

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BOARD STAFF REPORT**

**MEETING DATE:** December 20, 2022  
**AGENDA ITEM:** G.4  
**RESOLUTION NO.:** 23-01  
**REQUEST:** Review and recommendation to City Council on the North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan  
**INITIATED BY:** City of Clearwater, Planning & Development Department

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### **History of North Greenwood Area**

The City of Clearwater was incorporated in 1915, but early African American pioneers settled in what would become North Greenwood near the railroad tracks as the Orange Belt Railroad arrived in 1888. The North Greenwood area later grew to include numerous churches and local businesses and in modern times North Greenwood is a recognized center of Clearwater's African American culture. It grew from the earliest settlers to become a vibrant community that included housing, education, employment, and social organizations providing most of its resident's daily needs. Residents include multigenerational families that have contributed to the community for decades. They respect the community's past while actively seeking advancement for future generations.

#### **Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Establishment**

There are three steps to create a community redevelopment area: adopting a Finding of Necessity Study, developing and adopting a Community Redevelopment Plan, and creating a Redevelopment Trust Fund. Starting in 2019, the Clearwater Urban Leadership Coalition encouraged the city and county to undertake the process of creating a community redevelopment area in North Greenwood and the city began the process by completing a Finding of Necessity Study in August of 2020. The Coalition spearheaded an intense public outreach in the fall of 2020 including radio interviews, social media campaign, presentations to local community leaders and organizations, and five virtual public information meetings that reached over 2,000 people. The outreach started the process of informing and engaging the public over the need for poverty reduction and economic and redevelopment opportunities in the North Greenwood area to address concerns raised in the Finding of Necessity Study. The Study showed that the incidence of crime in the North Greenwood area was higher than the remainder of the city and there was a greater number of violations of housing and property maintenance standards. It also found that the area, compared to the city overall, had a higher rate of poverty, a lower median household income, lower median household value, and a higher rate of households spending 35% or more of their income on housing costs.

Based on this Study, the City Council and Board of County Commissioners agreed on and established the North Greenwood boundaries. As shown in the map on the below, the CRA is generally bounded by Sunset Point Road to the north; Kings Highway to the east; Palmetto Street, CSX Railway, and Jones Street to the south; and North Osceola Avenue, North Fort Harrison Avenue, and Clearwater Harbor to the west.



The next steps in the process are the development and adoption of the Community Redevelopment Plan and the Redevelopment Trust Fund. The *North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan* (CRA Plan) that is being reviewed through this staff report will serve as the Community Redevelopment Plan. The Redevelopment Trust Fund will be created by ordinance through City Council and the Board of County Commissioners concurrently with the adoption of the CRA Plan.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Purpose of Plan**

The purpose of a Community Redevelopment Plan is to address the unique needs of the targeted area and includes the overall goals for redevelopment in the area, as well as identifying specific projects.

The *North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan* establishes policies and strategies that guide future actions and projects of the city's Community Redevelopment Agency. The plan includes strategies designed to promote the improvement of North Greenwood's social and physical conditions within the future 20-year planning horizon. They are intended to minimize negative impacts of gentrification and displacement with a focus on the most vulnerable populations who are low-income people of color.

### **Plan Contents**

The *North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan* is divided into five chapters which are described below.

#### Chapter 1: Introduction (pages 1-5)

This chapter provides a summary of the CRA Plan, what a CRA is, navigating the contents of the plan, and an equity statement to reinforce the purpose of the plan to reduce poverty and provide policies and strategies that are designed to ensure equitable development.

#### Chapter 2: Existing Conditions (pages 6-89)

This chapter provides an overview of the history of this area, a summary of the Finding of Necessity Study, data regarding the existing conditions and demographics of the area, Pinellas County CRA funding analysis, and a summary of the community engagement efforts that shaped this plan. It closes with a summary of the major redevelopment issues that are addressed in the plan recommendations.

A large portion of the CRA Plan is dedicated to Chapter 2 and it serves as the background data used to support the strategies developed for this plan. Some of the information gathered was required for the factors used to assign a score as part of the CRA Local Assessment.

#### *Public Engagement*

There was extensive engagement and outreach done to build consensus and provide a better understanding of community needs and the marketplace to guide development of the CRA Plan. A variety of public engagement opportunities were conducted including a website dedicated to the project, community survey, youth engagement event, faith leadership roundtable, and four in-person public workshops. In addition, Technical and Steering Committees were formed to help guide the development of the plan. The Technical Committee included members from Forward Pinellas, Pinellas County, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, and various City of Clearwater departments. The Steering Committee members came from the North Greenwood community and included representatives from the Clearwater Urban Leadership Coalition, business owners, faith-based community, non-profit and community organizations, industry and development, and other neighborhood representatives.

Several themes resulted from this input including a desire to focus on the revitalization of the North Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue corridor, the importance of rehabilitation of existing homes, and the need for increased connections to trails and Stevenson Creek, access to public facilities, and coordination of existing non-profit organizations. The concerns that are intertwined in each of these themes is poverty reduction and support for better health outcomes.

Chapter 3: Vision, Goal, & Redevelopment Policies (pages 90-95)

The vision for the plan was established through discussion with the Steering Committee and during one of the public engagement workshops. The vision of the CRA is: “North Greenwood will flourish as a vibrant community where social and economic equity is prioritized to eliminate poverty and enhance the quality of life for all. The success of North Greenwood will be achieved through people-based solutions, academic excellence, the improvement of existing infrastructure, and the creation of new spaces that will foster a thriving and sustainable future.”

There are six overriding goals identified in this CRA Plan, which evolved through the public engagement process and are as follows:

- Public Safety:** Strengthen relationships between residents, neighborhood organizations, and public safety providers to improve public safety.
- Mobility:** Increase the safety of and access to active forms of transportation.
- Poverty Reduction:** Increase access to high paying jobs for the residents of the North Greenwood CRA both within and outside the area through workforce development, business assistance programs, and support for entrepreneurs.
- Housing Availability:** Provide safe and affordable housing options for residents at all stages of life allowing them to age in place.
- Quality of Life:** Sustain a high quality of life through community engagement, access to recreational opportunities, celebrating the unique culture of North Greenwood, improving public health, and protecting the environment.
- Invest in Youth:** Provide opportunities for youth in North Greenwood to live healthy and economically secure lives.

The vision and goals were used to guide the development of both people- and place-based strategies to ensure the needs of the community are met.

Chapter 4: Plan Implementation (pages 96-133)

This chapter primarily focuses on funding projections and the specific strategies and funding sources the city, Community Redevelopment Agency, and community partners will use to achieve the CRA’s redevelopment goals. There are two primary sources of funding identified for the plan implementation – Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA).

*Tax Increment Financing (TIF)*

Pursuant to Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes the county is authorized to approve the use of TIF in the CRA. Upon adoption of the CRA Plan and creation of the Redevelopment Trust Fund by the city, the county will consider the Plan and authorize the use of TIF funds in this new CRA.

Tax increment financing projections have been calculated for the CRA using the 2021 property tax value as the base year for the CRA; however, the intent is to base the CRA on the 2022 property tax value when it is available. TIF projections for the CRA assumed city and county millage rates would remain constant, property value would increase 3% each year, and there would be \$100 million in development in the Old Bay District (accounted for in years 6-12). Based on these assumptions, it is projected that the CRA could generate approximately \$30 million in tax increment over the next 20 years. The county requires that 50% of the total TIF revenue generated be committed to three priority areas: affordable housing, economic development and employment, and mobility to receive 95% of the county tax increment.

The use of TIF revenue is limited to mostly place-based strategies that are physical in nature. The CRA Implementation Table identifies strategies where TIF revenue is proposed to fund projects within the North Greenwood area.

#### *American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds*

The city has allocated \$5 million of ARPA funding that must be allocated by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026. ARPA funds are not restricted so they are prioritized for direct poverty reduction activities that may not be eligible for TIF revenue. The CRA Implementation Table also identifies strategies where the ARPA funds will be allocated.

#### *CRA Implementation Table*

This table identifies 58 strategies that the city will pursue to implement the CRA Plan. Some are very specific while others require study and analysis. Many city departments and divisions will have a role in implementing the Plan including Planning and Development, Economic Development and Housing, Community Redevelopment Agency, Cultural Affairs, Sustainability, Public Works, Public Utilities, Parks and Recreation, Library, Fire, and Police.

The CRA Implementation Table identifies nine Capital Improvement Projects to implement the *North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan*. The type of projects includes sidewalk and trail improvements or connections, streetscape improvements/landscaping, parks and recreation facility improvements, improvements to reduce odor from the wastewater treatment plant, and creative placemaking opportunities. The anticipated cost of these projects totals approximately \$10 million over the next 20 years with three of the project costs still yet to be determined.

A list of selected strategies from the CRA Implementation Table follows:

- Develop grant programs to pay for interior and exterior improvements to blighted properties;
- Install additional lighting along sidewalks and trails;
- Identify opportunities to increase use of existing transit services and expand transit services;

- Hire an organization(s) to develop and implement neighborhood scale business development assistance and marketing program(s) like the Main Street model or other comprehensive programs;
- Expand North Greenwood Library hours to support workforce development programming;
- Provide direct rent subsidy to cost burdened households to prevent displacement;
- Create a grant program to incentivize the construction of affordable housing on vacant, infill lots;
- Fund programs that honor North Greenwood's history through memorials, interpretive messaging and public art installations;
- Examine all recreational facilities and determine how to increase community access for recreational use outside of standard operating hours;
- Work with partners to implement and enhance workforce development and youth job readiness programs, including year-round afterschool employment; and
- Support organizations that provide youth mental health and wellness programs.

#### Chapter 5: Governance (pages 134-137)

This chapter contains county and state requirements for forming community redevelopment areas, reporting requirements, and restrictions on TIF revenue expenditures as well as how the city will administer the North Greenwood CRA.

The county requires that the city form a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to make recommendations to the Community Redevelopment Agency Trustees on the budget, amendments to the plan, and adoption of programs. The CAC is proposed to include 5 members where 3 would be elected by voters within the North Greenwood CRA and the remaining 2 members would be appointed by City Council. Each member would receive a stipend for their time and service on this committee.

#### Appendices A through D (pages 138-147)

##### *Legal Description (Appendix A)*

Based on the study area in the Finding of Necessity Study, a CRA boundary was created and is formally described in the provided legal description.

##### *CRA Local Assessment (Appendix B)*

Pinellas County uses 12 factors to assess a CRA to get a baseline understanding of the needs of the community and how it aligns with the three county priority areas. Using these factors, the city's consultant VHB determined the North Greenwood CRA should receive a score of 78 points, designating it an Urban Revitalization area, making it eligible to received 95% of county TIF increment.

##### *Tax Increment Projections (Appendix C)*

The Tax Increment Projections table provides a year over year projection of the CRA taxable value with a standard 3% increase in value in most years and accommodating the possible \$100 million in development value in years 6-12 where a range of 3% to 9.5% increase in value is projected. The table also shows the city and county tax increment contributions year over year.

### *Neighborhood Impact Assessment (Appendix D)*

A neighborhood impact assessment is required for a redevelopment plan if the CRA contains low to moderate income housing. The statutes require that six elements be evaluated as part of the neighborhood assessment and include the following: Relocation, Traffic Circulation, Environmental Quality, Availability of Community Facilities and Services, Effect on School Population, and Other items affecting the physical and social quality of the neighborhood. The assessment found that the Plan would not have a detrimental impact on any of the above listed elements.

## **CONSISTENCY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A selected list of goals, objectives, and policies from the *Clearwater Comprehensive Plan* that are furthered by the *North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan*:

Policy A.5.4.3 North Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue from Fairmont Street to Drew Street. The existing walkable community and livable neighborhood features should be maintained, while residential, office and institutional uses should be supported.

Policy A.5.5.2 Preserve the unique qualities of Clearwater and its cultural heritage as exemplified by historic buildings, landmarks, landscapes, streetscapes, lighting, and building design.

Policy A.5.6.1 Create art projects that help to shape the City's image, strengthen civic connectivity and support neighborhood identity.

Policy A.5.6.6 Encourage the incorporation of historic and current elements of Clearwater character into public art projects.

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.6.1.1 Redevelopment shall be encouraged, where appropriate, by providing development incentives such as density bonuses for significant lot consolidation; catalytic projects; workforce housing projects; "missing middle housing" projects; and vertically integrated, transit supportive mixed-use development, as well as the use of transfer of developments rights pursuant to approved special area plans and redevelopment plans.

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.

Policy A.6.2.4 Through economic development programs, facilitate the development of abandoned, idled, brownfield or underutilized properties and buildings, bringing them back into productive use.

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.

Policy A.6.8.5 Provide easy access to residential, commercial and recreational areas by providing direct routes such as trails and continuous sidewalks between destinations, in order to minimize potential conflicts between pedestrians and motor vehicles.

Policy A.6.8.9 Promote a variety of transportation modes such as walking, bicycling, ride sharing and mass transit to increase transportation choices and decrease dependence on the single-occupancy automobile.

Goal C.1 An affordable variety of standard housing units in decent and safe neighborhoods to meet the needs of current and future residents regardless of race, nationality, age, martial status, handicap, or religion.

Objective C.1.2 Objective for Affordable Housing – The City of Clearwater shall continue to provide assistance and incentives for the development of housing that is affordable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households, including those with special needs, consistent with the level of growth in these income categories.

Objective C.1.3 Objective for Housing Conditions – The City of Clearwater shall encourage the elimination of substandard housing units through demolition, upgrades, renovation and preservation efforts.

Policy C.1.3.5 Encourage ongoing maintenance through programs that foster pride in ownership and individual efforts.

Objective C.1.6 Objective for Housing Conservation and Rehabilitation - Through both private and public resources, the City of Clearwater shall encourage the conservation, rehabilitation, and preservation of the existing housing stock, including historically significant housing.

Policy C.1.6.2 Use Community Development Block Grant, HOME, SHIP, and any other available funds for programs and improvements throughout the City with special emphasis on North Greenwood, Lake Belleview, and East Gateway neighborhoods and such other neighborhoods as may require program attention.

Policy C.1.8.4 Continue to provide assistance to qualified residents to retrofit housing in order to be barrier free and accessible.



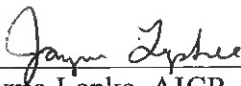
The *North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan* is consistent with the Clearwater Comprehensive Plan as evidenced by the numerous goals, objectives, and policies identified above. The CRA Plan establishes objectives and strategies to ensure neighborhood and corridor preservation, promote redevelopment of blighted areas, protect historic resources, connect neighborhoods to sidewalks and trails, include public art, provide incentives for affordable housing, encourage infill development, and support programs to promote homeownership, rehabilitation, and retention.

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION:**

The proposed *North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan* is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. It provides goals, objectives, and policies to guide redevelopment and city actions. It provides a neighborhood impact assessment to meet the requirements of Florida Community Redevelopment Act. Furthermore, it provides TIF projections and a CRA Implementation Table that outlines the schedule and investment in public strategies.

The Planning and Development Department recommends APPROVAL of Resolution No. 23-01, that adopts the *North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan*.

Prepared by Planning and Development Department Staff:

  
Jayme Lopko, AICP  
Long Range Planning Manager

### ATTACHMENTS:

*North Greenwood Community Redevelopment Area Plan*  
Proposed Resolution No. 23-01  
Resume

