



**Urban Land  
Institute**

**Tampa Bay**

**A ULI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT**



# Revitalization Strategies for Skyway Plaza

St. Petersburg, FL

May 4-5, 2017



## Tampa Bay

*Serving Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota, Pasco, Citrus and Hernando Counties*

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## 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 40,000 members internationally representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines. The Tampa Bay District Council has more than 400 members in 7 counties including Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Manatee, Sarasota, Hernandez and Citrus.

## About ULI TAPs

**In keeping with the Urban Land Institute mission, Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)** are convened to provide planning and development assistance to public officials and local stakeholders of communities, nonprofit organizations and private sector representatives who have requested assistance in addressing their land use challenges.

A group of diverse professionals representing the full spectrum of land use and real estate disciplines typically spend two days visiting and analyzing the built environments, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a fashion consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives. 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.

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## Revitalization Strategies for Skyway Plaza

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### TAP Sponsors



# Context

## TAP Scope

The City of St. Petersburg and the Brixmor Property Group engaged ULI Tampa Bay to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) for the purposes of investigating the current and future opportunities for Skyway Plaza, a 10-acre site at 1079 South 62nd Avenue.

Currently underutilized, the neighborhood shopping center is only partially occupied. The 46,803 sq ft. grocery store space has been vacant since 2013. The surrounding neighborhood is primarily residential with a range of institutional uses.

*The TAP panel was asked:*

- What is the highest and best use for the property? What does the market dictate? Is retail viable and if so, what kinds?
  - What are the future redevelopment opportunities for the site, particularly in relation to the surrounding neighborhoods?
  - What steps need to be taken?
- ULI Tampa Bay assembled a group of

## Panel Process

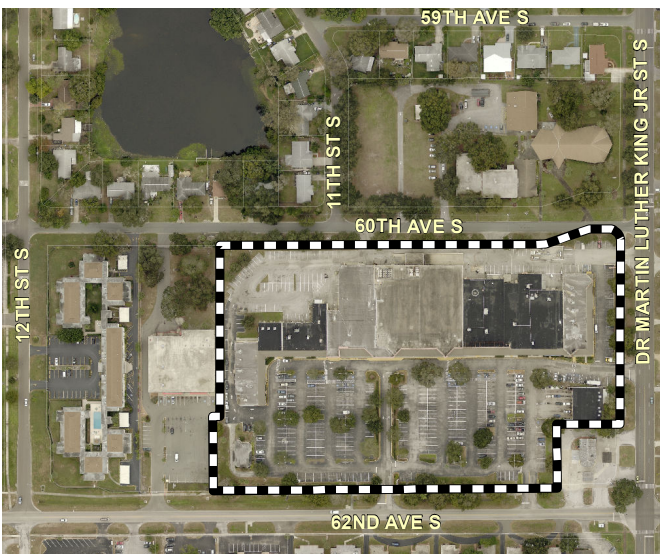
accomplished ULI members who have expertise in development, market analysis, neighborhood planning and design for an intensive two-day workshop to address opportunities for Skyway Plaza.

Prior to convening, TAP members received information on the area's demographics, economic data and various maps identifying the study area, existing land use, zoning, bus routes, and associated plans.

ULI had preliminary meetings with the city, property owner and community leaders to prepare for the panel and better define the scope of work for the two-day TAP.

Day one included a walking tour of the study area with the City of St. Petersburg and Brixmor Property Group as well as stakeholder presentations and interviews. Stakeholders included City of St. Petersburg leadership and staff, representatives from the Brixmor Property Group, Pinellas County staff, local developers and community leaders.

Day two focused on potential strategies and solutions to the issues. Panelists formalized their observations and developed recommendations. At the day's end, the TAP panelists made a presentation of their recommendations to community leaders, the city and the property's owners.



## Background

### The Site

Skyway Plaza is a 10-acre site owned by the Brixmor Property Group. Built in 1977 as a neighborhood shopping center, the site includes a one story traditional connected strip mall development with a large parking lot in the front of the building. Its borders are 62nd Avenue South to the south, which is the main entrance to the site, Dr. Martin Luther King Drive on the east and 60th Avenue South to the north.

At one time, Skyway Plaza served a greater role as a retail center for the surrounding neighborhood, until the 46,803 sq. ft. Sweetbay Supermarket closed in February 2013. Since that time, the center has only supported limited retail, which includes the Pinellas County Tax Collector's Office, a Chinese restaurant, and a local clothing retailer.

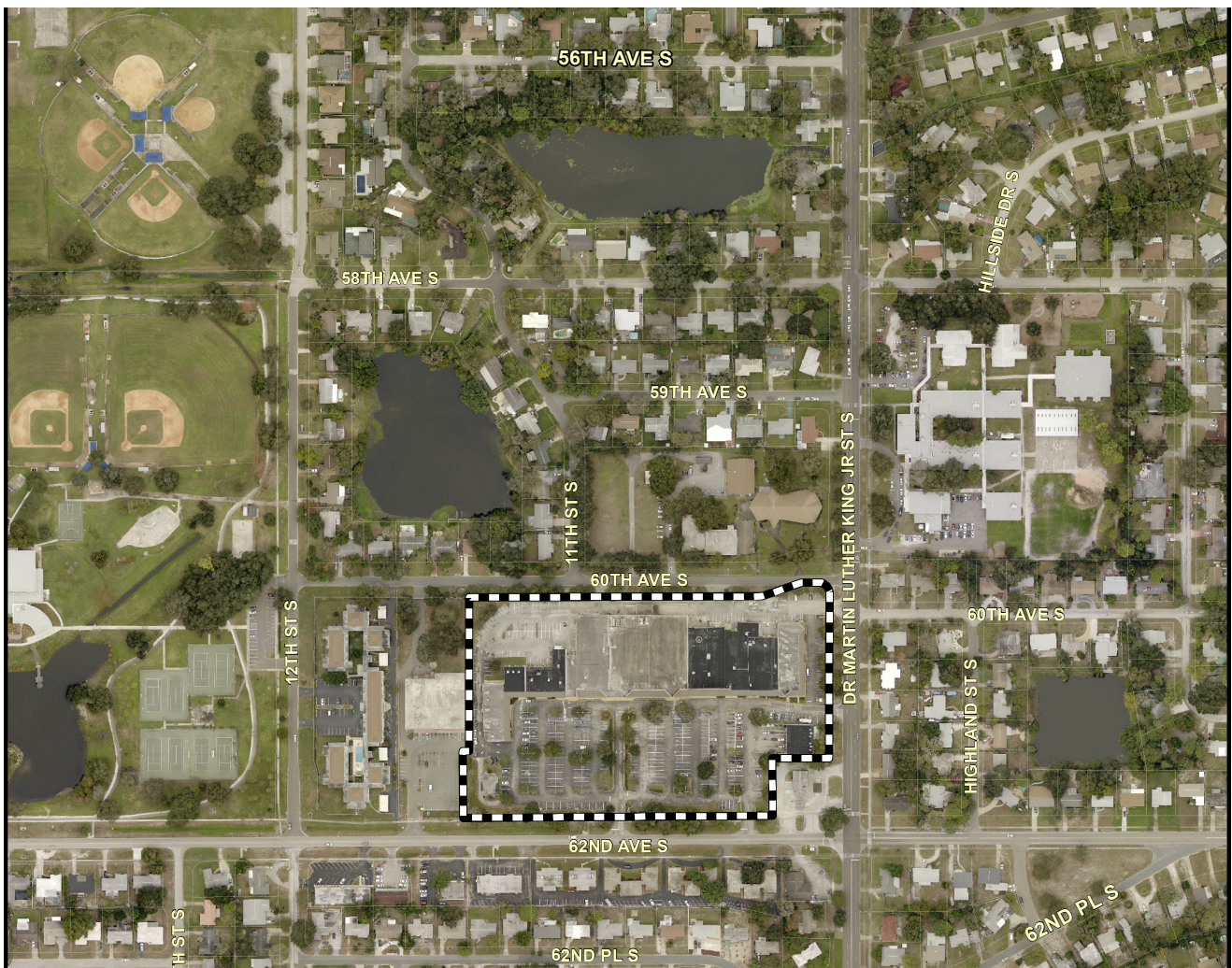
## Surrounding Neighborhood

Skyway Plaza is located in the southern section of the City of St. Petersburg, approximately 4 miles from downtown. Immediately adjacent to the site is a gas station and auto repair shop. The site is otherwise surrounded by a mix of residential and institutional uses.

The City of St. Petersburg Lake Vista recreation center is in close proximity and has indoor and outdoor fitness facilities and active programming for all age groups. The immediate area also includes several schools including Lakewood Community School, Bay Vista Fundamental Elementary School, and Bay Pointe Elementary and Middle schools.

The southern part of the City of St. Petersburg is characterized by a number of distinct neighborhoods demarcated in geography and name – giving this area a strong sense of community. The Skyway Plaza site sits uniquely as a center point among these neighborhoods.

While the site is in a central location, it is not served by a high trafficked road, compared to other arterials in the area. There is very limited retail in the immediate area, with the closest supermarkets now located within a 4 to 7 minute drive from the site.



## Demographics

The community within a 1 to 3 mile radius of the Skyway Plaza site is mixed income and diverse in age and ethnicity.

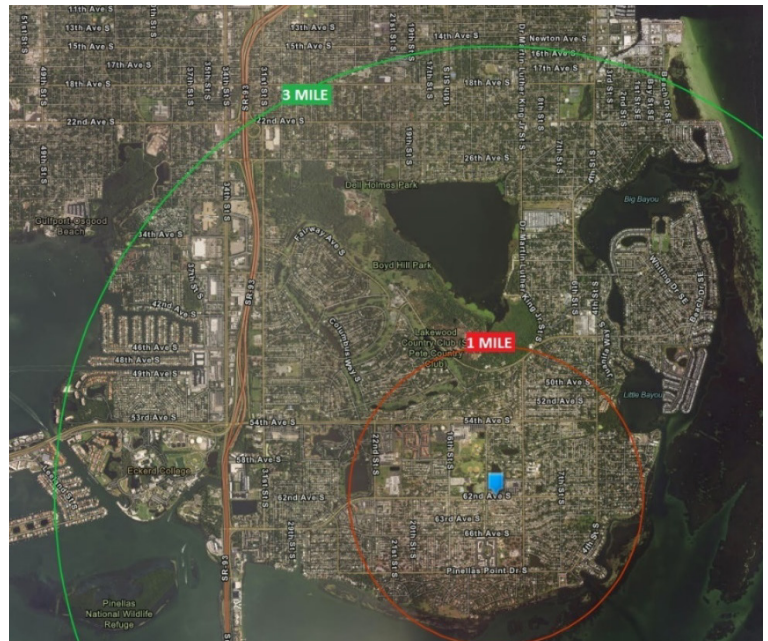
The overall population and number of households in the surrounding area has remained relatively stable, with very little change in the last 10 years. Median income grew 3% annually in the last five years.

As of 2015, the median house value within one mile of Skyway Plaza was \$156,850 and that number is expected to increase to \$185,144 by 2020<sup>1</sup>. This area is generally viewed as more affordable than other areas of the City, particularly downtown and the northern neighborhoods. Communities adjacent to or near the coastline tend to be higher income and housing value is distinctly higher.

When prospective tenants consider a retail site, most preliminary market studies begin with an analysis of the demographics within one and three mile radii of the parcel. The peninsular geography of the area creates a challenge for Skyway Plaza, especially when considering the site's three mile radius.

Demographic Snapshot (1 & 3 Mile Radius)		
	1 Mile	3 Mile
Population	12,205	46,736
Median Age	43.5	42.3
Median Household Income	\$45,154	\$39,869
Businesses	122	935
Employees	1,404	10,248
Owner Occupied Housing	49%	43.8%
Renter Occupied Housing	36%	37.3%
Vacant Housing	15%	18.9%

Data sourced from Esri® reports



As significant portion of the 3-mile demographic study area for Skyway Plaza is over the water.

<sup>1</sup> Data sourced from Esri® reports

# Perceptions & Potential

## Stakeholder Input

Every ULI panel relies on outreach to begin its technical assistance to get a substantive insider perspective on the state of the community and the aspirations of residents, city leaders, employers, and business representatives.

For the Skyway Plaza TAP, the chance to make a personal connection and listen to over 25 individuals, who brought varied perspectives, allowed the panel to achieve a very quick immersion into the neighborhood's history and happenings.

Each individual or group of stakeholders was asked to identify the primary challenges and concerns for the Skyway Plaza site, and to discuss what aspirations they have for the plaza and neighborhood at large.



## What We Heard

Common themes heard from stakeholders included the following:

- A strong desire for almost any type of retail, restaurants, or entertainment outlets in the immediate area. Residents have limited options within their neighborhood, and have to drive to the beaches, downtown or greater Pinellas County for basic retail and dining.
- General acknowledgment that while the two previous grocer tenants at Skyway Plaza provided a nice amenity for the neighborhood, there are enough alternative grocery options nearby to adequately serve the neighborhood. There was a recognition among many stakeholders that Skyway Plaza may not be a viable site for another big box grocer.
- Mixed feelings about new multi-family development. The neighborhood has had a few bad experiences with poorly managed apartment complexes.
- A unique identity and general awareness of this neighborhood is lacking within the context of the greater St. Petersburg area. Greater Pinellas Point is often generally referred to as South St. Petersburg. The area shares a zipcode with some of neighborhoods to the north, which skews local crime statistics and outsider perceptions of the neighborhood.



- The neighborhood has many assets (schools, parks, housing affordability, strong sense of community, etc.), but they are often unrecognized.
- Skyway Plaza’s vacancy and appearance leaves a negative impression and impacts the psyche of the neighborhood.
- There is a strong sense of community pride and leadership at the individual neighborhood association level, but this sense of community hasn’t translated to the larger area in an effective way.
- Residents want more direct action by the city.

## Initial Impressions of the Panel

Skyway Plaza’s story is similar to many other aging neighborhood retail centers around the country and is indicative of national retail trends.

At first glance, it feels like the neighborhood is lacking local flavor. The area around Skyway Plaza actually has many attributes that make for a great neighborhood, but these elements have not been woven together in a way that tells a compelling story. The community has an opportunity to invoke the history and character of the area to establish a stronger sense of neighborhood identity. Skyway Plaza should serve as the heart of this re-branding effort.

Revitalizing Skyway Plaza and the surrounding neighborhood will require a long term strategy of creative solutions and collective action from the community, city and property owner.



# Panel Recommendations

## Responses to the TAP Questions

### Question 1: Near-Term Realities of the Site

What is the highest and best use for the property? What does the market dictate?  
Is retail viable and if so, what kinds?

## Market Analysis

### RETAIL & OFFICE CLIMATE

Macro trends seen across the national retail landscape are manifest in the Skyway Plaza site. Retailers are downsizing their physical store footprints and shifting resources towards digital and mobile platforms. Big box retailers that would be appropriate users for the 46,803 sq. ft. anchor tenant space at Skyway Plaza are closing stores throughout the country.

While the data shows the South Pinellas sub-market has a fairly healthy retail and office market, as the analysis draws closer to the site the metrics begin to decline.

- Skyway Plaza represents roughly 50% of the retail space within a 1 mile radius.
- Traditional retail within a 1 mile radius appears to be under-performing.
- The 1 mile radius is also unlikely to support traditional office development.

Inadequate traffic counts, aged facilities and the proximity of two newer Publix

locations (within 4 and 7 minutes of the site) are all factors in the TAP's summation that the Skyway Plaza site is not a viable location for a traditional grocer tenant.

Smaller service-oriented retail, medical office, and indoor recreation centers are more likely to succeed in this area.

Figure 1: Existing Retail and Office Climate

Existing Retail Climate	Existing Office Climate
South Pinellas Submarket <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18,650,000 SF</li> <li>• 94.3% Occupancy</li> <li>• \$14.72 \$/SF</li> </ul>	South Pinellas Submarket <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7,385,000 SF</li> <li>• 91.8% Occupancy</li> <li>• \$15.44 \$/SF</li> </ul>
3 Mile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,725,000 SF</li> <li>• 85.8% Occupancy</li> </ul>	3 Mile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 640,000 SF</li> <li>• 96.5% Occupancy</li> <li>• \$16.53 \$/SF</li> </ul>
1 Mile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 229,000 SF</li> <li>• 70.5% Occupancy</li> </ul>	1 Mile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17,000 SF</li> <li>• 89% Occupancy</li> </ul>

*\*Note: Occupancy rates indicate that the space is leased, but may not be occupied, as is the case with the former grocery store space at Skyway Plaza.*

*(Fig. 1 data sourced from Esri® reports)*



## HEALTHCARE

A high level analysis of data as well as anecdotal evidence based on stakeholder conversations suggests that there is a demand for greater access to healthcare and wellness facilities in the vicinity. This should be explored in greater depth with the assistance of providers in the region.

Within the 1 mile radius of the site, there are two family medical practices. An analysis of physician demand in the surrounding area indicates that there may be a market for several additional medical practices, including for internal medicine, a pediatrician and an OB/GYN physician.

In addition, within the City of St. Petersburg, there is a large number of people with Medicaid or no health coverage that visit the Emergency room for medical conditions that could have been treated on an outpatient basis, including at a clinic, urgent care facility or physician office. Within the two zip codes 33712 and 33705 around the Skyway Plaza site, more than 17,800 people were seen at the emergency

room for issues that could have been treated elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. This may indicate the following:

- A lack of physicians accepting Medicaid, which results in people delaying going to the doctor until an issue becomes urgent.
- A potential need for additional after hour primary care access such as at a clinic or urgent care facility.

Finally, given the large senior communities, including Westminster, in the vicinity of Skyway Plaza, the demand for assisted living - such as a memory care facility should be investigated.

<sup>1</sup> Florida State AHCA data, 4Q2015-3Q2016

## Repurpose or Build New?

The panel's first course of action in evaluating the site was to determine whether Skyway Plaza is still viable as a retail center or whether it has outlived its useful life. Considering factors such as the land value of the site with and without the existing building and current market rents in the area, new construction would not currently yield a rate of return that would be attractive to a private developer in today's market.

At present, the highest and best value for Skyway Plaza likely incorporates utilizing the existing structure. The panel envisions a site plan that could allow for the phasing in of added uses as the market around the site strengthens. Catalytic reuse of the existing structure today can drive and inform the long-term redevelopment prospects of the site.



## Retail Viability

As noted in the market analysis, Skyway Plaza is unlikely to attract the high-credit national retailers coveted by commercial property owners and developers; however, the existing building still has value and presents opportunities for uses beyond traditional retailers.

The demographic composition and affordability of the neighborhood positions the plaza as an attractive option for users of space that rely on a lower cost structure. These users tend to be local, neighborhood serving retailers who can't afford to be in newer shopping centers or pricier leases closer to the downtown core.

Family services and entertainment retailers (such as dance schools, barber shops, cross-fit gyms, trampoline parks, ice cream shops, thrift stores, etc.) are a good fit for the plaza and could offer many of the amenities desired by the neighborhood

stakeholders interviewed during the TAP. Unlike traditional big box retailers, these types of users are less reliant on traffic counts, more price sensitive, and offer niche neighborhood services that customers are willing to seek out.

Frustration at the lack of neighborhood dining establishments was a common theme heard throughout the stakeholder interviews. The panel believes there is enough demand present to support a local serving dining outfit such as a pizzeria, BBQ restaurant or neighborhood Bar & Grill.

It should be noted that the property owner expressed a willingness to work with new tenants and make some adjustments to the existing layouts of the retail space. As a short term option, Skyway Plaza could be refaced for another life as a neighborhood serving retail center anchored by a tapestry of small local businesses.

## Question 2: Catalytic Uses & Future Redevelopment

What are the future redevelopment opportunities for the site, particularly in relation to the surrounding neighborhoods?

Despite the empty storefront, the anchor tenant space at Skyway Plaza is leased through 2020. This affords the community, the city and the property owner an opportunity to take the time needed to think outside the box and work together on a plan to truly elevate the site and create an authentic sense of place.

If successfully repositioned, the new Skyway Plaza should achieve the following objectives:

- Address the surrounding community's desire for local shopping, dining and neighborhood services
- Create a 'third place' outside of the office and home environments for local residents and visitors to connect
- Help to activate what is currently a mainly residential area
- Grow attraction to the neighborhood
- Build brand and neighborhood identity

This is an ambitious goal that will inevitably take multiple phases of reuse and development to achieve.

This section of the report will:

- Illustrate how the site can be programmed around specific categories of uses in order to energize the site and build value over time.
- Frame ways to envision the evolution of the site through different iterations of development.
- Provide examples of catalytic uses that could position Skyway Plaza as a distinct St. Petersburg destination and an emblem of the Greater Pinellas Point area.

## Catalytic Development Themes

The panel identified three thematic ‘use categories’ for Skyway Plaza that can spur future development, evolve overtime and promote gradual growth at a pace the market can support.

### USE CATEGORY #1: *Food*

With more and more routine shopping done online, when consumers do choose to go out they seek an experience. The rise in foodie culture and food based amenities reinforces this trend.

Well done food concepts can cultivate a local flavor and sense of authenticity. They often serve as community gathering spaces and can help create awareness about the neighborhood.

St. Petersburg’s downtown has a burgeoning farm-to-table scene; however, rising rents are already beginning to price out local food entrepreneurs.

### USE CATEGORY #2: *Health*

The TAP’s initial findings on health care providers, coupled with the site’s proximity to large senior living communities, suggests that a mix of health and wellness uses could fill a market gap for the immediate area.

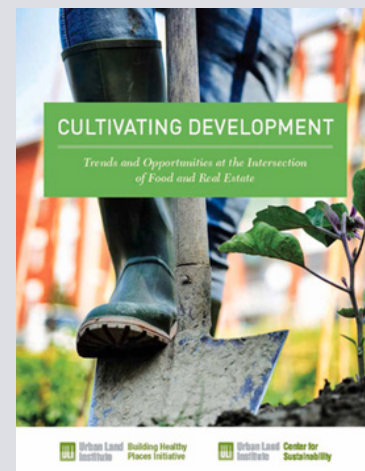
### USE CATEGORY #3: *Innovation*

A vibrant neighborhood should include local jobs. Having educational assets like Pinellas Technical College, Lakewood High School’s Center for Advanced Technologies (CAT) program, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg College, University of South Florida and others nearby by creates a natural link to entrepreneurial users.

## - ULI Resource Spotlight - *Cultivating Development:* Trends and Opportunities at the Intersection of Food and Real Estate

*“Food halls and marketplaces across the country are becoming top tourism destinations and are spurring community economic development.”*

*“People want local food, products, and experiences. This desire continues to grow as the internet redefines the shopping experience.”*



The full report can be found at  
<http://bit.ly/2iywEXX>

ULI’s *Cultivating Development: Trends and Opportunities at the Intersection of Food and Real Estate* publication explores the mutually beneficial relationship between food-based amenities—such as working farms, community gardens, food halls, restaurants, and grocery stores—and real estate.

It highlights how the growing interest and awareness in fresh, local food is spurring innovation in development projects. Developers, owners, property managers, designers, investors, and others involved in real estate decision making can learn from the research, case studies, and food and development practitioner insights described in this report, thereby allowing them to create places that both support and leverage investments in food. In the process, they can create real estate value and advance economic, environmental, and public health goals.

**Figure 2: Cultivating the Site: An evolution of uses**

The chart below illustrates examples of how a synergy of uses can drive development and build value over time -- from sparking interest through temporary uses, to strategic reuse of the existing structure, to the eventual redevelopment of the site. Inherent in the vision set forth below is an aggressive strategy and strong partnership between the city, community and property owner. Market realities, incentives, potential changes to zoning, etc. should be considered in the long-term vision for Skyway Plaza.

	<p><b>Short Term: Temporary Uses</b></p> <p><i>“Immediate Placemaking”</i></p> <p>Creative, community-activating and well advertised temporary uses can raise initial awareness and enthusiasm about Skyway Plaza.</p> <p>An immediate way to activate the site would be to leverage the large underutilized parking lot and vacant storefronts for temporary pop-up uses on weekends or after work hours.</p>	<p><b>Mid Term: Re-Use</b></p> <p><i>“Setting the stage”</i></p> <p>Building on the enthusiasm generated by the short-term placemaking activities, the site can attract new tenants that take advantage of the lower-cost rents of the existing structure.</p> <p>Successful reuse of the current structure will raise the profile of the site and set the tone for the next generation of uses.</p>	<p><b>Long Term: Redevelopment</b></p> <p><i>“Realizing the Vision”</i></p> <p>Once the mid-term uses are popular enough, land values will rise and the site will demand a more refined product than a rework of the existing structure can provide.</p> <p>New multi-structure buildings and build-to-suit products will enhance the site and provide the best return for a developer.</p> <p>A mix of uses and increased density will positively impact the surrounding neighborhood.</p>
	<p>&gt;&gt;&gt; &gt;&gt;&gt; &gt;&gt;&gt; &gt;&gt;&gt; <b>Evolution of Uses</b> &gt;&gt;&gt; &gt;&gt;&gt; &gt;&gt;&gt; &gt;&gt;&gt;</p>		
<b>Food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly farmer's market</li> <li>• Food truck rally</li> <li>• Special events, such as a local BBQ cook-off or craft beer fest</li> <li>• Urban garden onsite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culinary market/food hall with a local twist, such as a low cost restaurant incubator space to test new concepts.</li> <li>• An indoor farmer's market focused on the commercial buyer (downtown restaurants), but is open to the public.</li> <li>• Commercial kitchen for caterers, food entrepreneurs, and/or a food truck commissary.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The popularity of food amenities can make residential development viable.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughtfully designed and developed townhouse product, attracting younger residents and families.</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile health screenings onsite</li> <li>• Health fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urgent care and/or primary care offices in existing structure.</li> <li>• Crossfit gym, yoga studio, etc. in low cost existing space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground-up development for urgent care and primary care offices (may evolve into a multi-story building if the site supports it).</li> <li>• Assisted living facilities, such as a 50-100 room memory care facility.</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pop-up retail and temporary structures to showcase start-ups or local artists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurial/training center in existing structure. Entrepreneurs need inexpensive space and can typically begin occupying the space quickly with minimal build out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70,000 to 100,000 sq. ft. of Light Manufacturing and R&amp;D facilities.</li> <li>• Live/Work residential units.</li> </ul>

## Envisioning the Site

The following concepts help frame ways to envision the site through different iterations of development: from a ‘day one’ approach using the existing structure, to more aspirational (yet market-based) ideations.

The site concepts below vary in theme, but they all incorporate the following improvements:

### **Green Space**

Part of the existing site is reconfigured to allow for green space in the heart of Skyway Plaza. Public open space near restaurants and retail invites the neighborhood into the site and creates an attractive environment for customers.



### **Connectivity**

The Skyway Plaza site is a disconnect in the area’s greenway and bike path network. A greenway connector should be incorporated throughout the site in order to leverage one of the community’s greatest assets and promote connectivity to the many surrounding parks.

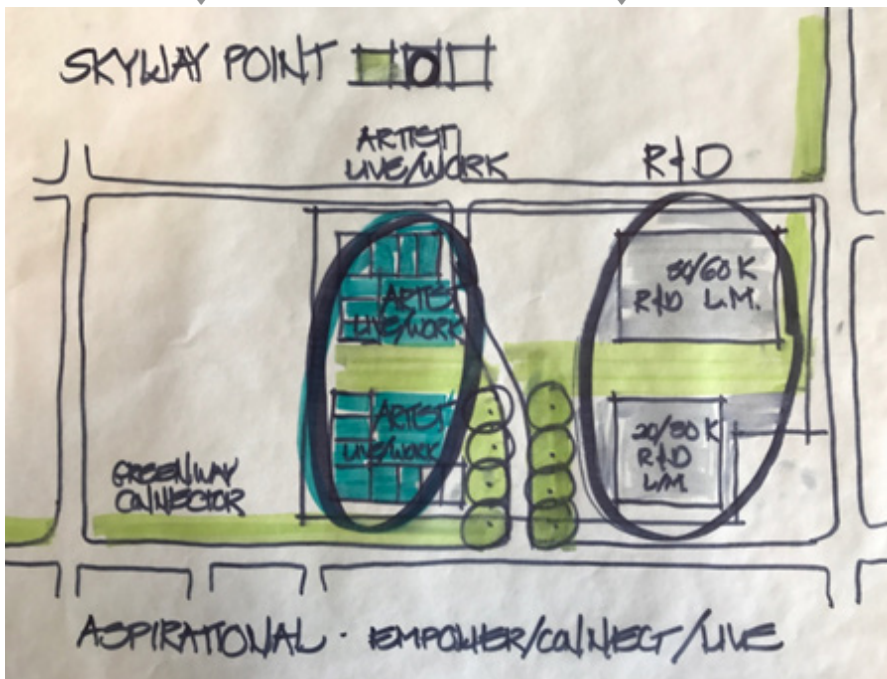
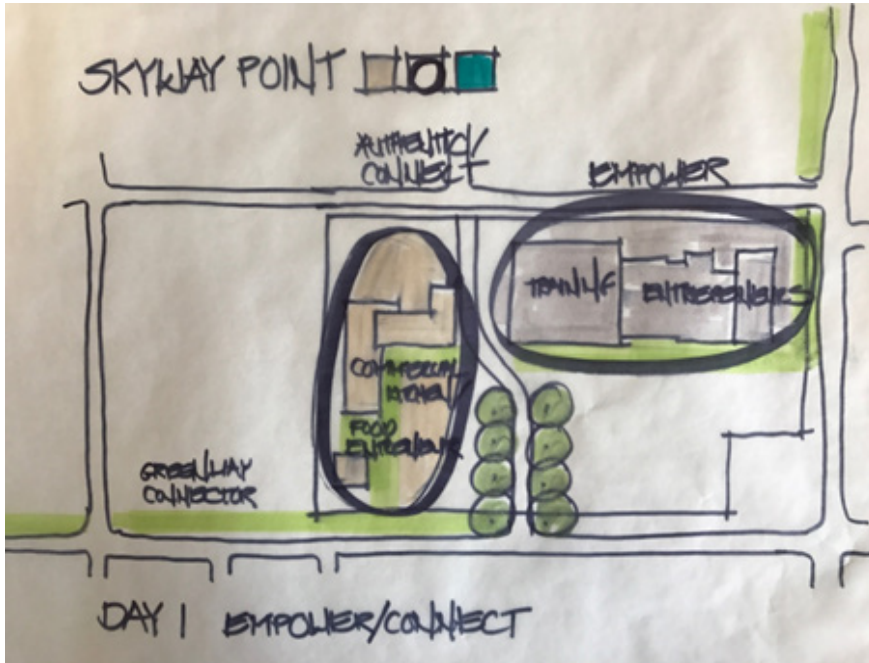
In planning for greater connectivity, it is important to be mindful of the gas station location on the site.

### **Bisecting the Site**

Bisecting the site (as shown in the conceptual sketches of the site) creates flexibility for future development phases. This allows for part of the site to remain a profit center while the other is being developed.



## Envisioning the Site: CONCEPT A



### “EMPOWER / CONNECT”

Envisioning opportunities for the existing structure

EMPOWER:

Training & Entrepreneurship Center

- Jobs, start-up space, connection to nearby learning institutions

CONNECT:

Culinary Market Concept

- Gathering place, enhances neighborhood identity, draws in community & visitors



### “EMPOWER / CONNECT / LIVE”

Envisioning opportunities for redevelopment

EMPOWER:

Light Manufacturing and R&D

- Capitalizes on the statewide light manufacturing boom, economic development driver, job creator

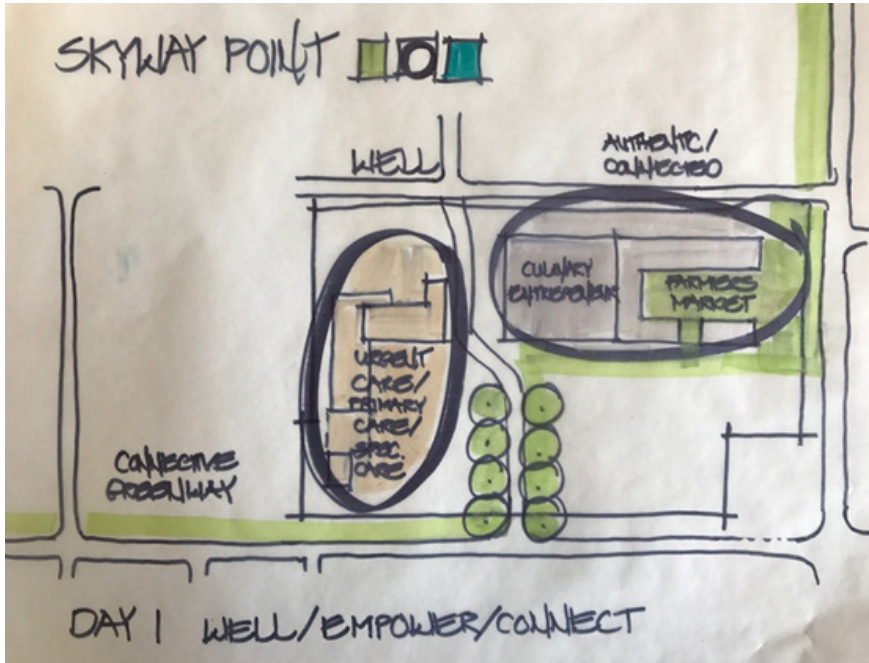
CONNECT:

Culinary Market Concept - *Reworked into mixed use structure*

LIVE:

Residential Development - Live/Work townhomes for small business, artists, etc.

## Envisioning the Site: CONCEPT B



### “WELL / EMPOWER / CONNECT”

**Envisioning near-term opportunities for the existing structure**

#### WELL / EMPOWER:

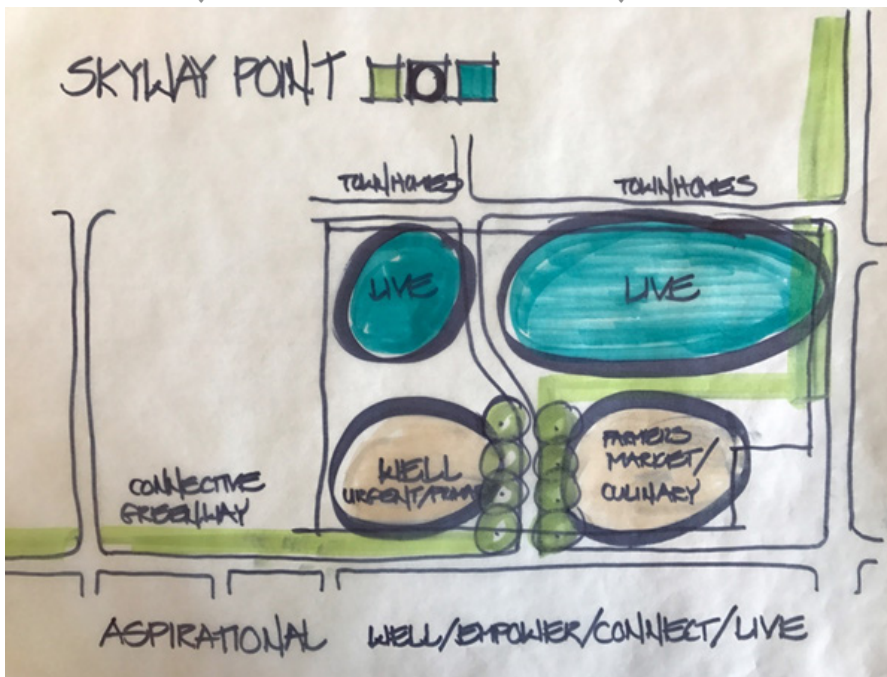
Wellness/Medical Infrastructure

- Urgent care facility, physicians, pharmacy

#### CONNECT:

Culinary Market Concept

- Gathering place, enhances neighborhood identity, draws in community & visitors



### “WELL / EMPOWER / CONNECT / LIVE”

**Envisioning long-term opportunities for redevelopment**

#### WELL/EMPOWER:

Ground-Up Medical Office

#### CONNECT:

Culinary Market Concept - *Reworked into new structure*

#### LIVE/WELL:

Residential Development - Townhomes and/or Assisted Living Facilities

- Lots of senior housing nearby. Likely there is a need for a memory care facility in particular

# Examples of Potential Uses

## SHORT TERM: Temporary Uses & Pop-Ups

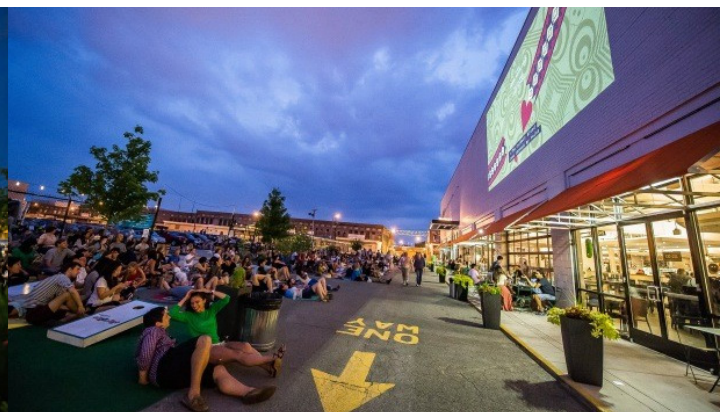
There are many creative ways to begin early activation and placemaking on the Skyway Plaza site. The large and under-utilized parking lot and/or vacant store fronts can serve as sites for community events, street festivals, markets, and temporary pop-up concepts.

Leveraging creative temporary uses will create a positive buzz about the neighborhood, reframe local perceptions of the site and generate support for future development.



Consider a recurring weekend or evening farmer's market with a local twist, such as a local BBQ theme, to distinguish it from the popular downtown market. (Above - Left & Middle). Or organize a food truck rally (Above - Right).

Union Market in Washington DC uses the face of their building and parking lot for 'Summer Drive-In' film screenings



When a startup begins to outgrow its initial homebase, it may not be possible to transition into a larger permanent facility immediately. Boombox provides innovative transitional retail spaces at affordable prices. A modified shipping container can provide a temporary, low cost venue for a start-up entrepreneur and generate potential development interest in a vacant or under-utilized site. (Photo Credit: Latent Design)

Pop-Up Shipping Container Retail: An 'Etsy Artists Assembly' to sell locally-made holiday crafts and goods.

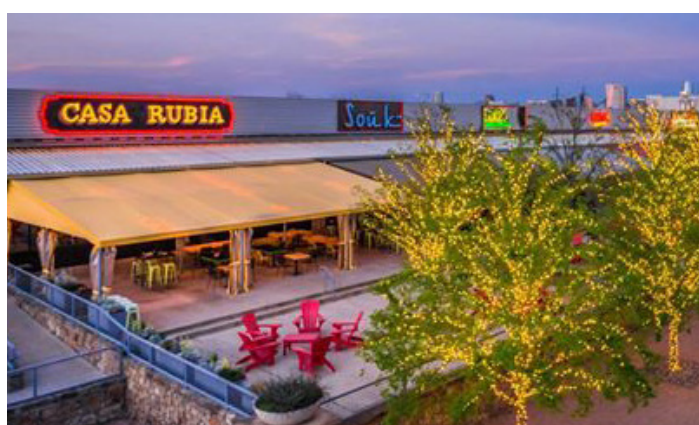
## MID TERM: Reuse of Existing Structure

Below are some catalytic ideas for reusing the existing structure at Skyway Plaza to create a unique retail destination and begin to shape a distinct identity for the surrounding neighborhood.

Skyway Plaza provides a competitive advantage due to its lower-cost structure and proximity to downtown, Central Pinellas and Manatee County.



The DeKalb International Farmers Market (left) just outside of Atlanta's downtown core in Decatur, GA, transformed a large warehouse space into an Atlanta icon. 184 international flags decorate the ceilings, and employees are from all over the world. The market serves over 100,000 customers each week with its international offerings.



Culinary Market/Food Hall concept with multiple independent vendors (upper left) and restaurant incubator concept (upper right). Both concepts take advantage of shared facilities and equipment to create a lower cost structure for food entrepreneurs, while creating a vibrant atmosphere with many unique food options to draw in locals and visitors from across the city.



With some minor improvements by the property owner, the existing retail space can provide affordable space for physicians offices and urgent care providers.

This can be a start to creating a long-term medical infrastructure on the site.

## LONG TERM: Redevelopment of the Site

Once the land values rise enough to support total redevelopment, the final phase of development of Skyway Plaza could include the addition of

residential elements, as well as newer, more sophisticated facilities for the existing uses on the site.



UNION MARKET is an indoor food hall that opened in 2012 in a historic market space in Washington, D.C. It also includes pop-up retail space, an event venue, and numerous outdoor gatherings. The project developer and owner, EDENS, embraces Union Market's role as a hub for social interaction and works to actively facilitate opportunities for local chefs and food producers to open or expand businesses in and around the market. EDENS and a number of other developers are building on the success of Union Market by creating a mixed-use urban village immediately surrounding the market, which will feature retail, residential, restaurant, hotel, entertainment, and culinary incubator space.



Memory care facility site plan example (above). With large senior communities like Westminster nearby, the site could likely support an assisted living facility, such as a 50-100 memory care facility in the future.

Example of Live/Work Townhouse design (above). Some of the stakeholders expressed an aversion to multi-family development on the site due to prior experiences with poorly run apartments; however, rental housing done well can provide the density needed to support other uses, attract a younger demographic, and add value to the entire neighborhood.



Urgent care facility and physicians offices that may have been using the existing structure at Skyway Plaza could be moved to new build-to-suit spaces. In the future, a redeveloped site may support between 10,000 and 20,000 square feet of small shop space in a new street front retail center along 62nd Avenue in the future.

Florida is experiencing major growth in R&D and light manufacturing jobs. Light manufacturing brings the benefit of manufacturing jobs without the need for sizable materials and large trucks disrupting the residential area.

## Question 3: Implementation Strategy & Next Steps

What short-term and long-term steps need to be taken?

### Identity & Branding

St. Petersburg is known for its many distinct districts and neighborhoods (i.e. Kenwood, Old Northeast, The Edge District, the new Warehouse Arts District, Skyway Marina District, etc.). Each has a name and character all their own which draw people in with the promise of a unique atmosphere and experience.

The area around Skyway Plaza is lacking a strong collective identity. The site is relatively central to several designated neighborhoods in the southern portion of the City of St. Petersburg. There is a strong sense of pride and identity in these neighborhood pockets, but this does not translate to the larger area encompassing Skyway Plaza.

Many residents in the greater St. Petersburg area are unaware that this neighborhood, currently referred to as Greater Pinellas Point, even exists. The Skyway Plaza neighborhood is often considered as part of the larger area of South St. Petersburg, which contains one of the city's community redevelopment areas because of the depressed economic conditions of some neighborhoods to the north of our site. This leads to unwarranted perceptions of the neighborhood.

In addition, the Skyway Plaza site's underutilized and deteriorated condition reflects poorly on the overall neighborhood. An empty shopping center sends visual cues that the neighborhood has stagnated or is in

decline. The demographics and economic data demonstrate that this is not actually the case for the Greater Pinellas Point area.

**Identity and branding are critical placemaking elements that provide a structure and guide map to how people think about an area. The city and the community have an opportunity to proactively define the area's brand.**

The TAP recommends the following strategies:

#### 1) DEFINE IT

What is this place? What makes it great? What does it aspire to be? The strengths and unique elements of the neighborhood should be reinforced as it relates to a brand.

The area is rich with many neighborhood assets:

- Parks (great programming, youth sports & recreational facilities, boat lifts, preservation areas, historical elements/ Indian mounds, etc.)
- A vibrant community -- diverse in age, economics and ethnicity
- Surrounded by waterfront
- Great value -- one of the remaining affordable areas of St. Petersburg
- Access to better schools than other areas of the city
- Proximity and easy access to downtown, beaches, Manatee County and Greater Pinellas

## 2) GIVE IT A NAME

The TAP recommends the city and the community work together to establish a new name for the area. The community should reflect on the character and brand of the neighborhood in order to come up with a name more concise and intriguing than “Greater Pinellas Point”—something like “Skyway Point” or simply “The Point” could give the area a fresh identity.

## 3) TELL YOUR STORY: “Get to the Point!”

The future redevelopment of Skyway Plaza should serve as a catalytic project and anchor for the area’s brand/identity.

- Position Skyway Plaza as the front door of “Skyway Point”.
- Leverage the transformation of Skyway Plaza as an opportunity to promote the greater area to the media and create a buzz around the neighborhood.
- Take advantage of the city’s existing communication channels and neighborhood social networks.
- Host a community oriented event onsite at Skyway Plaza establishing the vision for the neighborhood.
- Create a new logo & design aesthetic representative of the new brand.
- Invest in signage and wayfinding to create a sense of arrival and telegraph the identity and boundaries of the neighborhood.



The City of St. Petersburg's #SOUTHOFCENTRAL social media campaign promotes the people, places, and things that make the southern part of the city shine.



The success of the Skyway Marina District is a great example of how cultivating a strong branding effort and distinct neighborhood identity can energize an area.

## Implementation Strategy

No matter what the approach, the 10 acre Skyway Plaza site must be addressed. With so few retail centers in the area, Skyway Plaza is a critical element in the neighborhood's placemaking toolbox. The site strongly impacts the perception of the surrounding neighborhood's vibrancy and sense of place.

Reaching the multifaceted, interlocking goals outlined in this report will require the city, community and property owner to work closely together on establishing a vision, plan of action, and creative solutions for the Skyway Plaza and surrounding neighborhood.

### Community's Role

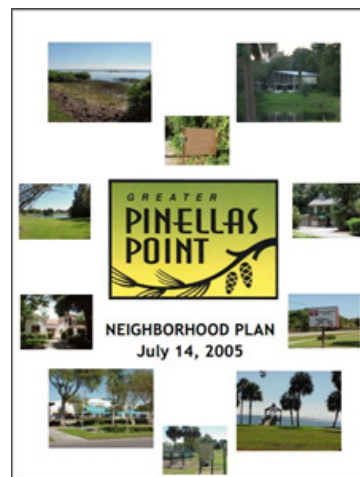
- Speak with a unified voice to include all of the neighborhood associations of "Skyway Point".
- Broaden outreach to grow and diversify community involvement

*The current neighborhood leadership does not reflect the diverse demographic make-up of the neighborhood. Find innovative ways to encourage the minority community and younger residents to become active in the plans for Skyway Plaza and the surrounding neighborhood.*

- Drive the conversation about the identity and branding efforts for the neighborhood.
- Spotlight the people, places and things that make the "Skyway Point" neighborhood unique, authentic and vibrant.

### City's Role

- Create a sense of arrival on 62nd Avenue South and I-275. Invest in signage and wayfinding that reflects the new branding of the neighborhood.
- Consider streetscape improvements along 62nd Avenue South from I-275 to 4th Street—drainage, sidewalks, tree canopy, bikeways.
- Utilize incentives for attracting and growing businesses—foster entrepreneurial spirit.
- Review zoning categories for recommended uses.
- Appoint a Skyway Point city liaison for coordination, communications and implementation.
- Work with the community to create an updated Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan.



The 2005 Neighborhood Plan has many elements that are relevant today.

To ensure progress is made, it is important to assign responsibilities and include SMART goals, *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Resourced and Time-Based*, in the updated neighborhood plan.



## Property Owner's Role

- Improve curb appeal and increase security.
- Be open minded about non-traditional retail in the short-term and alternative uses in the long-term.
  - Work with the city and community to allow for creative temporary uses and programming of the underutilized parking lot and unleased spaces at Skyway Plaza.
- Consider re-positioning the site as a place for the community to connect.
- Plan to invest capital to attract longer-term uses.

## Next Steps

The city, community and property owner should work together on the following next steps:

1. Convene a Skyway Point Task Force.
2. Review the Technical Assistance Panel findings.
3. Identify top priority uses/scenarios.
4. Develop an actionable implementation strategy that assigns specific responsibility & accountability, time lines and funding sources to each action item.
5. Get the word out! Consider hosting an event on site at Skyway Plaza to build awareness and support from the community about the new vision for the "Skyway Point".



# Panelist Bios



**Stuart Rogel**  
Partner  
ProspEquity Partners  
TAP Chair

Stuart Rogel is an entrepreneurial-minded executive who is serious about creating economic prosperity by building successful businesses. In his current role as a Partner at ProspEquity Partners, and previously as President of Graylan Ventures and Founding CEO of the Tampa Bay Partnership, Stuart has spent more than 30 years building paths to prosperity for companies that range from startup to Fortune 500. With broad and deep expertise in business development and economic development, Stuart identifies opportunities for growth and puts in place the strategies, structures, partnerships, and programs to reach ambitious goals.

Previously, he launched the first Florida office for a Boston-based real estate investment firm and served as Economic Development Director and Assistant City Manager for the City of Miami Beach. Stuart currently serves on the Board of Advisors of BBVA Compass Bank and the Board of Directors of United Way Suncoast. He is a Trustee for the Florida Chamber Foundation. Nationally active with the Urban Land Institute, he regularly speaks before the International Economic Development Council.



**Leonard Burke**  
Senior Asset Manager  
Tampa Housing  
Authority

Leonard Burke has eleven years of experience in property management and real estate consultation with a full scope of experiences ranging from real estate development, 3rd party fee management, lease-up to disposition, market and site analysis, and financial analysis.

Leonard serves as senior asset manager for the Tampa Housing Authority (THA). He is responsible for maximizing the performance and value of over 2,200 mixed-income, tax credit and market rate multifamily units. He is also responsible for coordinating the design and construction process with THA's development partner (Related Urban Group) on a 127-acre master planned redevelopment community in Tampa. Part of the coordination involves due diligence studies, pro forma generation and sourcing financing for the vertical construction of the individual lots. He is the lead negotiator for new acquisitions and dispositions for the company. In addition to the many successes in direct property management and real estate development, Leonard also worked for a Florida-based real estate investment firm (Beresford, LLC), acquiring, managing and disposing of distressed real estate assets. Because of his success with Beresford, he was able to establish a partnership with a national bank receiver (Hold Thyssen and Berger Commercial Realty) to fee manage properties in receivership. Leonard has experience in a variety of asset types.



**Dawn Gunter**  
Principal  
Gensler

As a Principal and Co-Managing Director in Gensler's Tampa Office, Dawn focuses on understanding the "essence" of her clients' goals and delivering projects that exceed clients' expectations. Her ability to build new client relationships and deliver compelling projects, such as Riverwalk Tower, SPP Morgan Block and the J&J Global ESP Hub have been key to establishing Gensler in Florida.

With more than 25 years of experience, Dawn's strategy is to combine Gensler's research and point of view with the client's goals to bring the highest level of design and industry knowledge to each project. Dawn's work serves local and national clients and includes a variety of Sciences, COBD, and Financial projects, such as JPMC Tampa Campuses, Citibank Tampa, Park Tower, Rivergate Tower, Bank of America Plaza, and Moffitt.

Her projects have been recognized by industry organizations including the Golden Brick Award, Best Places to Work, AIA Tampa Bay, NAIOP and Tradeline. Within the industry, she is involved in CoreNet and ULI.



**Lyle Fogarty**  
Managing Partner  
Clover Investment  
Properties

Lyle Fogarty is the Managing Partner for Clover Investment Properties. He was previously with Redstone Properties as Senior Vice President of Development and Acquisitions. He joined Redstone's Tampa office in 2010 to help lead the company's expansion efforts through new development and acquisition opportunities.

Prior to joining Redstone, Lyle spent 10 years in Atlanta working for Crescent Communities and Trammell Crow Company in a development role. In his previous roles, he led the development efforts for industrial, retail and mixed-use projects. He focuses on commercial and mixed-use as well as new land acquisitions for near term development. Prior to beginning a career in commercial real estate, Lyle spent three years at Arthur Andersen specializing in risk management and process improvement. He began his career as a commercial lender at SunTrust Bank in Tampa, Fla.



**Geri Lopez**  
Director of  
Redevelopment and  
Economic Opportunity  
Manatee County

Geri Campos Lopez is the Director of the Redevelopment and Economic Opportunity Department in Manatee County, Florida. The department was created in October 2016 to focus county efforts on the redevelopment and revitalization of its urban areas and to create greater opportunities for residents and businesses with their housing, community and economic development projects and programs.

Geri is a Certified Economic Developer with over 20 years of experience spanning the redevelopment, economic development, and affordable housing area. Prior to Manatee County, she was the City of Clearwater's Director of Economic Development and Housing for 14 years.



**Terry McLaughlin**  
Director, Real Estate &  
Development  
BayCare Health  
System

Terry McLaughlin is the Director of Corporate Real Estate and Development for BayCare Health System in Clearwater, FL, a leading not-for-profit health care system that connects individuals and families to a wide range of services at 14 hospitals and hundreds of other convenient locations throughout the Tampa Bay and central Florida regions. Terry has been with BayCare since it was founded in 1997 and has been partially or wholly responsible for its real estate and development operations and related strategic initiatives since 2000.

Terry currently oversees all facets of BayCare's Real Estate and Development operation including MOB leasing and facilities management, real property acquisitions and divestitures, new property development and all land use and zoning activities. The Real Estate Division leases and manages in excess of 3 million square feet of space throughout the Health System.

Terry holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Healthcare Administration from St. Joseph's College of Maine and has more than 34 year's experience in the clinical, technical and administrative aspects of healthcare.



**Phillip Smith**  
President  
Framework Group

Phillip Smith is based in Tampa, FL, and leads Framework Group's efforts throughout the state. Phillip is responsible for the acquisition, design, development and construction of multi-family communities and coordinates the Company's strategic plans for developing complex urban residential developments. Phillip manages all feasibility studies, regulatory approvals, design professionals, project financing and general contractor activities during all phases of project development and construction. Of keen interest to him are those development opportunities that present particular challenges as they relate to political, regulatory, design or complex site and environmental issues.

Prior to founding Framework Group, Phillip opened the Florida offices for Crosland, an 85 year-old private development company based in Charlotte, NC. Prior to joining Crosland he was a Partner and Senior Vice-President for a private venture based in Connecticut where he developed multi-family residential projects throughout New England and South Carolina. Prior to that, he was a Senior Development Manager at JPI where he developed over 3,700 apartments in some of the country's most challenging regulatory and construction environments of Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island and New Hampshire.



**Laura Jones Smith**  
Senior Project Analyst  
GAI Consultants

Laura Jones Smith specializes in the preparation and research of real estate development assignments and served as a professional municipal planner for six years. Her skills include writing and updating land development codes, development plan review, comprehensive plan re-writes and updates, comprehensive plan evaluation and appraisal reports, community redevelopment area findings of necessity, and redevelopment plans. She provides research assistance and analysis of market, economic and demographic data, information on existing and proposed retail, office, and industrial development, census data, and employment statistics for various products for the firm.



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