

# Pinellas By Design

Plan Implementation Progress Update - January 2008



Pinellas  
County

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
WWW.PCED.ORG/redevelopment

Adopted in 2005, Pinellas By Design: An Economic Development and Redevelopment Plan, is the county's redevelopment strategy to foster business development, while managing population growth and preserving our quality of life. The purpose of Pinellas by Design was to identify the means by which the county can maintain and enhance its long-term economic vitality, which is threatened by the disappearance of developable vacant land. Pinellas by Design estimated that some 50,000 new jobs at salary levels approximately thirty percent above the average wage will need to be created over the twenty year period through 2025 to maintain the same level of economic health that the county has enjoyed over the previous twenty years. Absent a concerted effort and coordinated public policy it will be difficult to achieve this goal, particularly as we reach build out, and the ability of the private sector to find and utilize the land necessary to locate and expand business opportunities is limited.

Since it was adopted twenty-three local governments have passed resolutions in support of the plan, which is designed so that each community will be able to define its future vision within a shared planning framework. The multi-faceted implementation includes regulatory, real estate and economic development programs that will ensure adequate opportunity to preserve and expand the potential for high-wage job creation.

For detailed information on the five year planning process, including community input, analysis, and related studies go to [www.pinellasbydesign.org](http://www.pinellasbydesign.org).

## **Recent Regulatory Updates:**

Redevelopment Land Use Categories - A Countywide Rule amendment created four new future land use categories, which are designed to allow local governments flexibility in planning for redevelopment through special area plans. The new "Planned Redevelopment" categories include Residential, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial. The City of St. Petersburg has been the first to amend its own future land use map to include three of the new categories, and has applied them to approximately 10,350 acres.

Hotel Densities - A Countywide Rule amendment will allow temporary lodging densities in some future land use categories to be increased if certain conditions are met. Depending on the size of the site and other conditions, 50 to 150 percent more hotel rooms can be built per acre. The changes were crafted in order to help hotel and motel uses, which are vital to support the local tourism economy remain economically competitive with high-end residential condominium redevelopment. Pinellas County's tourism industry has lost almost 5,000 hotel and motel rooms over the past few years to residential condominium development. The changes will allow each community in Pinellas County to have the option to either increase density for hotels, subject to certain guidelines, or keep the status quo for that specific community.

State Expedited Permitting - New state legislation created a pilot program establishing a streamlined process for the amendment of comprehensive plans for certain pilot communities, including Pinellas County and its municipalities. This alternative review

pilot project program will greatly decrease the state examination time needed on certain development projects.

### **Studies and Task Forces:**

Industrial Land - A detailed study of the supply and demand of industrial land in Pinellas County was begun in 2006 and is expected to be complete in early 2008. More than 2,000 businesses in targeted industry clusters were surveyed about their use of, and need for, industrial-designated land and other types of real estate. This feedback was combined with an analysis of the existing land supply using geographic information system (GIS) technology. The final report will recommend long-term regulatory and economic strategies for ensuring a supply of appropriately located, economically viable real estate that can accommodate high-wage primary employers. The report will be presented for review and approval in March and April of 2008 by the Board of County Commissioners. To view a copy of the preliminary final report, go to [www.co.pinellas.fl.us/PPC/ppcagendas/current/ppc0801-5b.pdf](http://www.co.pinellas.fl.us/PPC/ppcagendas/current/ppc0801-5b.pdf)

Historic Preservation - In 2005, The Board of County Commissioners established a Historic Preservation Task Force to examine the issue of preservation policies for historically significant structure, neighborhoods, districts and improvements throughout the county. In addition to private-sector professionals with expertise in historic preservation, the task force includes staff from the cities of Tarpon Springs, Dunedin, St. Petersburg, and Indian Rocks Beach. The task force recommendations will be used to guide land development policies in the unincorporated county and serve as a model for other local governments. Recommendations from the task force are expected in 2008. For more information, go to [www.pinellascounty.org/historic](http://www.pinellascounty.org/historic)

### **Real Estate:**

Toytown - In 2007, Pinellas County Economic Development Authority (EDA) requested development proposals to redevelop a 240-acre closed landfill along I-275 known as Toytown. The EDA received four proposals for the redevelopment of Toytown and a selection committee reviewed and ranked the proposals. The ranking was reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners in early 2008 and the county will enter negotiations with the selected development team - IRG/ BCC Development Partners. The development team proposes a master-planned mixed-use development including three million square feet of office and commercial space, 1,500 residential units and substantial public recreational and civic uses. Information on the Toytown Redevelopment project, including the proposals submitted, is available at [www.pced.org/redevelopment](http://www.pced.org/redevelopment).

Real Estate Listings - Three new categories of "For Sale" opportunities were added to Pinellas County Economic Development's real estate database. Property owners can now have shopping centers, hotel/motels and retail properties advertised on the site. The inclusion of these new categories exemplifies the county's changing focus to redevelopment, since aging shopping centers, old restaurants and hotel properties offer excellent opportunities for redevelopment.

## **Economic Development**

Pinellas by Design identified two important measures by which the local economy should be evaluated: size determined by the total earnings of all the workers in the county, and quality, determined by the average earnings per worker. In order to sustain the level of prosperity that the county currently enjoys, it will be necessary to enhance both size and quality. The plan established preliminary estimates and projections for future employment growth, based both on the overall number of jobs (which influences the size of the economy), and the number of jobs provided by high-wage primary businesses (which affects the quality of the economy). Primary businesses are defined as those that import at least 51 percent of their annual revenues from outside the local area), while high-wage jobs are those that pay at least 130 percent of the average annual wage. The plan concluded that to maintain growth in the size and quality of the county's economy, it will be necessary to create approximately 278,000 new jobs of which 50,000 are primary high-wage jobs over the next twenty years.

In 2005, the county's total employment was 428,804 and average annual wage was \$35,601 according to the State of Florida's ES202 data. By 2006, employment had grown by 5,812 employees and the average annual wage grew to \$36,946. Out of the 5,812, an estimated 230 were employees with wages greater than the county average. During 2006, projects approved by the State using its Qualified Target Industry Program totaled 1,043 new high-wage jobs. Additionally in 2006, the county secured the internationally-recognized research, development and commercialization group SRI-International. Their facility is currently under construction and will open in 2009 with plans for nearly 200 employees and much greater expectations for future spin-offs with high-wage job creation potential.

### **Partnerships and Awareness:**

Pinellas By Design recognized that the county can not implement a redevelopment strategy on its own. Partnerships with local municipalities, regulatory agencies, community development groups and the private sector will be needed for a successful redevelopment program. Ultimately the county seeks to encourage high quality projects that match the vision of each community. To assist the many agencies and individuals promoting redevelopment in Pinellas County, the county has produced new collateral materials focused on redevelopment.

The materials include the county's first redevelopment brochure - the *Communities of Pinellas*, which provides an overview of the county, promotes awareness of redevelopment opportunities, and highlights redevelopment efforts and investment. Brochure inserts provide quarterly real estate updates, contact information, incentive program descriptions, and updates on major redevelopment projects around the county.

A web page was also created on the PCED web site devoted solely to redevelopment - [www.pced.org/redevelopment](http://www.pced.org/redevelopment) with weekly news stories on redevelopment, updates on significant redevelopment projects, infrastructure investment, and regulatory changes, as well as 2007 maps, data and incentive programs. This site provides links to county departments involved in redevelopment, as well as contacts for each redevelopment area. This offers a one stop source for potential investors and developers to learn about Pinellas, its varied communities and our overall strategies for redevelopment.

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