

Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency
18-month Strategy
November 2018 – March 2020

Background

In early 2018, the CRA Trustees adopted the 2018 Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan which outlined a vision and goals to increase the attractiveness of downtown as a place to live, work and play. Within the Plan, Chapter 4: Plan Implementation contains four sections. The CRA section outlines the specific role of the CRA in downtown revitalization. The Funding Sources section contains all the identified and potential sources of revenue for implementation as well as tax increment projections for the CRA districts. The Incentives section provides information on available incentive programs for the downtown area as well as a framework for establishing new incentive programs. The Capital Improvement Program and Policy Implementation Projects section lists planned improvements and their costs for the entire downtown plan area as well as each character district.

With the adoption of the 2018 Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan, the CRA trustees established an operational framework and a capital improvements budget for the next 5-10 years. The next step is to adopt a more detailed implementation strategy for the next 18 months to leverage existing city leadership that will be in place until March 2020 and focus on activities that will support sustainable economic development in downtown.

Creating Sustainable Change in Downtown

The largest and most persistent barrier to the redevelopment of downtown Clearwater is a negative perception of the downtown and the city organization. This negative perception limits visitors to downtown and potential investment in downtown. The desired outcome of the 18-month strategy ***is to change the perceptions held by the public and investors about city government and downtown Clearwater to one that aligns with the 2018 adopted vision.*** The 2018 vision states, “Downtown Clearwater will thrive as the urban core and heart of the City, as the center of business and government, and as an attractive place to live, work, shop and play. A revitalized Downtown will be achieved through quality urban design, continued creation of a high quality public realm, and a dense and livable pattern which will strengthen the overall health of the City.” The CRA must focus on activities and investments that encourage others to participate in the implementation of the adopted vision for downtown.

There are four steps to achieving the desired outcome:

1. Commit to an 18-month strategy with a defined focus and measurable outcomes
2. Communicate the strategy
3. Implement the strategy
4. Track and publish results*

*Repeat steps two through four for 18 months

The 18-Month Strategy

Step one is to commit to an 18-month strategy with a defined focus and measurable outcomes. The strategy will be in place from November 2018 – March 2020 and includes four objectives:

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1. Create and share authentic, positive stories about Downtown Clearwater
2. Begin construction on Imagine Clearwater
3. Permit 600 housing units
4. Attract \$100 million dollars of private investment

Each objective includes a list of implementation activities that are aligned with the 2018 Downtown Plan and will achieve the desired outcome of shifting perceptions of downtown and the city.

Communicate the Strategy

Step two is to communicate the strategy. The CRA will do this through its website www.downtownclearwater.com, monthly updates the CRA Trustee meetings, internal city department meetings, downtown events and the monthly e-newsletter.

Implementing the Strategy

Step three is to implement the strategy. This section lists the activities that accompany each of the four objectives. They are categorized as ongoing, underway as of October 1, 2018 and planned to finish by March 2020.

Objective 1. Create and share authentic, positive stories about Downtown Clearwater

Ongoing

- Downtown Clearwater logo and website
- Targeted events (e.g. the Dali tour)
- New wayfinding signage

Underway

- Hiring for full- time PR person
- Public art programs (Murals, Art Installations, Second Century Studios etc.)
- Creating signature and everyday events (e.g. Holiday Extravaganza)

Planned

- Targeted social media campaigns
- Dedicated development and permitting team
- Designated CRA resource in city departments

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Objective 2. Begin construction on Imagine Clearwater

Ongoing

- Presented the 15% design to public and gathered feedback
- Establishing a new location for City Hall
- Early meetings with mixed-use developers and cultural anchor institutions

Underway

- Downtown parking study location recommendations for new parking and parking management
- Council approves remaining Imagine Clearwater design
- Demolition of Harborview Center in Spring 2019

Planned

- Issue RFP's for redevelopment of city parcels
- Secure new cultural anchor(s) for downtown
- Imagine park construction commences

Objective 3. Permit 600 housing units

Ongoing

- Utilizing the parking lot adjacent to The Nolen to support new restaurant/retail uses
- Provide a safe environment through community policing

Underway

- Construction of Streetscape Phase III
- Sustaining current businesses through marketing, special events and grant programs
- Issue RFP for 115 MLK Jr Avenue warehouse site
- Issue two RFPs for rental housing at 306 S. Washington and 1250 Cleveland Street

Planned

- Attract 4-7 new restaurants/bars through grant programs
- Build Mercado/Market Festival

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- Market research and utility study to reduce barriers to building new housing and businesses
- Housing developer event to showcase redevelopment opportunities
- Pinellas Trail improvements

Objective 4. Attract \$100 million dollars of private investment

Ongoing

- New state opportunity investment fund
- Updated zoning code
- The Nolen and Apex 1100 rental and buildout (\$44+ million)
- Land acquisition for redevelopment

Underway

- Land sale and acquisition
- Retail developer pitch
- Educational and cultural partnerships

Planned

- Targeted pitches to residential and commercial investors
- Consider tenant incentive program

Results

Step four is to track and publish results. The CRA staff will provide monthly reporting to CRA Trustees at their meetings beginning December 2018 and provide monthly e-newsletter updates through www.downtownclearwater.com.