



HISTORIC GAS PLANT DISTRICT

MASTER DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Submitted by:

Freedom Communities Company, LLC

St. Petersburg, Florida

Founder: Sarellyn Hamatani

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Freedom Communities Company, LLC respectfully submits this proposal to redevelop a portion of the Historic Gas Plant District into a transformative, mixed-use, affordable housing-anchored community that honors the site's cultural legacy while delivering future-focused solutions for housing affordability, economic mobility, and creative empowerment.

Our proposal, The Sanctuary St. Pete, is aligned with the National Green Building Standard (NGBS), featuring walkable, transit-oriented development centered on affordable and workforce housing, community-serving retail, and intentional upward mobility programming, including a two-year rental-to-homeownership pathway—a first-of-its-kind model in St. Petersburg.

This development is designed not only to house residents, but to restore opportunity, honor history, and build generational pathways to stability and ownership.

VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision:

To create a nationally recognized model for equitable redevelopment where affordability, culture, sustainability, and opportunity coexist.

Guiding Principles:

- Honoring the legacy and displacement history of the Gas Plant District
- Delivering long-term affordability with built-in upward mobility
- Creating walkable, mixed-use, community-centered neighborhoods
- Supporting artists, writers, and cultural creators
- Aligning with City, County, and State housing priorities
- Leveraging public-private partnerships for lasting impact

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Name: The Sanctuary St. Pete

Location: Historic Gas Plant District, St. Petersburg, FL

Freedom Communities Company proposes a phased development approach. It respectfully requests site control of approximately 1 to 1.5 acres within the Historic Gas Plant District for Phase I implementation of The Sanctuary St. Pete.

This initial phase will deliver approximately 100 mixed-income residential units, ground-floor mixed-use and grocery-serving retail, community cultural amenities, and walkable public spaces, with future phases subject to approval by the City.

Phase I Development Scope:

- **100 residential units:**
 - 80 affordable units
 - 20 workforce units
- **Future phases to include:**
 - Senior housing
 - Additional workforce housing
 - Expanded mixed-use components

Construction Timeline:

- Entitlement & financing: 2026–2027
- Construction start: 2027–2028

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

Two-Year Rental-to-Homeownership Pathway (Exclusive to Freedom Communities)

Residents enrolled in the program receive:

- Financial literacy and credit-building support
- Savings and escrow pathways toward down payment readiness
- Career mobility and income-growth resources
- Priority placement into homeownership opportunities upon completion

Nonprofit Partnership (Upon Proposal Acceptance): A formal proposal will be submitted following the acceptance of this RFP, pending acceptance by the nonprofit partnership.

- **Habitat for Humanity** is the preferred nonprofit partner to transition program graduates into affordable homeownership opportunities.

This model creates movement—not stagnation—within affordable housing, aligning directly with St. Petersburg’s equity and housing mobility goals.

MIXED-USE & COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Anchor Grocery (Proposed)

- Sprouts Farmers Market *or* ALDI
- Ensures access to fresh, affordable food
- Serves residents and surrounding neighborhoods
- Activates street-level walkability and economic vitality

Creative & Cultural Infrastructure

- **Jordan’s Sound Studio** – a professional-grade community recording and sound lab
- **Joseph’s Writers Lab** – a writing and literary creation space for residents and local creatives

These spaces intentionally honor St. Petersburg's rich artistic heritage and provide economic and creative empowerment, particularly for young people and emerging artists.

Community & Public Realm Features

- Leasing and community engagement center
- Walkable streetscapes and plazas
- Outdoor seating, eating, and gathering areas
- Green infrastructure and shaded corridors
- A next-generation fitness and lifestyle center for elevating overall health and community wellness with restorative health benefits. A coffee and shake bar is to be proposed.
- Monthly community-centric events that align with St. Petersburg's cultural vibrancy and inclusiveness, building roots together in our community. We are St Pete.

SUSTAINABILITY & GREEN BUILDING

The Sanctuary St. Pete is designed to meet National Green Building Standard (NGBS) principles, including:

- Energy-efficient building systems
- Sustainable materials
- Water conservation measures
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Pedestrian-first design

SMART CITY & MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS

Freedom Communities Company has submitted sponsorship proposals to:

- **Uber**
- **Lyft**

These partnerships are intended to support:

- On-site designated pickup/drop-off zones
- Reduced transportation barriers
- Workforce and upward-mobility access
- Smart city infrastructure integration

Sponsorship acceptance is pending.

CAPITAL STACK & FINANCIAL APPROACH (SUMMARY)

Estimated Development Cost (Phase I):

- ~\$300,000 per unit (aligned with comparable St. Petersburg affordable developments)

Projected Capital Stack (Illustrative):

- City of St. Petersburg support (land participation, gap financing, or incentives)
- Pinellas County housing funds
- State of Florida housing programs
- Private equity and impact investors
- Philanthropic and nonprofit capital (via partnerships)
- Conventional and tax-credit aligned financing where applicable

Freedom Communities Company respectfully requests a proactive partnership with the City of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County, leveraging local housing incentives, permitting, and regulatory coordination with the St. Petersburg Housing Authority and Pinellas County Housing Authority, to help assemble and align a best-in-class development team.

COMMUNITY IMPACT & LEGACY COMMITMENT

This proposal is intentionally structured to:

- Address historic displacement through opportunity-based redevelopment
- Deliver lasting affordability—not short-term compliance
- Support minority- and women-led development participation
- Create a replicable model for equitable urban redevelopment statewide
- Create sustainable, high-wage job security for essential workers, property management positions, and project management roles.
- Assist residents in homeownership who would otherwise be perpetual renters, creating generational wealth for families in our city.
- Partner with the city and county to develop deep roots and loyalty with those in our community we serve.

DEVELOPER PROFILE

Freedom Communities Company, LLC is a women-led, faith-based, mission-driven development firm focused on affordable housing, upward mobility, and community restoration.

While a startup firm, Freedom Communities brings:

- Deep lived-experience insight into housing instability
- Strong alignment with public-sector goals
- A bold, partnership-first approach to development
- A long-term commitment to St. Petersburg
- A deep loyalty to serve and empower those in our community, transitioning residents into homeowners, and creating a lasting legacy for many generations to come.

CONCLUSION

The Historic Gas Plant District deserves redevelopment that honors its past while building a just and bright future.

The Sanctuary St. Pete is not simply a housing project—it is a platform for hope, strength, creativity, ownership, and generational progress. We build with your future in mind.

Freedom Communities Company, LLC, is honored to submit this proposal and welcomes the opportunity to partner with the City of St. Petersburg in delivering a nationally exemplary redevelopment.

SUBMISSION CONTACT

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