

FORWARD PINELLAS STAFF ANALYSIS



APPLICATION NO.:	Case CW 25-05
STAFF:	Emma Wennick, Program Planner
APPLICANT:	Largo
PROPERTY SIZE:	13.92 acres m.o.l.
CURRENT COUNTYWIDE PLAN MAP CATEGORY:	Public/Semi-Public
PROPOSED COUNTYWIDE PLAN MAP CATEGORY:	Retail & Services
CURRENT LOCAL FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP CATEGORY:	City of Largo – Institutional
PROPOSED LOCAL FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP CATEGORY:	City of Largo – Residential/Office/Retail
LOCATION / PARCEL ID:	201 Highland Avenue North/ 35-29-15-71824-000-0010

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

The City of Largo has applied to amend the Countywide Plan Map from Public/Semi-Public to Retail & Services for a 13.92-acre site located at 201 Highland Avenue North. The current Public/Semi-Public category recognizes institutional and transportation or utility uses that serve the community or region, including larger facilities such as the existing City Hall complex on the property. Portions of the site also lack a current Countywide Plan designation, reflecting historic rights-of-way or other previously undesignated areas.

The requested Retail & Services category would allow a broader mix of uses, including retail, personal services, professional offices, employment opportunities, and residential as part of a mixed-use concept. The amendment supports infill redevelopment within an established urban area and aligns with the Countywide Plan's goals for placing mixed-use activity near multimodal corridors and activity centers. No specific development proposal is associated with this request, and any future redevelopment would be reviewed under the maximum allowable uses and intensities of the Retail & Services category.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the amendment to the Countywide Plan Map from Public/Semi-Public to Retail & Services.

PLANNERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Planners Advisory Committee met on September 2, 2025 and voted unanimously (14-0) to recommend approval.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL/COMMISSION ACTION:

The City of Largo Planning Board reviewed the proposed Countywide Plan Map amendment on June 5, 2025, and approved it by a unanimous 5-0 vote. One community member provided public comment at the meeting, expressing concerns about potential overdevelopment and impacts on surrounding areas. The City Commission considered the amendment on July 1, 2025, and approved it 6-0, with Commissioner Johnson absent, and no public comment was offered at that meeting.

CURRENT PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Property Use(s):	Vacant
Site Features:	Currently houses City Hall and associated government facilities

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

When considering this application, the following general site conditions, planning concepts, and other facts should be noted:

1. The site's location along major corridors and near multimodal transit options supports mixed-use redevelopment and enhances connectivity for residents, employees, and visitors.
2. The amendment encourages infill development on a vacant, centrally located site, reducing pressure for outward growth and supporting efficient land use patterns.
3. Future redevelopment can integrate residential, office, retail, and service uses while clustering higher-risk components outside the Coastal High Hazard Area to maintain resiliency and safety.
4. The proposed Retail & Services designation aligns with regional and Countywide Plan objectives by promoting economic activity, employment opportunities, and walkable, mixed-use development in an established urban area.

RELEVANT COUNTYWIDE CONSIDERATIONS:

The proposed amendment to the Countywide Plan Map is a legislative decision. The standards for the current and proposed Countywide Plan Map categories are summarized below:

	Current Countywide Plan Map Category: Public/Semi-Public	Proposed Countywide Plan Map Category: Retail & Services
Purpose:	Intended to recognize institutional, and transportation/utility uses that	Intended to depict areas developed with, or appropriate to be

	serve the community or region, especially larger facilities having acreage exceeding the thresholds established in other plan categories, which are consistent with the need, character, and scale of such uses relative to the surrounding uses, transportation facilities, and natural resource features, and may include residential as part of the mix of uses.	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.
Permitted Uses:	Institutional; Transportation/Utility; Residential; Residential Equivalent; Vacation Rental pursuant to the provisions of Section 509.242(1)(c), Florida Statutes; Storage/Warehouse/Distribution-Light; Storage/Warehouse/Distribution-Heavy; Recreation/Open Space; Community Garden; Agricultural-Light; Ancillary Nonresidential.	Office; Personal Service/Office Support; Retail Commercial; Commercial/Business Service; Commercial Recreation, Residential; Residential Equivalent; Vacation Rental pursuant to the provisions of Section 509.242(1)(c), Florida Statutes; Recreational Vehicle Park; Temporary Lodging; Research/Development- Light; Storage/Warehouse/Distribution-Light; Manufacturing-Light; Recreation/Open Space; Community Garden; Agricultural-Light. Manufacturing-Medium is subject to a three-acre maximum. Institutional; Transportation/Utility; Agricultural; Ancillary Nonresidential are subject to a five-acre maximum.
Max. Density:	12.5 units per acre	24 units per acre
Max. Floor Area Ratio (FAR):	Institutional uses shall not exceed 0.65 (except for hospital uses which shall not exceed an FAR of 1.0 within any single jurisdiction) / Transportation/utility uses shall not exceed an FAR of 0.70	0.55
Max. Impervious Surface Ratio (ISR):	Institutional uses shall not exceed 0.85 / Transportation/utility uses shall not exceed 0.90	0.90

Section 6.5.3. of the Countywide Rules provides the review criteria for amendments to the Countywide Plan Map. An analysis of these criteria are provided below:

- 1. The manner in, and extent to, which the amendment is consistent with the Countywide Rules and with the Countywide Plan Strategies as implemented through the Countywide Rules.**

Staff Analysis: The proposed amendment aligns with the Countywide Rules by allowing a mix of residential, office, retail, and service uses on a centrally located, vacant site that formerly housed City Hall and related government facilities. The Retail & Services designation supports redevelopment in an existing urban corridor, encourages multimodal access through proximity to transit and sidewalks, and maintains existing residential density limits within the Coastal High Hazard Area, supporting resiliency and hazard mitigation. By following voter-approved restrictions on heavy commercial uses, the amendment ensures that future development remains compatible with surrounding uses and does not exceed the intended scale or intensity of the area.

The amendment also advances Countywide Plan Strategies by promoting compact, mixed-use redevelopment that strengthens activity centers and leverages existing transportation infrastructure. It encourages economic activity, employment opportunities, and community amenities within walking distance of transit, supporting placemaking and sustainable growth. Overall, the amendment implements Countywide Plan goals by fostering efficient land use, enhancing multimodal connectivity, and enabling redevelopment that contributes to the long-term vitality, safety, and resilience of the surrounding community.

- 2. Forward Pinellas has developed a multimodal accessibility index (MAX index). Proposed amendments will need to maintain a MAX score equal to or better than the Countywide Average MAX score. The Current Countywide Average MAX score: 7.1; if that score is not reached, balancing criteria will be required. An amendment adopting or amending the Activity Center (AC), Multimodal Corridor (MMC) and Planned Redevelopment District (PRD) categories and affecting fewer than 10 acres shall be subject to the Multimodal Accessibility Index (MAX Index).**

Staff Analysis: The Multimodal Accessibility Index (MAX) score for the subject property is 17.75. This score exceeds the countywide average MAX score of 7.1. Since the property's MAX score is above the average, the proposed amendment does not require balancing criteria.

- 3. If located within a Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor, the manner in, and extent to, which the amendment conforms to the criteria and standards contained in Section 6.5.4.1 of these Countywide Rules.**

Staff Analysis: The amendment area is not located on a Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor.

- 4. If located within a Coastal High Hazard Area, the manner in, and extent to, which the amendment conforms to the terms set forth in Section 4.2.7.**

Staff Analysis: Portions of the site at 201 Highland Avenue North fall within the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) and FEMA Flood Zone AE. The amendment conforms to Section 4.2.7 by maintaining the existing maximum residential density of 12.5 dwelling units per acre within CHHA portions, ensuring that no new density increases place additional risk on high-hazard areas. Future development is expected to cluster non-residential uses within the CHHA only when necessary, while prioritizing placement of residential units and other higher-risk uses outside the most vulnerable zones.

The proposed Retail & Services designation further aligns with Section 4.2.7 by encouraging resilient building practices and infill redevelopment that reduces pressure to expand into higher-risk areas elsewhere. By concentrating mixed-use activity near major corridors, transit, and multimodal connections, the amendment supports safe, efficient access and evacuation planning while promoting Countywide goals for compact, adaptable, and hazard-conscious development.

- 5. If the amendment involves the creation, expansion, contraction of, or substantive change to the Activity Center, Multimodal Corridor, or Planned Redevelopment District category, the manner in, and extent to, which the amendment conforms to the purpose and requirements of the applicable category, and addresses the relevant Planning and Urban Design Principles described in Section 6.2.6 and Land Use Goal 16.0 of the Countywide Plan Strategies.**

Staff Analysis: The amendment area does not involve the creation, expansion, contraction of, or substantive change to the Activity Center, Multimodal Corridor, or Planned Redevelopment District category.

- 6. The manner in, and extent to, which the amendment significantly impacts a public educational facility or an adjoining jurisdiction.**

Staff Analysis: The amendment area is not located adjacent to an adjoining jurisdiction and if approved, the amendment would not significantly impact a public educational facility.

- 7. If the amendment involves the conversion from the Employment (E), Industrial (I), or Target Employment Center (TEC) category, the extent to which the amendment area can continue to provide for target employment opportunities as evaluated and set forth in Section 6.5.4.5.**

Staff Analysis: The proposed amendment area does not involve the reduction of land designated as Industrial, Employment or Target Employment Center; therefore, those policies are not applicable.

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

The proposed Countywide Plan Map amendment was publicly advertised as required by Section 7.8.4. of the Countywide Rules. No public correspondence has been received to date.

CONCLUSION

Staff finds the proposed amendment is consistent with the Relevant Countywide Considerations found in Section 6.5.3.1 of the Countywide Rules.