

CW 18-12 Forward Pinellas Staff Analysis

Relevant Countywide Considerations:

- 1) **Consistency with the Countywide Rules** – This proposed amendment is submitted by the City of Clearwater and seeks to amend the boundary, densities, intensities, and height allowances associated with the Special Area Plan (Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan). The first part of the request seeks to expand the Special Area Plan boundaries by 10.9 acres to the north and amend the designations of those properties from Public/Semi-Public (intended to recognize institutional and transportation/utility uses that serve the community or region, especially larger facilities having acreage exceeding the thresholds established in other plan categories, and which are consistent with the need, character, and scale of such uses relative to the surrounding uses, transportation facilities, and natural resource features), Retail & Services (used to depict areas developed with a mix of businesses that provide for the shopping and personal service needs of the community or region, provide for employment opportunities and accommodate target employment uses, and may include residential uses as part of the mix of uses), and Residential Low Medium (used to depict areas that are primarily well-suited for suburban, low density or moderately dense residential uses at a maximum density of 10 dwelling units per acre) to Activity Center (used to recognize those areas of the county that have been identified and planned for in a special and detailed manner, serve as identifiable centers of business, public, and residential activity that are the focal point of a community, and are served by enhanced transit commensurate with the type, scale, and intensity of use).

The second part of this request seeks to amend the Special Area Plan by amending the intensity, density and maximum heights for all Character Districts within the Downtown Planning Area.

If approved, this amendment will be consistent with Clearwater's Comprehensive Plan.

- 2) **Adopted Roadway Level of Service (LOS) Standard** – Segments of both S. Ft. Harrison Ave. and Chestnut St. are operating at an LOS of "F" within the amendment area boundaries.

Objectives of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan include reducing automobile congestion, maintaining or reducing roadway corridor size, providing an urban environment conducive to mixed-used development, and to emphasize connections to transit. The amendment area contains several key corridors, including Cleveland St. and N. Ft. Harrison Ave., which are served by transit. There are several transit routes operated by the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) in the Downtown Core with the Park Street Terminal in the center of the Downtown Core.

- 3) **Location on a Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor (SNCC)** – The amendment area is not located on a SNCC, so those policies are not applicable.
- 4) **Coastal High Hazard Areas (CHHA)** – A portion of the amendment area is located within the CHHA and is therefore subject to the Countywide Rules criteria regarding development in the CHHA. These criteria are used for reviewing proposed amendments that would increase density or intensity, or that would permit certain uses, within the CHHA. The Forward Pinellas

Board and the Countywide Planning Authority may, at their discretion, consider approving such amendments based on a balancing of the ten criteria below.

The 555.8 acre amendment area contains 24.2 acres within the CHHA (4.4%), with the majority of this area along the shoreline of currently developed parcels. The Downtown Core and the Old Bay Character Districts contain these portions within the CHHA. The amendment proposes to increase the maximum permitted density of the Downtown Core character district from 70 to 75 dwelling units per acre (UPA). The amendment also proposes to increase the boundaries of the Activity Center category by 10.9 acres, with the new area generally located between Nicholson St. to the south, the Pinellas Trail to the east, Clearwater Harbor to the west, and 340' south of Palm Bluff St. to the north, increase the permitted density to 35 UPA for residential uses or 50 UPA for mixed use, establish a permitted density of 35 rooms per acre for bed and breakfasts, and for properties fronting on and westward of N. Ft. Harrison Ave., increase the permitted intensity from 1.0 to 1.5 floor area ratio (FAR). Of the boundary expansion 10.9-acre area, 0.1 acres are in the CHHA (0.9%).

Access to Emergency Shelter Space and Evacuation Routes – The uses associated with the requested amendment will have access to adequate emergency shelter space as well as evacuation routes with adequate capacities and evacuation clearance times.

The City has adopted the objective of restricting permanent population densities in the coastal storm areas in order to help facilitate a more disaster-resistant community. The Section A.1.2 of the City's Future Land Use Element incorporate all criteria of the Section 4.2.7 of The Countywide Rules. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that this amendment will have a negative impact on emergency shelter space and evacuation routes since given the small area of upland that is within the CHHA.

Utilization of Existing and Planned Infrastructure – The requested amendment will result in the utilization of existing infrastructure, as opposed to requiring the expenditure of public funds for the construction of new, unplanned infrastructure with the potential to be damaged by coastal storms.

The amendment area includes a mix of uses all served by existing infrastructure and no significant upgrades are required to serve this area.

Utilization of Existing Disturbed Areas – The requested amendment will result in the utilization of existing disturbed areas as opposed to natural areas that buffer existing development from coastal storms.

The properties within the CHHA have been developed over time. That is, there are no natural, undisturbed areas remaining.

Maintenance of Scenic Qualities and Improvement of Public Access to Water – The requested amendment will result in the maintenance of scenic qualities, and the improvement of public access, to the Gulf of Mexico, inland waterways (such as Boca Ciega Bay), and Tampa Bay.

The City of Clearwater has incorporated objectives within their Coastal Management Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan which address the maintenance of scenic qualities and improvement of public access to water.

Water Dependent Use – The requested amendment is for uses which are water dependent.

The area that is within the CHHA includes a marina. The marina's viability will be improved as properties redevelopment consistent with the vision of the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

Part of Community Redevelopment Plan – The requested amendment is included in a Community Redevelopment Plan, as defined by Florida Statutes for a downtown or other designated redevelopment areas.

The Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) will be making a recommendation to the City Council regarding this document as the officially adopted Redevelopment Plan for the CRA. Once the City Council approves the Plan, it will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for approval as the Community Redevelopment Plan for the CRA.

Overall Reduction of Density or Intensity –The requested amendment would result in an increase in density or intensity on a single parcel, in concert with corollary amendments which result in the overall reduction of development density or intensity in the surrounding CHHA.

This proposed amendment is for a broader area, but it does not appear that it will result in a reduction in density or intensity in the CHHA.

Clustering of Uses – The requested amendment within the CHHA provides for the clustering of uses on a portion of the site outside the CHHA.

This proposed amendment is for a broader area, but it does not appear that it will result in a reduction in a clustering of uses outside the CHHA.

Integral Part of Comprehensive Planning Process – The requested amendment has been initiated by the local government as an integral part of its comprehensive planning process, consistent with the local government comprehensive plan.

The proposed amendments to the Special Area Plan implement the City's desire to provide greater opportunities for redevelopment. These provisions confirm and reinforce the City's commitment to implementing the strategies developed from the 2014 Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel Report. In addition, the proposed amendments are consistent with and will further the goals of the Clearwater Comprehensive Plan while also incorporating major policy provisions of Imagine Clearwater, North Marina Area Master Plan, and East Gateway District Vision Plan providing a unified vision for the area.

On balance, the proposed amendment can be deemed consistent with this Relevant Countywide Consideration.

- 5) **Designated Development/Redevelopment Areas** – The City of Clearwater proposes to amend the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan by amending the intensity, density and maximum height for all Character Districts within the Downtown Planning Area and expanding the boundary of the Activity Center by 10.9 acres.
- 6) **Adjacent to or Impacting an Adjoining Jurisdiction or Public Educational Facility** – The proposed amendment area is not adjacent to another jurisdiction. The amendment area contains a public education facility, North Ward Elementary, which is located at 900 North Fort

Harrison Avenue. However, the school is not on the Pinellas County School Board's active school list, so those policies are not applicable.

Conclusion:

On balance, it can be concluded that the proposed amendment is deemed consistent with the Relevant Countywide Considerations found in the Countywide Rules.