



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: October 3, 2023
AGENDA ITEM: F.4.
CASE: CPA2023-06001, Full *Comprehensive Plan: Clearwater 2045*
ORDINANCE NO.: 9721-24
REQUEST: Review and make a recommendation to the City Council to repeal the current *Clearwater Comprehensive Plan* and replace it with *Clearwater 2045*.
INITIATED BY: City of Clearwater, Planning and Development Department

BACKGROUND:

Florida law requires all local governments to prepare, adopt, and enforce long-range comprehensive plans through the “Local Government Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulation Act”. Chapter 163, Florida Statutes (F.S.), is part of the State’s growth management laws that govern comprehensive plans requiring jurisdictions to include elements on future land use; housing; transportation; recreation and open space; conservation; coastal management; general sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, and natural groundwater (public utilities); intergovernmental coordination; private property rights; and capital improvements.

A comprehensive plan is an official policy document designed to guide decisions on the city’s future growth and development. As a statement of municipal policy, a comprehensive plan is adopted by ordinance of the City Council and implemented through the city’s land development regulations, various public programs and initiatives, and local and regional capital improvement projects.

The last extensive update of the *Comprehensive Plan* (Plan) occurred in 2008, followed by several small technical updates with the latest being adopted in July 2023. *Clearwater 2045* is an extensive rewrite of the 2008 *Comprehensive Plan* and includes significant restructuring. Contrasting from prior plans, *Clearwater 2045* will move away from the use of elements and will instead divide the plan into six chapters: Quality Places, Mobility, Parks & Public Places, Conservation & Coastal Management, Support Services, and Plan Implementation. Although *Clearwater 2045* is organized into individual chapters, elements are identified within each chapter and are interrelated and consistent with the requirements of Chapter 163, F.S.

This Plan will aid City Council in their decision making and support city staff in their efforts to develop projects, programs, and code amendments to guide the city through the next 20 years. The Plan is meant to be a living document that is updated over time to respond to changing conditions and the evolving needs of the community. All parts of the Plan work together towards the realization of the city's vision for the future.

Staff began work on this project in late 2020 and provided numerous public engagement opportunities between April and July 2021. The engagement included in-person, youth, and virtual opportunities, as well as a questionnaire on the project website, clearwater2045.com. Staff worked with consultant HDR, Inc. to complete background data analysis and early public engagement. This background data provided a look at where the city was at, and along with the public engagement feedback, allowed staff to have a starting point for rewriting the *Comprehensive Plan*.

During the public engagement, numerous themes arose which included transportation concerns, cultural vibrancy, bringing new life to downtown, and balancing policy emphasis throughout the entire city. Public engagement activities also created the updated vision statement for *Clearwater 2045*: "From the beach to the bay, Clearwater is a city of diverse, unique and special places; livable neighborhoods; economic resiliency; friendly people; and amazing opportunities." With this feedback and the background data, staff was able to rewrite the goals, objectives, and policies which set out to address these findings and set a course towards the future.

Draft chapters as well as the full Plan were presented to the public at six community meeting events from April through June of 2023. These meetings allowed staff to present drafted goals and general objective and policy direction and allowed the public to ask questions and to reaffirm the vision statement. Additional presentations were made to the Environmental Advisory Board, Hispanic Leadership Council, Community Development Board (CDB), and City Council, with the latter two being work sessions allowing the CDB and City Council to ask questions of staff.

As part of the approval process, the city is required to send the draft *Comprehensive Plan* to Forward Pinellas to review for consistency with the Countywide Rules. The Countywide Rules contains requirements for what the city must include in the Plan, including a table that shows each local future land use category and the consistent Countywide future land use category. Staff forwarded the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* to Forward Pinellas on June 28, 2023, and received minor recommendations for edits to the Plan, which have been made.

The CDB will review *Clearwater 2045* and make a recommendation to the City Council. City Council is scheduled to review *Clearwater 2045* at their October 18, 2023 meeting, and vote to approve, approve with modifications, or deny the Plan. After the first City Council public hearing, staff will submit *Clearwater 2045* to the Florida Department of Commerce (DOC) and other agencies for review against the statutes and other plans or studies to ensure the city's *Comprehensive Plan* does not violate or conflict with the statutes or other regional plans. The DOC and other agencies will have 30 days to review the Plan and provide any comments. Should there be no comments from the DOC and reviewing agencies, the city will be notified and can then schedule and hold the second City Council hearing. If the DOC or other agencies provide comments, staff will need to address those before holding a second and final City Council hearing.

ANALYSIS:

Proposed Ordinance 9721-24 repeals the *Clearwater Comprehensive Plan* in its entirety and replaces it with *Clearwater 2045*, the city's new *Comprehensive Plan*. *Clearwater 2045* includes an Executive Summary to give a brief snapshot of the contents of the plan and an Introduction to explain what a *Comprehensive Plan* is as well as history and data about the City of Clearwater. The Plan has six chapters containing goals, objectives, and policies to guide the future growth and development of the city.

Quality Places

The Quality Places (QP) Chapter serves as the Future Land Use and Housing Elements and provides guidance related to land use, development, and redevelopment; housing affordability; neighborhoods; and economic development. The Quality Places Chapter also establishes a Framework Map that delineates the city's neighborhoods; corridors; activity, mixed-use, and neighborhood centers; and employment districts. Goals QP 1 through QP 4 cover the components of the Framework Map with the remaining goals covering citywide topics. The Quality Places Chapter introduces expanded goals with new objectives and policies to create a bonus density for a graywater system in development, equity in access to all city-owned properties and buildings, support for tree protection and a long-live tree canopy, opportunities for increased housing options through accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or missing middle housing bonus, and additional arts and culture opportunities.

Mobility

The Mobility (M) Chapter serves as the Transportation Element and provides guidance for the creation of a safe, efficient, equitable, and sustainable transportation system serving the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. The Mobility Chapter introduces guidance to cover the safe delivery of goods in the city and expanded goals with new objectives and policies to create equity in the city's transportation system, support Vision Zero, address new and emerging technologies and modes of transportation, and implement Greenprint 2.0.

Parks & Public Places

The Parks & Public Places (PPP) Chapter serves as the Recreation and Open Space Element and provides guidance to ensure the city's parks system provides opportunities for all residents and visitors; that parks are located and designed equitably to meet the evolving needs of the community; that natural features are conserved and protected; and that parks and recreation impact fees are collected and expended to improve the parks system. The city maintains a 10-year Parks and Recreation System Master Plan that was last updated in 2013. The city is in the process of updating this master plan and once that project concludes, it is anticipated that this chapter will be completely updated to account for new data and findings.

Conservation & Coastal Management

The Conservation & Coastal Management (CCM) Chapter serves as the Conservation and Coastal Management Elements and provides guidance on natural and built environment protection; improving air quality; sustainability and resiliency; post disaster redevelopment; and educational opportunities. The Conservation & Coastal Management Chapter introduces additional guidance for sustainable and resilient uses, furthers implementation of *Greenprint 2.0*, and adds policies to expand educational efforts for the natural environment, storm hazard-related risks, flood insurance, and sustainability initiatives.

Support Services

The Support Services (SS) Chapter serves as the Public Utilities Element and provides guidance for the provision and maintenance of the city's operational functions including public utilities, solid waste and recycling, stormwater management, Clearwater Gas System, police, fire and emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, library services, and other general support services. Many of these services are provided by the city but are not required to be included in the Plan and have not been included in previous plans. The Support Services Chapter introduces guidance for the Clearwater Gas System, law enforcement, emergency services, emergency management, general services, and the library system and provides additional guidance for reclaimed water and solid waste collection and disposal services.

Plan Implementation

The Plan Implementation (PI) Chapter serves as the Intergovernmental Coordination, Property Rights, and Capital Improvements Elements and provides guidance for city leaders and staff related to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP); intergovernmental coordination of natural resources, housing, transportation, public utilities, and emergency management; dispute resolution; annexations; and private property rights. The Plan Implementation Chapter introduces additional guidance to increase collaboration between jurisdictions and agencies and provides an updated 5-year Capital Improvement Program table.

CONSISTENCY WITH FLORIDA STATUTES

Municipalities within the State of Florida are required to have comprehensive plans per Chapter 163, F.S. The proposed goals, objectives, and policies were compared against the statutory requirements and staff did not find any inconsistencies between the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* and the requirements of Chapter 163, F.S. Any changes in state legislation since the last plan amendment has been addressed in *Clearwater 2045*.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

While *Clearwater 2045* is a complete rewrite to repeal and replace the current *Comprehensive Plan*, it is still considered an amendment to the Plan; therefore, the below standards must be addressed. Although there are many goals, objectives, and policies within *Clearwater 2045*, it will be considered one amendment for the purpose of addressing the required standards.

Pursuant to Community Development Code (CDC) Section 4-603.F. no amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan* shall be approved unless it complies with the following standards:

1. The amendment will further implementation of the *Comprehensive Plan* consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives contained in the Plan.

The proposed amendment completely rewrites the *Comprehensive Plan* and incorporates updated background data, which will allow the *Comprehensive Plan* to be implemented consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies within the Plan.

2. The amendment is not inconsistent with other provisions of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

The proposed amendment is not in conflict with other provisions of the *Comprehensive Plan* and brings further consistency between the goals, objectives, and policies. The Plan was written with input from various city departments and reviewed by Planning and Development staff to ensure that there are no inconsistencies within or between chapters.

3. The available uses, if applicable, to which the property may be put are appropriate to the property in question and compatible with existing and planned uses in the area.

This is not applicable to the proposed amendment as the proposed changes do not relate to a specific property or properties; however, the Quality Places Chapter includes goals, objectives, and policies to ensure that available uses on a property are compatible with the existing and planned uses of the area though the future land use categories and map as well as ensuring there are appropriate transitions or buffers between incompatible uses.

4. Sufficient public facilities are available to serve the property.

This is not applicable to the proposed amendment as the proposed changes do not relate to a specific property or properties; however, the Support Services Chapter includes goals, objectives, and policies to establish a level of service for certain facilities which will be used to determine capacity for existing and future development and plans for the future expansion of services as the city's population and development potential grows. The Plan Implementation Chapter also includes provisions to ensure that public facilities are available to serve a property prior to development.

5. The amendment will not adversely affect the natural environment.

This is not applicable to the proposed amendment as the proposed changes do not relate to a specific property or properties; however, the Conservation & Coastal Management Chapter includes goals, objectives, and policies to ensure protection for the natural environment and resources through protection of natural shorelines, beaches, dunes, wetlands, conservation areas, wildlife habitats, and the like. The Quality Places Chapter also includes provisions to ensure the natural environment is not adversely affected by including objectives and policies for the protection for trees and a long-lived tree canopy as well as landscaping and scenic views along the city's causeways, gateways, and view corridors.

6. The amendment will not adversely impact the use of property in the immediate area.

This is not applicable to the proposed amendment as the proposed changes do not relate to a specific property or properties; however, the Quality Places Chapter includes provisions to ensure that any proposed development or redevelopment is consistent with properties in the immediate area.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION:

The purpose of this amendment is to repeal and replace the city's current *Comprehensive Plan* with the new Plan, *Clearwater 2045*. The proposed amendment is consistent with all the requirements outlined in Chapter 163, Florida Statutes (F.S.), will further the goals, objectives, and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan*, will not result in inappropriate or incompatible uses, will not adversely affect the natural environment or impact the use of the property in the immediate area, and sufficient public facilities exist to implement the proposed amendment.

Based upon the above, the Planning and Development Department recommends **APPROVAL** of Ordinance No. 9721-24 that adopts the *Clearwater 2045*, the city's new *Comprehensive Plan*.

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ATTACHMENTS: Ordinance No. 9721-24
Clearwater 2045 (Exhibit A)
Resume