



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 18, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: ID# 25-1129

CASE: TA2025-09002

ORDINANCE NO.: 9856-25

REQUEST: Amendments to the Community Development Code to make final platting an administrative process, consistent with Senate Bill 784 (2025).

INITIATED BY: City of Clearwater, Planning and Development Department

BACKGROUND & AMENDMENT PROPOSAL

Proposed Ordinance No. 9856-25 contains staff-initiated amendments to the Community Development Code to address changes to state statutes through recent legislation. Specifically, Senate Bill 784 (2025), effective July 1, 2025, requires local governments to review, process, and approve plats or replat submittals without action or approval by the governing body (i.e., City Council). Instead, these shall be processed administratively by a designated authority. Senate Bill 785 further establishes requirements for written notice when applications for plat are received. Unless the applicant requests an extension, final plat applications must be approved, approved with conditions, or denied within the timeframe identified in the initial written notice. A denial must be accompanied by an explanation of why the submittal was denied, specifically citing unmet requirements.

Community Development Code Article 4, Division 7. Subdivisions/Plats establishes the city's procedures and standards for the subdivision of land. The proposed ordinance grants the Community Development Coordinator (i.e., Planning and Development Director) the authority to approve both preliminary and final plats, thereby modifying the city's process so that all stages are administrative. The statutory requirements for notices have also been added to the city's Code. The proposed ordinance incorporates certain staff-recommended changes to Section 4-701 to provide

better clarity regarding which scenarios may be processed as minor lot adjustments instead of platting.

CRITERIA FOR TEXT AMENDMENTS

CDC Section 4-601 sets forth the procedures and criteria for reviewing text amendments. All text amendments must comply with the following:

1. The proposed amendment is consistent with and furthers the goals, policies, and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective QP 1.2 Guide development and public investment in neighborhoods to preserve community character and promote strategic infill development and redevelopment.

Goal QP 5 Plan and regulate land use and development in the city to protect public health and safety and promote high quality development.

Proposed Ordinance No. 9856-25 addresses the statutory requirements for platting. Although it is not directly referenced in Clearwater 2045, the city's Comprehensive Plan, the purpose of Article 4, Division 7 states that the Division aims to "... ensure the orderly layout of property, ... and to implement the comprehensive plan." Since Clearwater is largely built out, redevelopment often necessitates re-platting of existing parcels. Preliminary plats will continue to be reviewed by the Development Review Committee, ensuring that infill development adheres to city standards. The change to make the final plat approval process administrative aligns with the city's Comprehensive Plan.

2. The proposed amendments further the purposes of the Community Development Code (CDC) and other City ordinances and actions designed to implement the Plan.

The proposed text amendment will further the purposes of the CDC in that it will be consistent with the following purposes set forth in CDC Section 1-103:

- It is the purpose of this Development Code to implement the Comprehensive Plan of the city; to promote the health, safety, general welfare and quality of life in the city; to guide the orderly growth and development of the city; to establish rules of procedure for land development approvals; to enhance the character of the city and the preservation of neighborhoods; and to enhance the quality of life of all residents and property owners of the city. (Section 1-103.A., CDC)

- It is the further purpose of this Development Code to create value for the citizens of the City of Clearwater by [a]llowing property owners to enhance the value of their property through innovative and creative redevelopment. (Section 1-103.B.1, CDC)

The amendments proposed in Ordinance No. 9856-25 will advance the stated purposes by maintaining the city's platting process, which ensures the orderly layout of property. Additionally, the proposed clarifications on when a plat is not required can offer property owners more options to maximize their property's use by subdividing it appropriately.

RECOMMENDATION

The Development Review Committee (DRC) reviewed the proposed text amendments to the Community Development Code at the DRC meeting of October 2, 2025. The Planning and Development Department, having reviewed the requirements of the Community Development Code, recommends APPROVAL of Ordinance 9856-25.



Prepared by Planning and Development Department Staff: _____

Lauren Matzke, AICP
Planning & Development Director

ATTACHMENTS: Ordinance No. 9856-25
Resume

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Director** *July 2025 to present*
City of Clearwater, FL
Responsible for directing the day-to-day planning, zoning, building and code compliance operations including the supervision of the Long Range Planning, Development Review, Development Service Center and Code Compliance Managers, as well as the Building Official. Serve as staff to the Community Development Board, Municipal Code Enforcement Board and City Council.
- **Planning and Development Director Interim** *December 2024 to July 2025*
City of Clearwater, FL
Responsible for the day-to-day planning, zoning, building and code compliance operations. Serve as staff to the Community Development Board, Municipal Code Enforcement Board and City Council.
- **Assistant Director** *March 2020 to December 2024*
City of Clearwater, FL
Responsible for assisting the Planning and Development Director in directing the day-to-day planning, zoning, building and code compliance operations including the supervision of the Long Range Planning, Development Review, Development Service Center and Code Compliance Managers, as well as the Building Official. Serve as staff to the Community Development Board, Municipal Code Enforcement Board and City Council.
- **Long Range Planning Manager** *December 2011 March 2020*
- **Planner III, Long Range Division** *October 2008 to December 2011*
- **Planner II, Long Range Division** *September 2008 to October 2008*
City of Clearwater, FL
Responsible for numerous aspects of the Growth Management Act of Florida such as comprehensive planning, future land use map amendments, rezonings, and annexations. Update Community Development Codes by Ordinance. Prepare staff reports for the City Council and Community Development Board. Responsible for providing informational assistance to the public and developers concerning development plans. Coordinate and manage various projects. Serve as the city's representative on countywide and regional planning agency committees.
- **Senior Planner** *February 2007 to September 2008*
City of St. Pete Beach, FL
Implemented new legislative directives for Florida's growth management laws related to governments' comprehensive planning and land development regulations. Served as staff to the City Commission, Planning Board and Historic Preservation Board. Administered the land development regulations, processed future land use map amendments and rezonings. Prepared special area plans.
- **Environmental Specialist III** *August 2005 to February 2007*
Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, FL
Served as primary reviewer of local government comprehensive plan amendments, sector plans and evaluation and appraisal reports for the northwest region of Florida. Drafted policies and comprehensive plan language regarding natural resource protection, assisting local government representatives.

EDUCATION

Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning, Florida State University, 2006

Bachelor of Science in Design and Environmental Analysis, concentration in Gerontology, Cornell University, 1998

Professional Memberships & Activities

American Institute of Certified Planners (2009 to Present)

American Planning Association (2003 to Present)

Florida Chapter (2005 to Present)

New York Metro Chapter (2003 to 2005)

Secretary, Sun Coast Section of Florida Chapter (2011-2014)

Congress for the New Urbanism (2012 to Present)

Urban Land Institute (2013 – Present)

APA Florida Annual Conference:

Speaker, "Innovative Sustainability Strategies" (2012)

Moderator, "City as a Canvas, Introducing Art into New Places" (2020)

Conference Chair/Committee Member:

APA Florida Annual Conference (2010)

CNU Florida Statewide Summit (2017)

CNU Florida Statewide Summit (2019)