

ST. PETERSBURG
DOWNTOWN
PARTNERSHIP



HISTORIC GAS PLANT REDEVELOPMENT

CUMULATIVE PLANNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RECORD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CUMULATIVE RECORD

Is the established planning and community-engagement record sufficient to move forward with redevelopment at the Historic Gas Plant site?

CENTRAL FINDING **The cumulative record provides a clear, credible, and more-than-sufficient foundation to move forward with redevelopment and negotiate a developer agreement, during which final terms will be determined.**

The Historic Gas Plant redevelopment site—currently occupied by Tropicana Field and surrounding parking—has been the subject of nearly two decades of sustained planning and public discussion since 2008, the starting point of the modern redevelopment period examined in this report. Across successive administrations and changing stadium scenarios, repeated rounds of planning and community engagement have reaffirmed the same core priorities, defining them more clearly and giving them greater weight in redevelopment requirements over time.

The next phase need not ask the community to reestablish priorities already documented across successive planning and engagement efforts. Instead, negotiations can build on this foundation, focusing on delivery terms, tradeoffs, accountability, and how commitments will be sustained over time. Although terminated, the 2024 agreements provide a valuable example of how those priorities can translate into measurable obligations. They should inform—not define or supersede—the next redevelopment program or the broader cumulative record.

96

Source Materials Reviewed

558

Evidence Entries

7

Enduring Priorities

ENDURING PRIORITIES	
01 HOUSING CHOICE & AFFORDABILITY	02 GAS PLANT LEGACY & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
03 JOBS, LOCAL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY WEALTH-BUILDING	04 RECONNECTION & MULTIMODAL ACCESS
05 RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE	06 COMMUNITY-CENTERED PUBLIC REALM & AMENITIES
07 COMMUNITY-SHAPED, ACCOUNTABLE DEVELOPMENT	

PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCE Negotiations can begin from the documented priorities. They should focus on delivery terms, tradeoffs, continued public input, and accountability in long-term delivery.

CONTENTS

This 15-page **Main Report** presents an interpretation of the cumulative record. The separate Evidence Appendix provides definitions, supporting evidence, and the complete document register. The evidence workbook contains the authoritative record of individual coded entries and their source(s).

02

Executive Summary

The central finding, headline figures, seven priorities, and practical consequences.

04

Introduction

Purpose, scope, and central question.

05

Methodology

How the source record was reviewed, coded, and interpreted.

06

Planning & Redevelopment Timeline

The major planning, engagement, selection, agreement, termination, and current-cycle events.

07

Community Engagement Record

What each engagement episode was intended to inform, how input was gathered, and the strength and representativeness of this data.

8-14

Seven Priority Pathways

One page per priority: its relevant historical baseline, modern evolution, associated 2024 agreement terms, and variables.

15

Findings & Implications

The negotiation-ready baseline and the specific variables that remain for agreement design and later best-practices research.

Separate

Evidence Appendix

Definitions, evidence profiles, engagement inventory, supporting matrices, and document register.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE, SCOPE & HISTORICAL BASELINE

Few places in St. Petersburg carry as much significance for the city's past and future as the Historic Gas Plant site, currently occupied by Tropicana Field and surrounding parking. Its redevelopment represents a **once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape a substantial part of the city and create lasting opportunities for its residents**. Sustained community interest reflects both this potential and the site's place in St. Petersburg's Black history, including the displacement of the former Gas Plant neighborhood and the unfulfilled promises of "urban renewal". Although the site offers considerable scope for physical transformation, it is not a blank slate historically or socially. Expectations for its future therefore extend beyond what is built to whose history is honored, who can afford to live and work there, and who shares in the benefits of redevelopment.

Since 2008, successive redevelopment efforts have produced an extensive and varied body of material. **City-issued solicitations and evaluation documents** have established public objectives and criteria for selecting development partners. **Consultant-led master plans and technical studies** have explored development scenarios, infrastructure needs, environmental conditions, transportation, and economic impacts. **Developer proposals** have translated these objectives and conditions into prospective programs, while **community-led planning efforts, stakeholder discussions, public meetings, and written feedback** have articulated residents' visions, priorities, and concerns. **Council materials and development agreements** have demonstrated how selected elements can move from planning concepts into formal obligations. These materials carry differing levels of authority and serve different audiences and purposes—from informing residents and guiding public decisions to testing feasibility and defining developer responsibilities.

1979 | HISTORICAL BASELINE

The City-led Gas Plant Redevelopment Plan provides the historical baseline for understanding the redevelopment objectives, community promises, displacement, and implementation tools that shaped the site and against which later efforts are understood.

2008-PRESENT | PRIMARY RECORD

The principal interpretation begins with the 2008 Tropicana Field solicitation cycle and follows modern planning, engagement, proposals, selections, agreements, termination, and the 2026 cycle.

SITE FOCUS | RELEVANT CONNECTIONS

The geographic focus is the roughly 86-acre Historic Gas Plant/Tropicana Field redevelopment site. Adjacent neighborhoods, infrastructure, parks, and watersheds are analyzed when analytically relevant.

Read individually, these documents can appear to describe competing futures. Read together, they reveal **substantial continuity in the priorities expressed** across changing administrations, stadium scenarios, development teams, and engagement cycles. Notably, the central debate concerns not only what the site should become, but whom redevelopment should benefit and how those benefits should be delivered. The **seven enduring priorities** examined in this report organize these recurring expectations without suggesting that the community has agreed on every detail. Each Priority Pathway traces how an expectation has been expressed, refined, and incorporated into successive plans, requirements, proposals, and agreements.

This report evaluates whether that cumulative planning and community engagement record provides a clear, credible, and sufficient foundation to move forward with redevelopment. It finds that the record is more than sufficient to support developer-agreement negotiations, while specific terms for scale, phasing, funding, responsibility, measurement, and enforcement remain to be established. The purpose is not to endorse a previous proposal or prescribe the next development program, but to clarify what has already been established, where meaningful differences remain, and what must still be resolved through negotiation.

METHODOLOGY

HOW THE RECORD WAS ASSEMBLED AND INTERPRETED

This report uses a **literature-review approach** to assemble and interpret the cumulative planning and community engagement record. The 1979 Gas Plant Redevelopment Plan serves as the historical baseline, while the principal analysis covers the modern redevelopment period from 2008 through the 2026 selections. Reviewed materials include City-issued solicitations and evaluation documents; consultant-led master plans and technical studies; developer proposals; records of community-led planning efforts, stakeholder discussions, public meetings, and written feedback; and Council materials and development agreements.

Evidence was organized by **priority and subtheme**, with source references and classifications distinguishing both the strength of the evidence and the form in which the priority appeared. This approach allowed recurring ideas to be traced across documents without treating a community aspiration, planning recommendation, developer proposal, and binding obligation as equivalent.

The analysis considers not simply whether a priority appears, but how specifically it is defined, what authority supports it, and what remains unsolved.

The seven **Priority Pathways** synthesize this approach's findings across successive planning and redevelopment milestones. Each traces how a priority has been identified, developed into a planning concept, incorporated into formal requirements, expressed in proposals, or translated into binding agreement terms. These categories do not imply an automatic or uninterrupted progression: a priority may become more specific in one cycle and remain broadly defined in another. Each Pathway concludes by distinguishing what the cumulative record establishes from the implementation details that still require negotiation.

CURRENT BODY OF EVIDENCE

- 96 source materials reviewed
- 85 contributed distinct evidence
- 558 coded evidence entries
- 7 enduring priorities

IDENTIFIED	PLANNED	REQUIRED	PROPOSED	BINDING
Raised through a plan, study, engagement finding, or proposal.	Translated into a program, spatial concept, strategy, or delivery approach.	Placed in a solicitation, approval criterion, or formal development principle.	Specified by a respondent or selected team, with varying detail and feasibility.	Converted into an obligation, schedule, restriction, payment, or remedy.

Coding totals solely describe the assembled evidence; they do not measure public support or establish how representative a view is of the broader community. Repetition across sources can demonstrate continuity without proving consensus, just as a binding provision may have a narrower scope than its label suggests. The report therefore considers competing considerations fairly and evaluates commitments according to their documented terms. It does not constitute a community poll, legal opinion, or endorsement of a particular proposal, nor does it select a preferred financing structure, governance model, or community-benefits framework.

EVIDENCE STRENGTH

445 DIRECT The source itself states, requires, depicts, evaluates, or binds obligations concerning the coded point.	98 CHARACTERIZED A later or secondary source describes an underlying meeting, document, or event not separately available in the body of evidence.	15 CORROBORATING The item confirms or contextualizes a point established more directly elsewhere.
---	--	---

For consistency, the report uses “Historic Gas Plant” when discussing the cumulative redevelopment record. Earlier materials often refer to the “Tropicana Field site.” Original source titles are retained in citations and the document register.

PLANNING & REDEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

MAJOR EPISODES IN THE CUMULATIVE RECORD

1979 Gas Plant Redevelopment Plan

Establishes the historical baseline of displacement, redevelopment promises, and City implementation tools.

2007-08 Ballpark concept and Tropicana Field RFP

A proposed waterfront ballpark at Al Lang creates an opportunity to reuse the Tropicana Field site, prompting a City forum, RFP, and three redevelopment proposals.

2016 HKS community engagement

Public meetings, stakeholder sessions, Council interviews, and a youth session inform City commissioned, consultant-led conceptual master planning.

2017-18 HKS stadium and no-stadium master plans

Two scenarios translate community input into mixed-use district concepts centered on a restored street grid and revitalized Booker Creek.

2020-21 Tropicana Field RFP and selection

Twenty-one community-derived principles are incorporated into the formal solicitation. Proposals are assessed for responsiveness to these principles, specificity, feasibility, financial return to the City, and community benefits.

2022 Historic Gas Plant RFP reset

A new process and 23 Guiding Principles sharpen expectations for housing, equity, business opportunity, resilience, mobility, historical recognition, and public benefit.

2023 Proposal review, selection, and CBAC input

Open-house feedback, public comment, and Community Benefits Advisory Council (CBAC) input accompany proposal selection and agreement development.

2024 Council-approved agreements

The selected Hines/Rays program is translated into detailed redevelopment and stadium agreements with measurable obligations and implementation procedures.

2025 Financing conditions and termination

Following post-hurricane disruption and financing uncertainty, the stadium agreement and associated documents automatically terminate on March 31st. Council votes to terminate the remaining redevelopment agreements in July.

2026 Alternative proposals and selections

PCHA is selected for an affordable senior parcel and The Burg Bid for the larger district. Both require negotiation and Council approval; only The Burg proceeds through community benefit review.

NOTE

The timeline above records the major planning, engagement, proposal, selection, agreement, and termination events. Analytical shifts in the seven priorities are reserved for the Priority Pathways.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RECORD

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Community engagement efforts have repeatedly shaped the redevelopment process: first by identifying priorities and later by testing proposals, advising on community benefits, and informing agreement terms. The documentation is substantial but uneven. The engagement record is strongest when it preserves written submissions, formal recommendations, or adopted requirements; it is weaker when summaries omit attendance, participant characteristics, or underlying comments.

EPISODE	INTENDED USE	DOCUMENTED METHODS	DOCUMENTED REACH & LIMITATIONS
2008 City Forum	Inform reuse of the Tropicana Field site in connection with the proposed waterfront ballpark	City-organized public forum summarized in the Hines proposal	Nearly 350 participants reported by the proposer; underlying submissions were unavailable for this review, so findings are characterized evidence.
2016 HKS Outreach	Develop the conceptual master-plan priorities and scenarios	Two public meetings; stakeholder and Council sessions; teen and South St. Petersburg/Midtown input	Rich qualitative synthesis; attendance totals and attribution for some cross-cutting findings were not reported.
2022 RFP Development	Shape the new Guiding Principles and solicitation	Community conversations, online and email feedback, and outreach to faith, business, and community organizations	138 submission rows, 116 containing substantive feedback. Mayor Welch later described more than 2,000 residents and stakeholders across the broader process.
2023 Proposals and CBAC	Compare proposals and identify desired community-benefit terms	Open house, written feedback, public comment, CBAC form, and advisory votes	107 substantive open-house responses and 83 CBAC responses. These totals count submissions, not necessarily unique participants.
2024 Formal Review	Review and approve negotiated agreements	CBAC recommendations, planning review, public comment, and City Council hearings	Council and advisory reviews documented the approval process. The agreement required annual community benefit reports and semiannual development updates, in addition to twice-yearly town halls until minimum development requirements were met.
2026 Alternative-Proposal Process	Compare shortlisted concepts and identify negotiation questions	Four-team open house, digitally submitted Q&A, and 30-day feedback period	Attendance was not reported. Moderator-selected questions document concerns raised but do not establish how frequently those concerns appeared among all submissions.

PRIORITY PATHWAY HOUSING CHOICE & AFFORDABILITY

01

From mixed-income intent to defined delivery terms

Across the modern redevelopment record, housing evolves from a general expectation for mixed income options into increasingly specific terms addressing income bands, on-site delivery, affordability periods, targeted access, and the timing of phased development, with earlier delivery consistently preferred. The issue is no longer whether affordable housing belongs in the redevelopment, but how much should be provided, where and for whom, how long it should remain affordable, and what consequences should apply if commitments are not fulfilled.



FIGURE 1 | Affordable, workforce, and market-rate housing developments located on the same block, as rendered for Midtown Development.
Source: Midtown Development Tropicana Field Proposal (2021), pp. 186-187.

MOMENT	SHIFT	HOW IT MANIFESTS
2008 Tropicana Field RFP	MIXED-INCOME HOUSING REQUIRED	The City required rental and ownership opportunities at varied incomes, including 80%, 120%, and 150% of median income. Proposal specificity differed substantially.
2016-18 HKS Planning	HOUSING NEED REAFFIRMED	Engagement identifies affordable and mixed-income housing as a priority, which the master plans translate into varied unit types within mixed-use neighborhoods.
2020-21 RFP & Proposals	AMI TARGETS FORMALIZED	The RFP calls for rental, ownership, and family-sized housing and requires proposals to substantially address housing at 60%, 80%, and 120% of area median income (AMI).
2022-23 Historic Gas Plant RFP	ON-SITE DELIVERY EMPHASIZED	The City calls for maximizing on-site affordable and workforce housing, defining “affordable” as at or below 80% AMI and “workforce” as at or below 120% AMI. At least half of this combined housing mix must meet the affordable threshold.
2024 Executed Agreement	UNIT QUANTITY, PHASING & REMEDIES BOUND	The agreement requires 1,250 income-restricted units, at least 600 of them on site, with defined income bands and affordability periods. It sets phased construction-start deadlines and requires payments for missed starts that replace the obligation to build the affected units.
2026 Proposals & Selections	ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODELS PROPOSED	PCHA proposes 80 affordable senior units. The Burg proposes over 3,600 affordable and workforce units serving households at 30% to 120% AMI, split evenly on and off site. Staff noted fewer on-site units than some competitors, a Phase 2 housing start, and dependence on acquiring land for the 1,800 off-site units.

ON-SITE INCLUSION AND A BLENDED STRATEGY

A meaningful on-site minimum would make housing inclusion visible within a high-opportunity district and provide the clearest redevelopment connection to residents displaced by urban renewal. On the other hand, off-site acquisition, rehabilitation, homeownership, and housing-stability programs may deliver additional or earlier benefits. Unresolved facets include the geography, timing, accountability, and equivalence rules governing a blended approach.

1979 | THE HISTORICAL BASELINE

The 1979 plan identified 8.91 acres for approximately 214 new housing units but relied heavily on citywide relocation resources and offered only a conditional relocation preference for displaced residents. The planned replacement housing was never built; the site instead became dominated by the stadium and surrounding parking.

2024 | RELEVANT PRECEDENT

The 2024 agreement shows how terms such as unit quantity, on-site location, income eligibility, affordability duration, schedules, parcel controls, and payment remedies may be organized within one encompassing framework.

WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES

A defined share of affordable and workforce housing should be built on site, while some units may be delivered elsewhere under clear terms. Affordability should serve stated income levels for defined periods, with varied housing options and a transparent delivery schedule.

WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST RESOLVE

The remaining questions include how much housing will be delivered on site and how the broader program will serve different income levels and tenures, including former residents and seniors. Off-site delivery also requires decisions about location, funding, schedules, and remedies for missed commitments.

PRIORITY PATHWAY

GAS PLANT LEGACY & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

02

From historical recognition to material redress

The modern record moves from commemorating the former Gas Plant neighborhood to treating its history as an obligation for material redevelopment and investment. Later engagement and solicitation cycles frame honoring that legacy as requiring tangible commitments to housing and economic opportunity, museums and public spaces that preserve and interpret Black history and culture, and a meaningful community role in implementation.



FIGURE 2 | African American History & Cultural Museum and Gas Plant Memorial Park within a redevelopment concept incorporating affordable and workforce housing.
Source: Gas Plant District Restoration Associates Proposal (2022), pp. 108, 117.

MOMENT	SHIFT	HOW IT MANIFESTS
2008 Tropicana Field RFP	HISTORICAL RECOGNITION INTRODUCED	The City requires recognition of the site's pre-Tropicana history. EcoVerde proposes Gas Plant Park and interpretive statuary, while Hines proposes a community advisory group to guide how that history is incorporated.
2016 HKS Community Engagement	UNMET PROMISES NAMED	Participants identify displacement, highway construction, and unfulfilled economic commitments as linked harms of earlier development. They seek meaningful Black participation, historical recognition, and tangible community benefits.
2017-18 HKS Master Plans	HISTORICAL RECOGNITION ADVANCED	The HKS plans document displacement, call for developer-community dialogue on cultural and historical expression, and propose outdoor exhibits interpreting Gas Plant history. They do not establish a distinct reparative program or delivery mechanism.
2020-21 RFP & Selection	LEGACY REQUIREMENT FORMALIZED	History becomes an explicit development principle. Proposals respond through heritage trails, museums, public art, and design features referencing the former neighborhood, while linking historical recognition to broader community benefits.
2022-23 RFP & CBAC Input	MATERIAL REDRESS EXPANDED	The RFP ties honoring the neighborhood's legacy to economic opportunity. Public and CBAC input extends this to housing, jobs, business support, museums and cultural spaces, and a meaningful role for former residents and descendants.
2024-26 Agreements & Proposals	RETURN & RESTORATIVE COMMITMENTS ADVANCED	The agreement translated priorities into binding community investments. The 2026 concepts propose former-resident preferences, early museum delivery, community funding, and governance roles for descendants and community members.

FROM INPUT TO IMPLEMENTATION

Later cycles propose or establish roles for descendant representatives, community advisory bodies, and public officials in funding, planning, and oversight. Delivery mechanisms range from dedicated funds and phased requirements to public reporting, affordability restrictions, and remedies that require payments or allow the City to withhold future land transfers when specified commitments are not fulfilled.

1979 | THE HISTORICAL BASELINE

Successive urban renewal, highway, and redevelopment actions displaced residents and businesses and cleared the former Gas Plant neighborhood. Plans promised replacement housing, jobs, and economic opportunity, but many commitments went unfulfilled. Most of the neighborhood's physical fabric was erased, and the conditional relocation preference never translated into the promised replacement housing.

2024 | RELEVANT PRECEDENT

The agreement organized a \$50 million package: at least \$15 million for City affordable/workforce housing programs; \$750,000 for ongoing outreach; \$10.5 million for enterprise support; \$6.25 million for workforce programs; \$7.5 million for education; and a conditional \$10 million toward an on-site Woodson African American Museum.

WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES

Honoring the former Gas Plant neighborhood requires both visible recognition and material redress. Redevelopment should create lasting housing and economic opportunities, invest in Black history and culture, and give former residents and descendants a meaningful role in implementation.

Supporting sources and page-level citations provided in the Evidence Appendix.

WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST RESOLVE

Remaining questions concern beneficiaries and how former residents and descendants will participate in implementation. Terms must also identify who will steward cultural assets; distinguish guaranteed commitments from those that may be substituted; and establish transparent reporting and consequences for nonperformance.

PRIORITY PATHWAY

JOBS, LOCAL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY WEALTH-BUILDING

03

From job creation to durable access and ownership

Jobs are one of the longest-running promised benefits. Over time, the priority becomes more specific: employment should be year-round, accessible to local residents, and evaluated for wages and duration. The record distinguishes lasting employment from temporary construction and contracting opportunities, while linking both to support for local firms, affordable commercial space, and pathways to capital and ownership.

MOMENT	SHIFT	HOW IT MANIFESTS
2008 Tropicana Field RFP	JOB QUALITY & SBE ACCESS REQUIRED	The City evaluates both job quantity and quality and requires Small Business Enterprise (SBE) opportunities consistent with its SBE program. Responses vary in the jobs offered, when they would materialize, and how clearly participation and delivery are substantiated.
2016-18 HKS Planning	JOB QUALITY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP EMPHASIZED	Engagement participants call for year-round work across skill and wage levels, supported by workforce training for residents. The master plans propose flexible commercial space to help small and local businesses establish and grow.
2020-21 RFP & Proposals	INCLUSION MECHANISMS FORMALIZED	The RFP makes SBE participation and support for underserved entrepreneurs part of the economic development mandate. Proposals translate that direction into dedicated business funds and participation targets, supported by affordable commercial space and connections to investors.
2022-23 RFP & Proposals	WEALTH-BUILDING TOOLKIT EXPANDED	Employment mechanisms combine workforce development and apprenticeships with targeted hiring in South St. Pete. Grants and incubators support local business participation. Endowments, homeownership programs, and equity pools extend the focus toward long-term wealth creation.
2024 Executed Agreement	FUNDING & PARTICIPATION TERMS BOUND	The agreement funds workforce programs, including apprenticeships and worker training, alongside enterprise support and certified-business participation. Some commitments carry fixed funding or numerical requirements, while others are governed by documented good-faith efforts.
2026 Proposals & Evaluations	HIGH-WAGE WORK & OWNERSHIP ADVANCED	Proposals give workforce and business development a physical presence through a small-business center and business accelerator. Broader community investment and discounted homeownership support wealth-building, while dashboards and high-wage job measures track outcomes.



BEYOND THE JOB COUNT

The record treats economic opportunity as more than a single job count. Employment and project contracting create immediate opportunities, while business support, affordable commercial space, and access to capital or ownership can sustain local enterprises and build wealth over time. These benefits require distinct commitments, responsible partners, delivery schedules, and measures of success.

1979 | THE HISTORICAL BASELINE

The 1979 plan provided industrial employment projections and encouraged training, yet the site remains dominated by the stadium and parking. This history underscores the importance of enforceable hiring and workforce development commitments, supported by timelines, reporting, and consequences for nonperformance.

2024 | RELEVANT PRECEDENT

The agreement paired enterprise and workforce funding with apprentice and disadvantaged worker goals: 15% of infrastructure work hours per group, subject to good-faith efforts, and separate 10% good-faith participation goals for vertical development. It also set MWBE contracting goals and reporting requirements. Recently enacted state legislation is expected to preclude those race- and sex-conscious provisions in future agreements. A race-neutral SBE structure remains possible, subject to legal compliance.

WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES

Economic opportunity extends beyond job creation. Redevelopment should create durable employment and meaningful contracting opportunities while enabling local firms to operate in the completed district. Homeownership, resident investment, and community equity funds represent potential pathways to long-term wealth-building.

Supporting sources and page-level citations provided in the Evidence Appendix.

WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST RESOLVE

Unresolved terms include how permanent and construction jobs will be measured and who benefits from hiring, training, and contracting opportunities. They must also define access to affordable space and capital; governance of homeownership and community-investment programs; and overall schedules, reporting, and enforcement.

PRIORITY PATHWAY RECONNECTION & MULTIMODAL ACCESS

04

From an isolated superblock to a connected urban network

A successful redevelopment plan will treat mobility as a holistic system for walking, biking, driving, and public transit. Proximity to walkable neighborhoods, the Pinellas Trail, and SunRunner service supports multimodal access, while I-175 and major east-west and north-south arteries provide regional roadway connections. Special focus should be placed on using this network to rebuild and reinforce community connections across I-175 to Campbell Park and broader South St. Petersburg.

MOMENT SHIFT HOW IT MANIFESTS

2008 Tropicana Field RFP

GRID & TRANSIT REINTRODUCED

City requirements seek to integrate the site with surrounding neighborhoods through a connected street and transportation network, with parking in structures rather than surface lots. The public forum revealed participant support for a walkable, transit-connected district organized around a restored street grid.

2016 HKS Community Engagement

MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS PRIORITIZED

Participants prioritize safe walking and biking, better transit, and coordinated parking and traffic management. They also seek stronger links to Downtown, South St. Petersburg, the Innovation District, and the Warehouse Arts District.

2017-18 HKS Master Plans

RECONNECTION STRATEGIES MAPPED

HKS translates these priorities into a restored street grid, integrating the Pinellas Trail as an arts-walk spine. The plans propose connecting the site to Campbell Park with an expanded, landscaped pedestrian bridge. The plans also consider changes to I-175 that could reduce its barrier effect.

2020-21 RFP & Proposals

MULTIMODAL STANDARDS FORMALIZED

Requirements establish pedestrian-first streets with separated bicycle facilities and connections to the SunRunner and future transit service. They also call for an intermodal facility and structured parking designed for future adaptation.

2022-24 RFP & Agreement

EQUITABLE ACCESS & STREET TERMS BOUND

The RFP prioritizes equitable access, particularly for transportation-disadvantaged residents and workers. The agreement carries this forward through Complete Streets and coordinated infrastructure requirements connecting creekside paths and open spaces to the broader mobility network.

2026 Alternative Proposals

SAFE CONNECTIONS RETESTED

Public questions continue to press for safe, active links to adjacent neighborhoods. Proposals vary in the specificity of their walking, biking, transit, and parking strategies. Evaluations raise unresolved questions about parking adequacy, infrastructure costs and responsibility, phasing, and delivery capacity.



FIGURE 4 | Major road and trail corridors connecting the Historic Gas Plant site with surrounding neighborhoods. Source: Hines + Tampa Bay Rays Proposal (2022), p. 153.

RECONNECTING CAMPBELL PARK

The record presents several alternatives for crossing I-175. An expanded pedestrian bridge would provide a direct, comparatively economical walking and biking link but remain a narrow crossing above the highway. A roadway bridge could extend the street grid and serve more modes, though vehicle traffic may weaken the park-to-park connection. A land bridge would create the broadest, most park-like transition but involve greater cost and engineering complexity. Broader I-175 transformation could address the barrier more comprehensively but would require decisions beyond the redevelopment site.

1979 | THE HISTORICAL BASELINE

Neighborhood clearance, highway construction, and development of the stadium and surrounding surface parking created the disconnected superblock that modern plans seek to repair.

2024 | RELEVANT PRECEDENT

The 2024 agreement applied Complete Streets standards and divided responsibility for delivering the transportation network and related infrastructure by phase. Final alignments and most off-site connections remained subject to later design and coordination.

WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES

The site should function as a connected urban district, with mobility infrastructure, parking, and public space planned as an integrated system. Reconnecting across I-175 to Campbell Park and South St. Petersburg is central to addressing longstanding physical separation and unequal access.

Supporting sources and page-level citations provided in the Evidence Appendix.

WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST RESOLVE

Unresolved decisions include final network alignments and who funds and delivers off-site improvements. Transit and parking assumptions, phasing, and long-term maintenance must also be settled. Handover terms should identify when facilities transfer to the City or another operator and the associated acceptance standards.

PRIORITY PATHWAY

RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

05

From green features to district-scale performance

The record increasingly treats resilience as a district-scale performance priority. Redevelopment plans integrate Booker Creek revitalization and stormwater management with native landscaping, heat reduction, and environmental remediation. Buildings, utilities, and infrastructure management must remain adaptable throughout a multi-decade buildout.

MOMENT	SHIFT	HOW IT MANIFESTS
2008 Tropicana Field RFP	GREEN DEVELOPMENT ENCOURAGED	The City calls for green development aligned with its Green City goals, demonstrated commitment to LEED standards, and sustainable development experience.
2016-18 HKS Planning	CREEK & DISTRICT SYSTEMS INTEGRATED	HKS envisions Booker Creek as both public space and working stormwater infrastructure. It also explores district cooling as part of an integrated utility network, together with coordinated green space and multimodal transportation systems.
2019-20 Technical Frameworks	RESILIENCE SOLUTIONS & CONSTRAINTS IDENTIFIED	The ISAP/Smart Cities analysis identifies possible energy, water, mobility, heat, green infrastructure, sensing, and performance monitoring solutions for the district. Site readiness work identifies utility and environmental constraints.
2020-23 RFPs & Proposals	HEALTH, REMEDIATION & RESILIENCE REQUIRED	The City adds smart city, health, climate, and remediation requirements. Proposals vary from measurable energy and water targets to broader technology concepts lacking concrete targets. CBAC submissions highlight heat resilience and restoration of the full creek system.
2024 Executed Agreement	CREEK PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL DUTIES FORMALIZED	The agreement requires a Booker Creek water quality and flood mitigation plan in addition to strategies for sustainable construction, waste management, green building standards, and tree replacement. Environmental due diligence and remediation responsibilities are allocated among the City and developers.
2026 Proposals & Questions	NATURE-BASED PERFORMANCE STRENGTHENED	Questions and proposals address creek restoration and propose shade and green roofs to reduce heat. They also explore solar and geothermal energy, LEED standards, and incorporating emergency shelter capacity. Resilient public infrastructure is a recurring concern, but measurable targets remain uneven.



FIGURE 5 | Rendering of a transformed Booker Creek with ecosystem restoration, flood mitigating designs, and pedestrian access. Source: Sugar Hill Community Partners Proposal (2022), p. 151.

BOOKER CREEK AS WORKING LANDSCAPING

Restoration must create public space while improving water quality, habitat, and stormwater performance. The 2024 framework contemplated softer natural edges, native landscaping, bioswales, and trash and sediment controls. Modeling must ensure these interventions do not cause upstream ponding or worsen downstream flooding. Because residual contamination remains on portions of the site under continuing regulatory controls, creek work must be coordinated with remediation and evaluated across the full downstream system.

HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Past industrial activity and site development practices created contamination and infrastructure constraints that remain part of redevelopment risk. The site's 2016 conditional regulatory closure left residual contamination in place and established continuing obligations.

2024 | RELEVANT PRECEDENT

Section 7.11 defined what creek planning has to achieve: water quality and habitat benefits; natural drainage where feasible; and flow management that mitigates upstream and downstream flooding. The agreement retained City ownership and operation of Booker Creek while making the developer responsible for adjacent improvements.

WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES

Resilience is a district-scale responsibility, not a collection of one-off green features. Booker Creek must simultaneously function as public space, habitat, and stormwater infrastructure. Its restoration must account for residual contamination and off-site impacts. Infrastructure must remain adaptable through the multi-decade buildout.

Supporting sources and page-level citations provided in the Evidence Appendix.

WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST RESOLVE

Negotiations must establish baselines and targets, along with monitoring and update procedures. They must define creek and downstream obligations; assign investigation, remediation, capital, and operational responsibilities; and distinguish site commitments from off-site improvements and citywide programs.

PRIORITY PATHWAY

COMMUNITY-CENTERED PUBLIC REALM & AMENITIES

06

From open-space acreage to civic life and stewardship

Successive plans envision the redevelopment as both a neighborhood-serving district and a citywide civic destination. Its public realm should support everyday gathering and recreation, arts and cultural expression, and community events. The site's design and the shops, restaurants, and services there should reflect local character while meeting daily needs. Connections to Campbell Park, broadly appealing and accessible programming, and thoughtful long-term stewardship will help keep the district welcoming and locally rooted.

MOMENT	SHIFT	HOW IT MANIFESTS
2008 Tropicana Field RFP	CONNECTED PUBLIC REALM ENVISIONED	The City seeks a connected, accessible public realm integrating Booker Creek and surrounding neighborhoods, with distinctive civic spaces rooted in St. Pete's character. Proposals give that vision form through spaces for recreation, social life, cultural expression, and commerce.
2016 HKS Community Engagement	PUBLIC REALM PRIORITIES SPECIFIED	Residents and stakeholders call for a vibrant Booker Creek and connected green spaces; locally rooted art, shops and restaurants; and safe, affordable year-round programming for families and young people.
2017-18 HKS Master Plans	PUBLIC REALM GIVEN PHYSICAL FORM	HKS proposed allocating roughly 40-42% of the site to the public realm (including streets and other circulation spaces). Booker Creek anchors a network of parks and gathering spaces linked to the Pinellas Trail and Campbell Park.
2020-21 RFP & Proposals	PUBLIC REALM & COMMUNITY USES REQUIRED	The City requires substantial park and gathering space anchored by Booker Creek and the Pinellas Trail, encouraging connectivity and public access. It also requires childcare and prioritizes art and local, independent businesses. Proposals vary in open-space acreage, maintenance, and phasing.
2022-24 RFP & Agreement	DAILY NEEDS IDENTIFIED; CORE DUTIES BOUND	Input calls for grocery, pharmacy, health care, and affordable arts space; the RFP encourages inclusive programming. The agreement requires a fresh food retailer, at least 12 acres of open space, public art, and a conditional \$10 million contribution toward an on-site Woodson African American Museum.
2026 Proposals & Selections	PARK SCALE & EARLY DELIVERY TESTED	Proposals combine neighborhood amenities, cultural facilities, and Gas Plant commemoration at widely different scales. Some integrate them across district-wide park systems, whereas others focus on a single facility or near-term project. Acreage, funding, phasing, and operations remain uneven.



FIGURE 6 | A bird's-eye view of the varying components creating an exciting, safe, and local street life in The Burg Bid proposal. Source: The Burg Bid Historic Gas Plant Proposal (2026), p. 26.

BUILDING LOCAL CHARACTER

A locally rooted district depends on who can afford to occupy and shape it. Proposed mechanisms include retail reserved for small and local businesses; lower-cost or City-controlled leases; smaller parcels; and business development support. Yet documents variously define locally owned firms, existing South St. Pete businesses, and certified small businesses without a consistent definition.

1979 | THE HISTORICAL BASELINE

The 1979 plan proposed industrial and residential reuse with buffers and parks, but the promised redevelopment did not materialize. Instead, the area became dominated by a regional sports and entertainment venue and expansive surface parking.

2024 | RELEVANT PRECEDENT

The 2024 agreement was more specific about building and maintaining the public realm than about who would occupy or program it. Local business access, local artist participation, tenant affordability, and operating arrangements were not fully specified.

WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES

Public space must do more than satisfy an acreage target. It should support daily community life, connect surrounding neighborhoods, and express local culture and Gas Plant history. Locally rooted businesses, artists, and organizations are central to that function.

WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST RESOLVE

Terms must establish the amount, location, delivery timing, ownership, and long-term management of public space. They must also define "local"; secure affordable access for businesses, artists, and community organizations; and bind programming, funding, and performance expectations.

PRIORITY PATHWAY COMMUNITY-SHAPED, ACCOUNTABLE DEVELOPMENT

07

From sustained engagement to accountable implementation

Across the record, community input increasingly shapes formal development principles and delivery requirements, while CBAC input helps carry priorities into negotiations. Public reporting, defined responsibilities, performance measures, and agreement remedies make resulting commitments trackable and enforceable.



MOMENT

SHIFT

HOW IT MANIFESTS

2008 RFP & Evaluation

COMMUNITY BENEFIT & DELIVERY CAPACITY WEIGHED

The City requires continued public engagement and community benefit while testing each team's capacity to deliver. Evaluators also compare land offer amounts, payment guarantees, and responsibility for stadium demolition and environmental cleanup.

2016 HKS Community Engagement

TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY DEMANDED

Participants seek clear evidence that community input will shape decisions. They also call for specific commitments and visible follow-through, reflecting concern that earlier promises went unmet.

2020-21 RFP & Proposals

BENEFIT & REVIEW EXPECTATIONS FORMALIZED

Community-developed benefit principles are incorporated directly into the RFP. Responses propose funded entities, advisory bodies, land-control approaches, and future community benefit negotiations, but vary in specificity and enforceability.

2022-23 RFP & CBAC

INDEPENDENT REVIEW & BINDING TERMS EMPHASIZED

The RFP requires continued outreach and Council approval of development agreements. CBAC input emphasizes independent oversight, measurable commitments, and clear accountability for the use of public resources.

2024-25 Agreement & Termination

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FORMALIZED

The agreement establishes public reporting throughout implementation and procedures for addressing unmet commitments. It also limits City remedies, barring termination for developer default and generally preserving City infrastructure funding duties despite default.

2026 Proposals & Selection

OVERSIGHT & DELIVERY TERMS REOPENED

Proposals offer different approaches to public reporting, community oversight, long-term affordability, and delivery timing. The Burg Bid's commitments remain subject to further negotiation and Council approval.

CREATING ENFORCEMENT LEVERAGE

The record distinguishes transparency from enforcement while showing how they work together. Reporting, public meetings, and advisory review reveal whether commitments are being met but do not themselves require corrective action. Enforcement provisions can allow the City to respond by making access to land or public funding conditional on performance or by imposing financial consequences. Substitute obligations add flexibility during a long buildout, but their value depends on clear equivalency standards, public review, and formal approval.

1979 | THE HISTORICAL BASELINE

The 1979 plan established schedules, land-disposition controls, and annual activity and financial reporting, but this research identified no long-term tracking of displaced residents' receipt of promised benefits. By the time modern site redevelopment discussions gained momentum in 2007, the broader non-stadium development had never materialized.

2024 | RELEVANT PRECEDENT

The 2024 agreement shows that enforceability must be assessed obligation by obligation. Some terms created direct financial or land-based leverage. Others relied on reporting and procedures for correcting failures, with remedies varying by obligation. Termination occurred before long-term delivery could test the agreement's enforcement mechanisms.

WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES

Community input should shape not only development priorities, but also how commitments are negotiated, monitored, and revised. Mechanisms of interest include an advisory body representative of the full range of redevelopment stakeholders, accessible public reporting, and regular public forums for ongoing input.

Supporting sources and page-level citations provided in the Evidence Appendix.

WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST RESOLVE

Negotiations must define who participates in oversight and when community input can influence decisions. Responsibility for reporting and independent verification must be assigned. Terms must preserve commitments' intended value when substituted or updated. The agreement must define effective remedies throughout the buildout.

FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS

A NEGOTIATION-READY BASELINE

The cumulative record supports a clear conclusion: St. Petersburg has a credible and more than sufficient foundation to move forward with redevelopment and negotiate a developer agreement. Across the seven pathways, the record consistently supports mixed-income housing; recognition of Gas Plant history paired with material benefit; durable jobs, local business growth, and wealth-building; a multimodal network reconnecting surrounding neighborhoods; district-scale resilience; a locally rooted public realm; and accountable implementation. Together, these outcomes form the substantive baseline for negotiations, which should focus on the delivery architecture needed to convert them into measurable, funded, and enforceable commitments.

AGREEMENT FUNCTION	WHAT THE RECORD ESTABLISHES	WHAT NEGOTIATIONS MUST RESOLVE	
Define the Commitment	Each priority identifies a clear intended outcome and the people, places, or systems it should benefit.	• Scale • Location • Beneficiaries and eligibility	• Key definitions • Minimum requirements • On- and off-site equivalence
Structure Delivery	Commitments must be tied to defined schedules, funding sources, responsible parties, and long-term stewardship arrangements.	• Delivery milestones and phasing • Funding sources • Responsible parties	• Ownership and operators • Long-term maintenance • Facility handoffs
Ensure Accountable Implementation	Community input should shape agreement terms and continue via representative advisory review, public reporting, and open forums.	• Oversight representation • Oversight authority • Decision points for public input	• Performance measures • Reporting requirements • Independent verification
Govern Substitutions & Remedies	A multi-decade buildout requires flexibility without reducing the value of commitments or weakening accountability.	• Transfer rules • Equivalence rules • Approval authority	• Obligation durations • Correction procedures • Proportionate remedies

2024 AGREEMENTS | A REFERENCE POINT

The terminated agreements provide the record’s most detailed reference for translating the seven priorities into obligations, goals, schedules, reporting, and remedies. What these terms secure depends on how they are qualified, whether alternatives are permitted, and how they can be enforced. These provisions should inform, not predetermine, the next agreement.

NEXT STEPS | NEGOTIATE FROM THE BASELINE

The seven priorities provide a durable, substantive baseline for the next agreement. Negotiations should translate them into clear, measurable, and enforceable obligations that are workable under current legal and market conditions. A later phase can draw on national best practices in redevelopment planning, financing, stewardship, and enforcement to craft a strong agreement that secures a well-executed redevelopment and lasting public benefits. That work should strengthen how the established priorities are delivered, not reopen whether they belong in the redevelopment.