume of redevelopment success stories across the country. Kimley-Horn has received numerous accolades for their redevelopment work, including awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects, American Planning Association and the American Society of Civil Engineers. Steve currently leads a region of Kimley-Horn that includes 15 offices in 10 states. Today his practice includes redevelopment planning, parks

and recreation projects, transit oriented development and private sector planning.

Steve received his undergraduate degree in landscape architecture from Cornell University and his MBA from the University of Miami.



**Stephen Lovett, ASLA, LEED-AP, Principal, ELM | Ervin Lovett Miller**

Steve is an award-winning planner and landscape architect with more than 18 years of experience in a broad range of public and private projects and clients. He has worked in environments throughout the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America, including master planned and golf course communities; destination resort development; park and recreation design; open space and landscape master planning; transportation corridors; and urban design.

Steve earned his degree in Landscape Architecture from Washington State University, where he pursued a diverse field of study emphasizing ecology, sustainable urban and community planning, and interdisciplinary studies. He is a LEED Accredited Professional (LEED-AP), serves on the Executive Committee of the Jacksonville Section of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), Florida Chapter, and on the Board of Directors for JaxPride, The City Beautiful Coalition, and the Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida. He is also a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), the Institute of Classical Architecture/Classical America (ICA/CA), the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Riverside Avondale Preservation Society (RAP). He also is active in collaborative efforts with the American Institute of Architects (AIA).



**Tom Murphy, Urban Land Institute**

Tom Murphy, ULI Canizaro/Klingbeil Families Chair for Urban Development, has been a senior resident fellow at the ULI since 2006. A former mayor of Pittsburgh, he has extensive experience in urban revitalization and has been a key addition to the senior resident fellows' areas of expertise. Murphy also serves on the Advisory Board of ULI's Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use. Since joining ULI, Murphy has served on many Advisory Services panels, including panels in Moscow, Hong Kong, and many U.S. cities. Murphy served as ULI's Gulf Coast liaison, following Hurricane Katrina.

Before joining ULI, Murphy served three terms as mayor of Pittsburgh from 1994 through 2005. During that time, he initiated a public/private partnership strategy that leveraged more than \$4.5 billion in economic development in the city. Murphy led efforts to secure and oversee \$1 billion in funding for the development of two professional sports facilities, and a new convention center that is the largest certified green building in the United States. He developed partnerships to transform more than 1,000 acres of blighted industrial properties into new commercial, residential, retail, and public uses, and oversaw the development of more than 25 miles of new riverfront trails and parks.

He is a 1993 graduate of the New Mayors Program offered by Harvard University's Kennedy School. He holds a Master of Science degree in urban studies from Hunter College and a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and chemistry from John Carroll University.



**Brooke Myers, Emerge Real Estate Ventures**

Brooke Myers is a visionary development partner focusing on strategic real estate opportunities in Central Florida. With over two decades of experience leading multi-disciplinary teams, feasibility analysis, business and master planning, she developed expertise in complex real estate transactions and strategic partnerships managing design, development, financing, structuring, marketing and delivery.

Brooke is an owner, investor, advisor and development partner on several high-profile projects in Central Florida, including the Creative Village, the redevelopment of the 68-acre site of the former Amway Arena; The Ivy - Residences at Health Village, a 248-unit apartment complex located at Florida Hospital Health Village; The Residence Inn by Marriott, Downtown Orlando, and the GAI Building, a 105,000 square foot LEED Silver office building in downtown Orlando.

Brooke's passion for the urban fabric started with the Atlanta Olympic Committee planning the 1996 Olympic Games, followed by a decade with the Walt Disney Company where she managed various large-scale growth projects in the theme park and hospitality industry.

Brooke is a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology with a degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering. She received her Masters of Management from Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management.



**Chris Sinclair, AICP, Renaissance Planning Group**

Chris Sinclair, AICP has over 30 years of experience managing a variety of land and transportation planning projects. As the firm's founding owner and current president, he has served as the visionary leader committed to advancing the state of planning practice through the integration of transportation planning and urban design. Chris has managed master plans, transportation studies, comprehensive plan updates, Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) long range transportation plan updates, impact fee and concurrency ordinances and fiscal impact studies. He is well versed in a wide range of planning tools and methods, including land use models, travel demand models, traffic operations software and fiscal impact models. Chris has developed unique technical methods, including the creation of the firm's land use allocation tool, CorPlan which is used as a scenario planning model. He is currently leading the development of a new model to measure and evaluate multimodal accessibility.

Chris is an experienced facilitator, teacher and course developer. In addition to his subject matter expertise in the areas of multimodal transportation planning, methods and tool development; livability; smart growth; TOD and integrated land use and transportation planning; Chris has been working with the National Transit Institute (NTI) since 2010 as an instructor for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) course. He also taught an urban design and planning course for nearly 20 years at Rollins College in Florida and continues working with the College to develop the curriculum for the new master's degree planning in civic urbanism which began in 2012.



**Michael E. Tabb, Red Rock Global, LLC**

Michael is responsible for setting the overall strategic direction of Red Rock Global. With an over 25 year professional career in commercial real estate, business administration and public/media relations, he serves as the principal relationship manager with the Company's investors, strategic partners and clients. He is responsible for developing business processes and for sourcing new business. He also provides direct leadership for the major functional areas of tenant representation, corporate services, complex assemblage and dispositions, asset repositioning and real estate consulting.

Formerly, Michael was the Global Director of Real Estate responsible for The Coca-Cola Company's real estate activities worldwide. He also served as a Group Manager for LaSalle Partners in Midtown New York City. Additionally, Michael has served in several positions in the U.S. Navy, including Assistant 1st Lieutenant.

Michael received his MBA from the University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School, and his BS from the U.S. Naval Academy (Freshman and Senior Year Leadership Award and Honor Board representative). He received his DoD Advanced Program in Organizational Strategy and Communication at University of Oklahoma.







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