



City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
324 EAST PINE STREET
P.O. BOX 5004
TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA 34688-5004
(727) 942-5611

Patricia L. McNeese, AICP
ACTING DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Linda Fisher, AICP, Principal Planner
Forward Pinellas

FROM: Patricia L. McNeese, AICP, Principal Planner/Acting Director

DATE: February 11, 2020

RE: Application #19-132, Ordinance #2019-22; Red Bank Investments, LLC
East Live Oak Street, Parcel #12-27-15-00965-000-0003
Request for Zoning Change in Activity Center

This memorandum provides additional information regarding the impact of the proposed rezoning on the Urban Design Principles contained in Goal 16 of the Countywide Plan Strategies. It is noted that the proposed use (residential multifamily) and density (15 dwelling units per acre) are not being altered in this request. The only alteration is one of housing product, from apartments (now allowable) to townhomes (allowable with the zoning change). On that basis, analyses of each of the Urban Design Principles are provided below.

Principle 1. Location Size and Density/Intensity Standards

The subject application is in an existing approved Activity Center. There are no proposed changes to the boundaries, density/intensity standards, or size of the Activity Center itself. This Activity Center is implemented through the City's Special Area Plan Sponge Docks and Community Redevelopment Area (SAP). The project is in the "Sponge Docks Character District" of the SAP and currently within the T5d (North Pinellas Ave) transect district of the City's Transect-Based Infill Code for the Sponge Docks and Community Redevelopment Area (SmartCode). The applicant wishes to build townhomes. The current T5d district allows apartments, but does not allow townhomes. A land use change to the T4c (Residential High) transect district is being requested to allow the townhome product. The standards for the T4c transect district requested by the applicant actually allow for an increase in density. However, the applicant does not wish to exceed the current allowable density under T5d, so a restrictive covenant will be recorded to maintain the current density limit of 15 dwelling units per acre.

Both the T5d and the T4c transect districts are designed to support Principle 1 in that they already allow relatively high densities and a mix of uses. The site is very close to Alternate U.S.

19 and on a main connector, East Live Oak Street, and is therefore within walking distance of transit. There is existing multi-family development (townhomes) immediately north of the site. This proposal maintains the densities already envisioned for the Activity Center.

Principle 2. Connectivity

In addition to being within very short walking distance to transit, the site is well-situated for connectivity to commercial and recreational uses. The City’s Dog Park, Splash Park and North Pinellas Trail Fitness Park are all located just east of the site, and the Sponge Docks tourist area is less than one block to the west. The site is well-situated and connected for all users including transit, bicycle and pedestrian modes. In addition, the site is also about one block from the Pinellas Trail, providing Countywide connectivity opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian users.

Principle 3. Site Orientation

The buildings, driveways and parking access will be oriented to an existing internal street (facing Athenian Way to the north). As townhomes, they will generally fill up the site, being relatively close to both Athenian Way and East Live Oak Street. This project is a final phase of the existing townhome development located immediately to the north known as Anclote River Crossings. The development features fairly narrow streets, buildings close to the street and pedestrian ways that wind throughout. This pattern will be continued by the proposed development. Residents of these buildings will be encouraged to walk due to the placement of buildings, proliferation of sidewalks, short distances from building to street, and minimized intervening parking area.

Principle 4. Public Realm Enhancements

This area of East Live Oak Street to North Hibiscus Street leading to the Sponge Docks recently underwent a major renovation that provides for traffic calming, comfortable pedestrian access and tree plantings that will provide increasing shade as they grow. The area is currently very comfortable and inviting for pedestrians. The applicant will be required to continue this trend in the design of the development.

Principle 5. Ground Floor Design and Use

The proposed project is residential. This principle does not apply. However, the purpose of this objective is being achieved through the wider array of uses within the Sponge Docks Character District of the SAP that are connected via the existing Pinellas Trail, City parks and sidewalk network transitioning into the commercial area of Alternate U.S. 19 and the Sponge Docks.

Principle 6. Transition to Neighborhoods

While this parcel could accommodate a wider array of commercial uses under the current transect (T5d, North Pinellas Ave), the original vision for this area has shifted somewhat with the improvements along East Live Oak Street and the installation of an accompanying major drainage facility along the south side of that street, directly across from the subject property. The drainage facility and reconfiguration of the roadway make this strip of East Live Oak Street less viable for commercial uses. This, along with the existence of primarily open space and recreational use immediately to the east, makes the proposal of higher density multi-family housing an appropriate transition as one travels west. The existing commercial uses just west of the site along Alternate U.S. 19 begin that transition over to the Sponge Docks commercial and

tourist area. A change to the T4c Residential High transect encourages higher density residential use with less emphasis on commercial development. Given the existing townhomes, the City feels this is an appropriate transition for this site and avoids potential conflicts with any proposed commercial venture here. Also, the site is judged to be more viable for residential development than for commercial development, and more appropriate to the physically connective environment along the East Live Oak corridor.