



## *Westshore Alliance 2016 Year In Review*

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Thank you for your support in 2016 – it was another successful year for the Westshore Alliance. We initiated and implemented a number of projects and programs to advance our mission of promoting, shaping future growth and fostering economic prosperity of the Westshore District. With your assistance, we exceeded our budget expectations and maintain a strong financial position to ensure we can continue to work for you. Thank you to our President Enrique A. Woodroffe, FAIA and all of our [Officers, Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Committee Chairs](#) and volunteers; without your assistance we could not accomplish all that we do. If you are not actively involved on one of our [committees](#), we encourage you to get involved in 2017.

Following are a few highlights of 2016 activities and accomplishments, as well as a look at what's to come in 2017:

### **MEMBERSHIP**

As a business-based membership organization our No. 1 asset is you – our valued member. Our membership base is strong and diverse with 400 member companies representing a broad range of industries in the Westshore District. In 2016 we welcomed 80 new members. You can see the full list of members in the searchable [member directory](#) on our website. Thank you to all who referred new members.

Those who participated in the annual membership survey ranked the top three priorities for the Alliance as improving Westshore's transportation infrastructure, promoting the District's continued growth and economic prosperity, and providing member networking events. Our 2017 initiatives remain focused on these priorities.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation projects and issues remained as the Alliance's leading priority. Serving on local and regional transportation committees and working with city, county and state agencies the Alliance continued to serve as an advocate for transportation improvements for the business district. These initiatives range from significant Tampa Bay regional transportation plans to local Westshore business district pedestrian circulation.

On top of the Alliance's transportation priority list is the reconstruction of the I-275/SR 60 interchange. The reconstruction of this interchange, which currently handles over 200,000 vehicles per day, is critical to the mobility and economic viability of not only the Westshore district but the entire Tampa Bay region. We have been consistent in our message to the District 7 Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), local agencies and stakeholders concerning our priorities for this project which include key vehicular and pedestrian connections and extensions to Reo, Trask and Occident streets. We continue to emphasize these priorities as the FDOT advances the project design and planning.

In conjunction with the interchange reconstruction project, we have worked closely with FDOT and the City of Tampa as plans develop for the Tampa Bay Express project – particularly how express lane access to and from the Westshore business area will affect local traffic circulation. The Alliance played a significant role in mobilizing local businesses and stakeholders to explain the importance of the TBX project prior to a critical vote by the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization to continue design of the project.

The year also saw the completion of several major transportation projects in the Westshore area. The I-275 reconstruction project was completed in June. The 4-year, \$225 million project from the Hillsborough River to Westshore provided the completion of FDOT's capacity project for four thru lanes in each direction from Westshore to the Hillsborough River. Throughout the project the Alliance worked closely with FDOT,

contractors and local businesses to minimize the disruption to local roads and businesses access. We continue to send traffic notices to provide our membership with the latest information on closures and detours.

As part of the widening project, FDOT constructed a bike pedestrian trail that parallels the new road construction project from Church to Hesperides. The Alliance is now working with the City to connect the pedestrian path to Westshore Blvd. and the newly completed Cypress pedestrian path which runs from Cypress Point Park to Westshore Blvd.

The Florida Turnpike Authority continued to work toward completion of the Veterans Express widening project in the Westshore area. During the year the Turnpike Authority completed a new toll lane in each direction from Gunn Highway to Memorial. The Authority is scheduled to complete the express toll lanes from the same area by the end of 2017.

The Alliance continued to monitor the status of City of Tampa planned Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Westshore projects which include improvements to O'Brien, Cypress and Spruce streets. The projects are in various stages of design with construction currently scheduled to begin in the next several years.

Alliance efforts have also focused on continuing measures to make the Westshore area more walkable. Plans are now complete for several small sidewalk and crosswalk projects with installation expected in the next few months.

Our 2017 transportation priorities are in line with our accomplishments and efforts in 2016; to continue taking all appropriate opportunities to express our transportation priorities to elected officials, government agencies, stakeholders, etc.; to professionally represent and advocate for transportation improvements for the Westshore area with those officials; and to take the necessary actions to make Westshore a more walkable area.

The Alliance Transportation Committee continues to keep our members informed of transportation issues that affect the business district. Please email [Chris Weber](#) for more information.

## **EVENTS & NETWORKING**

We hosted more than 30 events offering members great opportunities to network with other Westshore area business professionals and interface with some of the most prominent members of our community. Events included monthly luncheons, after-hours networking, a development forum, golf tournament and monthly informational breakfasts. Thank you to all who helped make these events possible. At our monthly luncheons, attendees heard the latest news from business and community leaders including:

- Joey Redner, Founder & CEO, Cigar City Brewing
- Rob Higgins, Executive Director, Tampa Bay Sports Commission
- Florida House Representative Dana Young
- Jeff Cogen, CBO, Tampa Bay Rays
- Brian Ford, COO, Tampa Bay Buccaneers
- Special Agent in Charge Paul Wysopal, FBI – Tampa Division
- Dr. Susan McManus, Distinguished Professor, USF
- Tampa Police Chief Eric Ward
- Rick Homans, President & CEO, Tampa Bay Partnership

More than 400 business and community leaders joined us for our 33rd Annual Dinner presented by Highwoods Properties at the Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay with guest speaker Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn. The 14th Annual Westshore Development Forum presented by Highwoods Properties gave members an

opportunity to find out the latest real estate and development initiatives. At the special engagement members-only luncheon held at One Buc Place, guests enjoyed lunch in the players' dining room and were treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of the training facility. More than 100 golfers joined us for the Ron Rotella Golf Classic presented by Grow Financial Federal Credit Union at the newly renovated Rocky Point Golf Course. The December holiday luncheon returned to Fleming's Prime Steakhouse for the fourth year in a row.

## **MARKETING**

We continue expanding our focus of the Westshore District beyond the office market through various marketing initiatives. At the beginning of 2016, we conducted a data collection and analysis project with the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission on District demographics, as well as several information-gathering projects related to hotels, events, retail, recreation and education in Westshore. To complement this data, we are researching opportunities to conduct a district-wide study of Westshore's employees and residents to gain further data and insight into the District's demographics, community perceptions and preferences.

Through special assessment funding, we designed and published a multitude of new print and online marketing collateral pieces promoting Westshore's "work, live, play and stay" identity. A full-page print ad featuring the new "Explore Westshore" theme is published in the 2017 Tampa Bay Visitor's Guide, an international tourism publication of Visit Tampa Bay. Two half-page ads were published in the Tampa Bay Business Journal, which focus on the District's business-related amenities. We added new design elements to our social media pages, and a quarterly updated District fact sheet is now available.

At the annual Development Forum, we debuted the new Westshore brochure and nine banners highlighting various ways to explore Westshore. The Development Forum is a great opportunity to market Westshore, and it once again generated a multitude of news stories highlighting what's new and what's to come in Tampa's vibrant Westshore community.

We are expanding and upgrading the online Westshore Development Tour to also include a "Transportation Tour" that visually highlights key transportation projects and priorities throughout the District. By doing so, both tours will soon be showcased in one location on the website. The new "Westshore Tour" also provides future opportunities to feature additional District landmarks and amenities (e.g. malls, entertainment venues, parks, restaurants, etc.) as part of this online informational and marketing tool.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY**

We kicked off 2016 with a new quarterly "Safety and Security E-news" publication to share crime statistics, prevention tips, and upcoming Alliance and community events. To subscribe contact [Shawn Fogarty](#) or click [here](#) - be sure to select Safety and Security News.

We continued working closely with Tampa Police Department Westshore Liaison Detective Don Grau to provide weekly reports regarding police calls for services, crime trends, crime bulletins and information on crime/suspects in Westshore. In addition, the Alliance continues to support a variety of safety initiatives including the Emergency Access Card program and the coordination of safety seminars on topics such as active shooter preparedness and crime prevention. We look forward to working together with Alliance members in 2017 to continue making Westshore a safe community.