



PPC Meeting
February 10, 2016

Agenda Item
III.C

Countywide Rules
Amendments
TECs, TDRs, and
Temp. Lodging

I. RECOMMENDATION

Council consider at public hearing and adopt accompanying Resolution No. 16-1 recommending approval of the amendment of the Countywide Rules to the Countywide Planning Authority.

II. BACKGROUND

There are three items that have been brought forward by local governments that involve the potential amendment of the Countywide Rules. These topics are:

- Target Employment Center (TEC) – Section 2.3.3.13. Specifically, the minimum size requirement of “generally 100 acres in size.” St. Petersburg staff has suggested that this minimum be reduced to 10 acres.

During the development of the most recent version of the Countywide Plan and Rules, and based on the “Centers, Corridors, and Districts” concept included in Pinellas by Design, staff chose 100 acres as a cutoff for the identification of areas that would be set aside to provide additional development rights for target employment uses. During the analysis, and specifically for placing on the Countywide Map during the one-time countywide map amendment adoption right given to the Council in the Council’s new Special Act, it was discovered that most groupings of industrial and office parcels were over 100 acres. The remaining conglomerations were closer to 20 acres (or below).

So, in keeping with Pinellas by Design’s Centers, Corridors, and Districts concept, the larger acreage threshold was adopted (the “Districts” term became “Center” as it relates to the TEC Countywide Plan Map category). However, staff is supportive of a change in the threshold if a local government can support an amendment that will assist in keeping or attracting target employment uses in smaller areas, which will further the Strategies in the Countywide Plan. In addition, a 10 acre minimum should still result in creating an area large enough to spur additional employment activity.

The attached ordinance indicates a 10-acre minimum size for new TEC areas.

PPC Action: *The Council adopted Resolution No. 16-1 recommending approval of the amendment of the Countywide Rules to the Countywide Planning Authority (vote 11-0).*

CPA Action: *5/10/16 - The Board held the first of two scheduled public hearings.*

- Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) – Section 5.2.1.1. Specifically, 5.2.1.1.1 D limits a receiving parcel to an increase of no more than 25 percent over the otherwise maximum permitted density/intensity allowed for each applicable Countywide Plan Map category. Pinellas County staff suggests that this limit be raised by an additional five percent for projects meeting specified criteria, such as economic development objectives.

The attached ordinance includes a new section outlining how this extra five percent of development rights can be utilized by local government.

- Temporary Lodging Use Standards – Section 5.2.1.3. Specifically, 5.2.1.3.1 E that includes ground level parking under a hotel in the calculation of floor area ratio (FAR). Treasure Island staff wishes to “level the playing field for inland and barrier island communities” relative to Temporary Lodging Use standards.

These Countywide Rule standards for temporary lodging uses are optional for local governments, as they may choose to utilize them in their local future land use plans and land development regulations. They were developed as part of a countywide effort to improve the regulatory framework for temporary lodging uses so they could compete more effectively with residential development that was beginning to dominate our coastal areas, resulting in the loss of thousands of temporary lodging units. There were several reasons for adopting these more permissive rules, including avoiding significant detrimental economic impacts due to losing temporary lodging uses, but another important aspect of these new optional standards was to ensure that the resulting structures were not too large and did not overwhelm the surrounding area or beach communities. The temporary lodging study primarily focused on the beach areas of Pinellas County, but it was also understood that these heightened standards could be used on mainland properties.

Temporary lodging uses on the barrier islands are required to elevate their structures due to flooding hazards. As a result, it is typical for them to devote the ground level to parking. The argument provided by Treasure Island staff is that the mainland temporary lodging uses have a built-in relative advantage because they do not have to elevate their structures for flood purposes and can therefore gain additional building area by placing parking outside of the structure. To remove the perceived inequity, Treasure Island staff suggests removing ground level parking from the FAR calculation. However, Council staff notes that when parking is placed outside the building, it still consumes land that could otherwise be used for the temporary lodging structure, and that a parcel of a given size would have the same development potential whether located on the barrier islands or mainland. We also note that the standards that were developed took this ground level parking into account and should accommodate a standard size room temporary lodging use and associated parking. In other words, the FARs that were adopted in the original ordinance were set to accommodate the temporary lodging use and associated parking structures.

The suggested local government revision would apply to all categories that offer these optional provisions, and across all parcel sizes regardless of location. Essentially, the removal of the first floor of parking from the calculations for the FAR standard would allow an additional floor of height, or a larger building footprint, depending on the parcel configuration.

Council staff has reviewed the backup materials that were part of the original study of temporary lodging uses, and discussed this with Treasure Island staff. We conclude that a change to the regulations is warranted, but only for the smaller parcels identified in the table that regulates FAR (i.e., less than one acre in the Resort Countywide Plan Map category) and not across the board of all size parcels and all categories that allow temporary lodging uses. Instead of erasing a perceived level of unfairness between the mainland and barrier island properties, it provides an appropriate FAR to accommodate small scale temporary lodging uses (see discussion below).

These smaller parcels (less than one acre) typically house temporary lodging uses that have a low number of rooms, so to be more viable and to compete with larger temporary lodging establishments, they often require a different product to attract clientele. After discussion with Treasure Island staff, we see that these smaller uses are more specialized in their product and are requesting larger than normal size rooms (typically above 700 square feet and up to 1,300 square feet). The current FAR of 2.0 for these smaller parcels is adequate for uses that have small to medium size rooms, parking structures, and with a modest amount of associated uses (e.g., coffee shop or gift shop). However, for room sizes exceeding the norm, staff has concluded that an additional 10% of FAR (changing from 2.0 to 2.2) should adequately address the issue and allow smaller uses to produce a more unique and attractive hotel product. This has a similar effect as removing parking that is below flood elevation requirements¹ from the calculation of FAR, but is a more consistent and clear way to accomplish it.

Please follow this link to access the Countywide Rules on-line (click Countywide Rules once at the home page): <http://www.pinellasplanningcouncil.org>.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Council consider at public hearing and adopt the accompanying Resolution No. 16-1 recommending approval of the amendment of the Countywide Rules to the Countywide Planning Authority.

IV. PLANNERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

¹ It is important to note that actual ground elevations and flood elevation requirements vary considerable depending on location, and may require the base floor of the structure to be elevated higher than the minimum flood elevation requirement in order to accommodate parking. This has the effect of increasing the size and height of the structure.

At the Planners Advisory Committee meeting on February 1, 2016, the members discussed and recommended approval of staff recommendation (vote 12-0).

V. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Resolution No. 16-1, including:
Exhibit I – Ordinance strike through and underline
Exhibit II – Ordinance clean