



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: August 16, 2016
AGENDA ITEM: G.1.
CASE: CPA2016-04001
ORDINANCE NO.: 8923-16
REQUEST: Review and recommendation to the City Council of an amendment to the *Clearwater Comprehensive Plan* to support the implementation of the US 19 Corridor Redevelopment Plan and new US 19 future land use categories, establish criteria for plan amendments in the Coastal Storm Area, and update various terms and references.
INITIATED BY: City of Clearwater, Planning and Development Department

BACKGROUND:

Over the last several years, several major planning efforts have been completed that necessitate amendments to the City's *Comprehensive Plan*. In 2011, the City's Economic Development and Housing Department engaged TIP Strategies, Inc. to develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) to position Clearwater for future sustainable growth and economic prosperity. One of the priority strategies identified within the Strategic Plan is to establish an employment center overlay district on US Highway 19 to encourage higher-wage employment opportunities. Recognizing the corridor's strategic location within Pinellas County makes it a logical place to grow as a regional employment center, and seeing that the retail sites were adversely impacted by the construction of the highway overpasses, new zoning standards were seen as a way to encourage the type of infill growth desired economically by the City.

The US 19 corridor was identified in Clearwater Greenprint (2011) as an "energy conservation area", recognizing the opportunity to create vibrant, mixed-use, transit-supportive activity centers that link people with jobs and services and the need to incentivize such infill development with updated land use policies. As a first step in implementing this Clearwater Greenprint strategy, the Planning and Development Department used US Department of Energy Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds to work with HDR to engage businesses and residents and define a vision for future growth along US Highway 19. The US 19 Corridor Redevelopment Plan (Corridor Plan) was approved by City Council in 2012. The Corridor Plan defines three types of revitalization areas – Regional Centers, Neighborhood Centers and In-Between Areas – and includes general guidance on future design standards “to ensure projects along the corridor contribute

to the creation of more compact, accessible, and attractive pedestrian- and transit-friendly destinations”. Revitalization and redevelopment strategies provide more details on how to achieve this vision.

At the same time the Planning and Development Department was working on the Corridor Plan, Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) staff was preparing a significant update to the Countywide Plan for Pinellas County (Countywide Plan). The new Countywide Plan was adopted by the Countywide Planning Authority on August 7, 2015. It establishes 16 Countywide Plan Map categories, while the previous Plan contained 36. The Countywide Plan distinguishes between areas and corridors appropriate for more intensive development to create transit-supportive urban areas and areas to be maintained as more suburban and primarily lower-density residential neighborhoods. In order to request the Activity Center or Multimodal Corridor designations be applied to the Countywide Plan Map, cities may prepare redevelopment studies and plans, and must identify how planning and urban design strategies will be implemented locally to mitigate the additional development potential allowed through the new categories. Options for complying with this requirement include adoption of comprehensive plan policies and special zoning designations and design guidelines or standards.

Because both the Corridor Plan and the new Countywide Plan were being prepared concurrently, the City had the opportunity to work closely with PPC staff to ensure that the vision in the Corridor Plan was achievable under the new Countywide Rules. The Corridor Plan provided the foundation to have US Highway 19 designated as Multimodal Corridor and Activity Center at the time the new Countywide Plan Map was adopted in 2015. The Corridor Plan strategies identify how the City will meet the requirements in the Countywide Rules, and the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* amendments include several policies addressing the Corridor Plan.

The main purpose of the proposed *Comprehensive Plan* amendments is to:

1. Establish the US 19 Regional Center, US 19 Neighborhood Center and US 19 Corridor future land use categories as well as the corresponding US 19 zoning district and subdistricts;
2. Address changes in Countywide Rules including identifying those Countywide land use categories that are consistent with City of Clearwater categories, adding a new Target Employment Center Overlay (TEC) category, and establishing balancing criteria by which to evaluate amendments within the Coastal Storm Area; and
3. Update the Citywide design structure policies to reflect changes based on the Corridor Plan and include additional policies supporting its implementation, consistent with the requirements for the Activity Center and Multimodal Corridor designations on the Countywide Plan Map.

The proposed amendments also include several minor amendments to the Future Land Use Element to update references or correct small errors.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed amendments to the *Comprehensive Plan* are summarized below:

1. **US 19 Corridor Redevelopment Plan (Corridor Plan) Related Amendments** [pages 4, 13 through 14, and 16 through 23 of Ordinance]

The proposal creates new US 19 Regional Center, US 19 Neighborhood Center and US 19 Corridor future land use categories and zoning districts consistent with the Corridor Plan, and establishes the corresponding floor area ratio (FAR) standards for the future land use categories. The proposed FAR standards are consistent with those within the Corridor Plan. The development potential for residential and overnight accommodation uses would be governed by the same FAR standard. To ensure the proposed amendments do not result in increases of residential density within the Coastal Storm Area, which would be in conflict with other policies in the *Comprehensive Plan*, Ordinance 8923-16 includes a new policy restricting residential density for those properties within the Coastal Storm Area along US Highway 19 to that which is already permitted, as well as a new Map A-16 depicting what areas are affected and what those residential densities shall remain.

The *Comprehensive Plan* includes several policies supporting the City's special area plans (*Beach by Design* and the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan*) and redevelopment planning efforts through its Citywide design structure. Changes within the Citywide design structure pertaining to US Highway 19 are proposed in order to recognize completed work and to further support the implementation of the Corridor Plan. Ordinance 8923-16 proposes to differentiate regional activity centers and neighborhood activity centers, consistent with the proposed new future land use categories. Additionally, the ordinance includes a new policy encouraging the establishment of design standards as envisioned within the Corridor Plan. Updates to Maps A-13 and A-14 and the corresponding attachment to Map A-14 are proposed to include new activity centers along US Highway 19.

Lastly, a new policy is proposed which would allow the appropriate US 19 future land use category be assigned to parcels that annex within the US 19 Corridor Redevelopment Area, and a new Map A-17 shows the extent of the US 19 planning area and the associated future land use categories. This would streamline the City's process for these properties, eliminating the need for companion Future Land Use Map and Zoning Atlas amendments. The Corridor Plan addressed properties both within the City's limits and within Unincorporated Pinellas County, recognizing that County enclaves within the City's planning area should also be considered in the planning and vision stage of the project.

2. **Countywide Plan for Pinellas County Consistency Amendments** [pages 3 through 5, 13 through 15, and 17 of Ordinance]

The proposed amendments update nomenclature throughout the Future Land Use Element to reference the Countywide Plan for Pinellas County (new name for Countywide Plan, Rules and Strategies combined) and to change references to land use classifications to land use categories. Additionally, other references from special area plan to redevelopment plan are updated where appropriate.

Consistent with criteria in the Countywide Rules, a new Policy A.1.2.3 is added to adopt "balancing criteria" against which the City may evaluate amendments proposing increases in permanent population within the coastal storm areas. This amendment would provide the City with more discretion at the local level in evaluating proposed changes within the coastal storm area, as allowed in the updated Countywide Rules.

A new Future Land Use Table A-2 is proposed which identifies the consistent Countywide Plan Map categories/subcategories. A new policy is proposed clarifying that the City may designate properties locally with more restrictive future land use categories, and these are consistent with the Activity Center (AC) Countywide Plan category. The Countywide Plan Map adopted in August 2015 designated the area governed by the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan* as Activity Center – Special Center, recognizing the City's special area plan. Properties within the East Gateway and Town Lake Residential character districts are designated locally with a variety of future land use categories.

The updated Countywide Rules include a new Target Employment Center Overlay (TEC) category, which is proposed within Table A-1. This overlay category will enable the City to designate industrial areas in the future to allow a 100% increase in development potential (FAR) for certain uses: manufacturing, office, and research/development. The City's Hercules Industrial Park area is identified as a TEC on the Countywide Plan Map.

3. Future Land Use Table *[pages 5 through 15 of Ordinance]*

The proposed amendments restructure Objective A.2.2 to provide clarity by moving certain components into new policies. As previously mentioned, new Tables A-1 and A-2 are proposed to replace the existing Future Land Use Table, and footnotes in the existing table pertaining to transit oriented development (TOD) and FAR bonus provisions for hospital uses are proposed as new policies. Ordinance 8923-16 includes a new policy addressing residential equivalent uses and beds per dwelling unit allowance, consistent with the definitions within the City's Community Development Code.

4. Miscellaneous Amendments *[page 16 of Ordinance]*

Ordinance 8923-16 proposes to add a policy emphasizing preservation of the character of North Clearwater Beach, recognizing that it is the one residential area on Clearwater Beach which is otherwise primarily tourist oriented.

STANDARDS FOR REVIEW:

Pursuant to Community Development Code 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 amendments to the *Clearwater Comprehensive Plan* are consistent with the following goals, objectives, and policies in the *Plan*:

- Goal A.2 A sufficient variety and amount of future land use categories shall be provided to accommodate public demand and promote infill development.
- Goal A.5 The City of Clearwater shall identify and utilize a Citywide design structure comprised of a hierarchy of places and linkages. The Citywide design structure will serve as a guide to development and land use decisions while protecting those elements that make the City uniquely Clearwater.
- 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.
- Objective A.6.2 The City of Clearwater shall continue to support innovative planned development and mixed land use development techniques in order to promote infill development that is consistent and compatible with the surrounding environment.
- Objective E.1.2 The coastal storm area shall be the area delineated in Maps E-1A and E-1B of the Coastal Management Element, which encompasses all of the following:
- (1) the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA), which shall be defined by the *Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH)* model to be inundated from a category one hurricane, as reflected in the most recent *Regional Evacuation Study, Storm Tide Atlas*,
 - (2) all land connected to the mainland of Clearwater by bridges or causeways
 - (3) those isolated areas that are defined by the *SLOSH* model to be inundated by a category two hurricane or above and that are surrounded by the CHHA or by the CHHA and a body of water, and
 - (4) all land located within the Velocity Zone as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The City shall direct permanent population concentrations away from the coastal storm area consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the Clearwater Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed amendments create additional future land use categories, adding to those already available within the Future Land Use Element and further expanding opportunities for properties along US Highway 19 and its cross streets. These categories were envisioned within the US 19 Corridor Redevelopment Plan (2012), which is proposed to be identified as one of the redevelopment plans prepared by the city to encourage infill development. US Highway 19 and Gulf-to-Bay Boulevard were previously identified as important corridors for redevelopment, and the Westfield Countryside Mall and Clearwater Mall areas were identified as activity centers within the Citywide design structure. The proposed amendments further these goals and objectives by adding supporting policies and activity centers for which the city has planned for redevelopment going forward.

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

The proposed amendments are not in conflict with other provisions of the *Comprehensive Plan* and bring further consistency between the goals, objectives and policies and the map series. The proposed amendments add several new objectives and policies to the *Comprehensive Plan*, while also simplifying other sections of the Plan. The proposed amendments to Objective A.6.1 and related policies identify the locations for the new US 19 Regional Centers, Neighborhood Centers and Corridor segments, as was previously done for the city's other redevelopment plans, *Beach by Design* and the *Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan*. The proposed policies support and expand the Citywide design structure as previously discussed. The proposal of balancing criteria for amendments within the coastal storm area and the proposed policy limiting permanent residential density for properties within the coastal storm area along US Highway 19 are consistent with other Objectives and Policies within the *Comprehensive Plan*, including the Coastal Management Element.

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.

The proposed amendments include some updates to the uses listed within new Table A-1 in order to clarify and bring consistency between the *Comprehensive Plan* and the Community Development Code. However, the updates to this table do not add or delete uses already available to these properties, as that is regulated by zoning districts in the Community Development Code. Table A-2 identifies certain general or primary uses for the proposed US 19 Regional Center, US 19 Neighborhood Center, and US 19 Corridor future land use categories. A complete list of permitted uses will be established when the corresponding zoning district and design standards are proposed later this year.

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

This amendment does not result in changes to the City's Future Land Use Map; therefore, this criterion is not applicable at this time. However, a review of public facility availability in order to support the related

Future Land Use Map amendment for the US 19 corridor is provided within the staff report for LUP2016-06004, LUP2016-06005 and LUP2016-06006.

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

This is not applicable to the proposed amendments.

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

This is not directly applicable to the proposed amendments as they do not relate to a specific property or properties. Several of the amendments proposed by this ordinance would expand the number of future land use categories available within the City, which will later result in an expansion to the number of uses available when the corresponding zoning district is established and properties are designated on the Zoning Atlas. Proposed Policy 6.1.13 encourages development standards for US Highway 19 which seek to provide safe and attractive settings for working, living, and shopping.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION:

The purpose of this amendment is to update the Future Land Use Element to recent changes to the Countywide Plan for Pinellas County and to include policies related to the US 19 Corridor Redevelopment Plan and further supporting its implementation. The proposed amendment is consistent with and will further the goals, objectives, and policies of the *Clearwater 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. 8923-16 that amends the *Clearwater Comprehensive Plan*.

Prepared by Planning and Development Department Staff: _____

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ATTACHMENTS: Ordinance No. 8923-16
Resume