



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 18, 2023

AGENDA ITEM: E.1.

ORDINANCE NO.: 9663-23

REQUEST: Review and recommendation to the City Council on amendments to the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan to revise the Public Amenities Incentive Pool eligible amenities and pool allocation process.

INITIATED BY: City of Clearwater, Planning and Development Department

BACKGROUND:

The city established the Public Amenities Incentive Pool (Pool) in 2004 as part of a major update to the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan (Plan). At the time, various constraints affecting redevelopment had been identified, and the Pool was one means of supporting the private sector in their efforts to redevelop Downtown which concurrently provided benefits to the public when utilized.

The Plan establishes the Pool, the allocation process, and qualifying amenities, while the Community Development Code references the Pool and is the implementing tool. Units and square feet of floor area within the Pool may be allocated for additional development potential in Downtown until the Pool is depleted. Developers may request increases in density and/or intensity in excess of the established maximum development potential, based on the provision of and/or payment of fees in-lieu of certain public amenities through a negotiated process approved by the Community Development Board. Currently there are 2,079 dwelling units and 2,095,667 square feet of floor area available for allocation from the Public Amenities Incentive Pool which may be requested for projects anywhere within in the Downtown District.

The 2018 update to the Plan reaffirmed the vision for Downtown as the urban core and heart of the City. Generally, the 2018 Plan's updated goals, objectives, policies and development potential support a multimodal Downtown, preservation of neighborhood character, allow for greater development opportunities for existing lots, and encourage a variety of housing types. No

changes were made to the Public Amenities Incentive Pool process or eligible amenities at that time.

More recently, Planning and Development Department staff have been evaluating the Public Amenities Incentive Pool program to identify ways to further increase development in the Downtown Core. One recommendation, which was discussed with City Council at its April 17, 2021 Work Session, is to establish a two-tier approach to allocating units and floor area from the existing Pool. Because the Plan establishes the allocation process, it must be amended to allow for such a change (proposed Ordinance No. 9663-23). Additionally, to implement these changes, amendments to Appendix C. Downtown District and Development Standards will also be required (see companion case TA2023-01001, proposed Ordinance No. 9664-23).

ANALYSIS:

Proposed Ordinance No. 9663-23 amends two components of the Public Amenities Incentive Pool subsection located in Chapter 4. Plan Implementation of the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan (page 132 of the Plan).

First, the eligible amenities list is proposed to be reorganized and expanded. New Class A office space in the Downtown Core and Prospect Lake Character Districts is desired and supported through Plan policies. Residential rental projects bring full-time residents to Downtown, consistent with the Integrated Variety Guiding Principle and helping meet the Plan's People Goal. Similarly, hotels are another means of bringing people and generating activity and are therefore a desired in all Character Districts. The inclusion of sustainable development options such as achieving green building certifications (e.g., LEED) and providing electric vehicle charging stations furthers the Plan's Environment Guiding Principle.

Second, amendments to the Pool Allocation Process would allow the Community Development Coordinator to approve allocations from the Pool. The allocation process will continue to be defined in the Community Development Code, but these changes enable a streamlined process through the Development Review Committee (DRC) for future requests.

CONSISTENCY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A review of the Clearwater Comprehensive Plan identified the following Objectives and Policies which will be furthered by the proposed amendments to the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan:

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- Policy A.5.5.5 Update Beach by Design: A Preliminary Design for Clearwater Beach and Design Guidelines, and the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan, as needed.
- Objective A.6.1 The redevelopment of blighted, substandard, inefficient and/or obsolete areas shall be a high priority and promoted through the implementation of redevelopment and special area plans, the construction of catalytic private projects, city investment, and continued emphasis on property maintenance standards.
- Policy A.6.1.8 The City shall continue to support and implement approved community redevelopment area plans, such as the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan adopted in 2004 and Beach by Design adopted in 2001.
- Policy A.6.1.10 Clearwater will continue to support the tax increment financing program and redevelopment efforts of the downtown area through activities of the economic development office and actions of the City Council as the Community Redevelopment Agency.
- Objective A.6.8 Identify those areas of the City that are appropriate for redevelopment as livable communities and require that specific sustainable elements be used in the redevelopment of these areas.
- Objective C.1.1 Assure an adequate supply of housing in Clearwater by providing for additional new dwelling units in a variety of types, costs, and locations to meet the needs of the residents of the City of Clearwater.
- Objective C.1.10 Recognizing that sustainable building techniques contribute to keeping housing units affordable over the long term by reducing energy consumption, lowering utility bills and decreasing maintenance costs, the City of Clearwater will promote the use of green housing construction and renovation and rehabilitation techniques.

Proposed Ordinance No. 9663-23 is consistent with the Clearwater Comprehensive Plan as evidenced by the objectives and policies identified above. Amending the Public Amenities Incentive Pool allocation process to allow the Community Development Coordinator to approve allocations supports Downtown redevelopment efforts by bringing greater consistency to and streamlining of the process which will encourage greater use of the Pool and thus redevelopment of properties overall. Similarly, utilizing the Pool to incentivize Class A office space in two

Character Districts further supports the Economic Development and Housing Department's activities in these areas. Allowing sustainable design options as potential amenities for which Pool allocations can be granted helps to address certain contributors to housing affordability and furthers the city's desire for livable communities as Downtown redevelops.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION:

The Community Development Board is reviewing proposed Ordinance No. 9663-23 in its capacity as the Local Planning Agency (LPA) and is requested to make a recommendation regarding the proposed amendments to the City Council. Additionally, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is requested to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the amendments to the Plan. Once the City Council approves these amendments, they will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for approval as amendments to the Community Redevelopment Plan for the CRA. The amendments will also be submitted to Forward Pinellas, in its capacity as the Pinellas Planning Council, and the Countywide Planning Authority for review and approval as the Special Area Plan governing Downtown.

The proposed amendments to the Plan implement the City Council's desire to further support redevelopment in Downtown and will allow for the allocation of units and floor area from the Public Amenities Incentive Pool in additional ways.

Based upon the above, the Planning and Development Department recommends **APPROVAL** of Ordinance No. 9663-23 which amends the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

Prepared by Planning and Development Department Staff: _____



Lauren Matzke, AICP
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ATTACHMENTS: Ordinance No. 9663-23
Resume