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**Launch of *Florida Riverwalk Exchange* Unveils Common Goals,
Common Challenges to Florida's Key Riverwalks
-- Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville & Jupiter Tackle
Best Ways to Optimize Waterfronts --**

Jupiter, Fla. – A groundbreaking collaboration was launched yesterday with the first-ever summit of the newly formed **Florida Riverwalk Exchange**. The three coastal cities of Tampa, Fort Lauderdale and Jacksonville teamed with the host town, Jupiter, for a think tank dedicated to creating and preserving dynamic and economically viable public/private waterfronts. Over twenty Riverwalk representatives attended, including Riverwalk Executive Directors, city and town officials, architects, urban planners, corporate executives, service professionals, and more. The audience spent the day grappling with how to create and preserve dynamic waterfronts that are accessible and exciting venues for the public. Noting why the venue, and Riverwalks are so important at this juncture in Florida's history, Lee Hoffman, Tampa's Riverwalk Development Manager summed it up, "All the planets are lined up for this to be the right time for a Riverwalk," especially as water frontage is quickly disappearing to condo and commercial development in Florida's coastal communities.

The unique forum was spearheaded by Ben Wacksman, President of Capital Realty Investors LLC, who is on Tampa's Riverwalk task force, and whose firm owns commercial property on Jupiter's Riverwalk, giving Wacksman the idea to create a forum to share the best of key Riverwalks in the state. Mr. Wacksman presided over presentations from each city and town, along with roundtable discussions on the most pressing challenges and suggested solutions for each Riverwalk.

"We discovered that whether a new or existing Riverwalk, we all faced so many of the same challenges," said Wacksman. "We also discovered a lot of innovative solutions that had worked for some Riverwalks, and will hopefully now work for others going forward. There is no need for a city to reinvent the wheel if other Riverwalks have tried and true formulas for success on issues."

Topics addressed included:

- *Public vs. private funding*. Tampa said it has an ordinance that requires that if you build on the Riverwalk, you also must build and maintain Riverwalk frontage, that city's way of capitalizing on partnering with the community.
- *Events and attractions to draw the public to Riverwalks*. Said Scott Strawbridge, an executive committee member of Fort Lauderdale's

Riverwalk Trust, “You need to give people ten ways to get there and ten things to do once they’re there.” Fort Lauderdale reps also noted they had reduced events after discovering they increasingly had to compete against more established Riverwalk businesses.

- *Access by boaters.* Jacksonville is using floating docks to increase accessibility to its Riverwalk, and Fort Lauderdale is initiating a pilot program with 500 linear feet of floating docks that would “rise and fall with the river”.
- *Width of a Riverwalk.* Representatives stated that a Riverwalk can’t be less than 12 feet, but some were aiming for a much as 25-foot width, which Jupiter said was preferable. As Jacksonville’s Riverwalk architect Melody Bishop noted, “You need enough room for two couples to comfortably pass while walking their dogs.”
- *Maintenance.* Fort Lauderdale said that like its beach areas, they were potentially looking to raise the Riverwalk’s maintenance “to five-star”. Maintenance, and who pays for it, was a hot topic among all.
- *Retail.* Jacksonville’s Downtown Vision Executive Director, Terry Lorraine, noted that in their studies of the right retail mix, bringing in top-notch restaurants caused art galleries to follow, and then high-end shops naturally followed. Fort Lauderdale noted that they stayed away from national chains in general, and most agreed that unique retail was most befitting a Riverwalk.
- *Security.* Jupiter’s Mayor Karen Golonka said that in the town’s early stages of its Riverwalk development, they request balconies on residential development so that the people could be “the eyes and ears” of the Riverwalk. Other mature Riverwalks, including Fort Lauderdale and Jacksonville, relied on bike police. Fort Lauderdale discussed the merits of webcams going forward, and call boxes were discussed.
- *New ideas* – Fort Lauderdale’s Riverwalk Executive Director, Patsy Mennuti, humorously noted that, “The wealthiest person in downtown is the hot dog vendor,” prompting them to consider a food court going forward.
- *Shade & Shelter* – Tampa noted that shade and shelter were important to incorporate into design. Jacksonville noted that one Riverwalk section that goes under a train bridge was a very desirable portion due in part to its shade.
- *Marketing* – Fort Lauderdale partners with local developers to include a membership to the Riverwalk Trust in condo welcome/closing packages.
- *Demographics* – Fort Lauderdale noted that the audience for a Riverwalk is always changing with the maturation of the area. – Fort Lauderdale’s Riverwalk is now experiencing an influx of residents due to condo development on both sides of the river, so how to transport them from one side to the other was discussed.

Representatives present also noted that planning long-term capital infrastructure is critical –not just plans for the near future. As Brenda Arnold, Riverwalk Project Manager from Jupiter aptly noted, “Our job is not to meet today’s market, but to meet the needs upon build-out [completion].”

Already, the Florida Riverwalk Exchange is planning a follow-up event in Tampa over the summer, at which time they will tour Tampa’s Riverwalk via cruise boat. Fort Lauderdale is looking to potentially follow with a November gathering to coincide with a large Riverwalk festival in that city.

Riverwalk Background

Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, and Jupiter are all in various stages of Riverwalk planning, development and/or preservation.

Tampa’s “Friends of the Riverwalk” public/private task force is dedicated to cultivating the 2.4-mile Riverwalk that will wind its way along downtown Tampa. The goal of the task force is to harmoniously integrate local history and natural scenery with business and residential life, emphasizing an interactive promenade. Tampa’s Riverwalk is 17% complete, with a strong focus on getting as much completed as possible by 2009 when Tampa hosts Super Bowl XLIII. Completed segments already include the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, a hotel and marina, and several parks. Future segments will link the new Tampa Bay History Center, the new Tampa Children’s Museum, Water Works Park, city pier, a residential development, restaurants and shops. More information can be found at www.tampariverwalk.net.

The Town of Jupiter, in northern Palm Beach County, plans a 2.5-mile Riverwalk that will serve as a focal point of that coastal bedroom community. Jupiter’s Riverwalk has been master planned to include an entertainment district, parks, observation areas, docks, fishing opportunities, residences, restaurants and retail, and natural preserved areas. Two phases totaling 2,500 linear feet have been completed: one section features a natural environment characterized by lush mangrove trees and wildlife, along with a luxury office building, Riverwalk Center; the second section features the adjacent Jupiter Yacht Club, a \$250-million development including a private/public marina, residences, soon to be completed retail and restaurants, and a future five-star hotel.

Fort Lauderdale’s Riverwalk is one of the most mature of the Riverwalks with a one-mile “Riverwalk Park” along the New River. The winding walkway passes Fort Lauderdale’s Arts & Entertainment District through lush landscaping past shopping, dining, water taxi stops, parks, new condo development, and past major cultural attractions including the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Museum of Discovery and Science, the Old Fort Lauderdale Museum of History, entertainment and retail at Las Olas Riverfront, and historic Stranahan House. The Riverwalk has 24,000 engraved Signature Bricks that line the walkway with personalized messages. The Riverwalk, www.goriverwalk.com, Trust serves as

the catalyst in building and nurturing Fort Lauderdale's "most beautiful mile", an advocacy group of business and professional volunteers.

The fourth city in the Florida Riverwalk Exchange, Jacksonville, has a well developed downtown waterfront with a pedestrian promenade that totals 2.5 miles. The city's Downtown Vision, Inc., is looking to build and maintain a healthy and vibrant downtown community, www.downtownjacksonville.org. Jacksonville's Riverwalk is situated on both sides of the St. John's River, passing premier attractions including the Jacksonville Historical Center, Maritime Museum, the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, along with parks, over 5,000 residential units (proposed), hotels, shops, marinas and more. The city anticipates the Riverwalk eventually doubling in length to five miles as development proliferates downtown.

More than twenty representatives are expected at the April 6th summit. The Florida Riverwalk Exchange expects ongoing collaborative efforts between the various Riverwalks for the foreseeable future, along with additional summit meetings going forward.

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