



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 19, 2016
AGENDA ITEM: G.6.
ORDINANCE NO.: 8885-16
REQUEST: Amendments to the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan*
INITIATED BY: City of Clearwater, Planning and Development Department

BACKGROUND:

The North Marina Area Master Plan project was commissioned by the City of Clearwater in response to objectives identified by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel, who provided strategic advice regarding a comprehensive and long-term perspective for the continued growth and development of Downtown Clearwater. The North Marina Area Master Plan is a comprehensive plan that balances the needs of the boating community, area residents and the development community. This planning area overlaps with the northern portion of the Old Bay District of the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* generally from property fronting both sides of Eldridge Street to the northern boundary of the Old Bay District generally along Nicholson Street. With assistance from a consultant team led by Stantec, the Planning and Development Department worked with community stakeholders to identify community needs, leverage the area's unique locational advantages, capitalize on market opportunities, and determine how to balance the needs of the boating community with area residents. The North Marina Area Master Plan was accepted by City Council on January 21, 2016.

The North Marina Area Master Plan includes provisions to encourage hotel, restaurant and other tourism-related businesses to locate within the waterfront area in order to strengthen the City's position as a boating destination. Specifically, it emphasizes activating the waterfront by enabling opportunities for the establishment of a mix of public and private development and active uses while also creating new open/green space. The Old Bay District also currently encourages more intensive commercial development along North Fort Harrison Avenue. Although Article 2, Division 9. Downtown District of the Community Development Code includes overnight accommodations and restaurants as permitted uses, the Old Bay District Vision does not include hotels and restaurants as permitted uses. In addition the Old Bay District does not include an intensity of use for overnight accommodations and therefore precludes a hotel from being developed.

Amendments to the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* are proposed which will support the community's vision regarding desired types of development in the area and will bring the North Marina Area Master Plan and *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* into alignment. The Community Development Board is reviewing the proposed amendments in its capacity as the Local Planning Agency and is requested to make a recommendation regarding the amendments to the City Council. The Community Redevelopment Agency is requested to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the amendments. Once the City Council approves these amendments, they will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for approval as amendments to the Redevelopment Plan. They will also be submitted to the Pinellas Planning Council and the Countywide Planning Authority for approval as amendments to the Special Area Plan governing Downtown.

ANALYSIS:

Proposed Ordinance No. 8885-16 includes amendments revising the Old Bay District Vision by providing language in support of the desired uses provided for by the North Marina Area Master Plan, adding intensity of use specific to overnight accommodations, increasing the permitted Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in a portion of the district from 0.5 to 1.0 and adding a policy in support of the North Marina Area Master Plan. Below is a summary of each proposed amendment.

1. **Allow Hotel Uses:** The proposed amendment updates the Old Bay District Vision to specify where tourism-related development such as restaurants and hotels are desired. These uses would help to strengthen the City's position as a boating destination, which is supported by the market analysis completed as part of the North Marina Area Master Plan, as well as the Clearwater Comprehensive Boating Plan.
2. **Encourage Certain Uses Along the Pinellas Trail:** The proposed amendment also specifies that neighborhood-scale restaurant and other commercial uses are desired along the Pinellas Trail. The North Marina Area Master Plan notes that the Trail has been a major economic redevelopment asset in many portions of the County with few exceptions including the segment which runs through this area, and discusses the Trail as a potential economic engine for residential and commercial investment. These proposed uses are supported by the community and are specified in the North Marina Area Master Plan.
3. **Increase Overall Allowed FAR in a Limited Area of the Old Bay District:** The Intensity section includes a proposed update to provide an increase in the permitted FAR from 0.5 to 1.0 for properties fronting North Fort Harrison Avenue and westward. The North Marina Area Master Plan encourages more intensive tourism-centric uses along the waterfront. In addition, the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* currently envisions North Fort Harrison Avenue to be the main commercial area in the character district providing neighborhood commercial uses on properties on both sides of the street. Increasing the permitted FAR for properties as noted above will better support the desired level of intensity of commercial and mixed uses in the district. The current FAR of 0.5 is proposed to remain the same in the remainder of the Old Bay District.

4. **Establish Density for Hotels:** The Old Bay District’s Intensity section is also updated to differentiate between dwelling unit and hotel unit density and provides a maximum density of 50 hotel units per acre for properties equal to or greater than two acres that are located west of North Osceola Avenue and north of Seminole Boulevard. Establishing hotel unit density will allow hotels in selected portions of the Old Bay District.

5. **Add Policy Regarding Master Plan:** Policy 12 is added which specifically provides support for the desired development patterns and uses of the North Marina Area Master Plan. This will reinforce the relationship and connection between the two plans.

The proposed amendments support several principles that guided the development of the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* and are set forth below (see Vision of the Plan, page 47):

- Downtown Clearwater is a major center of activity, business and governments;
- Downtown’s unique waterfront location should be a focal point for revitalization efforts and an orientation for all of Downtown. Views of and access to the water must be preserved;
- The Pinellas Trail is a unique resource for recreation and economic development within Downtown; and
- The elimination of blighting conditions and the revitalization of the existing and expanded CRA are critical to the future health of Downtown.

The proposed amendments also support Goals and Objectives currently found in the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* (pages 48-50) including:

- Goal 1 (People Goal): Downtown shall be a place that attracts people for living, employment and recreation. The City shall encourage redevelopment that will attract residents and visitors to Downtown as a recreation, entertainment and shopping destination.

- Goal 3 (Amenity Goal): Create Downtown as a memorable place to be enjoyed by residents and visitors that capitalizes on Clearwater’s waterfront location, natural resources, built environment and history.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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

- Policy A.5.5.1 Development should be designed to maintain and support the existing or envisioned character of the neighborhood.

- Goal A.6 The City of Clearwater shall utilize innovative and flexible planning and engineering practices, and urban design standards in order to protect historic resources, ensure neighborhood preservation, redevelop blighted areas, and encourage infill development.

- 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.6.1.7 Downtown Clearwater is designated as a Regional Activity Center suitable for increased threshold intensity for development consistent with the boundaries of the Central Business District as identified by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's Strategic Regional Policy Plan and as indicated in the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan approved in 2004.

- 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.6.5.1 The City shall support the Pinellas Trail and examine opportunities for Trail extensions or spurs to connect regional attractions and employers

- Objective A.6.6 Tourism is a substantial element of the City's economic base and as such the City shall continue to support the maintenance and enhancement of this important economic sector.

- Policy A.6.6.1 The City supports and encourages the continued development and redevelopment of overnight accommodation uses.

- Policy A.6.6.2 The City supports the adoption of higher density/intensity standards for overnight accommodation uses such that a sufficient supply shall be available within the City provided that concurrency standards are met.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed amendments to the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* implement the City Council's desire to provide opportunities for tourism-related uses such as hotel and restaurant within certain areas of the North Marina Area Master Plan and the Old Bay District. These provisions confirm and reinforce the City's commitment to implementing the strategies developed from the ULI study and the subsequent acceptance of the North Marina Area Master Plan by City Council. In addition, the proposed amendments are consistent with and will further the goals of the Clearwater Comprehensive Plan. Further, the proposed ordinance establishes intensity of use standards for hotels, increases the maximum FAR standards in certain areas and provides language in support of the desired uses specified by the accepted North Marina Area Master Plan for property in the Old Bay District in support of the vision of the Master Plan area as developed by City Staff, its consultants and the surrounding community. The proposed amendments to the Old Bay District, as outlined above, will align the North Marina Area Master Plan with the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* providing a unified vision for the area. Based upon the above, the Planning and Development Department recommends **APPROVAL** of Ordinance No. 8885-16 that amends the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan*.

Prepared by Planning and Development Department Staff: _____
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ATTACHMENTS:

Ordinance No. 8885-16
Resume
Maps