

## Pinellas County's Redevelopment Planning and FAQs

### Topics Addressed Below:

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What is redevelopment?

### **What does redevelopment have to do with economic development?**

Economic development takes place when local governments work with the business sector to attract and retain employers by marketing the community to new companies and addressing the needs of existing businesses. The goal is to create and maintain well-paying jobs, produce higher average incomes, and allow local governments to maintain a healthy tax base without unfairly burdening either residents or employers.

As we approach buildout, redevelopment is becoming a vital component of economic development. The lack of greenfield land makes it more difficult for new businesses to locate here, or for existing ones to expand. If this situation is not addressed through redevelopment, over time, existing businesses may be forced to move to other counties - taking well-paying jobs with them - and few new ones will move in to replace them. With planned redevelopment, aging buildings can be upgraded or replaced, and land can be recycled to accommodate the needs of new or expanding employers, helping ensure that high wage employers continue to come to, and remain in, the county.

### **What is Pinellas by Design?**

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. Almost every local government has passed a resolution in support of the plan, which was designed so that each community will be able to define its future vision within a shared planning framework. For detailed information on the five year planning process, including community input, analysis, and related studies go to <http://www.pinellasbydesign.org/>.

### **What are the goals of Pinellas By Design?**

- To protect and improve quality of life for residents, visitors, and businesses.
- To help Pinellas County compete with other regions for the high wage jobs and skilled workers we need to sustain and grow our economy.
- To ensure that there is sufficient land to accommodate new businesses, and allow existing ones to expand.
- To balance the employment, housing, and transportation needs of the local workforce.
- To help Pinellas County remain an attractive and competitive tourist destination.
- To preserve the character of our residential neighborhoods.
- To support a variety of transportation options, including walking, biking, and efficient transit.
- To provide more residential options, such as downtowns and transit corridors, to complement our established neighborhoods.
- To direct redevelopment to places where it is most appropriate.

- To encourage public/private redevelopment partnerships.
- To protect our beautiful beaches, maintain scenic views, and reward tree preservation.
- To create places of special value to the community, such as town centers, arts districts, and public plazas.
- To build a community that invites creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

### **Will redevelopment change my community?**

All communities change and evolve over time, some for the worse, through age and neglect and others for the better, through ongoing investment and revitalization. A community's efforts are best spent taking actions to ensure that the resultant changes are ones that contribute positively to the community.

Careful planning will help ensure that new buildings and redevelopments are attractive and fit the character of their surroundings, help make our streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists, and create new amenities such as parks, recreational trails, and pleasant downtown streets. It takes a combination of plans, regulations, and incentives to guide redevelopment in a way that benefits the public.

### **What regulations govern redevelopment?**

All developments and redevelopments must adhere to state, county, and local regulations, including future land use plans and land development codes. Exceptions or changes to these regulations can be made, but only after a thorough review by local government staff, citizen planning boards, and/or elected officials at a public hearing.

### **Are all redevelopments the same?**

No. Most redevelopments are initiated, and paid for, entirely by a private developer who is acting independently. However, some redevelopment projects that would be beneficial to a community may be too expensive or risky for developers acting alone. Therefore, some local governments sponsor partnered redevelopment, in which a developer agrees to provide a certain kind of redevelopment in cooperation with one or more public agencies. Examples might include a movie theater complex in a struggling downtown, or a housing development for low-income residents. Because public resources are used, these projects are open to greater input and scrutiny from the community.

### **How can I get involved in the redevelopment of my community?**

The best way to get involved is to keep informed of local redevelopment projects and issues through the newspaper, TV, radio, and local government websites. Other options include joining neighborhood associations, participating with civic groups, and attending public hearings. You can also express your views on redevelopment issues by calling, writing, or emailing your elected officials, and by writing to your local newspaper.

### **What is redevelopment? Why does it happen?**

Redevelopment is a process in which deteriorated or obsolete houses and buildings are altered or replaced to accommodate new, and sometimes different, land uses. It also can include land assembly where a number of smaller parcels are combined into a larger site. Sometimes it also involves environmental cleanup and reuse of contaminated land. Redevelopment is a natural, inevitable process. But it can, and should, be guided by the community according to a vision and plan.

### **What are some common redevelopment terms?**

**Brownfield:** Abandoned, idled or under utilized industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. See the County's Brownfield Program.

**Community Redevelopment Area (CRA)** – Areas designated by local governments in which investments are made to attract certain types of redevelopment. See further information below  
**Density:** The number of residences (houses, apartment units, or condominium units) permitted on an acre of land, e.g., 15 units per acre.

**Developer:** A person or company who builds or significantly alters a permanent building.

**Enterprise Zone:** A specific geographic area targeted for economic revitalization. Enterprise Zones encourage economic growth and investment in distressed areas by offering tax advantages and incentives to businesses locating within the zone boundaries. Go to [www.floridaenterprisezone.com](http://www.floridaenterprisezone.com) for more information and maps

**Future Land Use Plan:** A local government regulatory document and map that govern the types of development (such as residential or commercial) that are allowed on each parcel of land in the community. See the County's Future Land Use Plan.

**Grayfield:** A deteriorating or abandoned mall or shopping center, or other vacant land that is mostly paved over.

**Greenfield:** Vacant land that has never been developed.

**Infill Parcel:** A vacant or underutilized lot in the middle of a built-up area.

**Intensity:** The amount of non-residential development on a parcel of land. There are two measures of intensity. Floor area ratio (FAR) is based on the amount of building square footage relative to the area of the parcel. For example, a five-story office tower would have a higher FAR than a one-story office building on the same size parcel. Impervious surface ratio (ISR) is based on the square footage of the buildings, pavement, and anything else that covers the ground, relative to the area of the parcel. For example, on the same size property, a large surface parking lot would have a higher ISR than a compact parking garage surrounded by grass.

**Land Development Code:** A local government regulatory document that governs the way land can be developed or redeveloped, including how dense or intense it can be, how far away from other buildings it must be, and other characteristics.

**Livability:** A collection of qualities that make a community an attractive, safe, and enjoyable place to live.

**Mixed-Use:** A type of development or redevelopment in which different land uses are placed close together, sometimes in the same building. For example, retail shops with apartments located above them are considered mixed-use.

**New Urbanism:** A style of urban planning that imitates the design of downtowns and neighborhoods built before World War II. New urbanist communities are higher-density than modern suburbs, have more mixed-use development, and are designed to encourage more walking, bicycling, and transit use.

**Smart Growth:** A philosophy of regional development that advocates higher-density development and redevelopment of existing cities, limits on sprawl development, and protection of rural open space.

**Sprawl:** The outward expansion of low-density, automobile-dependent suburban development from existing urban areas.

## **What is a Community Redevelopment Area or District?**

Under Florida law (Chapter 163, Part III), local governments are able to designate areas as Community Redevelopment Areas when certain conditions exist. Examples of conditions that can support the creation of a Community Redevelopment Area include, but are not limited to: the presence of substandard or inadequate structures, a shortage of affordable housing, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient roadways, and inadequate parking. To document that the required conditions exist, the local government must survey the proposed redevelopment area and prepare a Finding of Necessity. If the Finding of Necessity determines that the required conditions exist, the local government may create a Community Redevelopment Area to provide the tools needed to foster and support redevelopment of the targeted area.

### **What is a Community Redevelopment Agency?**

The activities and programs offered within a Community Redevelopment Area are administered by the Community Redevelopment Agency. A CRA "Board" created by the local government directs the agency. The Board can be comprised of local government officials and or other individuals appointed by the local government. Although one local government may establish multiple CRA districts, there generally may be only one CRA Board. Each district must maintain separate trust funds, and expend those funds only in that district.

CRA Boards do not establish policy for a city or county - they develop and administer a plan to implement that policy. The CRA acts officially as a body distinct and separate from the governing body, even when it is the same group of people. The CRA has certain powers that the city or county by itself may not do, such as establish tax increment financing, and leverage local public funds with private dollars to make redevelopment happen.

### **What is a Community Redevelopment Plan?**

The Community Redevelopment Agency is responsible for developing and implementing the Community Redevelopment Plan that addresses the unique needs of the targeted area. The plan includes the overall goals for redevelopment in the area, as well as identifying the types of projects planned for the area. Redevelopment plans must be consistent with local government comprehensive plans.

Examples of traditional projects include: streetscapes and roadway improvements, building renovations, new building construction, flood control initiatives, water and sewer improvements, parking lots and garages, neighborhood parks, sidewalks and street tree plantings. The plan can also include redevelopment incentives such as grants and loans for such things as façade improvements, sprinkler system upgrades, signs, and structural improvements. The redevelopment plan is a living document that can be updated to meet the changing needs within the Community Redevelopment Area; however, the boundaries of the area cannot be changed without starting the process from the beginning.

### **What is Tax Increment Financing?**

[Tax increment financing](#) is a unique tool available to cities and counties for redevelopment activities. The dollar value of all real property in the Community Redevelopment Area is determined as of a fixed date, also known as the "frozen value." Taxing authorities, which contribute to the tax increment, continue to receive property tax revenues based on the frozen value. These frozen value revenues are available for general government purposes. However, any tax revenues from increases in real property value, referred to as "increment," are deposited into the Community Redevelopment Agency Trust Fund and dedicated to the redevelopment area.

The tax increment revenues can be used immediately, saved for a particular project, or can be bonded to maximize the funds available. Any funds received from a tax increment financing area must be used for specific redevelopment purposes within the targeted area, and not for general government purposes. It is important to note that property tax revenue collected by the School Board and any special district are not affected under the tax increment financing process.