



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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File #: 20-1714A, Version: 1

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### **Subject:**

Ordinances amending the Comprehensive Plan to expand the Activity Center Future Land Use Map designation and amending the Future Land Use Categories and Rules to support the Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval of the ordinances amending the Comprehensive Plan to expand the Activity Center Future Land Use Map designation and amending the Future Land Use Categories and Rules to support the Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan.

- The Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan includes a series of recommendations that address the connectivity, character, identity, branding, and marketing of the community.
- The Board of County Commissioners conducted the first of two required public hearings and authorized County staff to transmit the proposed Ordinances to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity on July 21, 2020.
- On October 6, 2020 the Board approved an amendment to the Countywide Plan Map and Rules to align with the Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan.
- This item:
  - a.) Establishes the required consistency among the rules and standards between the Countywide Plan Map and Rules and the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan, and limits residential density increases in the Coastal High Hazard Area; and
  - b.) Expands the Activity Center boundary, creating one contiguous area covering the greater Downtown Palm Harbor and entire Historic District; and
  - c.) Amends the Downtown Palm Harbor Masterplan and allows recommendations of the Master Plan to be implemented in the entire Activity Center.
- The Local Planning Agency recommended approval of these requests (Vote 5-0).

### **Strategic Plan:**

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.3 Catalyze redevelopment through planning and regulatory programs

### **Summary:**

The Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan includes a series of recommendations that address the connectivity, character and identity, and branding and marketing of the community. Also provided are

general tools for implementation of the Plan, including the expansion of the current Activity Center-Neighborhood boundary on the Future Land Use Map to allow a more holistic approach to planning for the greater downtown area, rather than the current condition that includes multiple land use categories. Therefore, in addition to updating the Master Plan, a Future Land Use Map amendment is included with this request. An amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Categories and Rules is also necessary to facilitate implementation of the Master Plan and, thus, it is included in this request as well.

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP BOUNDARY EXPANSION

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) boundary expansion allows for a more holistic approach to planning for the greater downtown area, rather than the current condition that includes multiple land use categories. This approach plans for transition between the downtown core that centers along Florida Avenue and the primarily residential neighborhoods that are adjacent to the Activity Center-Neighborhood boundary. (See attachments 3 and 4, Current and Proposed Future Land Use Maps, respectively.)

## MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Through an extensive public engagement process that involved a focus group, community-wide open houses, and online surveys, the Downtown Palm Harbor community identified key recommendations that address the area's character and identity (i.e., enhancing the pedestrian experience and opportunities for additional open space; streamlining the historic guidelines and review process while protecting the historic character; and improving the opportunity for additional retail), connectivity (i.e., addressing gaps in the sidewalk network and the safe crossing of Alt 19; exploring solutions to parking challenges and the opportunity to become a golf cart community), and branding and marketing of the community. The Master Plan also outlines potential tools for implementation of the Plan, including the expansion of the existing Activity Center land use designation. (See attachment 5, Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan (DPH MP).)

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP CATEGORIES AND RULES AMENDMENTS

Amendments are proposed to the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Categories and Rules to be consistent with the recently adopted Countywide Plan Map and Rules amendments and facilitate implementation of the Master Plan. In support of such amendments, the Legend on the Future Land Use Map was also amended to include a note referencing certain limitations noted in the Future Land Use Map Categories and Rules. (See attachment 1, Case Number CP-29-11-19.)

### **Background Information:**

In 2001, a Master Plan was adopted for Historic Downtown Palm Harbor. Beginning in late 2016, the Planning Department began meeting with the Palm Harbor community to address their identified current needs, resulting in the Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan Update (2019/2020). This update includes a series of recommendations that address the connectivity, character and identity, and branding and marketing of the community. Also provided are general tools for implementation of the Plan, including the expansion of the existing Activity Center land use designation.

The Planning Department worked extensively with the community to identify current issues and

concerns within the greater Downtown Palm Harbor area through a series of focus group meetings and open houses. The information gathered during this time provided valuable insight that aided the update of the Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan.

The LPA recommended approval of each of these requests during its November 14, 2019 public hearing (Vote 5-0). (See attachments 6 and 7, LPA Reports.)

On July 21, 2020, the Board of County Commissioners conduct the first of two required public hearings on these requests and authorized County staff to transmit the proposed Ordinances to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to conduct a review of the proposed amendments per Florida Statutory requirements (Vote 7-0). A summary of State Agency comments and subsequent modifications to the proposal are included in the following section of this report.

#### FOCUS GROUP

A focus group was formed to initiate discussions regarding current needs of the downtown community. The 15-member committee represented local community organizations and residents; as well as downtown property and business owners. While members were quick to point out what was great about their community, they did not hesitate to share their ideas about what could make the downtown better.

#### PROJECT EMAIL ADDRESS

A project email address was setup to take comments and questions from residents and stakeholders. The email address was advertised on the County's webpage and included in public engagement materials. The inbox was monitored by Planning staff.

#### COMMUNITY WEBPAGE

A community webpage was established to share information and documents with the public pertaining to the Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan. This webpage was continually updated with new materials, drafts of the Master Plan, and advertisement of upcoming engagement opportunities.

#### SURVEYS AND OPEN HOUSES

In December 2016, an online survey was launched to define the existing community identity, as well as target community needs. The community was asked to define Downtown Palm Harbor's identity. What are the area's unique features and which of these assets should be the area's primary identity?

A community-wide open house was held in early 2017 to bring the comments and ideas shared in initial conversations with the Focus Group with broader Downtown Palm Harbor community input. A second set of survey questions were launched at the event, with the opportunity for attendees to respond at the open house or at a later time. These questions were more specific than the initial open-ended questions, asking respondents to address priority issues.

A second community open house was held a few months later to share the revised recommendations and to further identify any additional issues. A brief presentation was given to the attendees to review some of the background and findings to-date, followed by a group question and answer session before the meeting moved into the open house format. Specific exercises were designed to gather additional feedback to better understand details about some of the concerns raised during the public input process to-date.

The results of the open houses and surveys were shared with the community in a summary report, as well as with the Board of County Commissioners, as were the final recommendations for follow-up and issues to address in this revised Master Plan. County staff spent several months following up on the many issues, working with consultants, and determining options for addressing these concerns.

Summary of State Agency Comments and Proposed Modifications:

Per County Commission authorization on July 21, 2020, Planning staff transmitted the proposed Ordinances to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to conduct a review of the proposed amendments per Florida Statutory requirements. The Planning Division received comment responses from four agencies, including the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

FWC responded having 'no objections' to the proposal. FDOT determined that the proposed amendment 'has no impact on important state transportation resources or facilities. They went on to suggest that redevelopment in the area of the Activity Center should integrate context sensitive [transportation] design(s).

SWFWMD asked for additional water supply evaluation documentation. The Planning Division held a meeting with SWFWMD to discuss potential additional water supply demands. County staff described the mostly built-out environment of the County at large, the subject area specifically, and the current infrastructure capacity pertaining to potable water; and that future development would be incremental and long-term over the course of many years. SWFWMD and the County came to an agreement that the County would provide narrative to the agency confirming that the County provides relevant and future projected water demand numbers to Tampa Bay Water that fall within their agreement to provide water to Pinellas County to accommodate demand. This agreement accommodated the concerns of SWFWMD.

DEO had questions concerning the potential for increased residential development within the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA). While County staff noted Comprehensive Plan policy language that assured this would not be an issue, it was ultimately decided that the proposed Ordinance, CP 29-11-19, amending the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Categories and Rules include additional notes further establishing residential density limitations within the CHHA. Furthermore, DEO requested that the County add a note to the Special Information heading of the Legend on the Future Land Use Map referencing such additional notes to the Future Land Use Map Categories and Rules.

Requested and agreed to changes from DEO, as described above, are the only additional changes included with this agenda item subsequent to the first 'transmittal' public hearing in July 2020. Such changes are included in the attached Ordinance CP 29-11-19.

**Fiscal Impact:**

N/A

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Brian Lowack, Interim Director, Planning

**Partners:**

Brian Lowack, Interim Director, Planning

**Attachments:**

Ordinance (CP-29-11-19) - strikethrough/underline  
Ordinance (CP-29-11-19) - clean copy  
Ordinance (as part of Case Number ZLU-28-11-19)  
Current Future Land Use Map  
Proposed Future Land Use Map  
Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan Update (2019/2020)  
CP-29-11-19\_LPA Report (final)  
ZLU-28-11-19\_LPA Report (final)  
DPH Boundary Description  
Impact Summary (Utilities and Transportation)  
State Agency Comments  
Presentation