Urban Redevelopment in Sunbelt Cities: Strategies and Approaches

by

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ABSTRACT

Most Sunbelt cities reflect the suburbanization that characterized urban growth and development over the past forty years. Given this dispersion, these cities often contain large areas of strategically located land that once was fully-developed, but is now either vacant or dramatically under-utilized. This condition is particularly prevalent in the older center city areas. In general, planners and government officials view these under-developed sites as having a claim on some locational advantage; they have actively worked to successfully redevelop such locations. Private sector developers, however, have mixed responses to this hypothesis, generally ignoring such under-developed older locations. This thesis examines the nature of urban under-development in Sunbelt communities, organizing the field into an explanatory matrix based on typological, causal and situational factors. The work builds on the premise that inner-city environments represent untapped competitive advantages, and addresses the roles of both the public and private sectors in realizing the potentials represented by these under-developed properties.

To date, formalized responsibility for urban redevelopment has been predominantly in the hands of the public sector. However, as financial, economic and regulatory roles change, the private sector will increasingly be called upon to help advance public agendas. Can the strengths of the private sector be brought to bear on these under-developed properties, thereby helping advance the public sector’s social and economic programs, while still meeting the private sector’s financial returns?

The challenge in the upcoming decades will be to economically and profitably redevelop the myriad parcels of land that litter the city centers. Because the public moneys to do so are not available, the financing, direction and operational energy for such projects will have to come from the private sector. The goal for the cities in such instances, will be to streamline the process of redevelopment, and to provide the organizational, regulatory and legal framework within which private sector developers can profitably exploit the largely untapped potentials of these in-town locations. This thesis documents four examples of urban neighborhood redevelopment efforts, and compares and contrasts them for elements that might be fruitfully applied to future redevelopment efforts.

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Biography

Before enrolling in the Center for Real Estate at MIT, James A. Moore was an Associate Professor in the School of Architecture & Community Design at the University of South Florida in Tampa FL, and the Director of the Florida Center for Community Design & Research, also at USF. His teaching, research, and consulting work have focused on urban design and development, with particular emphasis on Sunbelt environments and the redevelopment of older urban neighborhoods and properties. Moore has published numerous articles on these subjects in both popular and professional journals, and has lectured extensively. A licensed architect, he also practices in the area of residential design and development.

Upon completing the program at the Center for Real Estate, Moore will return to Tampa and resume his work there.
Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to all those who played a part in enabling me to take a year away from my work at the School of Architecture & Community Design at the University of South Florida. Spending nine months in Boston, away from family, friends and associates, was a mixed blessing. Thanks to all those in Tampa who held down the fort while I was away.

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Particular thanks go to:

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- Bill Wheaton, for putting up with my questions for an entire semester in what was easily one of the best courses I’ve ever taken;
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Finally, special appreciation, gratitude and love to my wife, Jana, who, despite the undue burdens it placed on her, encouraged me to pursue this effort; and to my one-year old son, Quin, who showed unflappable high spirits throughout.
Introduction

Neighborhoods and properties falter when the conditions that supported their initial economic purpose are no longer valid, and functional or contextual factors create a situation in which no viable alternative can be found. A factory shuts down and no new use can be found for the old facility. It falls into disrepair. Residents of the area who used to work at the factory leave in search of other jobs and no buyers can be found for their houses. These are let or sold at a loss, or possibly abandoned. Economic value declines. Large and small variations on this theme abound in this country’s urban history.

A neighborhood, an institution, or a parcel of property is re-developed —brought back into productive use, at enhanced value— through an infusion of external resources, generally capital. For neighborhoods or single properties, this imported capital comes primarily from the private sector or the public sector, including non-profit organizations. Private sector redevelopment can be internally generated —the citizens of a neighborhood make a concerted effort to revitalize their surroundings—but typically not without some influx of outside capital. Private redevelopment can be externally generated, spurred by myriad new individual owners and entrepreneurs; gentrification. Redevelopment can also be the work of a single private-sector source; a developer takes over an old building and provides the capital to fix it up and the resources to create new productive purposes. From a private-sector perspective, therefore, redevelopment involves: a) perception of untapped value; b) access to external resources (such as banks for financing, architects for design, contractors for construction, etc.); c) the ability to apply the resources to the problem at hand; d) the capacity to follow through on a long-term endeavor; and ultimately, e) an end-user for the completed project.

The public sector can also provide capital and resources for redeveloping real estate and neighborhoods. A great deal of the redevelopment efforts in the United States after the Second World War were initiated, funded and fueled by public sector dollars, often coming directly from the federal government. Today, however, such initiatives are few and far between; more and more, the private sector is being called upon to provide the impetus and energy for regenerating and reinvigorating once-thriving but now under-developed projects and environments. However, while the aforementioned factors are ostensibly the same for both public and private resources, there are
significant differences between the overall goals, the processes, and the end results. This thesis addresses some of these differences, with a particular focus on the newly emerging, fast-growing cities of the Sunbelt.

These medium- and large-sized cities are predominantly located in the newer, less urbanized regions of the United States, and generally define the older central cores of rapidly expanding metro areas. In many of these cities, the Central Business Districts have received considerable focus in recent decades, in part because of a perceived loss of position and power, and, in part due to actual deterioration and decay. The CBD of a Sunbelt city generally lacks the vitality it had at an earlier time, but most are economically viable. In general, however, the older neighborhoods surrounding the city centers tend to be under-developed. Previously active mixed-use neighborhoods are denuded; shopping streets lie empty; large tracts of land remain vacant or abandoned. Yet, within the metro area as a whole, growth continues apace, predominantly at the fringes where virgin sites are turned into shopping centers, office parks and subdivisions. Why should one part of a metro area strain under the stresses of growth, while another, ostensibly better suited area, lies fallow? Under what conditions can some of that growth be captured by these in-town areas?

Given a burgeoning awareness of the potential value of older, under-developed environments, what factors currently inhibit their re-development, and how might these factors be mitigated and overcome? Given the current professional antipathy to “sprawl” development, how can these unused in-town environments be brought back to productive use? Who are the potential audiences for these in-town locales, and how might they be induced to invest? Are there “highest and best” uses for areas that might otherwise appear to have no utility at all?

The thesis will approach a range of under-developed conditions typically found in Sunbelt cities. These conditions will be structured typologically and examined for both causality and current opportunity. The focus of this study is not be the traditional downtown cores or Central Business Districts of these cities. Rather, it examines the older, often residential, neighborhoods and environments that surrounded the traditional commercial core. In most cities, these commercial centers have been the subject of public and private redevelopment efforts, which have met with varying degrees of success. While positing a symbiosis between the city center and its immediately
adjacent in-town neighborhoods, the thesis will focus on these latter environments, accepting as a
given, some level of commercial and civic concentration within the downtown cores.

The general bounds of this study are provided by the two dozen or so suburbanized metro areas
that can be described as Sunbelt cities. The particular context of the study is the State of Florida,
a focus selected in order to adequately address the general issues within the allotted time and space,
to optimize the author’s familiarity with specific issues, and to unify the examples within a single
state’s regulatory and financial framework.

Figure 1: Map of the United States Indicating the Location and Range of the “Sunbelt”
(Source: Fink, “Toward a Sunbelt Urban Design Manifesto.”)

Specific examples highlighting general issues will be drawn from the City of Tampa on Florida’s
Gulf Coast. Tampa works well as a case city because of the author’s familiarity with it and
because, in numerous ways, it is representative of many post-War, Sunbelt “suburban” cities. The
features of Tampa that will be described in detail are similar to features found in cities such as
Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, Orlando, Atlanta, Albuquerque and on. In many ways, Tampa is
somewhat more advanced than other places in addressing issues of urban redevelopment; City
officials are regularly invited to other cities to present and discuss Tampa’s approaches and results.
Organization of the Document

The thesis begins with a brief overview of the problem of under-development, looking at it from fiscal, demographic, aesthetic, economic and urban vantages. General discussions are bolstered with specific examples from the City of Tampa.

The thesis then presents the first in a series of organizational typologies, describing the physical and functional presence of under-development. In general, under-developed properties in our late-20th century cities can be divided into (at least) four major categories: a) left-over space; b) obsolete commercial strips; c) abandoned institutions; d) bypassed neighborhoods. These categories are presented, first as a general condition, then with specific illustrations from Tampa.

The thesis asks why these sites and properties are under-developed. What historical factors led to the deterioration of the original uses to create the currently vacant or under-developed conditions? Issues to be discussed include: the loss of the original economic justification for development and the lack of a replacement; poorly applied or ossified zoning regulations; the practice of land-banking for future speculation; environmental factors; real and perceived safety factors; and the general cyclical nature of urbanization. Again, where applicable, issues are highlighted by examples from Tampa.

Next, the thesis looks at the current factors that inhibit re-development. Issues examined within this framework include the nature of the development process, financial incentives and disincentives, micro- and macro-economic factors of supply and demand, physical issues, ownership issues, and myriad regulatory issues.

Given this overview of the factors affecting the conditions of under-development, the thesis then examines a range of approaches to rectifying such conditions. Touching very briefly on the history of previous organized efforts at revitalization, the thesis takes the position that future re-development efforts will, of necessity, have to be true working partnerships between public and private sectors. While refraining from a whole-hearted adoption of Porter's position that inner-city development can be made to work almost entirely from within the private sector, the thesis full
acknowledges the increasingly limited tools available to the public sector. These limitations, coupled with the public sector’s rather checkered record in past redevelopment efforts, leads to the aforementioned conclusion: future efforts must incorporate, as efficiently and effectively as possible, the respective strengths and assets of both sectors.

To a degree, the closer contemporary re-development efforts can be made to fall within the general parameters of private-market, for-profit, real estate development, the more likely their chances of initiation. To the extent that, in the future, the public sector can refrain from attempting, ineffectively, to imitate the private sector, and look instead to work within its capacities to set the stage for private sector developers to carry out redevelopment efforts, the opportunities for success increase dramatically. On the other hand, one must acknowledge the ultimate difference between public and private sector agendas. Public sector responsibilities extend beyond mere economic viability and private sector profits; to what degree can public sector social and economic goals be met within a framework that promotes private-sector re-development?

The sixth section of the thesis highlights, compares, and contrasts four examples of redevelopment drawn from the City of Tampa, and uses these cases to examine the viability of some of the previously reviewed alternatives.

Finally, the thesis closes with some concluding comments on the nature of in-town redevelopment—the operational factors, the opportunities, the stumbling blocks—within our fast-growing Sunbelt metro areas.
Chapter I: Sunbelt Development

Florida: Archetypal Sunbelt Environment

For whatever reason, five and one-half Americans migrated from the Northeast and Midwest to the sunbelt regions during the 1970s. The Florida Story is especially dramatic. In the late 1980s, more than one thousand people move (sic) to the state of Florida every day of the year. With about twelve million people in 1987 and growing more than twice as fast as the national population, Florida is already 85 percent urban and continues to urbanize more rapidly than any other large state. Five of the nation's ten fastest-growing metropolitan areas are now located in Florida. Demographers have projected Florida's population at over twenty-two million by the time the post-war baby-boomers reach retirement age in the early twenty-first century. Florida has become the quintessential urban state of the post-industrial age.¹

The thesis begins with the premise that patterns of growth and development found in the post-War "Sunbelt" cities are dramatically different from those typifying the older, pre-War Northeastern and Midwestern cities, and advances the proposition that the factors affecting re-development in these newer cities might also be different than those found in older cities.

Within the Sunbelt, three or four states predominate: southern California, Texas and Florida, with recent focus on Arizona. Since 1970, the State of Florida has grown from a population of approximately 6,000,000 to a current population of 14,000,000; it is the fourth most populous state in the country and is expected to vault into third by the end of the century.

However, unlike many other fast-growth states, Florida has very stringent development regulations on record. The 1985 Growth Management legislation² has been viewed throughout the country as


² The Growth Management Act passed by the Florida legislature in 1985 mandated that all city and county governments formulate new comprehensive plans that were designed to regulate growth. The act, as well as the regulations issued by the state's Department of Community Affairs (DCA), included guidelines on the elements that were to be included in the plan. They also enumerated some specific goals regarding the type of growth that was to be fostered by the plan. One of the noteworthy goals was to
a model growth ordinance, and it has been copied, in part, by other states, including Vermont, New Jersey, and Georgia, in fashioning their own growth policies. As early as the 1970s, Florida moved to enact some level of growth regulations. Even at this date, business leaders, politicians and residents recognized the fragility of the state’s environment and ecology. While the state has always relied very heavily on tourism and immigration for revenues, it was acknowledged that a lack of regulation could easily destroy the benefits that made the state a desirable venue to visit or to live. The goal, therefore, has always been to figure out how to tiptoe a tight path between under-regulation with the attendant over-development and environmental damage that would occur, and over-regulation with its presumed resulting decrease in development that would depress the state’s economy.

Additional factors were also considered; the very growth and development that was making Florida a booming place to live was negatively affecting the state’s desirability as a tourist destination. Surveys conducted in the early 1990s indicated that Florida’s allure to tourists, particularly for visitors from within the USA, was diminishing, especially as alternative venues in states like Georgia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada emerged. The generally low quality of suburban development found throughout the state combined with increasing transportation problems, a weak economy, and negative publicity due to concerns about crime and safety have noticeably diminished tourism in many parts of the state.

As a state, Florida is clearly entering a very important period in its maturation. The amenities that it once proffered as a come-on to both tourists and potential residents are less evident: crime, pollution, traffic congestion and environmental degradation are widespread. While the state is still very low on per-capita taxation [45 out of 51], resident taxes are kept low at the expense of extremely high tourist taxes and development fees, and municipality after municipality has begun to face increasing fiscal pressures, particularly for infrastructure development.

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Discourage sprawl, the growth pattern that typified Hillsborough County’s development during the previous three decades. Another was the “concurrency provision” mandating that all development was to proceed concurrent with the provision of public facilities, thereby protecting communities from suffering the problems that Hillsborough County faced with its overloaded wastewater facilities. Kerstein, Robert. “Suburban Growth Politics in Hillsborough County,” Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 74, No. 3, September 1993, page 623.

3 Tampa Tribune report, Friday 12 July 1996.
4 Recent studies indicate that Florida’s attempts to maintain its position as a low-tax environment may be having deleterious effects on its business strength. As reported in the Tampa Tribune (12 July 1996):
The environmental ramifications of thirty years of intense development are widespread ranging from the ongoing depletion of the Everglades to salt-water creep, endangered animal species and increasing concern with stormwater pollution. Additional concerns have emerged in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew which, in a twenty-four hour period in August of 1992, wreaked over $20 billion of havoc across Southeast Florida. Dozens of smaller insurance companies were put out of business by these losses, and today, in an emergency stop-gap measure, the State itself, is the second-largest home property underwriter in Florida, with over 900,000 clients. Should a second, Andrew-type hurricane strike, many experts fear that it will bankrupt the State government.

By no means, however, is there consensus on the direction and path the state should take in the upcoming years. While concurrency requirements ostensibly help guarantee that future developments will provide the necessary infrastructure, there are still many large-scale projects that have been grandfathered into the original 1986 legislation. Two serious theoretical debates have been taking place throughout the state over the past twenty years: how much growth should occur, and, in what form. Even as Florida achieved the ranking of the fastest growing State during the decade of the 1980s, this status was far from uniformly well received.

In some jurisdictions, the sides have been sharply divided: pro-growth factions versus those in favor of no-growth at all. In Sarasota County, as recently as 1991, this debate went to a public referendum, with one side looking to curtail any and all development activity for a period of two years, during which time the community would work to come up with a universally agreed-upon strategy for specific future growth. While the proposal lost by almost a three-to-one margin, it galvanized the community and was widely regarded as a warning of events to come.

Florida’s economy is among the nation’s leaders in creating new jobs, but is at the bottom in wage growth and employer-paid health insurance coverage. It received an F and two D’s from an economic issues think tank for its bleak economic performance, lack of business vitality and failure to encourage competitive strengths through investment in schools and roads. The state has, since last year, gotten worse in nearly every way in the rankings released Thursday by the Corporation for Economic Development. The rankings show that Florida’s jobs are among the lowest in wage growth (43rd) and health benefits (45th), its businesses can’t compete on the national stage (49th), its has abysmally low high school graduation rates (47th) and a tax structure that favors the rich over the poor.

In addition to being in the vanguard as to the “growth/no growth” debate, Florida also serves as a case study of the on-going debate as to how exactly growth should “best” occur. The “compact versus sprawl” debate may have originated in California, but it is clearly the predominant theoretical development discussion in Florida at this time. As the title implies, a decision in preference of one position over the other has enormous implications for efforts at urban redevelopment. The converse is also true; the success or failure of ongoing efforts at revitalizing once-developed in-town locations into productive uses will impact the overarching debate as to the best way to focus development throughout the state.

Today, Florida, along with California, is at the vanguard in addressing issues that impact all of the Sunbelt communities and states. The importance of these issues is heightened in Florida by the sheer size and extent of the development surge, the fragility of the state’s environment and ecology, the tenuous nature of the state’s economy, and the cultural and political weight that have shifted to the state over the past twenty years. Other states and jurisdictions around the country are watching Florida to see how it responds to these pressures; the success or failure of efforts at compact development hinge to some degree on the ability to redevelop previously developed areas in a financially viable way.

The Rise of the Suburbanized City

While the term “Sunbelt” implies a division created along strictly climatic lines, loosely applied, this term covers any of the fast-growth metro areas in the United States. In general, these cities are in the Southeast and Southwest. Several boom communities, however, are not. These include Denver, Sacramento, Seattle and Portland. Outside of the geographic dichotomies, these cities all fit within the general criteria that define the post-War Sunbelt metropolis.

Within the “Sunbelt” category, the “city” proper generally describes only a small percentage of the larger metropolitan area. In some instances, the cities have grown rather starkly in the past thirty or forty years, typically through annexation and physical growth rather than increases in population density. Only rarely are the boundaries of the economic catchment area—the Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA)—congruous with political boundaries.
Generally, the region that defines a single economic unit comprises dozens of separate municipalities as well as vast amounts of unincorporated area.\(^6\)

In rather stark contrast to their 19\(^{th}\) century antecedents, these new “cities” often have several dominant focal points or “centers.” This thesis, therefore, takes as a given, the polynucleated model of the metropolitan region, as contrasted with the monocentric model that historically typified most older cities. Several fundamental differences distinguish post-War cities from their predecessors. These distinctions render many of the approaches to redevelopment that were taken in cities such as Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore less relevant to cities such as Atlanta, Orlando, Tampa and Phoenix. Nearly all of these older cities originated around a dominant center --typically the “downtown”-- and such centers still hold enormous significance today. Often, the dominance of the center was enhanced by “hub-and-spoke” mass transit systems. Post-War cities, by contrast, also have older centers, but these are generally just one of several focal points within a more dispersed metro region. In his 1990 text, Joel Garreau identified these non-downtown centers “Edge Cities,” a name that has since entered the common parlance of planning and development.\(^7\)

In keeping with their polynucleated structure, newer cities tend to be organized around automobile mobility as opposed to pedestrian or mass-transit based movement systems. This creates cities with lower overall densities and greater dispersion. The “critical mass” that defines many neighborhoods and downtowns in older cities is often missing in these newer environments. In addition, designing for characteristics of the car, both in motion and as stationary objects, have become critical urban design and development criteria for these newer cities.

The street as the conveyor of vehicular traffic is the central focus of the Sunbelt city. It defines neighborhoods and unifies the city. J. B. Jackson, the first editor of Center, stated: “The street . . . has taken the place of architecture as the basic visual element, the infrastructure of the city.” Sunbelt cities, he asserts, must be explored by car. “They stretch for miles and miles –street after street of one-story, single-family houses.” The typical Sunbelt city takes Manhattan’s two mile by thirteen mile grid and extends it over ten times the area.\(^8\)

\(^6\) Recently, an increasing number of authors have pointed out some of the inherent inefficiencies of such a setup. One of the most lucid, comprehensive and well-stated outline of such a position can be found in David Rusk’s book Cities Without Suburbs (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1993). In this thin, readable text, Rusk argues that today’s “city” includes the entire metropolitan area, and that artificial political boundaries simply foster racial, economic and ethnic divisions that are bad not only for the host municipality, but for the region as a whole.


### Table: Population and Land Area Growth for Selected Cities

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>1950</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>% change</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>% change</th>
<th>1950 density (per sq. mi.)</th>
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*Abbott (1981) includes these cities in the Sunbelt, while Bernard and Rice (1983) do not.


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**Figure 2: Population and Land Area Growth for Selected Cities**

(Source: Fink: "Toward a Sunbelt Urban Design Manifesto.")

In their rapid expansion in the past several decades, these Sunbelt communities have grown in both size and population, but have generally declined in density. This implies both increasing suburban-type development and the increasingly marginalized role of non-suburban prototypes. In short, the rapid growth of these newer metro areas was often accompanied by the neglect and eventual decline of the traditional pre-War urban cores.

Different communities, however, have approached growth from different standpoints. The different approaches stem as much from different philosophical and political attitudes towards growth as from site-specific geographic and environmental factors, or from specific factors related to the timing of the growth. While no community has turned its back on economic growth and...
development, cities have responded to such growth and development on markedly different terms. To some extent, a city’s general position towards growth and economic development will have a positive or negative impact on both public and private efforts for redevelopment of real property.

Four cities can be used to generically highlight some of the differences in the approaches to growth. Three of the four – Orlando, Tampa, and St. Petersburg – are located in Florida. The fourth – Portland, OR – represents a unique approach, but one that may become more prevalent as federal and state support for highway and suburban infrastructure development diminishes further.

St. Petersburg FL, a city of 245,900 (1994) people, occupies much of the southern part of Pinellas County on Florida’s Gulf Coast. Located due west of Hillsborough County, across Old Tampa Bay from the City of Tampa, Pinellas is the most densely populated county in the state of Florida. The 1994 population of 870,722 occupies a land area of 280 square miles, for a gross population density of 3,110 persons per square mile. Similarly, St. Petersburg’s population occupies just over 58 square miles, for an gross population density of 4,240 persons per square mile. (In Florida, only Miami, with its strong Latin American influence, has a higher population density.)

St. Petersburg’s form, organization and density derive from its history as a 1920s retirement and winter-time community, and from its geography. The city’s location at the tip of a peninsula has effectively turned it into a development “island.” It cannot expand to the east, south or west, and to the north it is bounded by smaller municipalities. Growth, if it is to occur in St. Petersburg, will be internal. On the other hand, while the city is land-locked, development is not precluded within the county, nor is it limited only to the county limits. Most of the recent growth in Pinellas has been occurring in the northern reaches of the county; the city’s population has actually decreased slightly since 1970. Considerable development, however, all of it suburban in nature, is occurring in Pasco County, immediately north of the Pinellas County limits.

Like St. Petersburg, Portland OR, with a population of approximately 440,000, is also effectively a development “island,” except that the island is a convenient fiction, with boundaries that are self-imposed, flexible, and regionally agreed-upon. Oregon was one of the first states to adopt the “urban growth boundary” as a planning device, requiring in 1973 that all of the state’s major cities
create an effective limit within which all future growth must be accommodated. As the largest city in the state, Portland became the focus in the implementation of this concept; unexpectedly large growth during the 1980s, including a large number of Californians disenchanted with that state’s rapid development, revealed the full character and utility of the concept.

Given fixed external boundaries and a purposeful focus on mass-transit in lieu of auto-transit, Portland established numerous incentive and opportunities for in-town redevelopment. In the 1960s, for example, the city rejected Federal funds to build a waterfront highway through its downtown, and instead used grant funds to remove an existing waterfront artery and replaced it with a park and a (now successful) mixed-use development, Riverplace. In the 1970s, the City placed a cap on downtown parking, essentially freezing the number of parking spaces available within the city core, while at the same time heartily endorsing further commercial development there. At the same time, the City provided incentives for developers and non-profit groups looking to create residential options within the core and in the immediately adjacent neighborhoods.

If St. Petersburg represents the case of a city that will, of necessity, have to turn inward to find future growth opportunities, and Portland represents the case of a city that voluntarily organized its planning and growth policies to optimize the exploitation of these opportunities, Tampa FL represents a city in which in-town growth will only occur within the context of a competitive market. If Tampa’s under-developed in-town neighborhoods are to be revitalized, they must be able to provide the amenities and facilities that the market demands, in direct competition with developers at the fringes of the metro area.

With a population of 285,000 people, Tampa is the dominant center of both Hillsborough County (population 900,000) and the entire Tampa Bay SMSA, a metro area that includes St. Petersburg and comprises nearly 2 million people. As a city, however, Tampa’s population growth has been stagnant since the late 1960s. Recent population growth has occurred only through the practice

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9 With few options for annexation, St. Petersburg represents what David Rusk refers to as an “inelastic” municipality.


Tampa included 124,683 citizens in 1950 and jumped to 274,970 in 1960, primarily due to a major annexation in 1953. Its population then rose slowly to 277,735 in 1970 and
of annexing large master-planned suburban communities that were originally constructed in the unincorporated county and have come to rely on the City for provision of services. Thus, while population as a whole has been gradually creeping upwards, so too has the overall size of the city; population density, in fact, has been steadily diminishing.\(^1\)

While both the current and previous administration have been whole-hearted advocates of in-town redevelopment, substantial redevelopment efforts have focused primarily on the relatively compact Central Business District. In fact, historically private sector developers attempting to renovate older properties or revitalize areas of the city have complained about the lack of public sector support for their efforts. Their complaint was that taxes, high rates, building impact fees and permit fees, all worked against in-town redevelopment; builders in the unincorporated county, they argued, had a much easier time of it.

Orlando FL, population 189,000, represents a cross between Tampa and Portland. Like Tampa in the 1980s, the Orlando metro area is experiencing very rapid growth and development, much of it occurring in unincorporated Orange and Osceola counties.\(^2\) Unlike Tampa, however, Orlando has a strong downtown plan that is the result of over a decade of concerted planning and development efforts. The traditional central business district is still regarded by many as the dominant center for the region, and this sense of centrality is bolstered by organized procedures for restoring and rejuvenating the in-town neighborhoods immediately abutting the downtown core.

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\(^1\) In contrast to St. Petersburg’s density figures, Tampa’s 1995 population of 285,000 occupied over 110 square miles for an average residential density of approximately 2,600 people per square mile. And, as the newer, generally low-density but well-to-do subdivisions sprout to the north and east of the current city limits, the City fully intends to annex them, thereby further increasing its land area and decreasing is average density.

\(^2\) In 1990, the population of the Orlando MSA was 1 million.
The Orlando area, however, is decidedly polynucleated; additional “centers” include the Walt Disney complex in nearby Osceola County, Park Avenue at the heart of the upscale suburb of Winter Park, adjacent to Orlando, and the sprawling “edge city” developing around the University of Central Florida. Like Portland, however, Orlando and Orange county have been applying the
concept of an "Urban Service Area"\textsuperscript{13} for many years. Unlike Portland, Orange County does not use the Urban Service Area as a way of dictating development density or recommended development patterns. Rather the Urban Service Area is a fiscal device designed to maintain an appropriate level of concurrency between development tax revenues and new infrastructure development. Orange County has no thought to curtailing growth; they simply want to be able to pay for it as it comes. As one official in Orange County expresses it, “Our goal is that ultimately the boundaries of the Urban Service Area will match the boundaries of the county.”

Portland has attempted to align the instincts and interests of both urban and suburban developers within the framework of a commonly accepted and administered regional vision. (In fact, Portland’s regional plan is one of only a handful that is, in fact, overseen by a truly regional governing agency.)\textsuperscript{14} St. Petersburg and the surrounding jurisdictions that comprise Pinellas county are all suffering from the same dearth of available undeveloped space. Slowly, albeit tentatively, these various organizations and jurisdictions have begun to work together to begin to maximize opportunities for internal re-development.

For example, the City of St. Petersburg has been working on an on-going series of redevelopment plans, both for its central business district as well as for many of its oldest in-town neighborhoods. In contrast to Tampa, however, and Orlando where growth is slightly demand driven, there has been very little demand for development within St. Petersburg. One of the recognized drawbacks to in-town redevelopment in and around the downtown is an overabundance of viable property. These is too much supply and not enough demand. Tampa and unincorporated Hillsborough County, however, tend to approach growth, particularly economic development, as a zero-sum

\textsuperscript{13} An Urban Service Area is “an area in which urban services will be provided and outside of which such services will not be extended.” An Urban Growth Boundary, on the other hand, is “the line on a map that is used to mark the separation of urbanizable land from rural land and within which urban growth should be contained for a period of time specified by a growth management program.” Easley, Gail. Staying Within the Lines. Chicago, IL: American Planning Association, 1992.

\textsuperscript{14} In 1979, metropolitan Portland, with urban development extending through some 26 incorporated cities in three counties, formed an elected regional government called the Metropolitan Services District (METRO). An urban growth boundary was delineated in 1980 by METRO, and it has been expanded only slightly since. Today, METRO administers growth and development within this boundary, and in conjunction with the other governments, is accountable for a regularly updated comprehensive growth and development plan. By implementing this over-arching elected government body at the outset of the growth management process, Portland thereby avoided one of the dominant problems in cross-jurisdictional development planning; how to keep local governments from competing with each other for growth and development.
What benefits one jurisdiction is regarded as a loss by the other, and vice versa. Given that Hillsborough County, at slightly more than 1,000 square miles, is larger than the state of Rhode Island, the overwhelming percentage of recent growth has been in the unincorporated county as opposed to the city.

Several arguments are presented as a means of rationalizing this pattern of development. Even though the county has a great deal of extremely productive agricultural land, it also has a surfeit of prime development property. In particular, the completion in 1987 of the Interstate 75 bypass
running about ten miles east of the Tampa city limits opened up enormous tracts of land for potential development. (While most of the land along this corridor remains undeveloped, the development rights for much of this land were secured as early as the late 1970s. Thus, enormous amounts of potential development were grandfathered in before the State's far-reaching and rigorous growth management legislation was officially ratified in 1986. A 1991 study conducted at the School of Architecture and Community Design at the University of South Florida, concluded that within only the northern half of Hillsborough County, over 1 billion square feet of potential development had already been permitted. By way of contrast, consider that there is only about 350 million square feet of commercial office space in all of Manhattan. Clearly, the potential supply grotesquely over-exceeds the potential demand, a factor that helps keep the costs of development generally low, particularly in the eastern reaches of the county.)

The ease, rapidity and relatively low price at which new development can occur within the unincorporated county effectively dampens demand for development within the City limits. Thus, even as sectors within the City have seen modest growth over the past few years, these gains pale in comparison with development within the County. Clearly, therefore, the degree to which it is easier or more difficult for inner-city neighborhoods and properties to redevelop depends on external factors such as the nature of the city core and the relative ease of development at the urban fringes. With low levels of center city concentration and relatively unchallenged fringe development, proponents of revitalizing in-town neighborhoods will be facing stiff competition. Similarly, to the degree that a community presents its older neighborhoods as viable alternatives to newer, suburban developments, the redevelopment of these neighborhoods will be facilitated.
Ask Yourself,

Why would you settle for an outdated house on a small lot in South Tampa

When the same money buys a new custom home with a gorgeous view in

a PRIVATE GATED COMMUNITY?

Figure 5: Advertisement for Suburban Master Planned Community North of Tampa
Chapter II  Patterns of Development and Re-Development in Post-War Cities

These sunbelt cities never experienced the nineteenth-century industrial revolution. They are twentieth-century automobile cities, less densely settled and more widely spread over the urban and suburban landscape. Aided by mid-twentieth century highway building and almost universal automobile ownership, sunbelt city populations pushed out the urban and suburban periphery to an extent unimagined in the industrial era.15

Cities that rose to predominance in the period after the Second World War differ from older, pre-Twentieth Century cities in many ways. The patterns and forms of development in these, predominantly Sunbelt communities, reflect the dominant suburban paradigms of the post-War period. Sprawling, low-density, functionally segregated, auto-dependent, these cities are the fast-growth urban environments in America today.

Observers of these new metropolitan areas, however, tend to be less than sanguine about future prospects. The specter of Los Angeles is held out as the fate of communities such as Houston, Dallas, Phoenix and Miami; choked on traffic and low-density growth, without room to expand outward or the mechanisms for redeveloping inwards. Economically and functionally segregated, these cities no longer carry the economic mandate of pre-War industrial and financial capitals. People, today, flee Los Angeles and Houston, not for other cities of comparable size, but for small towns in Colorado and Montana, from where they “commute” via modem and fax machine.

The very growth that powered the emergence of these cities as national, if not international, players, has threatened the ways of life that initially made these cities desirable and, ironically, has created the same conditions that initially induced people to leave the older, pre-War cities and head to the Sunbelt. Today, growth is forcing both advocates and opponents of growth to reconsider their options.

One option that is often proffered as a way around the current dilemmas is the focused re-development of the generally under-developed older areas of these Sunbelt cities. Efforts at attaining such ends, however, have met with relatively uneven levels of success, and while the potentials these areas seem to present continues to grow as ever more people abandon the

15 Mohl, op cit, page 17.
traditional core, solutions at re-capturing this human and economic capital are few and far between.

These failures are not surprising; the occur, in part, because the paradigms for urban re-development (many of which have not been very successful) stem almost totally from 19th-century pre-automobile environments: Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, San Francisco. The rules and methods that may or may not have been appropriate to such "traditional" urban environments are, for the most part, not workable in the newer, more suburban, post-War cities. They stem, in part, from an unwillingness to throw away outdated planning and development paradigms that focused on the primacy of central place, the dramatic separation of uses, and a belief in the automobile as the optimal form of mobility. At the same time, planners can be justifiably accused to utopian idealism and physical determinism in their general assumptions that the main thing hindering in-town redevelopment was the lack of a good plan.

Finally, these failures point up a central fact about post-War development in the United States. The conditions of development in this country are strongly influenced by macro- and micro-economic factors that transcend the capacities of individuals, or sometimes even of municipalities, to control, or even manipulate. As various economic analyses\textsuperscript{16} of growth indicate, when every player acts only in his or her best interests, the overall situation is never optimized. In a typical development scenario, without collective control or oversight, ultimately densities end up higher than optimal and prices end up lower. Under the aegis of a single developer or an enlightened collective, these conditions can be reversed. Each individual prospers and the collective is better off also.

Translated to the realm of urban planning and growth management, this suggests that one cannot address the issue of in-town redevelopment without also looking at the all of the development alternatives within the general catchment area. If a homeowner can buy a bigger house on a larger lot in a new part of town for less money than he or she can buy in an old part of town, ideology becomes the dominant factor suggesting that the redevelopment efforts will succeed.

To a degree, economic theories involving public goods, externalities and their relationship to
development operate under assumptions that do not actually describe reality. All homeowners are
not identical; all housing units are not identical; we don’t all address the same questions. The
underlying point, however, made by the economists’ approach, however, remains. Without
collective oversight, Pareto optimization will never occur. The issue, therefore, becomes a
discussion of the conditions in which collective oversight can be optimized. Clearly, when a single
developer purchases a thousand acres of virgin pasture and sets about developing a master planned
community, the developer (and the lenders) controls nearly every factor of development. He or she
can lay out roads, put in communal landscaping and amenities, indicate which lands will be built
on and which will be left as permanent open space. Within the boundaries of the development, the
developer rules.

In situations in which there are myriad development interests, however, such simple questions as
What land is used for open space and what land is developed? become far more difficult to resolve.
While smaller issues such as the style, size and color of a house, the use of one’s property, and the
location of one’s vehicles, can be collectively mandated through zoning, building regulations and
deed restrictions, within a “free” market, each land-owner is going to seek to optimized his or her
individual gain, whether or not it helps one’s neighbors.

Such is the typical economic and political arena within which many redevelopment efforts take
place. Not only are there various private sector factions each looking to optimize individual
holdings, there are generally public sector entities working to promote development, but often
without the same economic parameters as the private sector. In some situations, there are older,
established residents who represent an existing, albeit deteriorated, neighborhood, who stand in
direct contrast to newer, more affluent residents who are looking to “upgrade” the setting. All of
these disparate factions are at work in a situation in which the playing is not only not level, it is
not even completely playable.

In states such as Florida, the cost-effective redevelopment of once-developed areas takes on
additional importance in the face of rigorous growth management requirements. Fringe and
exurban development is increasingly burdened with the demands that growth pay for itself. A state
without a personal income tax, Florida uses extremely high impact fees to help pay for the
infrastructure necessitated by growth. These fees alone, however, seldom come close to covering the costs of growth; combined with generally weak levels of previous infrastructure development they perpetuate the "sprawl" environments that are increasingly coming under fire from various parties. At the same time, there is often an oversupply of infrastructure capacity in the underdeveloped core areas.\textsuperscript{17}

**Arguments For and Against In-town Redevelopment**

At this time, certain points seem unavoidable. As we near the end of the century, there is no unified theory of how a city should develop, and a primary source of funding for revitalization efforts—the Federal Government—is no longer a dominant factor. One theory avers that governments should focus their efforts on the traditional downtown of a city, arguing that such development is good for the city's overall image and that it creates much-needed jobs. This economic development rationale, however, has tested in studies of numerous cities and has been shown not to hold true. Downtown redevelopment does create some jobs and does bring additional revenues to a region, but the jobs are often filled by newcomers who are in the upper income brackets. Many of these newcomers choose to live in new, outlying suburban developments and commute to their downtown destinations. Thus, they are not adding to the municipal coffers and they are creating additional congestion and pollution.

A variant on this theory has achieved considerable coverage in recent times under the name of the New Urbanism or Neo-Traditional Design. A melding of turn-of-the-century "City Beautiful" planning principals, 1970s environmentalism, and nostalgia, this new "movement" has been spearheaded by architects and landscape architects, particularly the Florida firm of Duany/Plater-Zyberk, and the California firm of Calthorpe Associates. Arguing for a radical shift from

\textsuperscript{17} A 1993 article in the St. Petersburg Times (18 July 1993) highlighted the costs of services:
- **Roads:** It costs Hillsborough County $3.6 million per mile to build a new two-lane road, $7.6 million for four lanes. It costs the county $5.5 million per mile to widen a two-lane road into four lanes.
- **Water and Sewer:** A 12-inch water main costs $56.87 per foot and a 6-inch sewer costs $28.44 per foot. These are the kinds commonly used to hook up homes to the county's systems.
- **Fire:** County fire officials estimate it costs $887,000 to build a new two-bay fire house and $500,000 annually to keep it open.
- **Parks:** It costs $1.5 million to develop a new district park and $525,000 annually to operate it.
- **Library:** A neighborhood library costs about $2.5 million, add another $1 million to put books on the shelves. That's not counting the $649,600 annually it takes to operate the facility.
conventional development practices, the New Urbanists advocate “urban villages,” Transit Oriented Designs (TODs), and Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs). All of these forms of development break with conventional practice in downplaying the role of the car, emphasizing the role of pedestrians and bicyclists, and looking to reverse standard zoning practices in creating integrated, mixed-use developments.

A competing theory of urban development is referred to as the *laissez-faire* or market economy theory. Proponents argue that the rapid build-up of fringe development in Sunbelt metro areas and the gradual deterioration of CBDs and in-town neighborhoods simply reflect the free-market at work. Sprawl, as this general approach to suburbanization is known, is efficient, given the various factors involved at present. As described by Ewing:

> On the other side of the issue is a small but influential group of skeptics. Most hail from the field of economics and seem to delight in challenging the conventional wisdom of planners. Arguing in *Stuck in Traffic* that land planning isn’t worth the effort, Anthony Downs is the dean of this group . . . But no one matches the debunking zeal of the faculty at the School of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Southern California. For years now, Harry Richardson and Peter Gordon have argued against compact development and land use regulation.

As justification for their vociferous arguments against most forms of planning and development regulation, Gordon, Richardson and others in their movement point to the naiveté of the planning profession and a certain lack of sociocultural understanding. Points of reference for the advocates of sprawl include the following observations:

- Americans will not live at high densities (without massive government interference in land markets).
- Americans will not use alternative modes (of transportation) (without a dramatic increase in the cost of automobile use).

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18 Many authors have attempted to definitively describe the conditions commonly referred to as “urban sprawl.” In general, these discussions focus on several common features that describe this pattern of development: (1) large areas of continuous mono-functional development, such as sub-divisions that include thousands of residential units but no commercial or retail uses; (2) large amounts of “ribbon” commercial strip development, as typically defines the arterial roadways in most post-War cities; (3) discontinuous development in which new projects “leapfrog” over undeveloped areas to create outlying pockets of development; (4) large areas of essentially unplanned and uncoordinated land-uses.

• Americans will not live close to their places of work (given the many other factors that are more important such as the cost of housing and the quality of schools).  

In the face of such vaunting opposition, many opponents of sprawl avoid the economic rationale entirely, and fall back on aesthetic or environmental arguments. Sprawl, they argue, is destroying the visual character and ecological structure of our communities. Others acknowledge the immediate, superficial logic of the economic argument, but counter with the claim that sprawl only makes economic sense because so much of the cost of automobile transportation is subsidized by the Federal government. Claiming that the “true” cost of a gallon of gas should be upwards of $4.50, these theorists argue that a traditional focused, mixed-use, dense urban form still makes more sense than sprawl from both an environmental and an economic rationale.

A third charge leveled against opponents of conventional sprawl development is they argue not from facts but from normative stances. The common cant of proponents of neo-traditional forms of development is that the average consumer doesn’t really want to live in a gated suburban subdivision, but would rather live in a mixed-use medium-density diverse “village.” Quite clearly, if this were the case, more than a nominal amount of the 1.5 million single-family homes built each year would conform to this vision. In fact, repeat surveys of residents of Florida indicate that most of the residents of new suburban master-planned communities do like their living environments.

20 Ewing, op cit, pages 2-3.
21 A study done in 1993 by Reid Ewing of the Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems at Florida Atlantic University, using conditions and factors found within the State of Florida, concluded that if all the external costs associated with automobile use were factored into the price of gasoline, prices at the pumps would rise to between $4.50 and $4.80 per gallon. This is generally in keeping with the prices that are charged in Europe, an environment in which sprawl is much less common, auto usage is lower, mass transit much more prevalent, and city densities considerably higher than in the United States.

While articulate, heavily referenced, and convincing, the Florida Atlantic study offers no suggestions as to how one could functionally raise the price of gasoline in this country. To a degree, however, the cost of driving argument is a straw dog. Prototypes for personal automobiles already exist that don’t use gasoline at all, relying instead on solar energy for propulsion. While these prototypes are typically more expensive than conventional cars, their prices would fall and their use rise rapidly should the price of gasoline permanently escalate much above current levels. And, should these resource efficient, essentially pollution-free personal vehicles capture the market, the entire argument over economics and environment disappears.

22 Ivonne Audriac, Elizabeth Shermeyan and others at the University of Florida have done considerable demographic survey work in examining the likes and preferences of Florida residents. The overwhelming emphasis of this work seems to be that the majority of Floridians are not unhappy with their personal living options, but are upset about issues of pollution, crime, taxes and other factors associated with urbanization.
Reviews of the literature supporting and opposing the recently popularized theories of the New Urbanists are inconclusive at best. For example, while it is a tenet of the theory that dense, gridiron patterns of mixed-use development create an environment in which walking is increased and auto usage is minimized, recent empirical research at the University of California at Berkeley finds that the nuances of this argument belie reality. After studying a number of older communities in and around the San Francisco Bay area, the researchers found that residents of “neo-traditional” neighborhoods did, in fact, put less mileage on their cars. They did this, however, by taking a higher number than normal of auto trips that were much shorter than normal. Given that the maximum negative effect of car trips on air pollution occurs in the first few minutes after the car is started, paradoxically, the impact of their auto use on air quality was worse than if they lived in a sprawl environment and only took very few long-distance trips. In effect, the very argument of the New Urbanists had been turned upside down.

In other instances, advocates of neo-traditional design will argue that their designs are safer than conventional suburban alternatives. Again, empirical studies indicate that people are willing and eager to pay considerable premiums for the convention trappings of security: gated entrances with full-time personnel; roaming private security forces; absolute control over who enters and exist a living environment.

Finally, empirical studies of mixed-use environments indicates that, as popular sentiment would have it, living above, beside or near the store has deleterious impacts on property prices, with the singular exception of very high-end developments. Even the magazine Architecture acknowledges the dichotomy between what the theorists suggest and what surveys seem to indicate:

... issues of marketability may ultimately transcend them all. A survey of 1,650 home-buyers and shoppers in California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Texas and Washington state indicates that while buyers might enjoy an old-timey atmosphere of small shops in retail areas, more than 80 percent want to be able to park nearby.

The study, by American Lives, a San Francisco-based consumer research firm, reveals that 80 percent of home-buyers also prefer cul-de-sacs and courts over New Urbanist grids, because they believe children will be safer. More than two-thirds prefer the privacy of big yards and houses set back from the street, away from noise.23

Additional arguments in favor of redeveloping in-town neighborhoods focus on the environmental benefits that would accrue. Here, the evidence is clearly equivocal. Proponents of dense, mixed-use environments argue that every unit that is built on the site of a former development saves a new unit being built on a virgin piece of land. Every additional bit of density that can be added to a development, the more undeveloped land can be saved.

Opponents of this theory point out that the carrying capacity of different sites varies and that it is just as bad to overshoot this capacity as to undershoot. Thus, if the mixed-use, medium-density development overstrains the existing stormwater system, it could create more residual pollution for the local aquifers and waterways than if many acres of virgin land were developed at fairly low density levels. (The aforementioned argument about cars and air pollution is a similar case.)

In summary, therefore, an appeal to currently popular Neo-Traditional design theories as a way of bolstering support for re-developing traditional in-town neighborhoods may not prove terribly helpful. Nonetheless, many have argued for the redevelopment of under-utilized and vacant in-town properties and sites, using all of the above rationales for support. In-town properties, by definition, are older than suburban developments and far more likely to accord with the "traditional" sense of urban neighborhood: rectilinear interconnected street pattern of similar but not identical building types, often built at a density that exceeds contemporary developments and in a mixed-use context. (One of the paradoxes surrounding the "New Urbanism" is its dominant focus on creating new, suburban variations of traditional pre-War neighborhoods, with relatively little interest in helping to revive existing legitimate examples of such neighborhoods that have fallen on hard times. In part, this focus can be attributed to the exigencies of the design business; the new urbanists have been hired by suburban developers and have spent time and effort coercing these developers into using what is claimed to be a better development form. In part, however, this neglect of in-town redevelopment opportunities can be traced to the numerous financial, economic and social issues that surround the problem of re-development; in short, unlike the creation of a new subdivision, redevelopment is not primarily a physical design problem.)

It is true that as in-town neighborhoods are redeveloped and residents once again begin to live there, the population of the traditional city will increase. Often, this increase comes after some period of stagnation or even decline in population. Proponents of redevelopment will claim that
this increase in population helps bolster the municipal tax rolls thereby increasing the traditional city’s wealth. Again, this argument can be debated. While it is true that additional residents add to the city’s tax base through property taxes (and general sales taxes, etc.), they also demand more of the city’s services. One rationale for redevelopment has been that claimed existence of “excess capacity” of infrastructure, particularly with respect to transportation, water, sewer and other utilities.

Again, this argument must be taken apart. While it is true that a currently vacant neighborhood possesses more roadway, water main, sewer main, etc. than it currently uses, these facilities do not work in isolation. If the cars that will begin to use the currently vacant streets of a redeveloping neighborhood have to travel on an already-crowded level C or D arterial road that connects the neighborhood to the downtown, they one could equally argue that the redevelopment is overloading infrastructure capacity and that the redevelopment of the neighborhood will create a need to expand the arterial at a cost that is guaranteed to vastly exceed the enhanced taxes coming in from the new residents. One way around this type of problem has been for communities in Florida to appeal to higher funding sources. Many arterials, for example, are state roads; when levels of service deteriorate due to increased development and use, the State is required to upgrade conditions, not the municipality. Thus, external funds are available to resolve conditions that lead to an increase in internal revenues. To the degree that such funds continue to be available, they are a resource that municipalities should avail themselves of. Of late, however, particularly in the State of Florida, such funds have not been available, and it is currently the expressed policy of the Florida DOT to deliberately allow the level of services on selected roads—typically in-town arterials—to deteriorate to well below standard conditions, as a way of inciting drivers to find alternative routes or alternative travel times. In other words, from a policy of external system expansion, the FDOT is moving towards the creation of a “self-healing” movement system.

Proponents of in-town development who argue that currently unused lands can become a viable source of affordable housing for people who are currently living in sub-standard residences generally receive the greatest amount of attention and credibility. Groups such as Habitat for Humanity have been successfully working for years in many Sunbelt cities, incrementally repairing in-town residences and building new homes where the opportunities can be found. Such grassroots efforts, however, are constrained at almost every quarter. Labor tends to be voluntary, with
occasional expertise provided by hired contractors. Properties are generally volunteered by owner occupants or are taken from the city’s roll of vacant properties. Given the precarious financial standing of such volunteer organizations, even the slightest cost over-rides can cause considerable delays. Within Tampa, for example, a Habitat-led project lacked the funds necessary to complete the legally mandated electrical and plumbing work on one of its projects. For lack of $6,000 to complete the construction, a home languished for over six months.

The sum result of such volunteer efforts, while laudable, has been minute when contrasted with both the demand for affordable housing, and the potentially usable sites. The vast majority of these sites, however, are held in private hands, at nominal annual costs, by owners who are waiting for the “market to turn” so that they can cash out at a profit. Given the minimal holding costs, it is not rare to find properties that have been passed down from generation to generation; many have been vacant for thirty or more years. In other instances, the trail of ownership has disappeared, yet legal and regulatory mechanisms prevent the municipality from simply appropriating the unused land and applying it to a better purpose.

At present, very few Sunbelt cities are suffering from the broad-based poverty and crushing municipal revenue shortfalls that defined older cities such as Cleveland and New York in the 1970s, or Philadelphia in the 1980s. On the other hand, with few exceptions, these cities are cash constrained. Many Sunbelt cities are found in relatively low-tax states, with a preponderance of retirees who are expecting to live on a fixed-income. Large scale redevelopment projects are undertaken via bond offerings. These are the vehicles that enable cities such as Tampa to build its Performing Arts Center, its Convention Center, the Florida Aquarium and the Ice Palace professional sports arena. Similarly, St. Petersburg FL used a bond issue to build the Thunderdome baseball stadium –eight years before the city received a major league team-- and the ill-fated Bay Plaza mixed-use redevelopment project in the heart of the Central Business District.

Increasingly, however, the economic viability of such large-scale public works has been brought into question, particularly as the useful life of the projects has begun to fall short of the duration of the bonds that pay for them. In Orlando, for example, the Magic basketball team is already calling for a new arena to replace the eight-year old O-rena, and in Miami, the Heat basketball team will
be vacating its eight-year old Liberty City arena for a larger (and safer) facility in Broward County. In both instances, the bonds will be paid off long after the facilities are gone.

Thus, while increasing sums are being spent on large "civic" projects, cities are finding themselves unable to attend to more mundane tasks such as maintaining infrastructure, enhancing police, fire and other municipal services, and increasing the level of educational offerings. Tax Increment Financing (TIF), a mechanism that was used with considerable success during the 1980s by cities looking to revitalize downtown districts, is less useful for the small-scale development typically found in adjacent neighborhoods. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Special Assessment Districts (SADs) and similar mechanisms have also been used to generate additional funds for operations and services within delimited commercial districts. Again, these concepts work best in heavily commercial environments and are less appropriate for predominantly residential scale redevelopment efforts.24

Post-War Urban Re-development

This thesis builds upon several initial conditions. One of these posits that post-War urban redevelopment efforts are now moving into a third phase. This new phase is unique from the 1950s and '60s Urban Renewal programs, as well as the catalyst mixed-use projects of the 1970s and '80s. This third phase is only gradually emerging; it has been characterized by the general withdrawal of Federal and state funding for redevelopment efforts, an emphasis on redefining the focus and function of the core city, and an increasing reliance on private-sector initiatives.

24 While the jury may still be out on the utility and viability of such special districts, they are proliferating in cities across the country. Essentially, these special districts are a form of "private government," comprising the business and property owners within a defined area who have banded together and agreed to "tax" themselves in order to supplement regularly provided public services.

A BID or other district authorizes the local municipality to collect additional assessments from all owners within the district who are, in turn, required to pay these assessments. These revenues are then earmarked for selected projects to be carried out within the district. The ostensible goal in creating one of these special assessment districts is to stem ongoing decline, increase safety and security, enhance public perception of the area in question, and generally promote changes that will increase the profitability of local businesses, enhance development potentials, and generally benefit property of owners.

In the short term, such districts increase both the level of taxes within a locale and also increase the level of services. However, because of the relative newness of the district concept, no one is sure of the long term benefits or implications of such programs. In general, however, BIDs and other programs seem to work best when they are focused on predominantly commercial areas that are in need of improvement but are not too downtrodden or dilapidated. These programs are of relatively little use in residential areas, nor are they much help in jump-starting development in an abandoned neighborhood.
A great deal of work has been done in the area of urban redevelopment, but much of it has been carried out within two paradigms that are now seen as outdated. During the 1960s and '70s, an extensive body of literature was produced in keeping with the Urban Renewal model of city redevelopment. This was a top-down, Federally-funded and Federally-mandated approach to urban revitalization that was not only extremely expensive but was, in many instances, extremely destructive.

With the advent of Richard Nixon's ill-fated second term, the Federal government began to seek ways of divesting itself of direct participation in the redevelopment of the nation's cities. The earlier Urban Renewal model was gradually replaced during the 1970s by a more economically motivated model that relied on large-scale public-private mega-projects to attract people to the inner cities through a combination of tourist attractions, shopping centers, recreational amenities and gentrification. The Federal government's role in these projects was as a funding agency, often in the form of earmarked block grants, or through programs such as the Urban Development Assistance Grants (UDAG). Again, a body of literature developed around these projects, the best known of which include Boston's Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market development, Horton Plaza in downtown San Diego and the Inner Harbor in Baltimore.

Widely imitated, these projects were seldom replicated. Even now, cities continue to pursue one-off large-scale entertainment oriented projects that, they hope, will attract tourists and residents to

25 The centers of many small and medium-sized cities in the United States are littered with the remnants of 1970s public/private redevelopment projects: festival marketplaces, riverwalks, pedestrian malls and the like. It appears that the twenty year period between 1970 and 1990, in which generous amounts of Federal funding were available to cities with relatively few direct strings attached, promoted a form of derivative urbanism that is only now being repaired. The success of Faneuil Hall and the Inner Harbor sparked a spate of waterfront festival market projects in smaller cities across the country. With a few exceptions—Bayside in Miami, for example—these projects generally under-performed.

In the 1980s, convention centers were seen as the standard vehicle for urban redevelopment; at one time nearly twenty medium-sized cities had convention centers under construction. Given the plethora of such facilities and given the very real advantages facilities in cities such as New York, Atlanta, Orlando, San Francisco and a few others have, it is little wonder that many of these smaller-city projects are not living up to expectations. Aquariums, performing art centers, stadiums and indoor sports arenas all have had their day as the most attractive vehicle for in-town redevelopment. While these efforts have produced some truly wonderful pieces of civic architecture—Camden Yards in Baltimore, for example, or Jacobs Field in Cleveland—many cities failed to understand the full economic, civic and operational issues at hand (St. Petersburg, for example, or Miami). Unless these projects were included as part of a much larger, all-encompassing public/private masterplan for redevelopment, they had little chance of producing the returns and impacts that their originators and backers envisioned. In short, especially given
visit the city centers. The economic logic and catalytic capacity of such projects is increasingly suspect; funding has increasingly become a source of bitter debate that has divided communities, particularly as federal and state funding dries up.

As noted, a third phase in urban redevelopment is emerging, one that is market driven, economically savvy and oriented towards the private sector. Within this paradigm, however, relatively little research has been undertaken and the body of literature is still emerging. Much of what exists today stems from academic research: econometrics and land-use economics, fiscal and social policy development, land-use and transportation modeling. This study hope to draw upon this literature that has already emerged, in order to bring light to bear upon the specific issue of economically redeveloping under-utilized in-town sites and neighborhoods.
Chapter III  Under-Development: A Brief Typology

Deserted buildings and neighborhoods are evidence of tragic loss, but they also represent opportunities. Their location and services could be valuable assets, because land that has a current real estate value of almost nothing is equipped with water, sewer, gas, and electricity services that would cost a lot of money to duplicate in a greenfield location on the urban fringe.26

Under-development, in the context of this essay, is defined as situations in which properties that were once fully developed and contributing elements in a flourishing community have been allowed to decay. If they have not been abandoned entirely, these properties are functioning at only vestigial levels of their previous intensity. In many instances, the structures on the properties have disappeared; deliberately razed to make way for some possible future venture, or allowed to deteriorate to the point of disintegration. (Again, as noted earlier, this discussion avoids examples of "downtown" redevelopment, choosing instead to focus on redevelopment efforts in the immediately adjacent in-town locations and neighborhoods surrounding the downtown cores.)

Four specific types of in-town under-development are commonly found in Sunbelt cities. The four types differ in size, original purpose, function and re-use potentials. However, they are not mutually discrete; examples of one type can be part of another. Ranging in size from the smallest to the largest, the type are as follows: 1) leftover spaces; 2) abandoned institutions; 3) outdated commercial strips; 4) bypassed neighborhoods.

1. The Leftover Site

Every community of any perceptible size has examples of "left-over" sites; properties that simply are not built out even as other surrounding locations are developed. Just as a certain rate of housing vacancy or unemployment is considered normal and desirable, a certain nominal percentage of vacant properties creates necessary slack in the development cycle, providing developers with choices and creating valuable options. When this percentage, however, rises above what appears to be the reasonable norm for a healthy community, or when particular parcels languish for long periods of time, these "left-over" sites can be seen a an indication of pathology rather than economic lubricants.

Such parcels may have been “odd-lots,” slightly smaller or larger than standard. They could be parcels that were left out when earlier developments were completed, and which never found a valid use. Infrastructure projects often create such sites. New highways are pushed through an older neighborhood, effectively destroying the cohesiveness of the original plan. Properties at some remove from the new roadway might eventually recover some effective use, while those immediately adjacent to the highway seldom do. Not necessary for the safe and effective functioning of the roadway, these parcels cannot maintain an alternative use. Driving along expressways, particularly where they have pushed through older areas, one sees dozens of properties, often fenced in for liability reasons, overgrown with grass, effectively abandoned.

Figure 6: Example of Left-Over Site in Tampa FL

The widening of older arterial roadways often creates left-over properties as well. By periodically shaving frontage area from adjacent parcels of land, highway engineers can expand the capacity of
under-sized roads. In so doing, however, they can also diminish, if not invalidate, the effectiveness and utility of the surrounding parcels. Current regulations and legal precedents have done away with this practice, but there are many examples from previous decades.

Idiosyncratic abandonment or obsolescence creates left-over parcels; older buildings fall into disrepair requiring improvements beyond the means of the owners. Sometimes, these owners simply abandon the properties, letting them revert, after a period of time, to the municipality. Other times, they allow the assessed values of the properties to be written down and continue to pay the nominal tax burden, hoping for increased land values at a future time.

Finally, planning and/or development efforts can inadvertently create left-over properties. When a parcel is over-zoned for an intended use, either through the best intentions of planning officials or the desire of a developer, the intrinsic value of the property can rise to the point that it is significantly higher than surrounding parcels. Given this inherent value derived from the adjusted development potentials, the option to keep the parcel vacant increases in value. Should markets decline or interest rates increase thereby diminishing the viability of immediate development, the owner of the properties has a lot of incentive to keep the properties "asleep," effectively biding his or her time until conditions for redevelopment are optimal. Given the tenuous and often attenuated nature of the development process, this situation can create conditions in which otherwise prime pieces of property are left idle even as redevelopment occurs around them.

2. The Abandoned Institution

By the 1920s, Tampa’s population had exploded to more than 50,000, and more than 200 cigar factories employed at least 10,000 workers. The striking, three-story brick buildings stretched from Ybor City, across the Hillsborough River through what was once Robert’s City, to West Tampa.

In the late 1940s, however, mechanization caught up with the cigar industry and brought the curtain down on a historic era.

Frank Perez, an accountant with Villazon & Company Cigar Manufacturers in Tampa remembered those times well.

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27 In the 1960s, planners in Great Britain actually created an acronym for such properties, SLOAP: Space Left Over After Planning
"Three people working together could make 500 cigars in a day," he recalled. "Then came a machine operated by three people which could make 5,500 cigars a day."

Most locally owned factories were bought by larger tobacco companies in the Northeast, leaving behind the massive brick buildings. Some destroyed by fire and demolition; between 20 and 30 have survived. Not long ago, it was common to see the sleeping giants with broken windows and crumbling bricks, standing alone on overgrown lots.28

The transition of America from a manufacturing economy to a service-oriented society, from a basis in blue-collar production to white-collar management, hastened the abandonment of manufacturing plants and industrial facilities. Often, these facilities had been major institutions within the neighborhoods or cities. Many acres in size, these facilities employed hundreds if not thousands of local workers, many of whom lived in neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the factories.

The economic obsolescence and ultimate closure of these facilities put these employees out of work, and often hastened the deterioration of the surrounding neighborhoods. Forced to look elsewhere for employment, workers and their families left their original neighborhoods; their homes were either taken over by users at a lower economic strata, or simply boarded up and abandoned. The institutional facilities, themselves, were often abandoned as well. The boarded up buildings were an invitation to vandalism, and the large tracts of land surrounded by chain-link fencing only added to the air of abandonment.

Generally, the structures housing these institutions were well-built and architecturally significant. Given their history and their role in their communities, they were often on sites that initially offered some degree of locational advantage. To varying degrees, therefore, as targets for re-development, these institutions can play upon their structural integrity, their architectural character, and their locations. In many instances, however, these aspects, alone, are simply not enough to convey contemporary economic validity to these abandoned buildings and properties. Additional factors can actually work against redevelopment. Historically or architecturally significant buildings are often “protected” by local historic preservation ordinances. These rules, which are intended to preserve the initial character of the buildings, often serve as unintended disincentives to developers looking to redevelop the projects for new uses. While ordinances typically provide monetary

benefits in terms of low-interest loans, outright grants, or reduced tax burdens, these often come at the price of strict interpretations of what the developer can and cannot do to both the inside and outside of the building.

In addition, modern regulations intended to protect the life, safety and welfare of a building’s occupants can have a negative impact on the redevelopment of older structures. For example, many older buildings were built from a combination of heavy-timber framing and masonry bearing walls, with heavy plank floors. For a single use redevelopment, such buildings can be easily retrofit to include modern life-safety features, and a successful project can ensue. However, should the developer intend to section off the building vertically, putting different uses on different floors of the building, new and more intense life-safety standards come into play, requiring considerably more expense both in terms of materials and equipment, as well as space-absorbing fire-stairs.

![Under-Utilized Cigar Factory in Tampa FL](image)

Figure 7: Under-Utilized Cigar Factory in Tampa FL

(In a particularly relevant example taken from downtown Tampa, a developer bought a three-story mid-block building, seeking to place a restaurant on the ground level and offices on the upper
floors. The building was a solid masonry-and-wood structure, with a narrow but deep footprint. Given its location on the ground floor with easy egress to the main street and the back alley, the restaurant was relatively easy to permit and occupy. However, when the owner came to get permits to develop the office space on the upper levels, he discovered that in order to meet the egress requirements dictated by size and use, he would have to give up nearly 25% of his usable floor area to fire stairs and, because these stairs had to be built of the highest rated construction, his development budget would go up by nearly a fifth. After a series of unsuccessful appeals for leniency, the developer simply gave up. Today, the restaurant operates out of the ground floor and the two upper levels sit vacant.)

Within the City of Tampa, several types of significant institutional properties present the potential to play roles as redevelopment catalysts. Predominant among these are the cigar factories that contributed so heavily to Tampa’s initial economic prosperity and cultural character. Where the city once held dozens of the large, imposing brick and wood structures involved in the curing of tobacco and rolling of cigars, today, there are nearly two-dozen such structures remaining. With few exceptions, these properties are vacant or under-utilized.

Complementing the cigar buildings that helped define the Latino community in pre-War Tampa are the buildings that housed the many social clubs and cultural societies of the time. Buildings such as the Centro Espanol, the Centro Asturiano, the Cuban Club were all the predominant cultural facilities of their time. Today, many of these handsome brick and stone buildings are abandoned or hanging in vestigial states.

Abandoned schools, churches, and hotels also offer opportunities for redevelopment. As Urban Renewal and blight overtook some of the older neighborhoods in and around Tampa’s downtown, schools and churches were often left standing even as housing and stores were razed. Today, even driving along the highways leading through the CBD, one sees two high-schools, the 18 story Floridan hotel, several churches, the Union Railroad Station, and other handsome brick and stone structures.
By the 1970s, the State of Florida was aware of that many of its older institutions and buildings were in danger of deterioration if not destruction. Legislation passed in 1973 authorized the creation of local community preservation boards, whose job it was to see to the preservation and rehabilitation of the best examples of properties. Within the Tampa Bay area, the Tampa/Hillsborough Historic Preservation Board and the St. Petersburg Preservation Board have worked to survey, document and register significant structures. With the help of local, state and federal grants, they have worked to curtail deterioration on badly damaged projects, rejuvenate other structures and to preserve others. Among the success stories over the past twenty years are the Tampa Bay Hotel, now the main building for the University of Tampa, the Tampa Theatre, now a national landmark and the ongoing host of a variety of plays, talks, performances and films, the Scottish Rite Temple in downtown Tampa, the Friday Morning Musicale performance building in Hyde Park, and numerous smaller projects sprinkled throughout the City.
Significant projects that have resisted all attempts at revitalization abound, however. The aforementioned Union Station and Floridan Hotel are both socially and physically significant structures located in prime locations; neither has responded to any of a series of redevelopment and preservation efforts. Of the twenty-odd cigar factories within the older parts of the community, nearly a dozen have been structurally rehabilitated, but none are truly operating within the paradigms of successful, for-profit redevelopment.

Currently, three cigar buildings in Ybor City are set up to serve as speculative office space; two of the three have always had significant vacancies, while the third, smallest, and most recently redeveloped is completely leased. A third of this building, it must be noted, is leased by its owner and developer, and another third is leased by the City of Tampa’s Redevelopment Agency. Another cigar structure in Ybor City was purchased and redeveloped as a micro-brewery, with some speculative office space on upper levels. An immediately adjacent building had all of its windows bricked in and currently serves as low-cost warehouse space operated by U-Haul.

Ybor Square, an aggressive redevelopment effort, begun in 1972 by local publisher Harris Mullen, incorporates a full block comprising two cigar factories. At the time, Mullen was quoted as saying that “within 18 months, all of the property around [Ybor Square] will be coming around.” Twenty years later, vast tracts of property remain undeveloped and Ybor Square, itself, a mixed-use complex of shops, restaurants and offices, has yet to reach a point of unqualified success.

Similar scenarios describe the cluster of institutional structures located in West Tampa about two miles west of the downtown. With the demise of the cigar industry in the 1940s, and the subsequent death knell dealt by the Cuban embargo, several of these buildings were converted to cloth-cutting and clothing manufacture. The internationalization of this industry in the 1980s, however, reduced the viability of these uses and by 1990 nearly all of these buildings had been shuttered. At least one building was rehabilitated as a speculative office venture, with mixed results, attributed by the developer to the low quality of the surrounding neighborhoods and the perception of crime. Other buildings have been studied for a variety of uses including up-scale residential apartments or condominiums, executive office suites, housing for the elderly, and night clubs and cafes. None of these projects has gone beyond the stage of schematic design and pro forma analyses.
Several developers involved with potential rehabilitation projects place the blame for their failures on the City, quoting legal and regulatory impediments, overly stringent requirements for parking, handicapped accessibility, and stormwater runoff among other factors. Investment bankers and real estate lenders, however, who have watched these early efforts with interest, feel that these issues are only partially to blame. "There are so many problems with these old buildings," noted one, "and there is no guarantee that there is any market for using them." Referenced problems included the aforementioned concerns as well as issues such as asbestos abatement, life-safety requirements, significant structural repairs, and the potentially negative impact of landmark preservation status.

Figure 9: Ybor Square Redevelopment Project, Ybor City

In the early 1990s, the state of Florida passed a special historic structure building code that was intended to facilitate the redevelopment of significant structures. With this came a bill that froze the tax base of selected structures for a ten year period after revitalization. If renovations were undertaken in keeping with state guidelines, property owners would only be taxed at the initial
purchase value of the structure for a ten year period. Recaptured tax moneys could be used to help "make the numbers work."

For developers, this benefit can be viewed as a mixed blessing. To the degree that all of the desired changes to the building can be made within the guidelines, the benefits of the reduced tax burden come in quite handy. However, to the degree that the changes the developer wishes to make run counter to the preservation code, the developer might wish to forego the tax advantages in order to optimize the overall project potential.

While considerable mention has been made of using abandoned institutional structures for residential purposes, to date, none of the significant structures in Tampa have been used this way. Issues raised by observers include the lower return on a residential project versus a commercial project, a lack of demand coupled with the higher expenses of rehabilitating an older, historic building, and, with particular buildings, site-specific problems such as neighborhood crime, lack of parking or other environmental factors.

3. The Outdated Commercial Strip

At the beginning of the 20th Century, most American cities of any size were operating, or in the process of constructing, extensive rail-based mass transit systems. These systems typically came in two major forms; each spawned idiosyncratic development patterns. The "beads on a string" form of development accompanied the street-car lines that led from the central business districts into the newly developed suburbs. Small nodes of commercial development surrounded each transit stop, with various types of residences surrounding the commercial nodes.

Closer to the city-center, trolley lines, which typically ran on the streets with regular stops every few blocks helped spawn the earliest commercial "strip" developments. Streets with trolley lines typically developed a preponderance of commercial land-uses, which backed up to enclaves of residential development. Those major streets without trolleys seldom saw as much commercial activity.
The early trolley lines typically created "Main Streets" through urban neighborhoods, and as the trolleys gave way to automobile as the dominant form of transportation, some of these strips maintained their vitality while others deteriorated. The spatial demands of the car were considerably higher than the trolleys. Streets needed to be wider to carry more vehicles and parking needed to be provided adjacent to the stores. In some instances, early strips, close to the city centers, were abandoned in favor of later developments, farther away from the city, where road widths, building placement and orientation, and overall site design could be made to match the spatial and functional characteristics of the car.

Later generations of the auto-based commercial strip eventually replaced these initial versions. In strips from the 1950s and '60s, stores were often clustered into facsimiles of the traditional Main Street, with arcades fronting a collection of stores, set back from the street by parking lots. By the 1980s, these initial strips had become obsolete, replaced by full fledged shopping centers, malls, power-centers and other permutations of the commercial strip.

Figure 10: Plan of Tampa Showing Older Commercial Strips
As the commercial strips aged, so did the adjacent neighborhoods. Suburban expansion moved into its second generation; residents of the initial post-War sub-divisions that had been built within city limits departed for newer developments with bigger houses on larger lots, farther from the City centers. A burgeoning band of deterioration began to surround the traditional city centers, particularly in neighborhoods that had formerly been the enclaves of blue-collar or lower-income workers.

Today, many of the arterial routes leading from the city centers to the suburbs lead past abandoned or vacant commercial strips. Often, buildings have been torn down and replaced with low-overhead uses such as used-car lots, automotive repair facilities or parking. In other instances, buildings remain, boarded up and deteriorating. In instances where the surrounding neighborhoods
have managed to maintain some vitality and viability, these blighted commercial strips depress neighborhood real-estate values and add to a general ambiance of abandonment and disrepair.

The growth of these early commercial strips resulted from the codification of existing practice. As the City grew, it expanded northward along Florida, Nebraska, Howard and Armenia Avenues, and westward along Kennedy Boulevard (then known simply as Grand Central), Buffalo, Columbus and Hillsborough Avenues. As the major access routes in the cardinal directions, these roads took a lot of vehicular traffic. Given these levels of accessibility, these roads became the ideal locations for entrepreneurs and merchants. The tight, pedestrian scale downtown shopping street was stretched out to become an auto-oriented street in which the stores were still generally continuous, but their configurations were long and shallow as opposed to being narrow and deep. As the lots on either side of these arterial streets were platted no differently than the conventional residential areas, there was generally only enough space at the front of the stores for angled curbside parking or, possibly, two rows of parking in a small surface lot.

Over time, in order to guarantee proper levels of maintenance and safety features, these roads were taken over by the State, and designated as State Highways. This designation removed full responsibility for the care and maintenance of these roads from the local jurisdiction. It also added a layer of bureaucracy.

When the City of Tampa adopted its first zoning code in the 1940s, early regulations had to deal with the existing circumstances created by the state designation and common practice. Rather than use the power of the regulations to rectify the weaknesses in the situation through sensible zoning, planners and officials rubber-stamped the existing situation. As one native remarked, “there simply wasn’t the political will to fight the land-owners and the state.” So, these strips were all zoned totally commercial.

This situation worked for a while; there was generally a balance between the number of stores and the ambient resident population and the volume of auto traffic traversing the streets, while high was manageable, even given the historically narrow rights-of-way of Tampa’s streets. By the 1950s, however, suburbanization began to take hold, and the residents of the older neighborhoods began to leave for newer homes further out. As the initial residents left, they were replaced by residents at a
slightly lower economic station; they could not afford to keep all of the pre-existing stores in business, and the store-owners recognized that their primarily constituents now lived in the suburbs. The stores and shops, too, began to depart the traditional commercial strips.

Again, the transition was slow and as long as the roads were still the major arteries north and south, east and west, many stores could continue to operate based on the drive-by traffic. Then, in the 1960s, Interstate 4 was completed running east and west through the City, and Interstate 275 was constructed, carrying traffic north and south. Very rapidly, those cars looking to make through trips, began to use the new limited access routes.

By the 1970s, the suburbs had taken the stores and the highways had taken the cars; the older strips were left with no real raison d'etre, and entrenched zoning regulations that had become an enormous hindrance to effective redevelopment. With mile after mile of uniformly dense commercial zoning, merchants or businesses looking for the cheapest place to locate had many locations to choose from. Slowly, lower quality commercial uses flocked to the older strips. By the 1980s, some strips, such as Kennedy Boulevard and Howard Avenue were simply abandoned. Others, such as Nebraska Avenue and Florida Avenue looked like graveyards, littered with small shops that catered to the generally poor local residents, and extremely low-quality uses such as used-tire stores, auto repair establishments, and used furniture outlets.

Even as the quality and character of these strips plummeted, little effort was made to stem the tide. Any suggestion of concentrating and focusing commercial uses where they might work best together, and of downzoning the remaining lengths in order to spark residential development, was squashed. While logical from a regulatory point of view, the prevailing political mindset tended against it. In Florida, property rights movements are very strong and there would be no funds to pay for a “taking.”

In some locations, the inhibitions to rehabilitation are structural. As noted, many of the oldest commercial strips were simply residential routes that provided a direct connection between two common points and which, over time, came to receive the brunt of traffic and commercial activity. The original platting on these streets often remains in place. Small residential-sized lots that
worked well for single-family houses or even for early commercial options no longer provide enough room for even a small commercial function.

State-mandated Transportation Concurrency Requirements exacerbate the problem, mandating road expansion whenever Levels of Service (LOS) fall below specified minimums. Thus, the depths of these arterial lots will have to be reduced as the roads are expanded in order to carry more traffic. A lot that may have started with the dimensions of 50 x 100 or 60 x 120 may now be only 80 or 90 feet deep. Conventional lending practices for small commercial projects mandate that some percentage of on-site parking be visible from the fronting roadway. With standard depths for parking lots requiring at least 40 feet of space plus the necessary separations between lot and road and between lot and building, owners find themselves with only thirty or forty feet of depth within which to build their projects. For many building types, this dimension simply cannot meet functional requirements.

Local codes and regulations create additional problems. Often, original front-, rear- and side-yard setback requirements will be still be in effect. The limitations created by parking requirements will be compounded by mandated open area at the back and sides of the proposed structure. In Tampa, general code standards for commercial uses require the provision of 3.3 parking spaces for every 1,000 square feet of retail space. There is a movement afoot, however, among planning and development officials, to create opportunities to reduce this standard on a case-by-case basis. Official realize that the current situation is untenable both from the standpoint of the owner of commercial property and from the position of the adjacent neighbors, many of who want some limited level of commercial use, but are extremely opposed to large-scale development. Currently, the City is investigating a move away from strip zoning towards the selective use of overlay districts in specific locations where small-scale retail would be beneficial and potentially profitable. Among the first issues being studied is the reduction of the minimum parking requirement. The idea behind this action is that the reduced requirements will make it profitable for neighborhood-oriented commercial uses to locate within the special overlay zone. The improvement of the area within the zone will have a beneficial impact on those adjacent locations outside the zone, even if there are no special incentives provided.29

29 Interview with Ron Rotella, Special Assistant to the Mayor of Tampa, 26 April 1996. Under Rotella’s direction, the City is currently looking at implementing the first such overlay district along a several block length of South Howard Avenue, at the southwestern boundary of the Hyde Park
Environmental regulations, particularly with respect to stormwater runoff, create additional disincentive to development. Because Florida faces severe summertime storm conditions, it is not uncommon for two- to three-inches of rain to fall on a site within a twenty minute period. Environmental regulations dictate that some percentage of this rainfall (usually the first 1.5") be contained on-site and not allowed to runoff into the streets or onto adjacent properties. An easy, and acceptable, way to meet this requirement is to leave large portions of the parcel untouched, with a permeable ground covering of grass or dirt or wood chips, and to create slight swales that direct water from the far reaches of the site to these unpaved areas. In general, however, codes dictate some minimum area of the site be left at 100% permeability or else additional measures will be required. Depending on location and building use, this requirement can run as high as 50% of the site coverage. Thus, the owner of an already constrained site measuring 60 x 120 will be required to leave 3,600 square feet of the site untouched in order to receive a building permit. Clearly, this condition dramatically diminishes the utility of these small properties.

Alternative measures exist, but only at considerable costs. Vaults can be constructed below ground enabling the developer to effectively pave over the entire site. Such features, however, add tens of thousands of dollars to the development costs and indicate a higher quality of development than either the site or the general area can support.

Similarly, a developer can seek to purchase additional properties, looking to gain enough land to create a stormwater retention pond whose capacity meets the overall requires for the property to be developed, but whose overall size demands less land area than simply meeting the required percolation area. Again, such acquisitions add to the cost of development, and, given the nature of neighborhood. Sandwiched between two older and more affluent neighborhoods, the SoHo distirct comprises half-a-dozen restaurants, several shops and a number of second-story offices. The district is vital and active, but parking has always been a problem, increasingly so as new shops and restaurants look to occupy space. Under the guidance of several restaurant owners, an ad hoc, yet workable, parking program has been arranged in which night-time uses such as restaurants and clubs share parking spaces with day-time uses such as offices and stores. Under the City’s plans, these practices would be reified, and each commercial use within the district would pay an assessment based on annual revenues to contribute towards district-wide improvements.
property ownership along the older roadways, such land assembly may entail considerable expense of time, effort and money.\textsuperscript{30}

Conformance to codes and regulations is a major disincentive to redevelopment efforts, particularly for properties or projects in which profit margins are small. To the degree that such codes and regulations are within the jurisdiction of a local governing agency, waivers or reductions can be sought. Within the City of Tampa, for example, setback requirements, can be petitioned before the Architectural Review Board, and in legitimate instances where the existence of a requirement creates a hardship that denies legitimate use to a property, Board members are required to entertain motions for waiver or reduction of requirements. Similar appeals can be made when seeking to change a land-use or to increase the density of permitted uses.

Some requirements, however, cannot be as easily mitigated. Stormwater regulations, for example, are dictated at the level of either the Federal government or through regional water management districts, neither of which can be easily approached for small scale site-by-site petitions. With respect to traffic requirements and regulations, sites that sit on local roads have considerably more flexibility than those that front official State highways.

As discussed by an architect who has worked on numerous redevelopment projects, without clear jurisdictional control, even the more sensible projects might founder.

\textsuperscript{30} One way around the requirement that each property-owner mitigate his or her runoff is the creation of district-wide stormwater systems. Downtown Tampa falls into such a district; this enables developers to cover their entire site with impervious surfaces, and simply contribute a fee towards district-wide mitigation. (Although they still must attend to specific requirements for minimum amounts of public open space, this need not be permeable.) Such systems, however, are extremely expensive to create, and while regulations create situations in which such systems make the most sense from a functional viewpoint, they generally imply cost levels that simply are not tenable at the low- to medium-density development prevalent throughout much of the city.

The Florida Center for Community Design + Research studied the potential of using mandatory stormwater regulations as a vehicle for creating district systems that would use centralized stormwater retention ponds as natural amenities and thereby allow for higher densities of surrounding development. Such an approach is quite common in large planned communities developed by a single entity. Given the logistics of an urban redevelopment project involving hundreds of separate property owners, however, such an approach is not feasible without enormous external subsidies. While the advantages of developing in-town properties at densities that are considerably higher than standards could compensate for the costs of creating the district system and the natural amenities, there is little, if any, demand for districts built at such densities. The lack of demand derives from several sources: general preference for lower density development; the need to provide considerable amounts of parking, even in high-density
This is a major problem facing many forms of redevelopment. The current mayor used to be a developer, so he understands how some of these issues can get in the way, but he really doesn't control the game. He can't tell the EPA what to do or the EPC. He can't tell DOT or FDOT what to do. Mundane impediments become enormous because of the segregation of power into various regulatory structures...

Unraveling this Gordian knot becomes a game of astronomical proportions. 31

4. The Bypassed Neighborhood

Old factory districts represent another large category of bypassed urban land. Success in reusing these sites has depended so far on where they are located. Thousands of acres of old steel mills still languish in the Monongahela Valley southeast of Pittsburgh, while the old Jones and Laughlin mill that is closer to the city center, and right down the hill from Carnegie Mellon and the University of Pittsburgh, is being redeveloped as the Pittsburgh Technology Center. 32

To a degree, this fourth category of redevelopment opportunity encompasses aspects and examples of the previous three types. The by-passed neighborhood is typically a byproduct of one or more of the aforementioned causes of under-development, coupled with severe changes in local economic conditions. When major employers closed down and abandoned their facilities they often left entire neighborhoods of workers behind them. Some workers were able to move, others remained, but in a neighborhood robbed of its economic reason for being, the general character began to deteriorate. Single-family uses were converted to multi-family, one economic level was replaced by another, fringe properties were allowed to deteriorate beyond repair; over the course of time, the entire character and vitality of a neighborhood deteriorated.

The post-War period saw the creation of numerous such neighborhoods throughout the United States, in cities of all sizes, shapes and locations. The Great Depression combined with the Second World War to create a period of approximately 15 years in which money, jobs and development opportunities were all in short supply. Buildings and development did without revitalization and renovation. When the War ended, the outburst of development opportunities spurred by the rebounding economy and deliberate government actions such as VA loans and the construction of situations; the existence of numerous lower-density alternatives. The very nature of the suburbanized city, therefore, mitigates against this potential solution.

31 David Rigney, Director of Construction, Historic Tampa/Hillsborough Preservation Board. Interview with author, June 1996.
the Federal Highway system were not directed at the deteriorating inner-city neighborhoods. Rather, growth took place at the suburban fringes. The single-family house with a car parked in the driveway became the icons of success and achievement, and developers and car dealers catered to these desires.

The radical departure in home construction developed by builders such as William Levitt on the east coast and Ned Eichler in the west changed both the delivery and concept of the home. These men and other master builders streamlined the construction process, turning what had been traditionally a handicraft industry into a partially mechanized system of production. The designing, platting and developing of communities likewise took on aspects of mechanization and mass production. Builders went from constructing ten or twenty units a year to a thousand or more.

Even as those residents with the opportunity to do so were leaving the older neighborhoods for new opportunities in the suburbs, the in-town neighborhoods were becoming the locus of full-scale experiments in planning theory. The first government sponsored public housing projects in America had been built in 1939 as part of the omnibus 1939 Housing Act. Tampa was among the first communities in the country to feel the impact of this Act, as projects were built in the fringes of the Tampa Heights community just north of the downtown.

Initially, such projects were seen as stepping stones for people and families who could not afford homes of their own and who had no valid alternative for shelter. Projects were not supposed to be too comfortable and luxurious, as they were envisioned as temporary measures while people sought new jobs and better opportunities. As early as the 1950s, however, it was becoming obvious that these initial theories were not playing out in reality. Families were becoming permanent residents of these projects, and very quickly these projects were seen as negative influences on surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

Nonetheless, such federally funded complexes were viewed as the only viable form of affordable housing. Urban Renewal, which became federal policy at the end of the 1950s, only hastened the...

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32 Barnett, op cit, page 149.
decline of many older neighborhoods. Hardest hit in the Tampa area was the old Latino community of Ybor City.

The traditional home of Tampa’s vibrant Cuban, Spanish and Italian communities, Ybor City at its height in the 1930s had over 40,000 residents in a tight, densely-knit area just to the northeast of downtown Tampa. The deprivation and lack of upkeep that marked the period between 1930 and 1945 were particularly hard on Ybor and, with the coming the 1950s, large portions of the population moved northward and westward to newer suburban developments.

Figure 12: Vacant Blocks of Land in Ybor City

In 1963, Interstate 4 sliced through the northern portion of the neighborhoods. Combined with an aggressive policy of slum clearance, over 900 buildings in the community were torn down. Very few were replaced, and by the mid-1970s, most of this once-vibrant area were totally vacant. Some of the more monumental institutional buildings were left standing: cigar factories, the brewery, some churches and schools. Entire blocks, however, that formerly held townhouses, apartments and shops, were entirely vacant. Within a radial mile of Tampa’s City Hall, over
eighteen blocks of the formerly vibrant property were left covered with grass. Others were partially empty, and Seventh Avenue, the social and psychological heart of the neighborhood was almost entirely abandoned, the stores boarded up and sidewalks deserted.

While Ybor City suffered the worst fate of the neighborhoods in and around the downtown, few were spared. Similar Renewal-based clearance schemes combined with Highway construction to tear through the fabric another Latino enclave in West Tampa. The 1967 extension of the Interstate northward bifurcated the original suburb of Tampa Heights with similar results to those in Ybor City. More buildings were left standing, but the quality and character of the neighborhood steadily declined. Crime increased and property values decreased. Single family homes were subdivided, so paradoxically, the population of the area grew in size, but it also grew steadily poorer.

In a period during the 1960s when Tampa was still the dominant focus of a fast-growing metro area, the new highways dramatically improved auto accessibility in the region. In the 1950s, the primary suburban developments were to the northwest in an area now know as Town and Country. In the early 1960s, Carrollwood Village was started, due north of the City, and by the 1970s, similar master-planned communities were springing up at all fringes. The decision in the 1950s to add a state university on a 1,000 acre parcel at the far northeastern fringe of the city gave impetus to both the northern highway extension and additional growth in this area.

Additional factors added to the centrifugal expansion of the city. Tampa International Airport, built on the site of a former military field on the edge of Old Tampa Bay, about seven miles from downtown, fomented a wave of commercial development that resulted in the creation of the Westshore Business District; today, this is the largest contiguous business district in the state of Florida with over 70,000 workers and 20 million square feet of commercial development. A prototypical “edge city,” Westshore competed directly, and successfully, with downtown Tampa for businesses and workers.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Urban Renewal projects affected the downtown as well. Highway construction through the northern sector of the downtown had already cut the center off from the surrounding neighborhoods. Subsequent renewal schemes sought to eradicate “blighted”
housing from the area. Dozens of low-rise buildings were torn down and lots left vacant. Typically these buildings had served as boarding houses for lower-paid workers in and around the city center. With these buildings gone, these workers drifted away to other alternatives, including the public housing projects that were rapidly beginning to ring the downtown, often built in the wake of highway construction.

In the most extreme examples, Urban Renewal efforts, in Tampa and in other cities throughout the country, actually caused the demise of older neighborhoods. Such stories were brought to the public attention in Jane Jacobs' heralded 1960 text *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* written to document her anger at the wholesale destruction of the West End neighborhood of Boston. While the bulk of her discussion and the lessons she draws from it focuses primarily on the pre-War, pre-automobile, Northeastern and Midwestern cities such as New York, Chicago and Toronto, her searing indictment of misguided Urban Renewal planning theory has relevance in cities throughout the country.

Even in its benign applications, such top-heavy centralized Federal programs tended to do as much, if not more, harm as good. Public housing projects, heralded in the 1950s as the means of enabling struggling, lower-income families to get back on their feet and into the market for home-ownership, had become, by the 1970s and 1980s, havens for crime, poverty and despair. Many of the sectors within the City of Tampa with the highest level of criminal activity include such housing projects, and even where the projects themselves have remained relatively viable, the influence of the complexes on the character, nature and economic stability of the surrounding neighborhoods was seldom beneficial.

While the book was written in the late 1950s and immediately gained critical acclaim, its impact on official Urban Renewal programs appears to have been negligible. The devastation of Ybor City, for example, did not fully begin until nearly ten years after Jacobs' book was published. By the time Sunbelt cities such as Tampa were beginning to feel the brunt of Renewal practices, the program was beginning to collapse under its own weight. Ironically, one of the few cities in the Southeast that was only minimally affected by Urban Renewal was Birmingham AL; here the 1967 race riots so unnerved civic officials that no attempt at "renewal" or "black removal" as it was called in many locales, was attempted. Today, while downtown Birmingham suffers from the same problems of suburban flight and disinvestment as are found in most other Sunbelt cities, the bulk of the city's building stock remains intact, representing not only a direct link to the city's past social, commercial and developmental patterns, but also providing an ongoing incentive for renovation and revitalization. An old building, in many ways, represents an easier redevelopment challenge than a block of vacant land.
Chapter IV  Under-Development: Factors Hampering Re-development

A. Landbanking and Speculation

Often, the buildings in older neighborhoods or along abandoned commercial strips, were fully depreciated and completely paid for before they were shuttered. Burdened with only nominal annual property taxes, such properties are often held by their original or new owners who are waiting for re-development opportunities. Given the typically low costs of holding the properties, however, and the very real risks inherent in being the first to invest new moneys, the incentives to actively re-develop any of these properties remains extremely low.

This practice, land-banking, is one of the biggest factors in keeping under-developed in-town properties from re-developing. Current rules and regulations often make it relatively inexpensive to hold outdated buildings or parcels off the market in the hopes that other players will foment a development boom and the owners of these buildings and parcels will be able to cash out at a significant profit. Such practices are clearly evident among the case properties studied in the Tampa examples. Many parcels of land in both Ybor City and Tampa Heights are currently held in the estates of the original owners; some properties have been in the same family for nearly a century. Others were purchased for nominal amounts in the 1970s and early 1980s. Currently, many of these unused parcels still have minimal assessed values; taxes and nominal upkeep can cost less than $1,000 per year. Given the prevailing sentiment that both of these neighborhoods represent the focus of imminent rejuvenation and rehabilitation, it is clearly in the best interest of the owners to continue to pay the relatively low carrying costs and wait for potential windfalls in the future. Unfortunately, when such attitudes dominate, conditions within a dilapidated neighborhood enter a state of gridlock; each owner is relying on someone else to make the first move towards redevelopment.

To some degree, public and non-profit agencies have been able to make some steps towards spurring redevelopment. In both Tampa Heights and Ybor City, a good percentage of vacant land is held by public-sector and non-profits. For the former, however, aggressive development can be a political liability, while the latter shares in some of the sentiments of the private sector; the longer we can wait, the more we can get for our property. Thus, many prime parcels of land in both of
these neighborhoods sit vacant, waiting for even higher returns. In Tampa Heights, for example, efforts to revitalize a twenty-block sector are stymied by the lassitude of landowners whose property sits adjacent to the Interstate highway. For years, it has been rumored that this section of the highway has been slated for imminent expansion. Engineers have, in fact, drawn up plans, but no funds for construction have been allocated. Nonetheless, homeowners of properties fronting the highway are certain that officials from the Florida Department of Transportation are going to show up shortly with large checks as part of the land acquisition process. In the interim, these homeowners have no incentive at all to participate in some of the fix-up and revitalization efforts that are occurring a little as half-a-block away. Adding insult to injury, since these frontage houses can be seen from the highway, drivers on the highway have little idea of the significant renovation efforts that are taking place just out of sight.

The option of land-owners to wait before developing their properties has been a particular source of frustration to the earliest investors in Ybor City. “Don’t just sit there,” many of these smaller investors fumed at their larger colleagues. “Do something.” However, for many years, the wait-and-see attitude was extremely strong. For some investors, even though Ybor appears to have turned a significant corner, and assessed property values have more than doubled in many locations, the incentive to hold on outweighs the incentive to cash out. With large portions of Ybor, particularly along the Seventh Avenue commercial strip, held by less than ten large landowners, the decision not to get involved represents a considerable drag on development momentum. Even today, entire sections along Seventh remain shuttered and dark, despite the considerable progress that has been made in recent years.

Once the larger land-holders do begin to divest themselves of their properties, they are looking at the uses that are sure to provide the highest immediate return, either through a direct sale to an entity that can pay top dollar, or through a equity partnership with an enterprise that can return immediate profits. In the case of Ybor City, the district’s relatively generous zoning and land-use regulations played directly into the wishes of the incumbent landowners. Bars, restaurants and night-clubs were the “home run” uses during the period of the early 1990s, and as property owners began to sell out, Ybor City began to fill up with more and more eating, drinking and partying establishments. The original plans for a mixed-use bohemian “urban village” went out the
window, less as the result of any single counter proposal than the victim of extremely loose regulations, coupled with strong market conditions and little regulatory oversight.

B. Highway Construction

A legacy of the days of post-War idealism and economic growth, the creation and subsequent expansion of limited access, high-speed roadways has had an enormous negative impact on struggling in-town neighborhoods, particularly those that were predominantly residential in character. Intended, innocently enough, to enable people to easily commute between country and city, the highways, instead, fomented an enormous shift in population, commerce, and jobs, from the cities to the outlying regions. In no place was this de-population so intense as in the older in-town neighborhoods.

In Tampa, the path of Interstate 275 and Interstate 4 coincide exactly with a wave of depopulation, property value declines and overall neighborhood deterioration. As noted above, the development of Interstate 4 in the early 1960s, tore through the heart of Ybor City, creating an immediate and dramatic decline in the northern section and hastening the imposition of Urban Renewal tactics to the south. Similarly, in the later ‘60s, the development of Interstate 275 running northward from downtown Tampa to the cities of Gainesville, Ocala and Atlanta cut Tampa Heights in half. While both halves suffered, the eastern half suffered the most as property values plummeted and all those residents who could afford to leave did so.

As an attempt to mitigate this devastation and as a way of providing affordable housing to make up for the units lost, federal programs constructed a number of public housing projects in and around these highway corridors. These low-rise, bunker-like projects quickly became haven of poverty, crime and drug-use. While the projects have been the site of continual updating and renovation over the past decades, their visible blight on their immediate surrounding has been palpable and permanent. Notwithstanding political and regulatory pressures, some efforts have been made within the City of Tampa to have the projects condemned and destroyed, and to out-source the existing residents to smaller scatter-site projects throughout the city.
C. Zoning Mismatches

Often, in an effort to “spur” redevelopment, planning officials have re-zoned under-utilized sites and abandoned neighborhoods under the notion that the potential to build more on an parcel would serve as enough inducement to build something. Often, these efforts succeeded only in creating parcels that had no viable use but were burdened by the potential of extremely optimistic zoning. This potential, rather than the reality, help artificially inflate the asking price of the properties, thereby making large-scale re-development even more difficult.

Officials, recognizing this issue, can try to have the properties down-zoned, but have to be extremely careful in this respect to avoid potential litigation over the issue of “takings.” Owners can argue, often persuasively, that the down-zoning effectively deprives them of the full development potential of their property and thereby demand compensation for the “lost” revenues at the fair-market price.

The Tampa Quality District, a formalized program for using zoning bonuses as an inducement for redevelopment, has been singularly unsuccessful. An invention of the 1980s, the program offers developers who agree to develop particular types of projects — generally mixed-use — in particular locations — generally at the fringes of the CBD — extensive development bonuses. As explained by Fernando Noriega, Director of Community Development, however, bonuses that, on paper, looked like incredible deals, were really not worth very much to the developers. Noriega attributes this failure to one problem in general: automobiles.

We were offering developers an incentive to create really urbanistic projects; mixed-use with lots of density. But, in Tampa, everybody drives his or her own car. So, in order to take advantage of all that extra development potential, you either have to buy a lot of additional land, or you have to build parking structures. Either way, it’s very expensive. And, if you are looking to create an upper-scale clientele, the parking has to be immediately adjacent to the buildings. The only way to use your development bonus is to build enormous parking decks, and the market here simply cannot afford that type of development.34

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34 Fernando Noriega, Director of Community Development, Tampa FL. Interview with the author, July 1996.
Ironically, therefore, in its attempt to induce development, the City created conditions in which the potential for a site so overwhelms the reality as to effectively stifle any redevelopment at all.

D. Proximities and Perceptions

Given the extreme mobility of residents within a suburbanized metro area, the least implications of blighting factors within a neighborhood can lead to residential flight as owners attempt to optimize their property values. The exact moment when a neighborhood begins to change or lose value is extremely hard to pinpoint, but there are both telltale signs and causal factors. If a lot of houses go on the market at the same time, it can indicate that factors within the neighborhood have changed. If houses go on the market and cannot sell at a desired asking price, it indicates a dichotomy between the perception of the current owners and the market at large. If longtime commercial establishments shut down and nothing comes in to replace them, or if a higher level land use such as commercial or residential is replaced by a lower level use, such as parking, these are indications that general perceptions of the value of a location may be changing.

Causes include myriad factors, only some of which are controllable at a local level. The heady days of the 1980 real estate boom led to the creation of a lot of projects that did well as long as the boom continued. When the bottom fell out at the beginning of the 1990s and tenants or buyers could not be found for the inflated prices, numerous properties went into receivership. The blighting effect of freshly built projects shuttered up and covered with “For Sale” signs is nearly as strong as that of abandoned buildings or graffiti-covered walls.

The mere presence of a large number of “For Sale” signs, however, should not automatically be seen as a sign of impending deterioration. In Hyde Park, for example, it is hard to drive down a single street and not see at least a few “For Sale” signs. When questioned, however, real estate agents generally agreed that many of these homeowners were simply “fishing,” listing their houses at extremely high prices with the intent of selling only if they find a buyer to meet this demand. “Some of these houses,” one agent noted, “have been for sale since I started working here.”

There are some factors at work in Hyde Park, however, that do promote a relatively high degree of turnover. Taxes are chief among the factors prompting sale. Particularly along Bayshore Boulevard, the taxes on a large single-family home in Hyde Park can easily exceed $1,000 per month. Added to the cost of insurance and utilities, non-financial fees can often exceed the monthly mortgage payment, particularly for houses that were purchased before prices peaked in the late 1980s.

This last factor also affects the sale of homes in Hyde Park. Many buyers who purchased their homes in the 1970s and early 1980s sold out at the height of the market. Buyers at that time were often pushing their financial limits and with the relative diminution in prices and the increase in incidentals such as taxes and utilities, these buyers would like to reduce their housing costs.
Paramount among the potentially blighting factors, however, are crime and concerns for safety and security. This works at both the extreme macro scale and at the scale of the neighborhood. When ten tourists were killed within a one year time span, the entire state of Florida suffered through a major downturn in tourism. This downturn was debilitating enough that the State government took it upon itself to mount a series of damage-control ad campaigns in the attempt to woo tourists.

At the level of the neighborhood, a single incident within a transitional environment can create enough negative publicity to seriously harm nascent redevelopment efforts. As one long-time resident and small developer from Ybor City fumed, “Every time things start going, something happens (a crime) and the publicity means that we have to go back to ground zero.” Even in the absence of any serious incidents, every developer interviewed for this study, no matter how disparate their products, indicated that safety and security are paramount concerns for their target audiences. As little as two blocks can separate a desirable site from an undesirable one, according to one developer. “When we were just starting out,” he noted, “we got a half-block parcel between Platt and Swann in Hyde Park. (Two east-west through streets that run parallel to each other three blocks apart.) We built some town houses and we lost our shirts; because of the perception that it’s not safe, no one wanted to buy north of Swann. South, there’s no problem at all, but north, I wouldn’t touch it.”

E. Environmental Factors

Superfund’s cleanup standards have had the unintentional result of impeding the cleanup of contaminated sites. Without cleanup, many old, urban industrial sites fall into disuse. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that there are approximately 450,000 such sites, often called brownfields, in the U.S. Unpredictable cleanup costs often cause businesses to overlook brownfield sites in favor of untouched suburban or rural greenfield sites. This pattern of land use results in environmentally destructive urban sprawl and leads to fewer urban jobs.36

Environmental concerns are particularly prevalent in abandoned industrial or manufacturing sites. Increasingly stringent environmental regulations, often handed down from the Federal level, coupled with a general lack of any environmental standards in the decades prior to the 1960s, have
created situations in which the re-use of many industrial properties would entail enormous amounts of time, effort and expense, both from the legal and regulatory procedures and for actual physical clean-up and mitigation.

Figure 13: Abandoned Service Station, Tampa FL

In many cities, these environmental issues have helped create left-over parcels. Often, the cost of complying with stringent new regulations exceeds the potential profits from selling a parcel. Many of the earliest gas stations built in this country, for example, adhered to no particular codes for safety or environmental standards. The soil beneath former station sites is often highly saturated with oil and gasoline, conditions that not only render it unusable under current EPA regulations, but which also render it virtually unsellable. The owners of the property at the time that the latest regulations went into effect bear the responsibility for cleaning the soil prior to any sale. Often, these properties are held by large corporations for whom the nominal cost of carrying property is negligible, while the costs of de-contaminating the properties can be quite high.37

37 Howard Avenue, one of the oldest mixed-use commercial strips in Tampa was originally dotted with small “mom and pop” gasoline service stations. Typically, these stations stood on one or more of the
The latest news concerning such “brownfield” sites indicate potential relaxation of current standards. In many cities, particularly those with significant industry or manufacturing in their history, brownfield sites occupy considerable portions of the downtowns and in-town neighborhoods. The considerable costs of reclaiming these polluted lands for productive use effectively blights large portions of the traditional city center, further accentuating the economic disparity between older centers and the newer fringe areas. In an attempt to resolve this issue, coalitions comprising mayors, developers, elected officials and representatives of environmental agencies have been meeting in various states, looking for ways of effectively, yet safely, bringing this properties back on line.

This problem can create something of a catch-22. Often, the abandoned facility is the dominant development parcel in a neighborhood. Additional lesser parcels are also available, but the economic incentive to develop them depends on the residual land value that would accrue to them should the larger industrial facility be rehabbed. The up-front costs of such a rehab, however, coupled with the risks inherent in urban pioneering, leave the industrial facility and the surrounding parcels in a state of limbo.

Currently, efforts are on-going across the country, spearheaded by Mayors, Governors and other officials, who are looking at ways of reducing the cost of mitigation and more readily getting older properties and facilities back on line in some sort of capacity. For private-sector developers, however, particularly those considering the purchase and redevelopment of existing facilities, the current uncertainty surrounding such redevelopment projects generally outweighs the potential profits that can accrue from a successful venture.

corners at intersections along the street. These sites were small and over time, these stations were abandoned or torn-down, but seldom replaced. Today, along one, one-mile stretch of road that slices between relatively up-scale south Tampa neighborhoods, there are no less than eight sites of former gas stations; only two continue to operate as stations. Two others are the sites of small food stores that have occupied the properties since before EPA requirements were increased. Two are abandoned concrete pads, one is a parking lot for an adjacent office, and the last one is a seasonal fruit stand. Discussions with an architect who had been involved in a speculative project to renovate one of the older stations revealed that the costs of de-contaminating the soil below a badly polluted 100 x 100 foot site could run as high as $750,000. At $75 per square foot, this cost not only greatly exceeds the potential sales price of the property, but could easily exceed the cost of the proposed improvement. Effectively, these prime sites are rendered useless for anything but an auto-related, or conditional use.
F. Development Factors

Many redevelopment projects involve a transformation in land-use and/or intensity. One of the most difficult aspects of such a re-development project is the assembly of the land parcels necessary to make the project viable. For example, market analysis might indicate that an old mom-and-pop pre-War shopping strip could, in fact, serve as a larger mixed-use neighborhood center. However, the larger use and updated codes imply additional property requirements for parking, runoff and so forth. In this small example, the developer may have to purchase six or eight adjacent residential parcels in order to make his scheme viable. In larger examples, the number of parcels needed can easily run into the dozens (or even hundreds), each comprising its own legal, regulatory and procedural problems.

An additional problem for the would-be developer is that the asking prices of parcels will increase as the developer’s intentions become known. Assembling a number of contiguous parcels without tipping one’s hat as to one’s intentions is clearly possible, but takes time, expertise and money, all of which are factors that can cut into the ultimate viability of the project. Many times, what looks, in the architect’s plans, like a viable and profitable proposal, becomes, in the reality of the development process, an attenuated and expensive venture. Often, these requirements are so onerous that otherwise viable projects are foregone.

Clearly, redevelopment projects involve considerable degrees of risk, particularly for the first projects in a slowly re-developing neighborhood. In the presence of other, less-risky development proposals, lenders are apt to demand more from the redevelopment proposal than from the others. Even as a developer is getting letters of agreement and option agreements, lending criteria could change or interest rates could go up. The additional equity requirements, debt returns and so forth can add up to a considerable spread between a re-development project and a new development.

The entire building industry is institutionalized to support sprawl forms of development and to make most infill unattractive as an investment. Suburban developers are generally large corporations backed by Wall Street securities and national sources of financing. Suburban developers make money by building quantities of housing on large tracts of open land with fewer risks than infill developers . . . An infill developer, by contrast, has to build all the units at once, finish on schedule, and hope to sell the units as soon as possible after they are built to avoid carrying the cost of the whole development. The building process is
slowed for the infill developer by neighborhood concerns, demolition and site preparation, and additional requirements that stem from the urban setting (structured parking, code requirements and other requirements). In addressing neighborhood concerns in particular, the war stories from developers who have built infill projects are legendary. Even developers with the best intentions for creating better neighborhoods can become outcasts just for proposing change.

Typically, infill developers are working on small projects that require the same or more architectural and engineering services as large scale suburban projects. Moreover, since infill developers are most often building attached, or multifamily dwellings, they incur additional costs and risks associated with this building form. Design requirements to meet the American Disability Act (sic) energy efficient standards and other codes, while necessary and appropriate, are usually more stringent, and therefore more expensive, for multifamily dwellings. Insurance companies refuse to insure, or place high premiums on, some forms of developer’s liability coverage for condominiums and other forms of high-density residential development.38

Additional factors faced in attempting to develop non-standard projects, particularly those involving fringe or “developing” neighborhoods, include the difficulties in obtaining the necessary permits, variances, or zoning approvals involved in changing land-use designations or zoned uses. In many jurisdictions, labyrinthine procedures are involved in obtaining re-zonings or land-use variances. Multiplied by numerous sites and a developer could be looking at two or more years of effort to simply get permission to build his or her project.

Finally, ironic as it may seem, even while officials promote and support in-town redevelopment projects as an efficient and economical alternative to rural or suburban greenfield developments, particularly because of the re-use of extant infrastructure capacity, in many instances, officials are still obligate to assess impact and development fees on these infill projects that are as onerous as if the project were being built on a fringe site that did demand new infrastructure.

G. Financial Factors

The aforementioned regulatory and procedural factors have direct financial ramifications. Even if a developer can get a letter of intent from a bank or other institution to provide funding for a project, the longer the assembly and permitting process takes, the more likely the financial structure of the deal will have to be changed. Generally, given the speculative and unconventional

nature of the proposed project, institutions will demand higher equity contributions and higher returns for one-off, untested redevelopment projects than for "plain vanilla" simple suburban-style projects. As interest rates change or additional costs accrue, the structure of the deal can become more and more unwieldy, and lenders are certain to increase their demands. In an example from Ybor City in Tampa, a developer's proposal for putting twenty town-house units on a vacant parcel two blocks from the neighborhood's main commercial center was met with a lender's demand that 50% of the unit's be pre-sold. Given the neighborhood's current status as an arts and entertainment district, such a project would be breaking new ground and the developer was unable to find buyers willing to commit to such a venture a priori; the lending offer was rescinded and the project was shelved.

Option values also stand in the way of well-intentioned redevelopment schemes. As noted above, in situations where a number of owners are holding properties that are widely regarded as prime candidates for potential re-development, each owner has the tendency to view his or her property as the culminating project in the re-development effort, and to price his or her vacant land accordingly. This "option" to wait for re-development serves to increase the potential asking price of the parcel, sometimes to the point that none of the available parcels can be had for a price that is low enough to get the redevelopment effort off the ground.

As David Geltner and his co-authors have pointed out, this "wait and see" position becomes particularly strong in situations in which the property in question can be used as surface parking

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The surface parking lot is, in essence, an option - an asset that has the potential to be developed into something much greater. But parking lots differ in an important way from the stock options familiar to security investors. While all options offer the prospect of very large capital gains when you sell, parking lots provide the additional benefit of a positive cash flow while you hold them . . .

Although the option component is an important aspect of the investment characteristics of downtown parking lots, important differences exist between parking lots and traditional options on financial securities . . . First, the option to develop a parking lot into a building never expires . . . Second, the option component of the parking lot is often already "in the money" (in the sense that it would already be possible to build a building on the land that would be worth more than the building's construction cost), while many traded stock options are deeply "out of the money" . . . These differences make the option component of parking lots less risky than typical publicly traded stock options. The third and perhaps most important difference between parking lots and typical stock options is that parking lots are actually bundles; they consist not only of an option component that provides the major upside potential for
while the owners wait for the right offer. In a situation in which a parcel sits vacant while surrounding properties are renovated, rising tax assessments on the vacant parcel serve as an inducement for redevelopment, whether by the land-owner of through sale to a developer. However, when the parcel is used for surface parking, the increased costs of ownership due to increased assessment generally are accompanied by increased demand for parking. Therefore, the owner is easily able to pass along any cost increases, and possibly even increase his or her revenues, all the while waiting for the “best” offer on the property.

Even in situations in which no revenues accrue from a vacant parcel, absentee landlords or lands held in trust can prove to be stumbling blocks due to wildly inflated or unwarranted price demands. Within Ybor City, even as redevelopment continues apace, several key properties remain vacant. Their inactivity derives not from lack of developer interest but from unreasonably high demands on the part of the owners, who view the property purely as a financial play and have no desire or intention to redevelop the site themselves. Given their current financial status, they can afford to wait until all of the comparable structures have been purchased and then, with control of the limited supply of the commodity, they can demand, and possibly receive, their desired price. In the mean time, their properties remain a “black hole” in the progression of redevelopment throughout the neighborhood.

Within some municipalities, officials have attempted to wrest control of such parcels from land-banking owners, not via the power of eminent domain but by passing regulations that stipulate that properties must show “considerable improvement” within a mandated period of time or face forced sale and initial assessed value. To date, officials within Tampa have refrained from resorting to this mechanism for fear of the law-suits that would immediately ensue. Given a climate in the State that is heavily in favor of individual owner’s property rights, it is unlikely that such a move would go unchallenged.

Additional financial factors come into play in analyzing the difference between redeveloping an existing structure and developing an entirely new project. If the structure in question is operational and the owner/developer is seeking simply to up-grade or adapt the property, costs are generally capital gain in the investment, but they also have an income-producing parking-operation component that provides a “floor-value” to the investment asset. (69-70)
lower than if the property has been vacant and is slated for rehabilitation. As noted, various fees and code requirements can be modified if not waived, in such instances, and various additional funding sources can be found for various parts of the renovation. (For example, the City of Tampa makes moneys available within historic districts for facade improvements designed to allow owners to bring the front of buildings up to some facsimile of their original condition.) Similarly, for listed or contributing structures (of which there are many in both the Hyde Park and Ybor City neighborhoods), low-interest loans, redevelopment grants and other financial options from various sources are available. However, when it comes to new construction, developers quite often feel that they are facing the opposite situation. In many older neighborhoods, new structures not only have to pay the requisite fees and exactions, but they may also be subject to design review and oversight, with building permits withheld until specific architectural features are adopted, modified or otherwise incorporated. Both these features, themselves, and the time involved in the review process can be viewed as unnecessary expenses by developers.

Taxes also play a role in determining the financial viability of a proposal. Redevelopment projects are notoriously rickety as start-up operations. To the degree that ad valorem taxes are based on perceived or appraised values rather than actual operational cash flows, these taxes can become a serious disincentive to the operational viability of the re-development projects. In the period between 1993 and 1995, many of the developers and owners of the earliest redevelopment projects in Ybor City had the assessed value of their properties, and hence, their taxes, more than double. For operations with constrained cash flows, the additional $1,500 per month in property tax can mean the difference between a positive or negative NOI.

Finally, the very fluidity and accessibility of the Sunbelt metro environment can hurt potential redevelopment projects. As noted, cities such as Tampa contain many well-built, architecturally significant, but abandoned commercial and institutional structures. While regulations and locational issues often preclude the use of these properties as residential developments, many developers have entertained the idea of turning old cigar factories or civic clubs into boutique office complexes. However, given the complexity of adaptive re-use coupled with ancillary issues such as finding the land necessary to meet parking requirements and possibly the provision of additional security measures, without some substantial form of government intervention —subsidy,
grant, write-off, or tax break, for example—the project cannot be brought on line to be competitive with other office space in the area.

For example, the owner of one 50,000 square cigar building had intended, when purchasing the structure, to turn it into boutique offices. City regulations requiring extensive site work for parking and stormwater retention, coupled with the costs of gutting and refinishing the four-story brick building, simply pushed the price of redevelopment beyond what the market would bear. To make any type of minimum return on his investment, the developer would have had to rent the space at over $12 per square foot, at a time when brand-new class-A space in a downtown high-rise could have been let on long-term leases for $13 to $15 per square foot. Given the constrained foot prints of the renovated building, the presence of space-cramping heavy timber columns dividing the floor plates, and the transitional nature of the immediate environs of the building, the developer knew that he simply could not achieve the rents necessary to make the pro forma work out. He passed on the project, and the building is currently being used to store bulk materials while the owner looks for a buyer.40

H. Economic Factors

In many instances, developers in fast-growing environments wok from with the “Field of Dreams” belief that if they build it, someone will come. Given the capacity to receive the funds to do the project, developers’ market analyses and due diligence are not always as thorough as they might be. Where such a cavalier approach might not be terribly damaging for standard types of suburban development, when dealing with redevelopment projects, this attitude can be fatal. In this instance, the assumption is that if a way can be found to simply re-develop parcels and properties within the older city neighborhoods, residents and businesses will flock to use these redeveloped areas. Such, as example after example shows, is not the case.

40 This example points at one of the issues in a low-density, auto-dominated fast-growth environment. Within the $12/sf rental range of this project, literally dozens of alternative office options could be found. And, given the relatively low cost of land at the fringes, it is possible to develop an entire project from scratch based on a pro forma projected rent of $12/sf. In short, there is simply too much competition in too fluid a market for a redevelopment project to claim any real advantage based on location or price. Those few renovation projects that have worked as offices tend to have been done by owners looking to occupy much of the space themselves, by developers catering to a niche market, (a law firm looking to establish some cachet; doctors in proximity to a hospital), or by developers who have pre-development agreements with non-profits or government agencies.
Redevelopment efforts can be supply driven or demand driven. Too often, however, there is a surfeit of supply and a dearth of demand. The ability to convince a loan officer or a limited partnership of the potential of a redevelopment project is not the same as the ability to convince residents, owners, and users to frequent and use the same project.

Even on an upturn, supply alone does not presume demand. In Ybor City, now that significant redevelopment has been occurring for almost five years, speculators are beginning to enter the market, buying and renovating properties and setting up “concept” bars and clubs. The earliest investors in these types of operations often did the minimum necessary to get an occupancy permit. If things went well, typically the initial investors either put more money into their project, improving quality and/or expanding in area, or they sold to a better-capitalized outside entity who, in turn, made these secondary improvements.

Now, well-capitalized ventures are buying properties directly, often paying premiums for the remaining undeveloped structures. The benefits of agglomeration, however, seem to extend only to a certain point. Well-capitalized ventures are not seeing the profits they initially envisioned, but their presence has also hurt smaller less well-funded operations. While many of the bars, restaurants and clubs appear to being doing well, significant turnover is also evident. Thus, it appears, in contrast to previous years, that additional development of this type no longer adds to the audience in Ybor City. Rather, bars, clubs and restaurants are now in direct competition with each other. Demand appears to be stagnating while supply continues to expand.41 While such a situation is undoubtedly good for the consumer, it also implies that some investors in redevelopment projects will be forced to sell, close or change their concepts.

41 In part, the stagnation in demand stems from the somewhat uncoordinated public/private nature of development in Ybor City. Unlike a private development, no entity is aggressively marketing Ybor City to a target audience. And, unlike the Coconut Grove area of Miami which has many similar characteristics to Ybor City, there is no single dominant “anchor” entity to provide an overall focus for the district in the vein of Coco Walk in Miami. Without a target audience, investors and merchants complain that they can never be sure who will be frequenting their establishments.

City officials are aware of this weakness and are currently attempting to set up a study to assist in rectifying the situation.
I. Regulatory Factors

Discontinuities between codified zoning regulations and concerns for redevelopment can often hinder efforts to re-develop vacant properties. In the example cited above of the abandoned commercial strips, contemporary zoning regulations, designed for the characteristics of current arterial development, render older properties almost impossible to develop. For example, setback requirements today are considerably higher than previously. Older parcels, sized to meet the earlier requirements cannot accommodate today’s demands. In addition, functional demands for parking today are much higher than when the initial strips were developed; new demands such as those for stormwater retention, mandatory open space and additional demands, cut further into the buildable area for many of these small parcels, thereby rendering them functionally unusable.

Two additional sets of regulations also hinder redevelopment efforts. In Florida, impact fees are assessed on all new construction as a way of ensuring an equitable relationship between service provision and service demand. Mandated by the State, the legitimacy of such fees has been hotly contested by numerous parties, one side arguing that the fees do, in fact, help match demand and supply of services, the other arguing that the fees merely serve as a large disincentive to development, and that the taxes derived from developed property would be more than enough to cover the increased cost of providing services. In general, development groups such as the Homebuilders Association come down heavily in opposition to such fees, while environmental and civic groups generally come down in favor of them.

The nature of the regulations, however, is so sweeping as to actually hinder types of development that everyone seems to agree is desirable. As applied in the City of Tampa, wherever a parcel of land has been vacant for over five years, upon construction of a new structure, impact fees must be assessed and collected. This means that when Tampa Preservation, Inc. buys a vacant site in Tampa Heights for $5,000 and works with volunteers and donations to construct a 1,400 square foot house that they intend to sell for less than $50,000, they may be required to pay over $5,000 in impact fees, depending on the duration of the site’s previous vacancy.

The fees are based on building size and expected occupancy; construction cost is not an issue. Thus, a rehab effort in Tampa Heights and a tract house in the Tampa Palms master-planned...
community can end up paying the same amount of impact fees. In Tampa Heights, however, these fees can easily exceed 10% of the ultimate house cost; in an environment where non-profit groups are pulling as many strings as possible to give non-qualifying applicants and opportunity to own a home, this difference is often insurmountable. And, as one member of TPI noted, “In Tampa Heights, all of the infrastructure is already in place. The rule runs counter to our goal which is to redevelop the neighborhood, but there doesn’t seem to be anything the City can do about it.”

Conversations with Ron Rotella of the City indicate that Clarke’s perception is essentially correct. “It is illegal for the City to simply waive impact fees,” he notes. “There are a few measures we can take for specific types of development, but by and large the rule stands; new construction is required to pay development fees.”

One area, however, in which the City does have some discretion is the so-called “50% Rule.” This statute in the City’s building code is viewed by many homeowners, architects and contractors as the redeveloper’s bane. Briefly stated, the rule says that whenever a property is improved by an amount that equals or exceeds fifty-percent of the value of the original structure (not including the land), the entire structure must be brought up to meet the latest codes and regulations. Thus, when a homeowner buys a 1,200 square foot 1950s ranch house and looks to do a 1,000 square foot expansion, according to the rule, the entire structure (all 2,200 square feet) must be built to meet the latest codes and regulations.

42 There are ways around this requirement should the object be important enough. For example, the City was negotiating with a Target super store to locate along Gandy Boulevard in South Tampa. This is a heavily traveled route that links Tampa to St. Petersburg, but because of its proximity to MacDill AFB and the essentially transient nature of many of the residents south of the street, there was a dearth of retail. Target, looking build a structure of over 100,000 square feet balked at the cost of the impact fees, which amounted to over $200,000. As a legally acceptable way around this problem, the City arranged with Target that the store would pay the impact fees and in return, the City would mitigate the store’s annual tax burden until a net present value of $200,000 had been reached. The tax shortfall, in turn, would be made up from one of the City’s discretionary funds. In this way, Target meets its development goal, the City gets a major retail presence in an area that had been under-served, and because of the extended duration of the re-payments, the City also insures the cooperation of the store going forward.

While this is an elegant and equitable solution to a regulatory problem, it clearly cannot be done for very many projects. In this instance, the City wanted the store to move to a particular location. The store was agreeable, within certain financial limitations, and the City felt that the benefits of the store presence in this location outweighed the time, energy and expenses that would be incurred to win the store’s agreement.
South Tampa has many properties in which the structure is worth relatively little but the land is quite valuable; this applies particularly to sites on the water. It is not unusual to find a house appraised at $300,000 where the land is worth $225,000 and the building $75,000. Such situations present a dilemma to the buyers. If they tear the existing structure down, they immediately add to their land costs and also incur all of the development costs and impact fees of new construction. If, however, the renovate or expand the original structure, they are effectively limited to a $37,500 budget (in this instance).

One way around this situation is incremental renovation. In the instance above, the homeowner would ask the architect or contractor to design a series of improvements. The first improvement would be done for the allocated $37,500 budget and the house would be submitted to the City for re-assessment. Once the re-assessment has been done, and the house has an increased value (say $110,000), a second renovation would be undertaken, this time for the new, higher 50% figure.

The impact of Hurricane Andrew on South Florida in 1992 added to the gravity of the 50% rule. Many of the buildings in Tampa are simple concrete-block, slab-on-grade construction whose finished floors sit anywhere from six to ten feet above sea level. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations, however, stipulate that new construction must sit above the minimum flood level for the particular location within which the home is built, or else federal flood insurance will be withheld. In most parts of Florida, this level is either 11 or 13 feet above sea level. Thus, a renovator who does not adhere to the 50% rule runs the danger of losing Federal flood protection for his or her property. In specific instances, this rule has forced homeowners to literally elevate their structures several feet while doing renovation work.

Needless to say, these rules and requirements add to the cost of construction for both new and renovated properties. While the FEMA regulations are outside the City’s jurisdiction, the 50% Rule is not. Recently, the City initiated action to reduce the rigor of the rule with an eye to the rehabilitation of older houses. Under the proposed wording, as long as the renovations in a project meet the current code requirements, and the existing portions of the project meet previous codes, the homeowner can spend as much money as necessary to rehabilitate a building. As noted by a member of TPI, “Working in Tampa Heights, this is clearly going to help us and others looking to rehab older houses.”
Chapter V Options for Transformation: Case Studies from Tampa FL

Revitalization In and Around Downtown Tampa

Creating a successful downtown in the last decade of the 20th century is probably one of the most challenging things facing cities. It's a really difficult proposition because of all the fundamental forces working against you: decentralization of employment, decentralization of population, concentration of urban problems in the inner city, the resulting lack of investment.43

Like many cities, large and small, Frostbelt or Sunbelt, Tampa saw its downtown decline precipitously in the decades following the end of the Second World War. Historically, downtown Tampa marked the site of the initial settlement, adjacent to Fort Brooke that had been set up by the US Army in the 1830s. Bounded on the west by the Hillsborough River, on the south by Hillsborough Bay and some 20th century spoil islands, and on the east by the 40 foot deep Ybor Channel which had been built to service large vessels, Tampa’s downtown was a compact, densely developed mix of uses. (The construction in 1963 of Interstate 4 created a fourth “edge” for the downtown, leaving it with an official CBD of less than one-mile square.) Before the 1960s, no buildings were taller than 15 stories, and the majority of the brick and stone buildings were between three and five stories tall. The downtown has a simple orthogonal grid of streets, running in the cardinal directions; at 210 x 210, Tampa’s CBD blocks are the smallest of any city center outside of Portland OR.

During the 1950s and 60s, businesses and residential uses began a steady migration away from the downtown towards the suburbs. By the end of the 1960s, the remaining residential uses tended to be second- and third-story boarding houses and precursors of today’s SROs. Older buildings were torn down and generally replaced with surface parking. The advent of skyscraper development in the 1970s promoted this transition, and by the middle of the 1980s, Tampa’s CBD was, for all intents and purposes, a cluster of 40 story high-rises surrounding by an eclectic collection of older low-rise buildings and many blocks of surface parking.

Throughout the 1960s and ‘70s, the city’s official position was to encourage the development and redevelopment of residential uses within the defined downtown area. The significant downtown

developments of the 1970s were both public-private ventures. Tampa City Center, comprising a 38 story office tower, a 300-room Hilton Hotel and a 1,500 car parking structure, was built immediately across the street from Tampa City Hall, and straddling the City’s traditional “Main Street,” Franklin Street. In addition, Franklin Street from the City Center to the Interstate was closed off as a pedestrian mall. Millions were spent on streetscaping and design improvement. The sum effect was the rapid decline of most of the retail uses located along the Mall.

In the 1980s, possibly helped by the publicity generated by the city’s inclusion in John Naisbitt’s bestseller, Megatrends, commercial and civic development in downtown Tampa boomed. Within the decade, 7 additional high-rise office towers were built, as well as a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center, a Convention Center and an award-winning public park/parking structure. In addition to the projects that got built, dozens of speculative projects were presented. While many were never built, the energy and optimism generated by these projects helped to create a sense of downtown Tampa as a locus for future development.

Lost in this optimism was any sense of the downtown as a place for residential development. Outside of a number of buildings that were protected by historic designation but which had no productive use, there was little interest in exploring residential options within the CBD proper. Instead, official focus for residential redevelopment shifted to the immediate in-town, adjacent neighborhoods, most of which were still in stages of ruin and blight. The city’s downtown development plan which was officially adopted in 1987, and was included as part of the City’s official, State-mandated, Comprehensive Plan of 1988, “alludes to a presumed synergistic relationship between the CBD (one of the county’s three major employment centers), and the areas on its fringe. Enhancing the attractiveness of those areas for residential use by downtown workers is widely believed to be essential to the achievement of a revitalized downtown.”

Thus, like many cities throughout the country, and, in particular, like many Sunbelt cities, Tampa’s official development plan, promulgated in the 1980s and maintained to this date, suggests a coordinated center-city redevelopment plan that put large amounts of commercial and civic development in the CBD and envisioned significant levels of medium- to high-density residential development in the immediately adjacent neighborhoods. The terminology used to describe these
neighborhoods was "urban villages," a concept that was receiving favorable press throughout the country and active implementation in cities such as Seattle WA and Portland OR. Within the State of Florida, visions similar to Tampa's could be seen in the center-city plans for Orlando, Jacksonville, Miami, St. Petersburg, and Fort Lauderdale.

Clearly, the emphasis of the Downtown Plan was on commercial development and re-development. With few exceptions, the fate of most of the adjacent in-town neighborhoods hinged on the continuing growth of the Central Business District. A follow-up study, however, done in 1990 by the Planning Commission at the City's behest, suggests that the official plan was flawed in at least two significant ways. First, while the potentials for commercial redevelopment within the city center were, and are, significant, little, if any of this potential was being achieved. In fact, during a short period between 1992 and 1994, shortly after two new high-rise office buildings came on line, Tampa ranked up with Dallas, Miami and Houston as a national leader in vacant office space. The buildings were built but no one came.

The Planning Commission's study also suggested that the adjacent in-town neighborhoods were, in fact, extremely weak candidates for residential redevelopment. The heady days of the 1980s real estate boom had left many long-time land-holders with an inflated sense of the value of their properties. This, coupled with negligible holding costs, created severe property speculation. In addition, as noted in the study, "(a)nother major deterrent is an excessive crime rate. The rate exceeds city-wide averages by 200 to 400 percent in most crime categories."

The Planning Commission's report, published in October of 1990, was equivocal in its outlook for in-town residential redevelopment. While acknowledging the ostensible potentials the areas possessed, the report clearly outlined the limitations, and concluded on a decidedly down note. In the six years since the Planning Commission's analysis was completed, a great deal has happened in both the CBD and the adjacent neighborhoods. Little of it, however, conforms with the city's official vision, and while that vision remains on the books, public officials and private-sector developers admit that things are moving very differently than might have been foreseen.45

45 Most of the plans done in the 1980s for the CBD and immediate environs were predicated on assumed increases in downtown worker population. With a worker population of approximately 26,000 in the
The following case studies examine four neighborhoods immediately adjacent to downtown Tampa. Each neighborhood has been the focus of considerable public and private sector design and development efforts over the past twenty years. The four neighborhoods represent four different approaches to the issue of urban re-development, differences that are accentuated by their location in a fast-growing suburbanized metropolis.

The four neighborhoods represent varying degrees of redevelopment success and failure. They also represent different challenges going forward. Most significantly, however, when taken as a collective, united with the downtown proper, these neighborhoods serve as a unique example of the potentials and the problems of redevelopment, as well as of the possibilities for the future.

Case Studies of Urban Redevelopment

The current market for a new suburb in derelict parts of an old city is likely to consist of people from nearby areas who have started to make a little money, plus people whose other housing choice is a small house or a mobile-home way out on the urban fringe. To eliminate long hours of commuting every day, they might be willing to consider a house in a close-in neighborhood, but the neighborhood has to be affordable and part of an area large enough, and complete enough, to be clearly distinguishable from deteriorated inner-city districts.46

In the 1970s, Philip Clay of MIT described two major means of neighborhood revitalization: "gentrification" and what he called "incumbent redevelopment." Clay's models and discussions were similar to those presented by Anthony Downs in his book Neighborhoods and Urban Development.47 In both cases, gentrification was seen as the infusion into an existing neighborhood, of outside capital and energy, generally in the form of younger, more affluent people who invested time, energy and money in the neighborhood. While it was hard to dismiss the middle of the decade, the CBD was seen as a home to as many as 70,000 workers by the end of the century. Instead, for several years, worker population actually fell. Today, the most optimistic surveys put the downtown worker population at just under 30,000 people. By contrast, the Westshore Business District, five miles west of the CBD, has over 70,000 daytime employees.

As one public official put it, "These plans were all based on increases in the downtown worker population. Instead, it went down. And, studies show that the number of downtown workers who live outside Hillsborough County has increased over the years. It seems pretty safe to assume that the downtown worker population is not looking for in-town housing."

46 Barnett, op cit, page 146.
significant improvements that could be made to neighborhood through such factors, most observers felt less than sanguine about the disruptive impact gentrification has on the original residents of a neighborhood, most of whom are bought out and displaced.

Incumbent re-development, on the other hand, was the situation in which the residents and businesses of a neighborhood contributed towards the overall renovation and rejuvenation of the area. Whereas gentrification was seen as disruptive to the original nature and occupancy of a neighborhood, incumbent redevelopment was regarded as the best of both worlds. Those who hailed from a district and wished to remain there, could do so. Those who wished to sell out and move could find buyers. These buyers would contribute to the general upgrading of the environment, but without dramatically raising prices or fomenting gentrification.

Critical to both definitions, however, is an influx of external capital. In gentrification, the “yuppies” bring extra money and sweat-equity with them. Properties are renovated and re-sold, or simply occupied. The new residents tend to have specific consumption patterns, so local retail adjusts to support these new demands. Retail development and residential development work symbiotically to create a new, typically mixed-use, enclave, with a cachet and character all its own.

Such external influxes of capital, however, are not so easily attracted in cases of incumbent re-development. In the 1960s and 1970s, a range of government grants could be hand to help such activity. While the success record of such grant programs as the Community Development Block Grant program was checkered, the availability of external moneys that could be had with relatively few strings attached did lend a sense that opportunities were available, particularly for those neighborhoods and districts that were down but decidedly not out.

By the 1980s, however, Federal policies coupled with decreasing availability of funds led to sharp cuts in external grant moneys. Faced with such impediments, examples of such internally-generated rejuvenation became fewer and farther between.

Within Tampa, an example of the impact of gentrification can be seen in the Hyde Park neighborhood just south of the downtown. Similarly, an ongoing example of the efforts involved in
incumbent regeneration can be found in the case of Tampa Heights, just north of downtown Tampa.

There are, however, at least two other potential models for neighborhood revitalization, both of which are applicable to in-town redevelopment. The first of these involves the collapse of a previous institution, be it a large manufacturing plant, a shipping yard, a military establishment, etc., and the subsequent take-over by a large, private sector developer. Mud Island, in Memphis is one example of such in-town redevelopment; Harbour Island, in Tampa, is another example.

Finally, there is a fourth path to redevelopment, one that is less straightforward than any of the other three. It involves an over-arching public/private partnership and is generally applied in situations in which neither a single private-sector entity nor a single government entity has the time, energy, money or desire to attempt to re-vitalize an area. Incumbent regeneration will not work because there are simply too few people and institutions left in the neighborhood. A single private entity might find the project too big, or too complicated to undertake. The same criteria hold true for government agencies, particularly in light of the dismal record of similar efforts undertaken by the Federal government in the 1960s. An example of this type of public/private re-development effort is Ybor City in Tampa.

- Hyde Park: Classic Gentrification

Four factors account for gentrification. One was the substantial inflation of housing prices during the 1970s, which for a time made real estate in central-city neighborhoods a more attractive investment. At the outset, this was a major impetus for gentrification. A second factor was the coming of age of a huge population cohort, the postwar "baby boom" generation, from which many gentrifiers have been drawn. Third, the restructuring of urban economies has generated many new white-collar jobs in corporate management, firms providing business services, and traditional professions such as law. Many of the new recruits to these occupations work in the central city, and for them residing in a near-downtown neighborhood can be highly attractive. Fourth . . . substantial portions of the middle class, have once more embraced the urban neighborhood as a place of residence.

The direct consequences of gentrification have yet to play out . . . in no major US city does the number of gentrifying neighborhoods represent more than a small fraction of the local housing stock. Thus, gentrification, of itself, does not promise to reconstitute the property base of local municipalities or rebuild whole cities. Gentrification in some cities has dislocated poorer incumbent residents who
can no longer afford the rents asked in “upscale” neighborhoods in a few cities. Loft conversion in industrial areas has pitted real estate developers against incumbent commercial and industrial enterprises, the latter being threatened by the rent and tax increases that can strike properties that are proximate to such conversions. In the late 19th century, the city of Tampa sat adjacent to Fort Brooke on the eastern side of the Hillsborough River at the mouth of Hillsborough Bay. In the 1890s, Henry Plant, a railroad baron from the Northeast pushed his railroad line south into the heart of the city. A fierce rivalry existed between Plant, who was developing rail lines down the West coast of Florida, and Henry Flagler, who was developing similar lines down the East coast of the state. Flagler had started the practice of establishing large, luxury hotels at specific stations along his train routes. These were advertised to well-to-do Northeasterners as vacation destinations and winter-time homes.

Flagler’s success with hotels in St. Augustine and Palm Beach pushed Plant to propose a similar project for Tampa. Given the density of downtown development and the cost of land there, Plant purchased a large tract of land on the west side of the River and in 1891, he opened the Tampa Bay Hotel there. A compilation of at least half-a-dozen architectural styles, the 300+ room hotel was an immediate sensation and a tourist attraction. To ease the passenger’s journey, Plant built a railroad trestle across the River, and then convinced the City of Tampa to build a similar bridge, just to the south of the trestle, for vehicles and pedestrians. Not only did this facilitate easy movement between the hotel and the City, but it spurred the suburbanization of the land around the hotel, along the shore of the Bay.

The first major development to take place after the bridge was built was Hyde Park, named after the Illinois hometown of developer O. H. Platt, who purchased twenty acres of orange groves and subdivided them for large homes for Tampa’s elite. From this point on, Hyde Park became “the focal point for Tampa’s social life.”

Two of Tampa’s oldest schools, Gorrie Elementary, constructed in 1899, and Wilson Junior High School, built in 1916, are located in Hyde Park verifying that it was one of the City’s first housing developments of significant scale. Newspapers from the turn of the century show that Hyde Park became a fashionable address for prominent Tampans. This growth continued from 1891, until the culmination of the Florida Land Boom and the beginning of the Depression in 1929.

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Trolleys provided public transportation from Ballast Point to the Tampa Bay Hotel. In 1914, the County road alongside the trolley line was paved with two 11-foot strips of brick, and Bayshore Boulevard emerged as a major thoroughfare.

After World War I, the Land Boom began as millions of people poured into Florida. The early 1920s were a rapid growth period for Tampa and Hyde Park. Smaller homes, Florida “bungalows” with low slung roofs, appeared beside the earlier grand residences.

Most jobs were centralized downtown, and Hyde Park’s convenient location resulted in the construction of many new homes. At this time, Tampa had no zoning, so apartments and grocery stores were built alongside single family homes, resulting in scattered land uses throughout the area.49

The Land Bust and the Depression effectively halted the growth of Tampa and Hyde Park, as well as most communities in Florida. The only major project undertaken during the 1930s, however, had considerable significance. As part of the WPA undertakings, Bayshore Boulevard was widened, a central median and a seawall were added, and a promenade was built along the water’s edge. Along with the Tampa Bay Hotel which, by this time, had fallen into bankruptcy, this project quickly became one of the civic and aesthetic features of the region.

Hyde Park stayed in limbo from 1929 through the end of the Second World War. After the war, however, FHA loans, new highways and rapid suburbanization overtook Tampa and most other cities in Florida. Hyde Park, with its tight gridiron of streets, was not convenient for auto traffic, and with many of the thirty-, forty- and fifty-year old homes in need of maintenance and repair, those who could left the neighborhood for newer subdivisions being built to the north of the City.

In the 1950s and ’60s, Hyde Park was left to those who could not afford to move to the suburbs. Once elegant waterfront residences were converted into apartments or boarding houses. Other buildings were simply abandoned and boarded up.

During the early ‘70s, commuting to the city for employment and specialized goods and services became difficult and expensive. Environmental and energy considerations also combined to make commuting less desirable; thus, scattered, sprawling developments lost some of their appeal.50

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Hyde Park was an obvious first choice for people looking to live in an in-town neighborhood. While the neighborhood was rundown, it was essentially untouched by Urban Renewal, and property prices were quite affordable. Five and six-bedroom Victorian houses from the 1920s could be had for as little as $50,000, and smaller cottages and bungalows were priced as low as $15,000. In general, these houses were less than three blocks from Bayshore Boulevard, and while somewhat rundown, most properties still had their original architectural features intact.

The neighborhood quickly became the focus of an early example of gentrification. Some of the earliest people to recognize the value of both the buildings and the location were architects, artists and others from creative fields who were drawn to the area because of the unique character of the buildings and because the houses, while in need of repair, were generally affordable.51

Initially, speculators and more timorous homeowners stayed away from Hyde Park because of the reports of high levels of crime, generally stemming from the numerous boarding houses along the northern edge of the neighborhood. In the early 1970s, however, the City of Tampa initiated condemnation proceedings and began construction the Crosstown Expressway. While much of this limited-access toll road was built within existing railroad rights-of-way, a short piece was run through the northern part of Hyde Park, immediately west of the CBD and south of the Tampa Bay Hotel, now run as part of the University of Tampa.

In other instances, such a construction project could have had devastating impacts on the adjacent neighborhoods, but paradoxically, the Expressway bolstered the burgeoning redevelopment efforts. The right-of-way was routed through the least expensive properties in the neighborhood. These were generally the oldest buildings, most in the need of repair. Dozens of boarding homes and

51 As an example, one elegant two-story house located two blocks from the Bayshore in the heart of the neighborhood was purchased in 1975 for $45,000. Its current assessed value, which is down from the highs at the end of the 1980s, is close to $300,000 and Realtors speculate that the property would sell for a price well above $350,000, even in a generally deflated market.

While individual property prices vary considerably based on location, size, amenities, upkeep and historical character, average prices in Hyde Park are among the highest in Hillsborough County. In 1995, the average per square foot cost of existing houses in Hyde Park stood at slightly greater than $100. New house prices were generally higher than this. By comparison, average house prices in Seminole Heights, a neighborhood that also derives from the turn of the century and which also has many examples of period residential architecture, were about half those in Hyde Park. The comparisons between the two neighborhoods, however, boded well for both. House prices have remained high in Hyde Park, despite general economic downturns, and prices in Seminole Heights have risen an average of $5,000 to $10,000 since 1994.
vacant buildings were destroyed and replaced with a well-landscaped, generally elevated four-lane divided highway. As a result of the construction, crime levels fell dramatically, and the southern half of the neighborhood comprising mostly single-family homes and small apartments was separated from the northern segment that contained mostly multi-family housing and commercial uses.

The Expressway thus eradicated one of the few areas in the district that was truly blighted, pumped money into the neighborhood, led to some streetscaping and general beautification, facilitated easy access between Hyde Park and other parts of the City, and helped reduce criminal activity.

After the Expressway was completed in 1974, gentrification efforts in the neighborhood took off. Now, in addition to homeowners willing to put sweat equity into restoring a house, contractors and speculators began purchasing buildings for renovation and re-sale. Given the desire to promote redevelopment and the generally mixed zoning in the area, some of the largest single-family homes in the neighborhood were redeveloped as boutique offices.

When the Expressway bifurcated the district, it left the southern part with only a single major commercial center. In the mid 1970s, this Old Hyde Park cluster of stores was given an extensive facelift and new stores and restaurants were added.

In the early 1980s, in one of the first examples of large-scale private sector intervention in the district, Amelea, Inc., a Canadian development company proposed an upscale mixed-use project for the Old Hyde Park location. Designed by Toronto architect Joseph Bogdan, this extremely ambitious project included 250,000 square feet of upscale stores and shops, nearly 100,000 square feet of commercial offices, and well-over 100 town-homes and condominiums.

The redevelopment proposal met with some initial resistance from neighbors who felt that it would adversely impact traffic conditions in the immediate surroundings. A series of design changes by the developers helped mitigate this opposition. Such design features include a unique “double frontage” for much of the project. Commercial uses facing into the “square” at the center of the project back up directly against long, shallow townhouses that face onto adjacent through streets. Thus, from all major venues, Old Hyde Park Village, as it was named, has no back. From the
outside it appears as a series of contextually designed townhouses; from the interior, it looks like a small village shopping district, albeit one with extremely upscale shops and boutiques.

To enhance the pedestrian character of the district, to buffer the adjacent, older residential areas from the bustle of the commercial center, and to enhance the pedestrian quality of the entire center, the developers placed three, four-story parking structures at the far reaches of the project boundaries. Done in concrete with brick veneer and planted with vines, the garages are wider than their immediate neighbors, but no higher. As the developers were required to maintain some of the older, historic buildings as well as most of the original through streets and a central fountain, the project has the appearance of having been in place for much longer than ten years.

The short-run results of this redevelopment project were not positive. A sudden increase in interest rates coupled with lackluster sales forced the developers to re-organize and slowed progress to a standstill. Some of the original stores and restaurants were not able to meet the increased lease payments and with the severe real estate recession at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, there was considerable turnover in shops.

The unconventional design of the project may have contributed to these early troubles. Located in the middle of a high-density residential neighborhood, the Village was nowhere near any major vehicular thoroughfares. It had only a single anchor tenant -Jacobsons, from a chain of smaller, upscale departments stores; the majority of stores were small, high-priced boutiques selling clothing, perfume and jewelry, and restaurants.

The subsequent, Phase II addition of a seven-theater movie complex added considerably to the drawing power of the Village, as did its steadily escalating popularity as a place to go to hang out, to see and be seen. By 1992, it was well known as the in spot among younger professionals in the south Tampa area.

Housing sales were sluggish at the outset. The notion of living “above the store” was novel in the Tampa area, and the recession at the end of the ‘80s coincided with the completion of many of the units. A planned third phase of the project was put permanently on hold in 1990, but ground was finally broken for an additional 124 townhouse units at the end of 1995.
As a case study in the gentrification and revitalization of a historic neighborhood, Hyde Park stands out as a paradigm. The neighborhood had bottomed out in the 1960s, the victim of benign neglect, suburbanization and changing cultural values. The aforementioned factors—perceived value for those willing to invest sweat equity, increasing commute times for suburban dwellers, the oil embargo and subsequent increase in commuting costs, the construction of the Crosstown Expressway—all created conditions that made Hyde Park ripe for gentrification in the 1970s: Subsequent development in the 1980s helped reinforce the historic character of the district. Hyde Park, today, is both a nationally and a locally designated historic district. Under the aegis of the Historic Tampa/Hillsborough County Preservation Board, a host of volunteer agencies had documented all of the original buildings in the district in the 1970s. This documentation was used in apply for historic district status, and became the basis for a set of officially sanctioned “Hyde Park Design Guidelines.” These guidelines, in turn, provided the parameters for both redevelopment efforts as well as new construction.
New construction began to appear in the district at the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s. Where older buildings were so far deteriorated as to be beyond salvaging, builders were able to petition to raze the structures and erect new ones. Most of the original single-family houses in the district were built on relatively small lots with 50- or 60-foot frontages. Generally, such buildings were replaced with new single-family houses, although the newer homes were both larger and more efficiently laid out on their sites.

Sometimes, however, the sites were larger, and either zoning permitted more than one unit to be built, or variances were sought. Given the escalating property values in the district, in many instances, a single structure was torn down, and two or three units were built in its place. Townhouses and courtyard duplexes have been extremely popular in that they provide many of the amenities sought by home-buyers—attached, two-car garages, back-yards, generous interior light and air—but allowed the builder to keep prices in the moderate to high-moderate range.52

By the mid-90s, several design/build development companies had emerged that focused almost entirely on medium-density infill development projects. Each company followed essentially the same pattern, with variations due to the intended market, the standard product and the selected architecture. One company, Bayfair, Inc., specializes in replacing well-located but under-sized or run-down single family houses with much larger, more elaborate models. A rule of thumb in this approach is to try and locate properties where the cost of the land (sometimes including the pre-existing structure) will not amount to more than one-third of the sale price of the completed construction. While it is technically possible to arrange such conditions by simply building more expensive houses, developers attempt to stay reasonably close to the high average price of home immediately around the proposed construction site.

In particular instances, the price of these infill homes will considerably exceed that of the surrounding buildings; homes located on the water or along Bayshore Boulevard, or in an area where the potential for doing a number of such projects is relatively high. For a typical project, however, a property purchased for $165,000 will become a large (3,000+ square foot), two-story house with an asking price of approximately $500,000.
Because many of the houses in Hyde Park are listed as contributing structures, they cannot be torn down except in cases of severe structural damage. Because of this, direct house-for-house redevelopment is somewhat limited within the confines of the Landmark District. Outside the District, however, along Bayshore Boulevard and on Davis Islands, such redevelopment practices abound.

Within Hyde Park, there are still many smaller, non-contributing single-family homes, particularly at the fringes of the district. In such instances, the numbers may not work on a direct one-for-one redevelopment. Here, however, developers look at more creative solutions. Where possible, there might be two similar structures on adjacent lots. Here, with re-zoning, the developer might be able to build four townhouses and thereby justify the initial costs. Craig Ross and Scott Shimberg of Hyde Park Builders have produced over one-hundred units working in this vein.

“Our approach is very simple,” notes Ross. “We look for properties which are under-valued or under-sized for the immediate environment. If the zoning can be worked, we figure out how many multi-family units we can put on the site; we figure out our hard and soft costs and our sales prices. We subtract the costs from the prices and whatever is left over is what we can pay for the property. If we can get it for that amount—or less—we go ahead.”

Ross and Shimberg have done a great deal of market research, both in studying potential projects in evaluating completed work. “Our typical buyer is a professional women between the ages of 25 and 40. Generally, they are single and they work downtown or in Westshore. They are looking for something that is comfortable, and well-designed, but most of all, they are looking for security.” Hyde Park Builders standard product is a town-house cluster project, with two- or three-story townhouses grouped around a central drive court. Each unit has a two-car garage beneath it, with small outdoor spaces on the sides of the buildings facing away from the courtyard. “The garages, perimeter fencing, and gates all add to our cost of doing the project,” says Ross, “but it is what we have to do in order to reach this market. And, it is quite an extensive market. These are people who have good jobs, have discretionary income, but who want to feel safe and secure at home. They want to live in Hyde Park (or on Davis Islands) because they are safe, they are close to the water and the shops, and people feel comfortable walking or jogging or roller blading.”

53 Craig Ross, Hyde Park Builders, Tampa FL. Interview with the author, June 1996.
A third redeveloper working in Hyde Park does some new construction, but focuses primarily on renovating older buildings, typically looking to convert uses where possible and feasible. Again, the company’s efforts are motivated by a positive bottom line. Property will sit vacant until the asking price comes down or the market improves to the point that the owners of the company feel that they can make a profit on the renovation.

Figure 16: Infill Courtyard Townhouse Project

In addition to these companies, a host of smaller design/build firms also dabble in redevelopment in the Hyde Park neighborhood. Typically, builders look for situations where they can increase the density of their sites, generally looking to replace one single-family house with a duplex, two adjacent houses with a triplex or quad-block. As related by one architect/developer, he looks for properties on blocks that still have their original alleyways intact. Many of the blocks in the Hyde Park area were built with 12 foot center-lot alleys for garage access and utilities, but not all are still extant. With two fifty-foot frontages and alley access, one can petition to develop three two-story townhouse units with attached garages entered from the rear and courtyard access in the
With a single sixty-foot lot, one can create a courtyard duplex with similar garage and front yard conditions.

Figure 17: Duplex Infill Development

Construction costs for all these infill projects tend to be somewhat higher than for conventional residences built in other locations both because of the additional amenities that go into the buildings—hardwood floors, higher ceilings, trim materials, etc.—and because of the additional review procedures required by the City of Tampa. Asking prices for well-designed townhouse and duplex units in nicer locations easily reached $100 per square foot by the early 1990s; despite a dip in both prices and sales in 1993 and 1994, by 1995, infill development was booming once again, with most condos in the neighborhood selling for between $125,000 and $185,000.

While Hyde Park builders caters to a particular clientele, the typical buyers for infill units tend to be younger professionals, most of whom work in and around downtown Tampa or in the Westshore Business District, about seven miles west of Hyde Park. A smaller percentage of residents work in
St. Petersburg, which is a relatively easy commute down Bayshore Boulevard, across the south Tampa peninsula and then across the Gandy Bridge. Most buyers are single or young couples in their twenties or thirties. There is a small but stable gay population, and some of the more upscale condominium units are seeing increasing numbers of empty-nester buyers.

In addition to the single-family homes and newer multi-family condominiums, Hyde Park still contains a wide variety of neighborhood-scale apartment options, many of which are original construction from the 1920s. An early prototype apartment design consists of a U-shaped or H-shaped two-story building with extremely narrow wings and anywhere from eight to sixteen units. The narrow width, extensive surface area and high-ceilinged interior were adequate to provide comfort in the days before window-unit air conditioning became popular in the 1950s. Sturdily-built out of masonry covered with stucco, examples of these buildings abound throughout the district, and are generally interspersed among the single-family homes. Some have been renovated and charge rents that are well above-market, but many are usable, but not in great condition. As such, the provide moderate priced options. Many of the residents in such apartment buildings occupy lower-level white collar jobs at downtown offices; some work in the numerous bars and restaurants in and around Hyde Park.

By 1993, however, the market in Hyde Park had come back to the point that several developers were looking to create upscale rental apartment complexes. There was considerable difficulty in finding large enough parcels of land for such suburban-style garden apartments, and several developers came up with ingenious proposals involving swapping a collection of smaller scattered parcels for a 14-acre City-owned parcel being used as a playground. To date, only one such project has been completed, a 200+ unit project done by Post Apartments from Houston. Built just outside the Hyde Park district line on former light-industrial land, the complex has been extremely successful, with one- and two-bedroom options aimed primarily at young professional singles. At prices between $600 and $900 per month, this project is at the upper end of South Tampa rental property, with the exception of units located directly on Bayshore Boulevard or on Harbour Island.

In summation, the past twenty years have seen an extremely successful gentrification of the Hyde Park neighborhood, combined with market-driven examples of selective densification. Currently, Hyde Park stands as one of the most desirable living environments in the City, because of the
obvious traditional character and interesting architectural features, its easy access to recreation, shopping and work, and its diverse, yet generally up-scale constituency.

Several factors, however, clearly helped make Hyde Park such as success. Even at its nadir, Hyde Park never reached the levels of abandonment and decay of many other in-town neighborhoods, in Tampa and elsewhere. Although buildings had been converted from single-family to multi-family and from single-tenant to multi-tenant, most buildings were still occupied and usable. The construction of the Crosstown Expressway helped eradicate some of the worst housing conditions, and by bifurcating the district, created a sense of the southern half as safe environment. In addition, the neighborhoods location immediately southwest of the downtown astride a truly beautiful waterfront boulevard created enormous locational advantage. Finally, given the tenor of the times in the 1970s, Hyde Park found an active and energetic group of supporters, in both the public and private sectors; people who were willing to commit time, money and energy to turning the neighborhood around.

- Tampa Heights: Struggling Incumbent Regeneration

One mile north of the CBD, sits Tampa’s earliest suburban neighborhood, Tampa Heights. Similar to Hyde Park in lineage, architecture and street organization, Tampa Heights, too, fell upon hard times during the period after the Second World War. Unlike Hyde Park, however, to which it is often compared, Tampa Heights never caught the gentrification rebound. Twenty years after it was first identified as a potential redevelopment gem, the neighborhood is still struggling; even though it has brought itself back from the brink of total decay, even the most positive advocate admits that there is still a long way to go.

The first “suburb” of the newly-created city, Tampa Heights was located due north today’s Central Business District. Situated at an elevation that was between fifteen and twenty-five higher than the city proper, Tampa Heights suffered none of the problems of malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases, and was viewed as a cool and leafy retreat from the city center. In the 1880s and 1890s, those residents who could afford to do so, moved northward to the Heights, where they built airy Victorian wood-frame houses with wrap-around porches and large windows.
The boom that produced Tampa Heights, however, was challenged almost as soon as it occurred. As noted, in 1888 Henry Plant convinced the Tampa city leaders to construct a bridge across the Hillsborough River into what became Hyde Park, and with the creation of the Tampa Bay Hotel and the subsequent re-construction of the Lafayette Street bridge in 1896, the boom to develop Hyde Park was on, generally powered by the same audience for houses in Tampa Heights. With its proximity to the Hotel and the Bayshore and its sense of being the “trendy” place to live, Hyde Park quickly surpassed Tampa Heights as the well-to-do neighborhood.

As the twentieth century progressed, therefore, and development continued in Tampa Heights, it was more economically, socially and culturally varied than in Hyde Park. Spanish, Cuban, Italian, German, Jewish and black residents all moved into Tampa Heights, surrounding some of the larger and more lavish older homes with small, neat bungalows and frame houses. Nebraska Avenue and Florida Avenue, parallel streets moving northward from the downtown became the predominant routes out of the city; these streets were lined with stores and shops.

Without the dominant industry and culture of Ybor City, or the wealth of Hyde Park, Tampa Heights felt the impact of the Depression and the War more severely than these other neighborhoods. As early as the 1940s, the neighborhood was viewed as the ideal location for the earliest Federally-funded public housing projects. After the War was over, suburban flight had a strong, negative impact on Tampa Heights. The final blow to the neighborhood came in the late 1960s with the northern extension of Interstate 275, which functionally and physically separated Tampa Heights from Ybor City, the abutting neighborhood to the east.

By the middle of the 1980s, Tampa Heights had one of the highest crime rates of any location within the City of Tampa. Long known for its drug dealers and prostitutes, many of the old, houses in the neighborhood, which had originated as single-family dwellings and had later been turned into boarding houses, had been turned into crack-houses, havens for those who sold as well as used the drug. Grid 95, covering the northeastern section of the neighborhood, and home to the Robles Park public housing project, had the fourth-highest crime rate in the City in 1989. At that time, crime in and around public housing projects had become endemic, and then-mayor Sandra Freedman instituted a special program to combat the problem. Working with the Chief of Police, the City authorized a number of QUAD Squads (Quick Unit Action Deployment), who were
Figure 18: Plan of Tampa Heights
deployed in the worst sectors of the City. In addition, City bulldozers were brought out to raze known crack houses and the word was spread that the sale of drugs, particularly in the worst neighborhoods for drug trafficking, would no longer be tolerated.54

By the end of 1993, the City's anti-crime efforts had begun to have a sizable impact, particularly in the most crime-ridden inner-city neighborhoods. Tampa Heights had been considered such a neighborhood, but by 1993, crime in one of the seven Grids comprising the community was down over 40%, crime in two others was down between 20 and 40%, and in another two Grids, was down between 0 and 20%. Only in one small sector of the neighborhood had criminal activity increased, and this was by less than 20%.55

Residents of the neighborhood base the turnaround on a series of factors. Paramount among them is the City's action in cracking down on drug trafficking and prostitution. Complementing these efforts, however, were the efforts of private citizens, as individuals, or as members of community and civic associations such as the Tampa Heights Civic Association. This was a group that came together in the late 1980s, "out of frustration," noted one long-time member.

In addition to cracking down on criminal activity, in 1987, the City created the Challenge Fund, a revitalization program designed to provide funds for citizens looking to renovate and restore older properties.

In the face of shrinking Federal funding and with the realization that the City alone would not be able to improve the quality of housing in the inner city, in 1987 the Mayor's Office initiated the Challenge Fund. According the Fernando Noriega, Director of Community Development for the City, the idea stemmed from examples found in Northeastern and Northwestern cities. The goal was to induce private sector funding sources to provide mortgages to applicants who might otherwise be viewed as high-risk borrowers. In return for banks and credit unions overlooking exceptions in their credit criteria, the City would guarantee all loans for the first five years.

54 In July 1994, the QUAD squad oversaw the razing of the 200th crack house in the city of Tampa. By everyone's estimate, this program has had an enormous positive impact on the problem of drugs and drug dealing within the city limits. St. Petersburg Times, 20 July 1994, B1.
55 Lammers, Dirk. "Crime by the Numbers," in Tampa Tribune, 17 July 1994. The original source for the crime statistics was the City of Tampa Police Department.
While the program stipulates ways in which the lenders can effect these exceptions – reduced underwriting criteria; lowered interest rates; enhanced amortization standards—"in reality, the lenders seldom have to lend at below-market rates. Instead, we encourage them to lend to home buyers who would otherwise not be able to qualify for a mortgage." Typically, these are people who have a poor credit history, would be spending more than 28% of their gross income on house payments, or who do not have the necessary job history.

Within the City at large, over a ten year period, the Challenge Fund has helped approximately 14,000 families acquire some form of housing. Today, the program has 26 banks and 8 credit unions involved, providing approximately $25 million in loans each year. Within Tampa Heights, the Fund has help several hundred families purchase property. As of 1994, only a bit more than one percent had defaulted on their loan obligations.  

“There is no doubt that the City has been incredibly helpful in our efforts to revitalize the housing stock in Tampa Heights.” The speaker is Becky Clarke, a member of Tampa Preservation, Inc., a private, non-profit group whose goal since 1988 has been to preserve and revitalize the original housing stock in the neighborhood. Founded in Hyde Park in 1974, TPI took on Tampa Heights as a cause in the late 1980s after visiting other cities across the country and hearing presentations done by the National Historic Trust.

“We were inspired by what we saw in Savannah and Kansas City and elsewhere, and we asked why we couldn’t make something like this work in Tampa.” Using money that they had earned by rehabilitating and selling an historic house in Hyde Park, TPI pledged $40,000 to a revolving fund to be used in Ybor City. Because many of the members of TPI also belonged to the local chapter of the Junior League, the League, in turn, contributed $50,000 to the fund. An additional $10,000 donated by Leadership Tampa, a non-profit civic group, gave TPI the $100,000 start up funds it needed to begin work.

57 Becky Clarke, Tampa Preservation, Inc. Interview with the author, July 1996.
TPI's first project was to assist the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. "They were struggling a bit," notes Clarke, "so we purchased two lots for them, and contributed funds to pay for the design of two prototype buildings, and then paid for the construction." The small, 1,400 square foot, wood-frame houses included some of the Victorian features that were common to the neighborhood - porches, gingerbread railings and trim, metal roofs. Including volunteer labor and contributions, the buildings were designed to sell for $35,000, "the most the neighborhood could absorb at the time." Completed in 1990, the houses were "the first new construction in Tampa Heights in eons."

![New Residential Construction in Tampa Heights](image)

Realizing the magnitude of their self-appointed task, TPI chose to focus their efforts on a single, 20-block sector of the neighborhood. "We spent some time scouting around," says Clarke, "and we decided that there was an enclave where there were still a number of restorable houses and a lot of empty lots." In 1990, the group won a State Preservation Grant to be used in restoring four additional houses within that target area. Including these initial projects, TPI has played a role in
the development of between 45 and 50 sites to date, and currently owns another 10 sites that they are looking to develop.

Our role is a lot like that of a standard real estate broker. We buy vacant land and re-sell it to buyers who are looking to build their own homes. We buy vacant land and build our own houses on it for re-sale. Or, we buy older homes and restore them. We are not looking to make any money on the deal and we are not looking to gentrify the neighborhood.

We have a few standard rules. We will never displace any law-abiding citizen from the neighborhood. We deal only with housing, as opposed to social services, and we are not looking to be landlords, so we don’t do rental projects. For the projects we do build and sell, we have deed restrictions. We get the right to approve any subsequent improvements or additions, and we prohibit subsequent subdividing of parcels or properties. Other than that, we are really looking to help the people here make things happen on their own.58

In the last few years, Clarke notes, they have begun to see spontaneous redevelopment efforts from private owners and developers in the neighborhood. Paramount among these were young professionals, generally in their late 20s or early 30s, many of whom worked in the downtown, who were looking to purchase their first home. Many of these investors were single, and a considerable percentage were gay. A 1993 feature in the St. Petersburg Times, focused on the role of gay professionals as urban pioneers, and tracked their progress in Tampa, as part of the initial wave in Hyde Park in the 1970s, then in Seminole Heights (located just north of Tampa Heights) in the 1980s, and finally, in Tampa Heights at the advent of the 1990s.

In Tampa Heights, a rundown, crime-ridden neighborhood just north of downtown, a gay community thrives.

"We don’t have families and aren’t threatened by riff-raff," said one gay professional, in his 30s, who recently bought a crumbling home in Tampa Heights. He couldn’t afford Hyde Park, yet wanted to live close to his downtown job. A gay friend suggested Tampa Heights, where three acquaintances were renovating old homes.

"They actually took me there and showed me their projects," he said. Within weeks, he bid on a Victorian home in need of major repairs. "It’s sweat equity, and you fulfill a dream that you can’t do in Hyde Park."59

Similar stories can be told by many others who have purchased buildings or property in Tampa Heights in the past few years. Some of these deals have been brokered by TPI; more and more now are not. At the beginning of the decade, vacant lots, generally 68' x 120', could be purchased

58 Clarke, op cit.
for $5,000-$7,000. Today, the cheapest lots begin at $10,000 and it is not uncommon to find some single-lots with asking prices as high as $25,000. "Those prices are a bit unrealistic," acknowledged one seller, "but not that far off. And, you might as well start high and then negotiate down."

Five years ago, it was not impossible to find original home, albeit in extremely dilapidated condition, for a little as $12,000. Today, the best of such homes have been purchased and renovated, and some are back on the market at prices almost ten times their original purchase price. Other houses, purchased at somewhat higher prices, have shown similar increases in value. In 1992, Tony Ulloa, a downtown executive and past-President of the Tampa Heights Civic Association, purchased his small Victorian home for $28,000. In 1994, after two years of sweat equity and renovation, the house was appraised at over $120,000.

Ulloa's initial concerns, like those of other buyers in the area, was to find something that he could afford, and to get "the best bang per buck." Today, such small-scale renovation and redevelopment continues, but not without some obstacles. Dan Stevenson, a contractor, has been living and working in Tampa Heights since the early 1980s. "Things are happening now," he says, "but I don't understand why there isn't more of it."

Stevenson points to pockets of activity within the neighborhood, blocks where three of four new structures sit side-by-side with other buildings that have been renovated. Many of the newer buildings are the work of a single construction firm who is now in the process of speculative development. In general, the new houses imitate the traditional Victorian gingerbread quality of the older structures, and sell for between $75,000 and $85,000.

Stevenson credits the City for helping clear up the original drug and crime problems, and points to the new YMCA facility along Palm Avenue as one of the better investments in the neighborhood. "It's a new building; it's big and clean, and it attracts people from downtown who might otherwise not come up this way." On the other hand, he points out, other social service agencies in the Tampa Heights area are clearly working against the on-going revitalization efforts. "The main culprit is the Salvation Army. They have a major soup kitchen operating from their Tampa

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59 Rosen, op cit, page 1H.
Heights facility and every day at 5:00 PM, there are hundreds of indigents just hanging around waiting for a handout. And, with the location (astride an Interstate exit ramp, and Florida Avenue, one of the major northward exits from downtown), this is what the downtown workers see when the go home at night. It's the worst possible advertising in the world."

Even though the facility is less than two block from the current headquarters of the Tampa Police Department, the Salvation Army has been the target of complaints because the soup lines attract drug dealers looking to sell to the indigents. Residents also point to the bus-transfer station located beneath the Interstate Highway that runs along the southern edge of the neighborhood. "It's scary driving under the highway when it's full of people waiting for the busses," says one resident. "There may not be anything to it, but it's a problem as far as the image of the neighborhood goes."

On the other hand, Clarke of TPI, is quick to point out that the Salvation Army and the Metropolitan Ministries pre-date most of the recent residents in the neighborhood. "People forget that we are the new kids on the block here. These social service programs provide a very real benefit to members of our society; it is our responsibility to learn how to live with them and not the other way around.

"The fact is," notes Clarke, "that rehabilitating Tampa Heights is a very hard project if you are going to look at it strictly from the point of view of making a profit. It's simply not here. But, if you are like us, and you are looking to really effect some change, there's a lot of opportunity."

Pressed to name an individual or entity that has taken the leadership role in Tampa Heights recent revival, Clarke demurs. "There's no one person or group. There are literally dozens of groups involved in the Tampa Heights area. We've been lucky to have the support of the City, but we've also had to support of private-sector groups like Home Depot and landscaping companies. This is truly a communal effort. We've got a long way to go, but we've seen some real success."

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60 One of the most recent addition to the ranks of groups involved with Tampa Heights is the Tampa Heights Neighborhood Revitalization Alliance, an umbrella organization comprising all the various groups and agencies working in the neighborhood. "This has been a very useful group," says Clarke. "It allows us to figure out what we each are interested in and what we do well; then we go and focus on our own areas of expertise. This way we avoid duplication and efficiency increases.

61 Home Depot has a long-term reputation as a supporter of local revitalization efforts, supplying materials and expertise to groups such as TPI and Habitat for Humanity. In Tampa, local Home Depot stores have helped groups sponsor events such as building projects. In other areas, the Mayor's office has
Clearly, despite the parallels in their histories, Tampa Heights and Hyde Park represent different problems and different solutions in terms of neighborhood redevelopment. Sitting along the edge of Hillsborough Bay and Bayshore Boulevard, Hyde Park has an enormous locational advantage. On the other hand, the City of Tampa is planning on relocating its current Police Headquarters from Tampa Heights to the CBD, freeing up a 16 acre parcel of land along the Hillsborough River. It is anticipated that the City will seek developer bids for this land, with a focus on some sort of upscale residential project. "It would be great if someone like Post Apartments (a large Houston-based developer of up-scale apartment complexes) would come in and do one of their projects," says one current resident. "As long as they leave the River's edge accessible." Responding to this, Noriega of the City's Community Development office notes that the City intends to offer the parcel with an eye for what the developer intends to do with it, not for the price to be paid.

Hyde Park clearly had some additional advantages. "Even at its worst," notes David Rigney, Director of Construction for the Tampa/Hillsborough Preservation Board, "Hyde Park was never really at the bottom. Houses that were formerly single-family were used as multi-family, and some of the construction had deteriorated, but the buildings were all there, all intact. Tampa Heights is like a war zone compared to Hyde Park."

Ironically, while highway construction hastened the decline of Tampa Heights, it helped the revitalization of Hyde Park, and Urban Renewal, which effectively left Hyde Park untouched, left Tampa Heights with well over 1,000 units of public housing, which, over time, became one of the major sources of criminal activity within the area.

Finally, despite the attention that Tampa Heights has received from both the public and private sectors, the overriding intention for the area is clearly different than it was for Hyde Park. "Hyde Park was a classic case of gentrification," says preservationist Rigney. "That is not the goal for Tampa Heights." "Our goal is not to gentrify," says Frances Kruse, of TPI, echoing Clarke. "We want a mixed neighborhood."62

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62 Rosen, op cit, page 3H.
External factors may influence Tampa Heights’ redevelopment for the better. At the end of 1995, Seminole Heights, the neighborhood immediately to the north of Tampa Heights, was designated as a Local Landmark District; in 1993, the core of the community had been added to the National Register of Historic Places. Like Hyde Park, Seminole Heights will now be subject to development review by the Architectural Review Commission. Owners of properties will be given guidelines for renovations and new additions. Tax breaks and other incentives will also be available. Noted one developer, “This could bode very well for Tampa Heights. Properties in Seminole Heights will become more expensive as the general conditions improve, and there should be a spin-off effect to the south. In addition, as conditions in Seminole Heights improve and there is a clearer sense of it as an up-and-coming neighborhood, there should be some residual impact on Tampa Heights.”

Figure 20: Obsolete Commercial Strip Along Florida Avenue, Tampa Heights

Nonetheless, Tampa Heights still has a long way to go. Population in the neighborhood has stabilized, and there are clearly signs of renovation and new investment. Still, despite the welcome addition of the YMCA, there is concern about other service agencies such as the Metropolitan
Ministries and Salvation Army. Two major commercial streets cut through the neighborhood moving north and south: Tampa Avenue and Florida Avenue. Each bears vestigial signs of its importance in the immediate pre- and post-War period, but neither can be viewed today as anything but an example of an outmoded commercial strip.

Where once the two streets both carried two-way traffic, with Florida Avenue as the main commercial street in the neighborhood, and Tampa Avenue as a more mixed collection of commercial and residential uses, now the streets function primarily as traffic arteries. Converted by the Florida Department of Transportation into a one-way pair (Tampa flowing south into the CBD; Florida flowing north, out of the downtown), the uses along the streets clearly reflect their diminished status. Small stores, without the requisite parking, sit adjacent to the lots of auto-wreckers and used-car dealers. As one resident points out, "Florida Avenue is like a graveyard. Where there used to be dealers selling cars, now there are only people selling hub-caps and mufflers."

Along the southern edge of the neighborhood, closest to the downtown, there is evidence of landbanking. Several properties are listed for sale, at asking prices that run from two to four times their assessed value. Inquiries as to the sale price of clearly abandoned properties were answered curtly; "The property is not for sale." Several large parcels are held by city or county agencies, including an abandoned high school and a former library. Both buildings have a certain civic monumentality and sense of architectural presence. Both, however, may be too far gone to save. "The County ran the school building into the ground," says one architect who was around when the building was shuttered. "I am not sure you could use it today without extensive structural renovations." Another architect, hired to do a feasibility study on the library building, reported that the layout and design of the structure make it extremely expensive to re-use. "As an old library, it

63 Metropolitan Ministries recently received a $15 million endowment to create a two-block, enclosed "compound" between Tampa Street and Florida Avenue. Within the walled precinct, the agency hopes to offer care and training for people and families of all ages, including quarters for housing families and individuals. Announcement of the project was met with considerable protest from residents, and approval was only granted by the City after striking a deal with Metropolitan Ministries. As explained by Noriega, "we agreed to allow them to expand the quality of their offerings, but not the volume. They will be dealing with people who are case managed. As long as their clients obey the rules, they will be allowed to stay." In the City's eyes, given such controls, the positive attributes of the new construction, the increased activity and the many well-paying jobs that the project would create, outweighed the possible negative impact of an expanded social service presence.
worked fine. As an office building or other contemporary use, it's very very inefficient." In both instances, there are no immediate plans to re-use these abandoned institutions.

Similar fates have befallen some of the many churches that dotted the original neighborhood. A few have been the victims of arson and abandonment. Many are still operational, but without the necessary funds for upkeep and repairs. Like many other situations, however, despite the size of the problem, there are glimmers of hope. A local architect recently signed a contract with TPI to take possession of a large, architecturally elegant brick church that had been badly damaged by arsonists in the early 1990s. "It's not the type of project that would make sense to do as a developer," says TPI's Clarke, "but this man really loves the building and he wants to use it as his own office. We'll do everything we can to help him make it work."

In additions to the dozens of vacant infill parcels, several large tracts of vacant land can be found in the neighborhood. Typically, these belong to private owners or institutions, many of whom are not yet looking to develop or to sell. One whole-block parcel, the former site of St. Joseph's Hospital, is held by the Dioceses of St. Petersburg. "Initially," notes Stevenson, who owns six parcels across the street from the site, "I got them to go in with me on a package, looking for someone to take on eight acres. We got no response to our notice and after a year, the Diocese said that there weren't interested in developing it at the time." As another observer noted, "The Diocese has no need for the money, so they'll do something with the site whenever they decide it's time."

Stevenson's six parcels are still on the market, at $25,000 apiece, which is lower than the $50,000 price he was initially asking. He hasn't had many inquiries. "I did have one fellow call me. When I told him the price, he laughed and said that he could buy half-a-dozen similar sites for between $10,000 and $15,000. "Then go buy one of them," I told him. "Just stay in the neighborhood."

* Harbour Island: Private-Sector Neighborhood Redevelopment

Some indication of how hard it may be for those in positions of power to make downtown a magnet can be gleaned from the experience of one ambitious investor that has already stumbled. Beneficial Corp.'s Harbour Island, a vast commercial and residential development just across the shipping channel from a wharf area under revitalization, opened in 1985. Its 66,300 square-foot retail
center was supposed to be Tampa’s marquee marketplace – a showplace of upscale shops and trendy restaurants. Instead, the island’s shops have a 50% vacancy rate.

Finn Caspersen, chairman and chief executive officer of Beneficial, based in Wilmington, Del., says he started developing Harbour Island at about the time John Naisbitt’s book “Megatrends” called Tampa one of the “Ten Great Cities of Opportunity” in the U.S. Mr. Caspersen now says, “I think both of us were a little early.”

Located less than 100 yards directly south of Tampa’s Central Business District, Harbour Island represents a redevelopment opportunity that few cities can match. The 217 acre parcel of land is entirely surrounded by water, linked to the Downtown by two bridges for cars and pedestrians. “In effect,” notes Tom Harvey, former development manager for the Island, “we’ve got the largest downtown gated community in the country.”

Harbour Island began life as Seddon Island, a spoil island created in the early 1900s when the channels leading to Tampa’s main port area were deepened to between 35 and 45 feet in depth. The Seaboard Railroad used the property as a marshaling yards for their trains, and as a transfer point in shipping phosphate and lumber.

During World War II, Tampa emerged as a center of ship-building; much of this was carried out at facilities located on another spoil island, Hookers point. After the war, particularly with the Cuban embargo, activities on Seddon Island and at Port Tampa were gradually consolidated on Hookers Point. By the 1970s, the property was, for all intents and purposes, abandoned. CSX Railways, its owner, listed it for sale in 1972, with an asking price of just under $3 million.

The island evinced a great deal of interest. Developers came forth with a wide variety of re-use proposals, including housing, conference centers, and even an amusement park. No one was willing to pay the asking price, however, until 1979, when Beneficial Finance Corporation, from New Jersey, agreed to purchase the property for $2.9 million.

At the time of the purchase, Beneficial was primarily a consumer finance company. It had been doing very well in this business and Finn Casperson, the CEO of the company, was looking for

ways to diversify the company. Casperson was familiar with Tampa from having visited the West Coast of Florida as a child with his father, the founder of Beneficial. At the time of the sale, Casperson did not have a specific idea of what to do with the property, but he felt that it had excellent redevelopment potential and that it represented a smart business move for his company.

On top of the purchase price, Beneficial had to pay to have many contaminated sites on the island cleaned and mitigated. Because of these expenses and because of the unique location, from the outset, the island was seen as a dense, urban activity center. Zoning was approved for a redevelopment land-use plan that included 4,560 residents, over one million square feet of office space, a conference center, a 500-room hotel, and a considerable amount and variety of retail.

The masterplan and phase one design work for the project, which was rechristened Harbour Island, was complete by the Hillier Group, an architecture and planning company from New Jersey, that had done earlier work for Beneficial. Work began on the project in 1983, and by 1986 the first 200 condominium units had been completed, the hotel and offices were in operation and the 66,300

Figure 21: View of Downtown Tampa from Harbour Island
square foot retail center, "The Shops at Harbour Island" was open for business. Done in light brown brick, with concrete trim, the buildings bore a noticeable resemblance to other Beneficial facilities in the Northeast, and the propriety of the architecture for Tampa’s hot, humid, subtropical climate was a topic of considerable debate. Additional design features also stimulated discussion. The Shops were laid out essentially in the manner of a mall, with an internally functioning, double-loaded corridor, even though the entire project sit right on the water’s edge at a juncture facing Davis Islands, Hyde Park and the CBD.

Nonetheless, the opening of the Island was a cause for considerable celebration. Former President Ford came to Tampa for the Grand Opening ceremonies, along with thousands of visitors, and the project was featured in a number of design and development publications. Almost immediately, however, the project ran into trouble. As Harvey notes, "The opening of the Island coincided almost exactly with the bottom falling out of the real estate market in this part of Florida." Residential development in 1987 was 25% below its 1986 levels and continued to decline for several years to follow. Commercial development, particularly Class-A office space, continued until 1990, but the writing was already on the walls, and the market for additional office or retail space on Harbour Island disappeared.

By this time, Harbour Island was considerably in the red, and Beneficial's other diversification attempts were also coming back to haunt the company. Revenues and profits were falling, and the Company was actively seeking to divest itself of its loss-leaders. Given the enormous amounts of money that had already been invested in the Island, Beneficial chose to sell off its other outside interests, but to retain ownership of Harbour Island. At the same time, however, they were continuing to lose money on Harbour Island; estimates are that the company lost at least $100-million on the project.65

In looking to restructure, Beneficial decided to take a hands-off position with respect to the development and management of the Island. In 1987, they contracted with Trammell Crow Residential and Trammell Crow Commercial to carry out the development of the project. After five years and five project managers, Tom Harvey was hired to oversee this process.

Figure 22: Plan of Harbour Island
“Right from the outset,” he notes, “I could see things that had not be done as efficiently as they might have.” The Shops, for example, were in a state of limbo, in part because of the economy in general, but in part because they were badly mis-sized. The Shops were too big to serve the limited audience on Harbour Island itself, but too small to function as the kind of Festival Marketplace draw they were originally intended to be.

“The idea for a festival marketplace had come from the Rouse Corporation., and it simply was out of place here in Tampa. People were hoping that what had happened in Boston or Baltimore might happen here, but there’s simply no way it would work. Those cities are entirely different than Tampa is.”

On the other hand, the office building was fully leased and the hotel was doing well, in part because of excellent management by the Wyndham Corporation, and in part because of a relatively lack of high-end hotel spaces in and around the CBD.

The first two condominium projects had been completed and were selling, but very very slowly. Seddon Cove was a cluster of four-story flats with a saw-tooth plan running along the edge of Seddon Channel. The units were large, with at-grade parking below, and generally broad vistas of the water and Davis Islands to the west. Harbour Place included two eight-story courtyard buildings containing condo flats and duplexes. Again, parking was included within the buildings, at grade, with the first units beginning on the second floor.

Initial prices for these units were at the high end of the housing market for the City, but each complex included its own security force and gated entryways. And, by this time, the Harbour Island Athletic Club had been built and was quickly becoming one of the most popular such clubs in the City. Nonetheless, condo sales were sluggish, and one of Trammell Crow’s first responsibilities was to see how they could increase revenues.

Trammell Crow commissioned some market studies in order to better understand the demographics of the Tampa Bay area. “By far and away, the people told us that they wanted to see houses on Harbour Island,” Harvey recalls. “This ran completely counter to what the original vision had been, but the analysis seemed to bear it out.”
Stand-alone housing, however, was not a popular option with Beneficial, because of the very high density that they current zoning permitted. With a top residential density of 60 dwelling units per acre, Beneficial could not see the logic in building stand-alone houses at 12 units to the acre. “Still, we studied the market, and the results seemed to indicate that we could sell very tight, very well-designed houses at the high-end of the market.” Trammell Crow’s instincts were, again, correct, and both the luxury house projects and the luxury-townhouse complexes were very well received. Currently, new luxury waterfront houses on Harbour Island are selling at around $1.0 million; smaller, courtyard houses away from the water are selling for between $350,000 and $500,000, while attached town-homes are selling from between $200,000 and $300,000.

“Our next thought,” notes Harvey, “was to add apartments. This was not really part of the original plan, but we figured that there was an audience of people who wouldn’t be interested in buying a condominium, but who wouldn’t mind paying a premium for a nice apartment in a new, tightly-patrolled environment.”

Figure 23: Island Walk Apartment Complex, Harbour Island
Again, Trammell Crow's instincts were correct. Island Walk Apartments were completed in 1992, and were an immediate hit. “These were the first apartments in the Tampa area that included a garage with each unit. We were able to get a 50% premium over similar products in the area.”

Buoyed by this success, the developers built the Island Place Apartment complex the following year. Here, unit plans were more ambitious, including two- and three-story designs; again, every unit had a garage, with some of the larger units including room for two cars. Once again, the apartments were a hit and Harbour Island was able to command a huge premium over other complexes targeting the same audience.

The development decisions made by Trammell Crow helped increase the population of the Island tenfold. From 200 residents in 1989, Harbour Island currently has over 2,000 full-time residents, living in a wide variety of unit types. The demographics of the Island is varied. There are a number of families, typically found in the single-family houses. Seniors, retirees, empty-nesters, some singles, and couples without children tend to occupy the town-houses and condominiums. The apartments house the greatest diversity, including singles and couples of all ages, with a few families, typically living on the Island temporarily due to relocation, house-hunting or divorce. According to the leasing offices, occupancy rates are very high, and while there is considerable turnover, vacancy rates remain very low.

Predominant reasons people give for living on Harbour Island include the newness of the buildings and the design options, but the predominant motive is a sense of safety and security. All of the residential options on the Island have their own 24-hour security services. All units have alarms, and all complexes are gated. “Without a doubt,” notes Harvey, “security is a critical issue for people who choose to live here. And, we are the only major complex of this type anywhere on the south side of the City that can offer this kind of security.” These sentiments are echoed by leasing agents at the various complexes.

On the other hand, according to Harvey, only a few people choose to live on Harbour Island because of its immediate proximity to downtown. “Only about a quarter of the people on the Island work in the downtown area,” he says, “They work everywhere; even over in St. Petersburg.” Pressed on this point, he suggests a reason. “Downtown Tampa is pretty centrally
located. It’s within five minutes of half-a-dozen very nice neighborhoods. What difference does it make if you live two minutes from the office (on Harbour Island) or five minutes away (on Davis Islands or in Palma Ceia)? Everything is within pretty easy reach.

At present, considerable portions of Harbour Island remain to be developed, although the exact direction of this development is not certain. Trammell Crow is no longer involved in the project, having been bought out by Beneficial, and Tom Harvey has stepped down to pursue other projects. Even though recent projects have been extremely successful, accounting practices prevent Beneficial from writing down all of the initial losses they suffered, and now that the Florida economy is on the ascendant once again, the company is eager to increase revenues sharply. Rather than adhering to a pre-determined masterplan, the company hopes to auction off parcels of land on the Island to different developers, each of whom can build the project that he or she feels is most likely to sell. Such a *laissez-faire* approach may increase revenues, but it reduces the likelihood that the various parts of the Island will integrate, economically or communally. At build-out, the Island may be less of a community than simply a collection of very well-off high end compounds in very close proximity to each other.

The issue here is one that cannot be fully described in Return on Investment calculations or spreadsheets. Rather, the question is whether the developer’s efforts to “force feed” a project will mitigate against the creation of an “organic” sense of community; returns will go up, but the quality of the environment will go down.

While Harvey does not feel that the success of the Island depends on its proximity to downtown Tampa, he does feel, however, that the continued expansion and development of the downtown will only increase the success of Harbour Island. In the Spring of 1996, in an effort to increase cash on hand, Beneficial sold the two apartment complexes to Raymond James Associates, an investment banker fronting for a Midwestern pension fund. “I understand why they sold the projects,” says Harvey, “but I felt that the timing was wrong. Once the Ice Palace hockey arena project gets finished (in September of 1996) and some of the additional development around the Aquarium gets underway, there will be increased interest in living on Harbour Island. Those two apartment projects will become even more valuable.” The Ice Palace and the Aquarium are both located immediate across the Channel from Harbour Island. The Aquarium, which has been open since
April 1995, has already dramatically increased traffic past the Island; the arena is sure to increase it even further. Both projects involved millions of dollars of beautification, landscaping and streetscaping. The public perception of Harbour Island has been dramatically enhanced, if only because the approaches to it and roadways immediately adjacent to it have been so thoroughly upgraded.

After many attempts at keeping the retail Shops on the Island in business, Beneficial elected to close the shops permanently at the end of 1995. Casperson intends to move one of the company’s back-office clerical operations to Tampa and given the dismal record of the Island’s retail, the company intends to convert the original 200,000 square feet of retail to open-plan office space. Such a move, however, creates an odd demographic blending in the original hotel/office complex, given the disparity in wages and income between the Beneficial workers and the lawyers and accountants who occupy most of the ten-story office tower on the Island. Conversely, it leaves these workers, hotel guests, and Island residents with very few retail and restaurant options on site.

Currently, Harbour Island is going through both a growth spurt and a transition in its development. Economically, the project has moved from “beleaguered” to “upscale.” Organizationally, however, it is no longer clear who is directing development, nor is it clear who the target audience is, or what the envisioned outcome should be. Unlike Davis Islands, its larger neighbor immediately to the southwest, of Hyde Park, Harbour Island does not project a sense of community or neighborhood. Rather, it has the austerity and distance of a heavily guarded campus; very upscale, very chic, very well tended, but remote and uninviting. To the degree that its target audience is high-end professionals who are looking for security and ease of maintenance, there is a good chance that the entire Island can begin to approach its 4,000+ projected buildout population by the turn of the Century. However, to the degree that Beneficial sees Harbour Island as an upscale, in-town “community,” they are currently wide of their mark.

Within the larger framework of in-town redevelopment, however, Harbour Island clearly plays an important role in Tampa’s attempts at revitalizing and re-using older portions of the community. With over 2,000 residents to date, and the potential to double in population in the near future, the Island adds to the tax base and the city’s vitality. The project may, in fact, fit most closely into the role envisioned by planners and officials for all of the nearby neighborhoods; that is, as a
denser than normal, predominantly residential enclave. In nature and form, however, it bears little resemblance to any of the other case environments, or to any other in-town neighborhoods. Rather, Harbour Island is more like a compressed version of one of the gated communities that are arising at the fringes of the City, with a similar target audience, a similar building product (albeit one with more emphasis on attached- than on detached-housing, and much less land area), and similar social concerns.

- **Ybor City: An Old Neighborhood Looking for New Uses**

At a Regional Plan Association conference on the future of the inner city, a real estate developer was asked what the first move should be in making a bypassed urban area an attractive alternative to suburbia. His answer: “Build a golf course.” The prescription makes sense, despite its shock value. If old neighborhoods are to be alternatives to suburbia, they need to offer comparable amenities, although a golf course is not the only possibility.\(^{66}\)

As the 1950s arrived, Ybor City had lived through good times and survived bad. It had its problems but was changing, particularly as Tampa mushroomed away from its downtown core and suburban shopping centers took root.

Then along came a superhighway called Interstate 4, knifing through the heart of the neighborhoods north of Ybor’s Seventh Avenue business center. As the 1960s dawned, the downward spiral was unrelenting. Businesses moved and well-groomed areas became low-rent.

Ybor’s colors paled and its voices hushed to a whisper.\(^{67}\)

Ybor City is located two miles northeast of Tampa’s Central Business District, with its southern border adjacent to the Port of Tampa, one of the nation’s largest natural harbors. Comprising 70 acres of land, Ybor was founded in 1885 by Vincente Martinez Ybor and two associates. The three had operated a successful cigar-making business in Key West, but were looking to escape the devastation of the regular hurricanes that swept the island. They came to Tampa at the invitation of local business leaders, and quickly set about creating an environment akin to a company town. Within ten years of its founding, Ybor City had its own street cars, fire department, waterworks, and police force. Although Ybor City was annexed by Tampa in 1895, it retained its distinct ethnic flavor. It was a “city within a city, a city as truly Latin-American in appearance and in the customs of its inhabitants as though it had been in the heart of Cuba.”\(^{68}\)

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\(^{66}\) Barnett, op cit, page 149.
\(^{68}\) Grismer, page 204.
At the turn of the century, Tampa had a population of 15,839, of which approximately 10,000 lived in Ybor City. In 1920, Ybor comprised 1,280 acres of land and over 15,000 residents. Recognized at the turn of the century as the “Cigar Capital of the World,” Ybor City developed with all the uses needed in a community, and had 30 cigar factories; by the mid-1920s, there were 159 factories employing 13,000 workers. Factory owners provided employment and housing, while other entrepreneurs started businesses. The various ethnic groups organized “social clubs” which provided a center for entertainment, recreation, education, and health care. A WPA report in 1941 cites the presence of “stores, theatres, movie houses, schools, churches, and newspapers, as well as clubs, hospitals, and clinics.”

By 1941, Ybor consisted of “approximately 10,000 Cubans, 8,000 Spaniards, and 6,000 Italians” as well as lesser amounts of other ethnic groups. From this War-time peak, Ybor’s population fell steadily. As early as the 1930s, labor problems and the growing mechanization of the cigar industry combined to sap the vitality of the cigar industry. The period after the war saw Ybor’s fortunes decline further as those residents who could afford to do so move to newer suburban developments to the north and west of the City. Many buildings were abandoned and left vacant, and in 1959, Ybor City was targeted for Urban Renewal.

For all intents and purposes, Urban Renewal and the creation of Interstate 4 all but destroyed Ybor City. The combine effect of the two Federal programs was the destruction of over 600 buildings, including several significant social or cultural facilities, and the dramatic depopulation of the area.

Even as the buildings were being razed, local efforts were underway to find options for redevelopment. As early as the mid-1960s, the Barrio Latino Commission had been created in order to review such initiatives, and in 1974, the central part of the community was designated a National Register Historic District. The following year, Hillsborough Community College chose Ybor as the location of one of its branch campuses. In 1983, the City of Tampa paid over $150,000 for a full-scale urban development masterplan for Ybor, a plan that for all its good intentions, never really got off the shelf.

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69 Florida Center for Community Design + Research. Integrating Community Design and Transportation. (Tampa FL: Center for Urban Transportation Research, 1993), page 25.
Figure 24: Plan of Ybor City
In 1987, the City created the Ybor City Community Development Corporation, and in 1988, designated much of Ybor as a Community Redevelopment Area, using this designation to create a Tax Increment Financing District, and targeting the community as an Enterprise Zone. Funds from the TIF District were used to support the Development Corporation.

Figure 25: Seventh Avenue, Ybor City

Despite these activities, however, Ybor’s population continued to fall throughout the 1980s. By the 1990 census, Ybor and its immediate environs included only 1,842 residents, but “officials estimate that only about 500 people live in the heart of Ybor.” By 1988, 72 percent of the buildings in Ybor City had code violations. Thirty-one major buildings were entirely vacant, and another 27 were at least one-fifth vacant.

The revitalization study completed in 1983 was embodied into a special district zoning law that was passed by the City of Tampa in 1986. Paramount among the assumptions of the plan was the

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notion that if the businesses of Ybor, primarily those along Seventh Avenue, could be brought back to life, inevitably and inexorably, residential development would follow suit.

Figure 26: Vacant Parcels, Ybor City

Commercial development, however, was slow to follow the 1986 ordinance, and there was virtually no change in business development until 1990. In 1991, 14 new businesses moved into Ybor City. Almost that many arrived the following year. Then, in 1993, a hurdle was passed, as over thirty new businesses were started in the District. 1994 continued the boom with 50 new businesses, and a similar number opened in 1995.

Within this five year period, the ten-block strip of Seventh Avenue, the traditional heart of the neighborhood, came alive once more, albeit in a very different incarnation that previously. From being the social, cultural and economic heart of a tight-knit ethnic enclave, Seventh Avenue became “Party Central” for people all over the Tampa Bay region. Police estimate that on good weekend nights, when the weather is pleasant and there are events scheduled throughout the district, over
50,000 people will pass through Ybor City. Traffic backs up on the Interstate with visitors from as far north as Ocala and as far east as Orlando.

The Ybor City Community Development Corporation (CDC) estimates that during this period, approximately $40,000,000 has been invested in development within the District. All of this, however, produced only 29 residential units. Most of these were renovated loft-type spaces located above ground-floor commercial uses along Seventh Avenue. With the exception of one, three-story infill project along Seventh Avenue, which contains two, third-story apartments, and a number of small stand-alone houses south of the main commercial street, none of the residential renovations involved new construction.

A source of puzzlement to planners and Ybor advocates, the dearth of residential development is easily explained by area developers. “Quite simply,” remarks Craig Ross of Hyde Park Builders, “there is no way that we could build anything in Ybor and make any money.” Ross and his partner, Scott Shimberg, have been very successful with in-fill residential development throughout South Tampa, but they have no intention of getting involve in Ybor City. “The price range of the typical person who would buy in Ybor is about $75,000 per unit. There’s no way we could meet that figure and still provide some of the amenities and features that we feel are integral to our product.”

Key among these features are attached garages and sophisticated security systems. “You could give us the land,” notes Ross, “and there would still be no way that we could provide this type of product for the existing market.” When asked why there is a strong market for up-scale infill development in Hyde Park but not in Ybor, Ross noted the significant perceived differences between the two neighborhoods. “Hyde Park is seen as a safe, pleasant, middle- and upper-middle-class environment. Ybor City is seen as a place to go party, but it’s perceived as being dangerous and unsafe. People go to Ybor to have fun and come back to find that their car has been broken into. You simply cannot get buyers to spend significant amounts of money to live in an environment like that.”

Like others, Ross indicated that the prices in Ybor have risen to a point that all but precludes new residential construction. Tampa Heights, on the other hand, presents many of the same risks as Ybor in terms of safety and security, but at a much lower entry cost. “You can buy a nice house in
Tampa Heights for $40,000. If you are willing to fix it up and be careful, you can get a real bargain.” Bargains of this nature can no longer be found in Ybor City.

The City of Tampa’s stated policy for Ybor City has been to look for large-scale developers who would be willing to put up a project of significant size and draw. Ideas include a hotel, a design center, or a large entertainment-oriented mixed-use complex on the lines of the very successful Coco Walk in Miami. Companies as large as Steiner Corporation, developer of Coco Walk in Coconut Grove, Disney Development, and the DeBartolo Corporation have been contacted about opportunities in Ybor City. To date, no one has expressed much more than passing interest.71

“These programs are at cross purposes with the expressed goal of getting more residential into the neighborhood,” noted another developer. “When the word gets out that you are looking at large, national players, land prices stay high. On the other hand, you want to encourage small developers to get involved with projects such as residential that may actually be loss leaders without some degree of owner involvement.”

Over and over, in discussions of non-commercial development in Ybor City, conversations come around to the need for “non-economical” options. That is, officials and developers recognize that the first large-scale residential development in Ybor City will probably lose money. Should the developers be able to hold out long enough to sell off a good number of the units, and should the sales and occupancy go well, subsequent developers might be able to produce similar residential offerings at a profit. Even aggressive advocates of Ybor City recognize the catch-22 nature of the current situation. “We are looking for larger developers to come in and take up a whole block of land,” remarks CDC director, Rebecca Gagalis, “but we understand that for a large developer, the numbers just don’t seem to work out.”

Taken in the context of other well-publicized, broad-based efforts at revitalizing urban neighborhoods of significant historical importance, Ybor City represents a variation on the typical case. Unlike Boston or Baltimore, Ybor City stands isolated from the immediate downtown

71 In July of 1996, Mayor Dick Greco, a former developer, set up a number of visits to Ybor City by representatives of several large development companies. While, at the time of this writing nothing had come of these meetings, the “word on the streets” was that at least one had expressed significant interest
context, separated from Tampa’s Central Business District by about a mile, a distance that includes rail lines, abandoned properties, surface parking lots and two housing projects. While the major vehicular connection between the CBD and Ybor recently received a multi-million dollar face lift, these changes have spurred little redevelopment and the transition between the two areas remains an amalgam of empty industrial buildings, active marine-related businesses, and vacant lots. Unlike Baltimore and Boston, downtown Tampa does not have the daytime worker population to keep Ybor City active, even at lunch time. And, unlike the Church Street station area in Orlando, to give cite one very well known example, Tampa does not, as of yet, have the necessary tourist base to support Ybor. Functionally, therefore, Ybor City comes alive on Friday and Saturday evenings, and during the daytime on Saturdays and Sundays, serving as a regional draw for visitors to and residents of the greater Tampa Bay area.

Again, unlike Boston or Baltimore, Tampa does not have the requisite transportation infrastructure to make Ybor City accessible except to those who come in automobiles. Concomitant with this limitation are the requirements for car parking; the more people who come to the district, the more space must be given over to parking. And, since the regularity and volume of visitors is still very much up in the air, to date, there are no structured parking alternatives. During particularly busy weekend nights or for periodic special events, most of the vacant lots in Ybor are turned into profit-centers as owners or operators rent out parking spaces at $3 to $5 per car.

The realization that Ybor City needs some alternative to car transport, combined with a desire to imitate New Orleans with its extremely successful Charles Street Trolley, led to the creation of the Tampa Historic Trolley Association whose expressed goal is to get a 1.5 mile in-ground trolley rail laid between downtown Tampa and Ybor City. However, unlike New Orleans, whose French Quarter is often held up as a model of what Ybor City could become, Ybor lacks the extant buildings and institutions to make such a transition possible. Unlike the French Quarter, or South Beach in Miami, or Coconut Grove, Ybor City is coming close to running out of old buildings to renovate, but there are still enormous gaps in the development pattern. As the most viable

72 As of July of 1996, the Trolley Association has been successful beyond anyone’s dreams in attracting money to their cause. With the help of Mayor Greco, the businessmen and women in the Tampa Downtown Partnership and considerable lobbying at both the State and Federal levels, the Trolley had
candidates for redevelopment are, in fact, converted into viable uses, the call is going out for projects involving new construction. With a few small exceptions, however, no one is responding.

The predominant factors stifling development appear to be price and risk. Even though many owners have either sold out or put their properties into productive use, there is still some degree of land-banking at work in Ybor. Considerable amounts of property remain in the hands of the City or the Community College and, in the words of one developer who has observed the scene for many years, the City "is looking for a major play; a home run." With the knowledge, the owners of other large parcels are playing a similar waiting game.

Thus, after five years of events that clearly outdid the expectations of even the wildest neighborhood supporter, Ybor City finds itself at a turning point. Neither a public nor a private entity, it represents an ad hoc collaboration. The plans that underpinned the initial forays into redevelopment have been all but relegated to the shelf, but nothing substantive has taken their place. The consensus at this point is that new, private-sector residential development is not going to occur; that leaves the City and various agencies with at least 11 blocks of vacant land to fill. This is much more space than any single developer would undertake, yet, the City is reluctant to apportion space in half- and quarter-block increments for fear of getting in the way of a future project.

South of Seventh Avenue, where many of the older buildings were not razed, there is potential for smaller infill residential development projects, but the zoning permits myriad uses, many of which are considered higher and better uses than housing. In addition, early investors have managed to tie up significant portions of this land, thereby excluding the smaller one-and two-unit developer.

Parking has reached a critical juncture. Every available surface lot is occupied on a good weekend night, but clearly the economics is not there for constructing a structure, for either the private or public sector. In the interim, people continue to come to Ybor to party, but while they do, they worry about vandalism to their vehicles.

access to almost $25 million in funding for the rail project. Ground is to be broken for the first rails as early as late 1996, with an active system in place by sometime in 1997.
Chapter VI  Conclusions

The four cases presented herein represent four different approaches to in-town neighborhood redevelopment as it is currently found in Sunbelt cities. Unlike older, pre-automobile cities such as Boston or Philadelphia, Sunbelt cities generally lack the tight, dense, multi-family environments that typified many of the earliest urban redevelopment programs and proposals. These are cities built around auto-accessibility and easy mobility throughout the metro region. The claim, therefore, that mere proximity to the Central Business District automatically confers some locational advantage generally does not hold true in these suburbanized environments the way it might in an older city.

In Tampa, as in many metro areas throughout the country, the average daily one-way work commute is 22 minutes. Without breakdowns or other incidents, it is possible to get from the CBD to the *nouveau-riche* Tampa Palms master planned community at the northern edge of the City in 25 minutes. Avila, another highly-touted gated community and home to both a championship polo field and General Norman Schwarzkopf, is also about 25 minutes from the downtown. Pinellas County with its beaches is only a bit further away.

Closer in, the golf-course neighborhood of Palma Ceia and the waterfront community of Daivis Islands are less than five minutes from the CBD; the waterfront homes of Beach Park, Sunset Park and Culbreath Bayou are all only fifteen minutes away. In short, the claim of proximity alone confers little value, particularly since the potential buyer will still need a car in order to traverse the numerous trips that are not a direct home-work-home commute.

As the case of Hyde Park indicates, given an extensive collection of architecturally interesting, if not significant, buildings set in a “traditional” pre-War neighborhood with over a mile of publicly-accessible waterfront and myriad shopping opportunities, all located less than five minutes from the CBD, the potentials for gentrification are extensive. As one of the oldest settlements in the area, Hyde Park was an early victim of the “new is better than old” mentality that swept the country in the 1950s and 1960s. The inherent real estate values of product and location, however, never went away, and with the coming of age of a younger generation in the 1970s, coupled with the energy crisis and impending traffic concerns, it was a easy pick for transformation.
Today, Hyde Park is experiencing further development, the selective “densification” that optimizes values, replacing undervalued single-family homes with two- and three-family alternatives. However, several factors mitigate against overly-intensive development. With the exception of some parcels on Bayshore Boulevard, most of Hyde Park is zoned as single-family or medium-density multi-family. A town-house developer, looking to include a two-car garage in each unit generally cannot go much above 20 dwelling units to the acre. Apartment developers, such as Post, generally sacrifice some potential density in order to minimize parking costs and use surface lots. In either manner, development generally peaks at less than 24 units to the acre.

Developers looking to exceed that density generally need some sort of structured parking, with the concomitant cost implications. Several large sites along Bayshore Boulevard are ideally suited for high-rise condo or apartment development; all, however, have languished for over a decade, as a combination of soft-markets, consumer preferences, financing problems and costs all mitigated against their development. Unlike the South Beach area of Miami Beach which has both the precedents and the overall density for high-rise residential development, typical Sunbelt urban neighborhoods tend to be overwhelmingly low- to medium-density environments.

Even within easy proximity, what works for one neighborhood might not work in another. Given some of the same conditions as Hyde Park, Tampa Heights languishes. Devastated by the earliest examples of Federally funded public housing and sitting at the confluence of two major interstate highways, the neighborhood was transformed in the post-War period from an elegant, albeit shabby, collection of Victorian wood-frame houses, into an over-crowded barrio filled with converted boarding houses and a relative lack of commercial and retail options. The advent of the drug culture in the 1970s and ‘80s hit Tampa Heights very hard, leaving the City of Tampa few alternatives to literally bulldozing structures in order to eradicate drug dealing.

A stick-frame, one-story bungalow in Hyde Park can cost well over $250,000. A similar house, in somewhat worse repair, can be had for $50,000 in Tampa Heights, implying locational value of nearly $200,000 per unit. Certainly, given the ostensibly residential character of both neighborhoods, crime and safety concerns are paramount in explaining the difference. Despite the crackdown on drugs in the past few years and the very real and dramatic improvements seen in
Tampa Heights, most potential buyers regard the neighborhood with considerable trepidation. The 1989 Planning Commission study clearly articulated the concerns of downtown workers with respect to the area. Given the alternatives available—Hyde Park, Davis Islands, Palma Ceia, etc.—all within reasonable proximity, there is very little call for those downtown workers who make $50,000 and above to consider pioneering in Tampa Heights.

Within the next level of workers—those making between $35,000 and $50,000—Tampa Heights represents an option, but when given the enormous amount of new housing available at the edges of the city, ranging in price from $85,000 to $150,000, there is little wonder than Tampa Heights is left out. This leaves two sources of population for the area. Those who work in and around the downtown who make less than $35,000 and who are looking for an urban environment but cannot afford to live in Hyde Park or a similar environment, and those indigenous residents of Tampa Heights and surrounding neighborhoods, who have always regarded the area as home and who are happy to see it on the upswing.

In either case, extensive amounts of capital are not forthcoming. However, with programs such as the City's Challenge Fund to help guarantee loans and through the efforts of city agencies, volunteer groups and non-profits such as Tampa Preservation, Inc., very real redevelopment progress has been occurring in recent years. Slowly and steadily, this progress promises to continue, possibly bolstered by catalyst events such as the eventual redevelopment of the current Police headquarters property or the spinoff of the projected highway expansion.

Hyde Park and Tampa Heights represent the tried-and-true approaches to redevelopment; the high-road and the low-road. Harbour Island represents an essentially anomalous case, but one that will be increasingly visible in future years as large institutional holdings are divested and become available to private (or public) sector developers. Held by a single entity and sold on the open market, Harbour Island was 177 acres of vacant land a stone’s throw from the CBD. In other cities, railroad yards, industrial properties, and military facilities represent similar potentials, particularly if current EPA cleanup requirements are relaxed in the future.

73 Albert Whitted Airport, for example, in downtown St. Petersburg, is an under-functioning general aviation airport, owned by the City. It is also 80 acres of waterfront property, and has caught the eye of many developers. Currently, the downtown land market in St. Petersburg is somewhat depressed; as it improves, however, expect proposals for the airport property to come in abundance.
Several key lessons can be drawn from the example of Harbour Island. First, and foremost, the project indicates that if the product is right, there certainly is a market for medium- to high-density downtown housing in a Sunbelt environment. Done properly, this “unsellable” commodity can even be developed at a premium. On the other hand, real estate development as a diversification tactic is probably not the best way to achieve the full potential of a site, nor does it make sense to develop an ostensibly urban situation as a xerox-reduced version of a suburban gated-community. Despite the manifest benefits of being developed by a single owner, Harbour Island, in the end, will bear witness to none of the potential benefits that such a situation confers. Rather than working as a true urban neighborhood, one that has the added benefits of being a naturally gated enclave, it will ultimately end up as a compacted collection of stand-alone sub-developments, albeit ones whose residents are in the upper income brackets.

Given the idiosyncratic opportunities presented when a 177 acre island comes on the downtown land market, the specific lessons of Harbour Island might not be immediately translatable to another Sunbelt setting. The current interest in and research about the re-use of military facilities, however, indicates that similar situations may not be uncommon in the future.

The fourth case study, Ybor City, represents a situation that can be found in many metro areas, either as something that was once a distinct enclave such as the case here, or as a peripheral location within the original downtown itself (as can be found in the Church Street Station area of Orlando, for example).

Ybor City is not going to come back as it once was. While individual buildings can be seen as preservation projects in a strictly architectural sense, functionally, formally and economically, Ybor City is in the process of reinventing itself. Unlike Hyde Park or Tampa Heights, Ybor City is going through a significant urban metamorphosis and, for all intents and purposes, no one is really controlling the process.

Instead, redevelopment is occurring as a free-form public/private partnership with each side giving and taking. Even the members of the CDC and City officials admit, now, that the so-called masterplans for the neighborhood, produced in the 1970s and 1980s, have little connection to the reality that is unfolding at present. Private sector interests similarly indicate a flexibility of
approach. If a building won’t work as a mixed-use store/office/apartment combo, maybe it can be used as a bar with an upstairs music club; if that doesn’t work, maybe a restaurant with loft space above. Development, at present, in Ybor City is an on-going, full-size experiment in urban regeneration.

In a discussion with members of the City and the CDC the subject of control and regulation was raised. Instead of dictating uses for the vacant parcels of property, why not simply provide a set of building regulations—setback lines, build-to lines, height limitations, materials, scales, proportions, etc.—and then let the market decide what should actually go in the containers. The suggestion met with no significant disapproval.

The real issue at hand in Ybor depends on the nature and scale of immediate future development. With a few exceptions, most of the easily rehabilitated older structures have been renovated. One or two significant projects remain—the Centro Espanol, for example—and there are still some instances of land-banking, but the easy redevelopment has taken place. For the most part, there has been relatively little new construction; several well-financed infill projects along Seventh Avenue, a new office for the School Board, a small, two-story owner occupied mixed-use project. A type of holding pattern has taken over, with each land-owner or developer waiting for the other one to make the first move.

Several pressures are at work. There is still a vocal element, typically including long-time residents and members of the art community, who argue, against economic logic, that Ybor should attempt to re-assert its identity as a bohemian enclave. A slightly less ingenuous faction argues that Ybor needs residential development in order to succeed, despite the considerable evidence that neither the market nor the financial rationale for such development can be found.

City officials understand the sentiments of each of these other groups, but themselves would like to see some sort of large-scale, mixed-use project get built. In the 1980s, there was talk of a 250,000 square foot design center. Later, ideas for movie complexes, sports arenas, hotels and mixed-use entertainment complexes a la Coco Walk have been bruited about. No lesser a figure than the Mayor is on record as saying that he would like to see something “really big” happen in Ybor.

Tampa Tribune, Friday 28 June 1996.
When pressed for details, he admitted that he had no particular idea in mind, just something that would draw lots of people.

This relative inactivity can be interpreted as either a sign that the recent surge in Ybor City has played itself out, or as a sign that a second, more mature round of redevelopment is about to begin. The development of the past five years in Ybor City has been, with few exceptions, locally driven by small developers and investors. The players being wooed at this point in time all represent large, national if not international interests. According to Rebecca Gagalis of the CDC, over the past five years, nearly $40 million has been invested in Ybor City; if all of the current projects under discussion come to fruition, this number could double within the next year. Given that the first $40 million turned a sleepy ethnic/artists enclave into a rip-roaring regional entertainment venue, one wonders what an additional $40 million will lead to.

A primary issue mentioned repeatedly in all four of the cases is the necessity to enhance both the perception and the reality of safety and security. Harbour Island actively touts its alarm systems, gates, guard houses and security personnel. Hyde Park Builders has targeted a niche market for whom these issues are critical and has created a very successful product to meet the demands of this market. In Tampa Heights, even the most ardent neighborhood champion admits that crime, particularly drug activity, is an on-going presence and that extra precautions are necessary. In Ybor, on a Friday or Saturday evening, as many as fifty police personnel will be stationed in the neighborhood, more as a deterrent than in defense against any expected criminal activity. But, as a further measure, officials recently committed nearly $40,000 of TIF money to improve street lighting and to erect surveillance video cameras along Seventh Avenue. While this last move set conspiracy theorists on edge, the City feels that the visible presence of these devices will deter criminal activity, particularly during the active evenings and nights. “We really had no choice,” notes Gagalis of the CDC. “There is an ongoing perception of Ybor as a dangerous place. It has very real economic impacts on the neighborhood, and we’ve got to do everything we can to combat that perception.” To a greater or lesser degree, the same holds true for all of the redeveloping neighborhoods.
Roles for the Public Sector

The constraints facing the City of Tampa with respect to in-town revitalization and redevelopment are similar to those found in most Sunbelt cities. Major development funds are tied up as bond issues for traditional civic-scale projects, most of which are located in the downtown: Performing Arts Center, Convention Center, Aquarium, Hockey Arena. Additional moneys are being committed to the development of a headquarters hotel facility for the convention center. Clearly, the City does not have the funds to finance or develop a major intervention in any of its in-town neighborhoods.

At the same time that major sources of capital funding are tied up in a series of large civic projects, the City is also getting pressure from the 100+ neighborhoods within the city limits, each of which is looking for money for improvements and upgrades. The sentiment among some of the members of THAN (Tampa Homeowners, an Association of Neighborhoods), is that Downtown, Hyde Park and Ybor City get the lion's share of the funding; the other areas are left to fend for themselves.

On the other hand, the City seems to have created a workable relationship with these neighborhood groups, a most, if not all, realize the City’s goal of establishing the downtown and immediate surrounds as a regional, if not state or national, attraction. Nonetheless, the future role of the City in the on-going redevelopment process, appears to be as a regulator, as a source of loan guarantees, as a mediator, as a source of technical assistance and support, and as an oversight agency. The example of Tampa Heights shows that increased police presence, attention to code issues and physical appearances, combined with some fiscal oversight, can help create a situation in which small-scale redevelopment efforts can burgeon. According to Noriega, the City clearly intends to continue its efforts in this manner, but with the single exception of offering the vacant police headquarters site for sale to the “right” developer, the City will not be initiating any projects in this area.

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75 The Ybor CDC and members of YEAA (Ybor Entertainment and Arts Association) are not unaware of this complaint. Their rebuttal is that Ybor City is a city-wide resource and therefore merits more attention than other neighborhoods. A legitimate claim, but one that is generally not well received by other neighborhood associations.
Other public sector entities have contributed to the redevelopment efforts, too. The county-wide School Board is putting up a new magnet school just across the Hillsborough River from Tampa Heights; the Federal government is building a courthouse in the CBD; the Customs Service has leased a large office in Ybor City, and both the City and the Community College are holding property in Ybor for future construction when the time is right. A combination of City, County, State and Federal grant funds are being used to construct the 2.5 mile in-ground trolley link between Ybor City and the downtown Convention Center. Federal funds generated through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) are being used in Ybor City to move structures currently sitting in the path of the proposed Interstate expansion. These buildings, primarily wood-frame houses, will be transported from the north of the highway to the south, where they will serve both as infill and to create a small compound of buildings dedicated to the arts. At an estimated cost of $40,000 per building including transport and renovation, these original structures will prove to be cheaper than new construction and may be able to spur some new development at the northern edges of the neighborhood.

Clearly, for the time being, the public sector will not be engaging in many “home run” projects, and will instead focus on myriad small ventures. Conventional, but necessary, capital improvements such as new storm drainage for Ybor City and Hyde Park will occupy time and money, but will enhance the livability of these neighborhoods. Streetscaping and sidewalk improvements similarly create a residual sense of on-going restoration and renovation. In Ybor City, the CDC had decided to use TIF moneys to improve security lighting and provide additional security measures. Internally, the Tampa Police are working with donors and private interests to re-create their equestrian patrol, to be deployed in Ybor City. The horse-mounted patrols are seen as both a security enhancement and additional “character.”

Fernando Noriega summarizes the City view of its role in the ongoing redevelopment efforts. “We have to make people see that Tampa is the engine driving the entire metro area. We have to get people to focus on the City, to understand how the city works, how the county works, how the entire Bay area works together. We’ve got to stop all the competition.” In short, the City is taking a position that it is going to consciously work against the general trends for suburbanization and dispersal.
How is this to be accomplished? "Marketing. We’ve got to think the way a corporation does. We’ve got good things here, but we’ve got to get the word out. First, we need to let everyone in the City understand what is happening, get them to come downtown, visit Ybor, take a look around, see the opportunities. Then, we’ve got to get the word out to the region; get people to come visit and see what’s happening. Maybe they’ll be interested in working or living in some of these areas. Finally, we need to try to capture the tourists and the out-of-state businesses."

Opportunities for the Private Sector

It has been argued by some that developers prefer working at the fringes of metropolitan areas because these are the locations that are cheapest to buy and easiest to control; here is where it is possible to create the suburbanized environments that the typical consumer wants and demands. The rapidity of the growth at these fringes indicates at least some validity to these arguments, but it does not convey the entire story of growth and development within the contemporary Sunbelt metro environment. The fact that there is obvious demand for fringe “products” does not automatically imply that there is no demand for in-town redevelopment. The success of Hyde Park, Harbour Island and Ybor City in attracting both investors and customers indicates that demand can be found (or created) for such redeveloped properties.

On the other hand, as the example of Harbour Island shows, given 177 acres of downtown waterfront property, an ostensible market, and significant financial backing, it is still possible to lose a lot of money. As the example of Hyde Park Builders shows, it is also possible to look at a neighborhood that appears, for all intents and purposes, to be both thriving and built-out, and still find opportunities to do profitable development. And, as the one- and two-man shops operating in Ybor City show, it is possible to get into redevelopment from a commitment to a neighborhood and then come of it with significant financial returns.

Even within an ostensibly devastated neighborhood, there is potential to create successful projects. “People don’t build in Tampa Heights,” one is told, “because no one wants to live there.” Yet, as the volunteers at Tampa Preservation, Inc. have shown over the past five or six years, there is demand for development within this in-town neighborhood. It’s simply a demand that cannot be fulfilled within the framework of current development delivery. The returns are too low for all but
the smallest mom-and-pop contractor, and there are very real risks associated with marketing property in this environment. While the City's Challenge Fund has mitigated some of these problems through its loan guarantees, the point remains; a for-profit developer is not going to make much, if any, money by working in Tampa Heights, yet.

Under the aegis of TPI, Habitat for Humanity, and the City, Tampa Heights was brought back from the brink of total decay. Unlike a similar neighborhood in Cleveland, Philadelphia or Boston, however, total decay in a Sunbelt environment is a much more malleable and tractable phenomenon. With few exceptions, buildings stand-alone. Residences are predominantly single-family houses, and the vast majority are built of wood. The original densities in the area were considerably higher than a contemporary suburban subdivision, but much lower than those found in Boston's West End, or North Philadelphia.

The ease of decay and destruction of the physical fabric and form of an Sunbelt neighborhood are also the seeds of its rebirth. In Tampa Heights, old, deteriorated buildings were run over with a bulldozer and hauled away to create instant development sites. Sound buildings in bad locations were hauled to better sites and mounted atop concrete piers. For $20,000 and a piece of land, you had a new home.

Unlike the thick, row-house neighborhoods of northern cities, in the Sunbelt, even the neighborhoods closest to the central business district comprise low-rise, single family construction. Such environments make modest demands on developers looking to purchase and rehabilitate, as was seen in Hyde Park in the 1970s. For $40,000 and some sweat equity, a person could have an original 1920 stick-frame house, two blocks from the water. The incentives in such a situation are not for the large-scale developer or development company. Rather, they are for the mom-and-pop companies, the do-it-yourself advocate, the architect looking to get into development, the contractor looking to buy, renovate, sell and buy some more.

Each of the conditions presented in the four cases is representative of similar conditions in cities throughout the United States. Within a gentrifying older neighborhood, opportunities exist to create centralized focused mixed-use "centers" such as Hyde Park Village. Initial opportunities exist in renovating significant structures; later potentials include replacing less significant
structures with higher and better uses. For examples, small, half-block, two-story mixed-use buildings are beginning to appear along Howard Avenue in Hyde Park. With some dispensation from mandated parking requirements and setbacks, builders are able to get a one to three retail spaces on the ground floor and 2,000 to 10,000 square feet of office space above. As with the multi-family projects, these represent niche market opportunities and are generally the product of small, local (if not neighborhood based) contractors and developers. Many times, these builders are tapping into a market of small businesses that used to lease space and are now convinced of the benefits of ownership.

Large tracts of institutionalized land represent ideal opportunities for large scale private sector development; structured in the manner of a suburban master-planned community, these projects will require increased density and a concomitant greater focus on public space, amenities and communal features. However, to the degree that developers approach these projects as variations on the suburban theme, they may be letting themselves in for a hard time. Even the support of national companies need not guarantee a successful product; the Enterprise Corporation’s involvement in Harbour Island did nothing to help their unsuccessful marketplace concept.

In addition, many of these tracts of land are currently in the hands of the public sector, and represent an enormous potential asset. To the degree that the public sector is looking to capitalize on this asset, they will demand considerable rigor from their private sector counterparts, possibly setting up the redevelopment projects as public/private partnerships, an area in which local governments have developed considerable expertise over the past decades.

Transitional neighborhoods such as Ybor City represent the most interesting challenge for the private sector. Too large and diverse to be “captured” by a single entity or to succumb to a single master vision, Ybor is representative of in-town environments found in many cities. Bargains can be had as far as individual properties go, but the success of the individual depends on the gradual transformation of the entire neighborhood. Developers such as Harris Mullen of Ybor Square had to hang on for nearly twenty years before they were able to realize any significant profits on their projects. While the potentials are there, such forms of redevelopment are most opportune for developers with long-term commitments. On the other hand, a handful of developers made
commitments to Ybor City in the 1980s; they still hold many of their investments, but they have also managed to extract profits along the way.

Of the four conditions, incumbent regeneration is probably the most tentative investment from a private sector point of view. Unlike gentrification, regeneration occurs primarily from within the capital resources already contained within the original context, with assistance from non-profits, local governments and various other institutions. As noted, the notion that there is no demand for housing in Tampa Heights, for example, is belied by the success of Tampa Preservation, Inc. Rather, there is no demand, at present, for developer housing done under for-profit private-sector conditions. On the other hand, as the examples of significant land-banking indicate, clearly some private sector entities view a neighborhood like Tampa Heights as a profitable long-term investment.

In summation, urban redevelopment represents an enormous opportunity within lower-density suburbanized Sunbelt metro areas, albeit one that may require new strategies and approaches. These, in turn, will imply new practices, typically involving close coordination of public sector and private sector skills and abilities.
VIII Bibliography


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