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From Water Street to Westshore Marina: These four developments are changing the face of Tampa

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Water Street Tampa. The Westshore Marina District. Midtown Tampa. The Heights. The four major mixed-use districts under way in Tampa are frequently in the news, whether it's a construction update or a deal with a retailer or restaurant that's new to Tampa Bay.

Look beyond the headlines, though, and what's apparent is the magnitude of having four large-scale projects under construction at the same time, all within six miles of each other. If those districts were laid out next to each other, they would span 130 football fields. They would cover a land area 20 percent larger than Disney's Magic Kingdom. And they will bring millions of square feet of new commercial and residential space to a city that finally feels ready for the type of high-end developments that have long been the standard in peer cities like Austin, Nashville and Charlotte.

"The critical mass they provide — it's not only going to be transformative for people who live in Tampa today, but also really important for attracting news businesses to Tampa," said Nicholas Haines, CEO of New York-based Bromley Cos., which is the developer of Midtown. "I think there's real market need. I don't think Tampa is oversaturated in anything at this point, especially for really cool, dynamic developments."

Tampa Mayor [Jane Castor](#) frequently points out that the city will "change more in the next 10 years than it has in my entire lifetime." The four districts, she said, are critical to attracting the new business and industries that diversify the city's economy.

"Historically, a lot would come open and a building would go up," said Castor, 60, a Tampa native. "And now we're creating entire neighborhoods. It's not development for the sake of development; it's very thoughtful."

Westshore Marina District

The Westshore Marina District is transforming a long-vacant, seemingly forgotten piece of Tampa Bay's waterfront. Fort Lauderdale-based BTI Partners, the master developer, took title to the property in 2014 and started selling parcels to builders in 2017. Construction is underway on one of BTI's three condo towers on The Pointe within the district, and the developer has landed several retailers and restaurants — key to its goal of creating a walkable, urban community. The construction on this site is driving interest in the surrounding neighborhoods, pulling the vibrancy of South Tampa past its unofficial southern border of Gandy Boulevard.

Midtown Tampa

Midtown, at the intersection of Interstate 275 and North Dale Mabry Highway, has been in the works for more than 20 years; master developer Bromley Cos., based in New York, began assembling the land in the late 1990s. It is smack-dab in the middle of two of the city's most bustling districts — Westshore and downtown Tampa — and will add a sense of place and identity to the swath of land in between. The Midtown moniker is already catching on, with businesses in the area surrounding the district embracing the Midtown label.

Water Street Tampa

Water Street may be best known for its two major backers — Tampa Bay Lightning owner [Jeff Vinik](#) and Cascade Investment LLC, the investment fund controlled by Microsoft co-founder [Bill Gates](#) — but it is already changing the vibe of downtown



JAKE STEVENS/TBBJ; MAPS4NEWS

The big four mixed-use developments changing the face of Tampa.

Tampa. Apartment tower 815 Water Street— which is actually towers perched atop a parking deck and GreenWise Market — is rising quickly near the entrance to the Tampa Riverwalk, and the 26-story JW Marriott is expected to open in late 2020. The University of South Florida's Morsani College of Medicine is officially open in Water Street on an acre of land that Vinik donated to USF. With a major focus on growing Tampa's corporate base, the ripple effects of Water Street will reach well beyond its boundaries.

The Heights

You may refer to the entire 50 acres of The Heights as Armature Works — and while Armature Works is an anchor, there's so much more to The Heights. The mixed-use Armature Works — a historic trolley barn now home to two sit-down restaurants, a rooftop bar, food hall, and coworking and events space — is surrounded by new development. Heights Union, a 342,000-square-foot office building, will open in mid-2020. It's already signed deals with [WeWork](#) and AxoGen, a medical technology company. A new 25-story tower, which will include apartments and the city's first Moxy hotel, will begin construction this year. The developers, Tampa's SoHo Capital, also appear to be targeting a grocer for the district, based on filings with the city. Only a fraction of the overall Heights is up and running, but it has already revitalized the surrounding neighborhoods, increasing home prices and interest in Tampa Heights and Riverside Heights.

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