

# 2025

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# Annual REPORT





# CITY OF TAMPA

— OFFICE OF THE MAYOR —

Jane Castor, Mayor

**The Tampa Riverwalk** (the Riverwalk) has substantially transformed the downtown waterfront into a vibrant setting, making our Hillsborough River the center of the city, and it provides connectivity to cultural institutions and public parks. While greatly improving our quality of life, the Riverwalk has become a dynamic catalyst for economic development, community building, and it has become a travel destination. Among its many accolades, it has been named one of Fodor's Travel's *15 Best Riverwalks in the United States*, and USA Today voted it the top *10 Riverwalks and top 10 Best Public Holiday Lights Display* in the nation, Time Magazine's *World's Greatest Places*, and other distinctions.



A source of great pride for Tampa Bay, the Riverwalk laid its first plank 50 years ago, and it provides relief to the urban environment by connecting people with the area's abundant natural resources. With preservation of mangrove-lined living shorelines and the restoration of native springs, our natural flora and fauna are on full display as sustainability is promoted with an eye toward the future. With new construction completed and others underway, including future development of the West Riverwalk, the face of the Riverwalk and its amenities enhance the experience for all.

Friends of the Riverwalk is a nonprofit organization established in 2005 and working in partnership with the City of Tampa with a mission of developing and promoting the Riverwalk, and they have been instrumental in activating Tampa's waterfront to provide the types of experiences that were envisioned when the project began five decades ago. The organization's goals include connecting the downtown riverfront parks, museums, attractions, and businesses while supporting further expansion, and their efforts to produce high quality events such as the Tampa Riverfest, July 4<sup>th</sup> Boat Parade & Blessing of the Fleet, Riverwalk Trick or Treat, the Lantern Parade at Riverfest, the Holiday Harbour Tree Lighting and Holiday Spectacular, Winter Village at Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Holiday Lighted Boat Parade, and more, offer interactive activities that engage the entire community and has elevated the Riverwalk's identity.

Friends of the Riverwalk administers a variety of programs, including Riverwalk clean-ups, the Specialty Cup Program to-go cups, personalized pavers, customized corporate banners, the Historical Monument Trail, and other initiatives that continue to promote and define the area as an inclusive space enjoyed by both residents and visitors. We look forward to their involvement in the next chapters of the Riverwalk's evolution.

It is an exciting and rewarding time to serve as your Mayor, and the continued progress and improvements on the existing Riverwalk will serve to define and transform Tampa, adding to its success as a great city.

Sincerely,

Jane Castor

# Letters from our leadership

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

As Chair of Friends of the Riverwalk Inc., I am honored to reflect on FY 2025—a year marked by resilience, national recognition, and meaningful progress for the Tampa Riverwalk. Together, we strengthened our organization, expanded our reach, and delivered memorable experiences for residents and visitors alike.

This year, the Tampa Riverwalk achieved significant national acclaim. It was named #2 Best Riverwalk by USA Today, and our Holiday Spectacular earned recognition as one of the Top Public Holiday Lights Displays in the country. We also reached a major organizational milestone by earning the GuideStar Platinum Transparency Seal, the highest standard for nonprofit accountability. In addition, Riverwalk Trick or Treat received a nomination for an Urban Excellence Award, highlighting the event's sustained community impact.

FY 2025 was also a year of strategic and operational advancement. We completed a full redesign of the Tampa Riverwalk website and refreshed the TAA brochure map to better serve visitors, partners, and members. Our partnership with the City of Tampa continued to deepen, including City support for social action and arts programming, active work toward a formal Services Agreement, and inclusion in the City's FY 2026 budget under City Asset Funding.

Despite challenges from two hurricanes, our signature events thrived. Riverwalk Trick or Treat returned for its eighth year, Riverfest celebrated its most successful year to date, our holiday events exceeded expectations, and the July 4th Boat Parade delivered strong community engagement.

Organizational growth remained strong throughout the year. We welcomed new corporate and Tampa Attraction Brochure members, expanded philanthropic support beyond expectations, and saw continued success in our banner and cup programs. Our digital presence grew substantially, with significant increases across Facebook and Instagram, allowing us to connect with a broader audience than ever before.

Environmental stewardship also remained central to our mission. Through four organized clean-ups, hundreds of volunteer hours were dedicated to maintaining the Riverwalk, resulting in the removal of hundreds of pounds of debris and reinforcing our shared commitment to preserving this vital public space.

These accomplishments are made possible by the unwavering support of our board, staff, volunteers, sponsors, members, and partners. Thank you for helping the Tampa Riverwalk continue to thrive as a vibrant and connected public space.

With gratitude,

Anthony Derby  
Chair, Friends of the Riverwalk Inc.

# Letters from our leadership

Dear Friends of the Tampa Riverwalk,

As we reflect on 2025, I am incredibly proud of the momentum, resilience, and community spirit that continue to define Friends of the Tampa Riverwalk. This past year was one of meaningful progress—strengthening what we do best while laying the groundwork for an even more vibrant and connected future along Tampa’s waterfront.

In 2025, the Riverwalk once again served as a gathering place for our community through beloved signature events including Riverwalk Trick or Treat, the Holiday Spectacular, Tampa Riverfest, the July 4th Boat Parade & Blessing of the Fleet, and the inaugural New Year’s Eve Fireworks celebration. This exciting new event marked a major milestone for Friends of the Riverwalk, welcoming the community to ring in the new year along the river and further establishing the Riverwalk as Tampa’s premier destination for shared civic celebrations. Together, these free, family-friendly events brought thousands of residents and visitors to the waterfront, reinforcing the Riverwalk’s role as a shared public space where memories are made and traditions continue to grow.

Beyond events, we made important strides in enhancing the everyday Riverwalk experience. Our “Paving the Way” program continued to expand, allowing more individuals, families, and organizations to leave a lasting mark along the Riverwalk. We also advanced efforts to improve wayfinding, lighting, and amenities—projects made possible through strong public-private partnerships and the generous support of our donors and sponsors.

A major focus in 2025 was strengthening the foundation of our organization. From expanding partnerships and diversifying revenue to investing in marketing, data, and planning, we are ensuring Friends of the Riverwalk is well-positioned to steward this iconic public space for years to come. These behind-the-scenes efforts are critical to supporting both our programming and long-term capital improvements.

None of this work happens in isolation. I am deeply grateful to our board of directors, volunteers, sponsors, city and county partners, and community stakeholders who share in our mission. Your continued belief in the Tampa Riverwalk—and in Friends of the Riverwalk—makes everything we accomplish possible.

As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, we are energized by new opportunities to enhance the Riverwalk, deepen community engagement, and contribute to Tampa’s ongoing growth as a world-class waterfront city. Thank you for walking alongside us and for being part of the Riverwalk’s story.

With sincere appreciation,

MaryBeth Williams  
Executive Director  
Friends of the Tampa Riverwalk



**“The Tampa Riverwalk has substantially transformed the downtown waterfront into a vibrant setting, making our Hillsborough River the center of the city.”**

-Mayor Jane Castor

## Mission

To be America's Iconic Riverwalk.

## Vision

Working in partnership with the city to develop, activate and promote Tampa's downtown waterfront.

## Purpose

- Support further expansion and development that increases community access to the waterfront, improves mobility and connectivity and increases people-oriented uses and experiences along the Riverwalk.
- Create an inviting outdoor destination showcasing downtown parks, museums, attractions, and businesses through outdoor public events and programming.
- Build a stronger sense of community for everyone.

## Committed to Growth

FOR is committed to promote the West Riverwalk Project, a \$56.8 million City of Tampa initiative featuring 2 miles of new west-bank Riverwalk, 5 miles of multimodal bike and pedestrian paths, enhanced street safety, scenic overlooks, and living shorelines.



## 2025 Accolades

- USA TODAY: 2025 #2 Best Riverwalk in the Nation
- Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful Green Guardian Award Recipient
- TIME Magazine: World's Greatest Places

# Board of Directors

## Executive Committee:

Chair: Anthony Derby (Florida Avenue & Brew Bus Brewing)

Vice Chair: Keith Greminger (Greminger Urban Design, LLC)

Secretary: Chris Eastman (Eastman Construction Management)

Treasurer: Kris Knox (Splitsville Tiki + Social)

Immediate Past Chair: David DeVaney (The Beck Group)

At Large: Amanda Page-Zwierko (Metropolitan Ministries)

At Large: Katy Alderman (Redstone Commercial)

## At-Large Executive Committee:

Carly Ciccati (Strategic Property Partners)

Santiago Corrada (Visit Tampa Bay)

Cameron Diehl (Raymond James & Associates, Inc.)

Jacqui Garman (Hidden Springs Ale Works)

Lucia Garsys (Principal, Garsys Planning)

John Gerding (888 Legal, PLLC.)

David Harris (Cushman & Wakefield)

Jeff Houck (1905 Family of Restaurants)

LaKisha Kinsey-Sallis (Fisher Phillips)

Lijah Lokenauth (Tampa General Hospital)

Jill Manthey (Manthey Hospitality)

Juan Merheb (JW Marriott/Tampa Marriott Water Street)

Kevin Plummer (Tampa Preparatory School)

Carole Post (University of South Florida)

Candace Rotolo (Point of View Communications)

Stephanie Stanfield (West Florida Area Wealth Executive, Regions Bank)

Jeff Weckback (Pepin Distributing Company)

Glenn Zimmerman (Mad Bear Productions)

## Staff



**MaryBeth Williams**  
*Executive Director*



**Casey Young**  
*Marketing & Events Manager*

# Community Activation & Programs

## Specialty Cups

### Participating Businesses

- 3 Corners Pizza
- Anchor and Brine
- Columbia Cafe
- Four Green Fields Irish Pub
- Hotel Tampa Riverwalk
- Malio's
- Pirate Water Taxi
- Publix
- Straz Center for the Performing Arts
- The Pearl Tampa
- The Sail Plaza
- Ulele

★ 66,000 10 oz cups sold

★ 238,000 16 oz cups sold

## Personalized Pavers

- ★ 210 pavers engraved
- ★ 6 locations possible

## Banners

- ★ 188 banners
- ★ 53 organizations participated

## Riverwalk Cleanups

In partnership with Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful, participants work together to pick up trash and beautify the waterfront, helping protect the environment and enhance the downtown experience for residents and visitors.

174  
participants

144  
bags of trash

742 lbs of  
trash

522  
volunteer  
hours

## Historical Monument Trail

The Historical Monument Trail on the Tampa Riverwalk is a curated walking route of bronze and marble busts and monuments that celebrates influential people and events that shaped the history of Tampa and Hillsborough County. It was developed in collaboration with the Tampa Bay History Center highlighting local heritage and inspiring community pride.



★ 30 monuments

## Tampa Attractions & Riverwalk Brochure

Friends of the Riverwalk once again produced the #1 brochure pulled from racks throughout the Tampa Bay area in 2025. The Tampa Attractions & Riverwalk Brochure highlights local attractions, entertainment, hotels, restaurants, transportation options, and community events, providing broad exposure for partners and the city.

150,000+ copies distributed each year. Available at 500+ locations, including Official Florida Welcome Centers

# 2025 Signature Events

Throughout 2025, Friends of the Riverwalk delivered a dynamic lineup of free, family-friendly signature events that activated Tampa's waterfront, celebrated community, and welcomed tens of thousands of residents and visitors to the Riverwalk.



## New Years Eve

Friends of the Tampa Riverwalk partnered with Jackson's Bistro, Bar & Sushi for the first time to illuminate downtown Tampa with a New Year's Eve fireworks display.

### Signature Activities:

- Open bar & food
- Fireworks viewing space



**110 VIP tickets sold**

**5 free locations for fireworks**



## Tampa Riverfest

The 9th Annual Tampa Riverfest returned May 2-3, 2025, transforming more than half of the Riverwalk into a vibrant cultural festival.

### Signature Activities

- Taste of the Riverwalk
- TacoFest
- Sister Hazel Performance
- Balloon Glow
- Wiener Dog Derby
- Vendor Market
- Paddle Invasion
- VIP Tent
- Lantern Parade



**48 sponsors**



**25 vendors**



**39,000 attendees**

## July 4th Boat Parade & Blessing of the Fleet

On Independence Day, the 5th Annual July 4th Boat Parade brought patriotic energy to Tampa's waterfront. Hundreds of decorated boats filled the river as families lined the Riverwalk from Sparkman Wharf to Armature Works.

### Signature Activities:

- Tampa Bay Water Ski Team
- Boat Parade
- Blessing of the Fleet
- Fireworks



**12,000 Sparkman Wharf attendees**



**28,000 Boat Parade spectators**



# Riverwalk Trick or Treat

The 9th Annual Riverwalk Trick or Treat brought families in costume along the scenic Riverwalk to collect candy and enjoy festive fun.

## Signature Activities

- Movie on the Lawn
- Thriller Flash Mob
- Kids & Pets Costume Contest

 **15,000 attendees**  **12 vendors**

 **48 treat stations**  **8 food vendors**

 **3,000 trick-or-treat bags**



## Holiday Spectacular

7th year of transforming the Riverwalk into a large-scale seasonal destination, activating multiple waterfront locations through immersive lighting, décor, and interactive displays.

## Signature Activities

- 30 foot tree RGB panel tree synchronized to music
- 35 foot LED holiday harbour tree
- 9 illuminated holiday floating displays
- 2 holiday selfie photo stations
- 54 garland wrapped with bows light poles

 **288,000 attendees**

## Holiday Harbour Tree Lighting

Mayor Jane Castor kicked off the 6th Annual Holiday Harbour Tree Lighting, launching the Riverwalk Holiday Spectacular before hopping aboard a Pirate Water Taxi to light both Riverwalk holiday trees.

## Signature Activities

- Santa Photo Op
- Live DJ
- Cookie Decorating Station

 **3,076 attendees**

 **14 vendors**



## Holiday Lighted Boat Parade

The annual Holiday Boat Parade transformed the downtown waterfront into a festive gathering place, delivering a free, family-friendly experience for residents and visitors while activating the Riverwalk and surrounding parks.

## Signature Activities

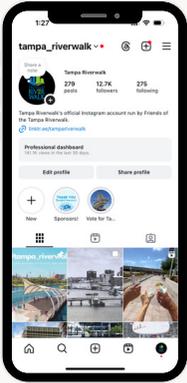
- Denis Phillips and Elsa as the Grand Marshals
- VIP Viewing at Sparkman Wharf
- Children's Dream Fund judges

 **29,000 spectators**

 **91 boats registered**

# Marketing & Communication

## INSTAGRAM: TAMPA\_RIVERWALK



**20.1K FOLLOWERS**

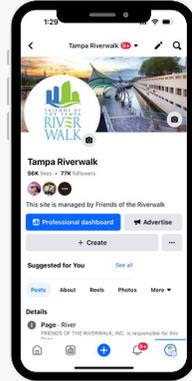
**54.1K REACH**

**159K VIEWS**

**6.9K INTERACTIONS**

PER MONTH, APRIL 2025 STATISTICS

## FACEBOOK: TAMPA RIVERWALK



**77.5K FOLLOWERS**

**498.9K REACH**

**969.2K VIEWS**

**9.2K INTERACTIONS**

PER MONTH, APRIL 2025 STATISTICS

## WEBSITE: THETAMPARIVERWALK.COM

2025 STATISTICS



**401K VISITORS**



**698K PAGE VIEWS**



**2:39 AVG. TIME PER VISIT**

## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: THE RIVERWALK ROUNDUP

The Riverwalk Roundup is the Friends of the Riverwalk's weekly newsletter, featuring upcoming events around the Riverwalk and information on F.O.R events. It is sent out every Thursday at 10am.



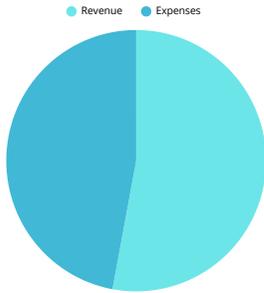
### Newsletter Impact:

- Event awareness
- Increases website traffic
- Stengthen brand awareness
- Increase sales

**5K**  
ACTIVE CONTACTS

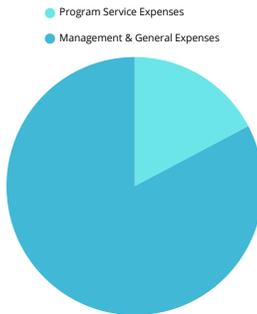
**50%**  
OPEN RATE

# At A Glance



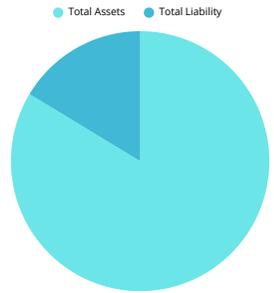
## REVENUE & EXPENSES

Revenue: \$1,151,909  
Expenses: \$1,024,491



## FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,024,491  
Program Service Expenses: \$897,006  
Management & General Expenses: \$127,485  
Fundraising Expenses: \$0



## BALANCE SHEET

Total Assets: \$1,148,491  
Total Liabilities: \$224,678



# 2025 Corporate Membership

## Diamond Members

1905 Family of Restaurants  
Barrymore Hotel  
Diamond View Studios  
Florida Avenue Brewing  
JNR Family Foundation  
Margaritaville at Sea  
Visit Tampa Bay

## Gold Members

Beck Group  
Redstone  
Tampa Bay Buccaneers  
Tampa Bay Rays & Rowdies  
Valley Bank

## Bronze Members

Cushman Wakefield  
Florin Roebig  
Partners in Printing  
Regions Private Wealth  
Management  
Sunset Events  
Tampa Bay Chamber

## Platinum Members

Teachers Federal Credit Union

## Silver Members

Hill Ward Henderson  
Tampa Downtown Partnership  
Tampa General Hospital

## Pearl Members

Ybor Chamber

# Tampa Attractions Members

## Diamond

Visit Tampa Bay

## Platinum

Manthey Hospitality –  
Busch Gardens  
Florida Aquarium  
Glazer Children's Museum  
Splitsville/Jotoro  
Straz Center  
Tampa Marriott Water  
Street & JW  
Tampa Museum of Art

## Gold

American Social  
Barrymore Hotel  
Malio's  
Sparkman Wharf  
ZooTampa  
Tampa Theatre  
Hampton Chocolates  
Jackson's Bistro  
Tampa Bay History Center

## Silver

Aramark/Sail/Big Rays  
GOGO Charters Tampa  
Hilton Downtown Tampa  
Hotel Tampa Riverwalk  
National Charter Bus Tampa  
Tampa Charter Bus  
Company  
American Victory Ship  
H.B. Plant Museum

# 2025 Event Sponsors

101 N Meridian • 1905 Family of Restaurants • 888 Legal, PLLC • American Social • Armature Works • Ashley Home Stores • Barrymore Hotel • Biolyte • Bubba Burger • Busch Gardens • Bush Ross • City of Tampa • Clear Channel Outdoor • Couch Family Foundation • Dano's Tequila • Diamond View Studios • Direct Auto Insurance • Dr. D's Live • Edlen • FHIA Remodeling • Florida Aquarium • Fun 4 Tampa Kids • Gardner Brewer Hudson, P.A. • Gobioff Foundation • Grow Financial • Hillsborough County • Holidays Network Group • Hotel Tampa Riverwalk • iHeart Media (Mix 100.7 & Rumba 95.7) • Jackson's Bistro • James Immigration Law • Jotoro • Liquid Death • Manthey Hospitality • Marriott Water Street Hotel & JW Marriott • Matt Law • MOR-TV • Mosaic • Pepin Distributing Co. • Publix • Scoop Soldiers • Shagbark Properties LLC • Splitsville • SPP / Sparkman Wharf • Straz Center • Tampa Bay Lightning • Tampa Bay MOR-TV • Tampa Bay Rays / Rowdies • Tampa Bay Sun • Tampa Bay Times • Tampa Convention Center • Tampa Downtown Partnership • Tampa General Hospital • Teachers Federal Credit Union • The Point • The Sail • Tito's • Ultimate Medical Academy • UNation • Urban Kai • US Marine Corps • Valley National Bank • Vault127 • Verizon • Vibrant Health Systems • Wade Trim • WAHL • Westgate Marketing • Zippy Shell Moving & Storage