

Chapter 2

Existing Conditions

THE PLANNING AREA

The Downtown Clearwater Plan encompasses 539.7 acres comprised of 1,740 parcels of land (see Map 2, page 17). This document serves a dual function as both the Special Area Plan for the entire planning area and as the Redevelopment Plan for 83% (448.7 acres) of the land area that is located within the City's Community Redevelopment Area. Those areas not contained within the CRA boundaries are considered part of the Downtown and are governed by this Plan. This Plan will replace previously adopted special area plans including the 1995 Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan which governed the CRA, as well as the Downtown Clearwater Periphery Plan, originally adopted in 1995 and amended in 2001. This Plan is intended to guide Downtown redevelopment for the next 20 years.

Original and Expanded Community Redevelopment Area

The city's original Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), illustrated on Map 1, page 9 encompassed 247 acres. The blighting factors identified for this area in 1981 include:

- A predominance of defective or inadequate street layout by modern standards;
- Faulty lot layout limiting the nature and extent of uses of properties;
- Deterioration of sites, buildings, and other improvements;
- Diversity of ownership which prevents the free alienability of economically feasibly sized properties;
- Unusual conditions of title based on large institutional holdings in this area which restrict the market supply and size of private enterprise land; and
- A static tax base, with conditions of ownership which portend a continuing relative decline in the downtown area's values.

Over the past 20 years, the CRA has had a positive impact on Downtown as evidenced by the public and private investment detailed in this Chapter in the section titled "Investment in Downtown." Certain issues identified above, however, still exist. Additionally, Downtown lacks activity. It has numerous nonconforming uses as a result of the adoption of the 1999 Community Development Code, as well as Brownfields, deteriorating and unattractive infrastructure and lack of housing diversity. These issues combined with the recent slowdown in the economy, the construction of several major capital projects and other changing conditions presented an opportunity to redefine the vision and boundaries for the CRA.

The most important capital project impacting Downtown is the re-alignment of the new Memorial Causeway Bridge, which is scheduled to open in early 2004. This project, which is discussed in detail later in this Chapter will have a tremendous impact on Downtown because it will significantly change commuting patterns from the mainland to Clearwater Beach. The other major issue impacting Downtown is the deterioration of the commercial and residential area east of the original CRA identified as the East Gateway character district and portions of the Town Lake Residential character district in this Plan. Since the East Gateway is a main gateway into Downtown from the eastern sections of

Clearwater, its accelerating decline will have a major affect on the traditional Downtown core.

Based on the above factors, the original boundaries for the CRA were reassessed. The City prepared a Findings and Declarations of Necessity Analysis for 201 acres generally located to the east of the CRA, including land governed by the Southeast and Southwest Expansion Areas of the Clearwater Downtown Periphery Plan. The study clearly demonstrated the need for revitalization outside of the existing CRA boundaries and documented the following conditions:

- Poor lot layout relating to size, accessibility and use;
- Site and environs deterioration;
- Inadequate and outmoded building density patterns;
- Defective or inadequate street configurations, transportation facilities and parking facilities;
- Excessive emergency calls;
- Unsanitary and unsafe environment;
- Excessive violations of the Florida Building Code;
- Diversity of ownership;
- Falling lease rates;
- High residential and commercial vacancy rates; and
- Lack of appreciable increase in the past five years of the aggregate assessed values

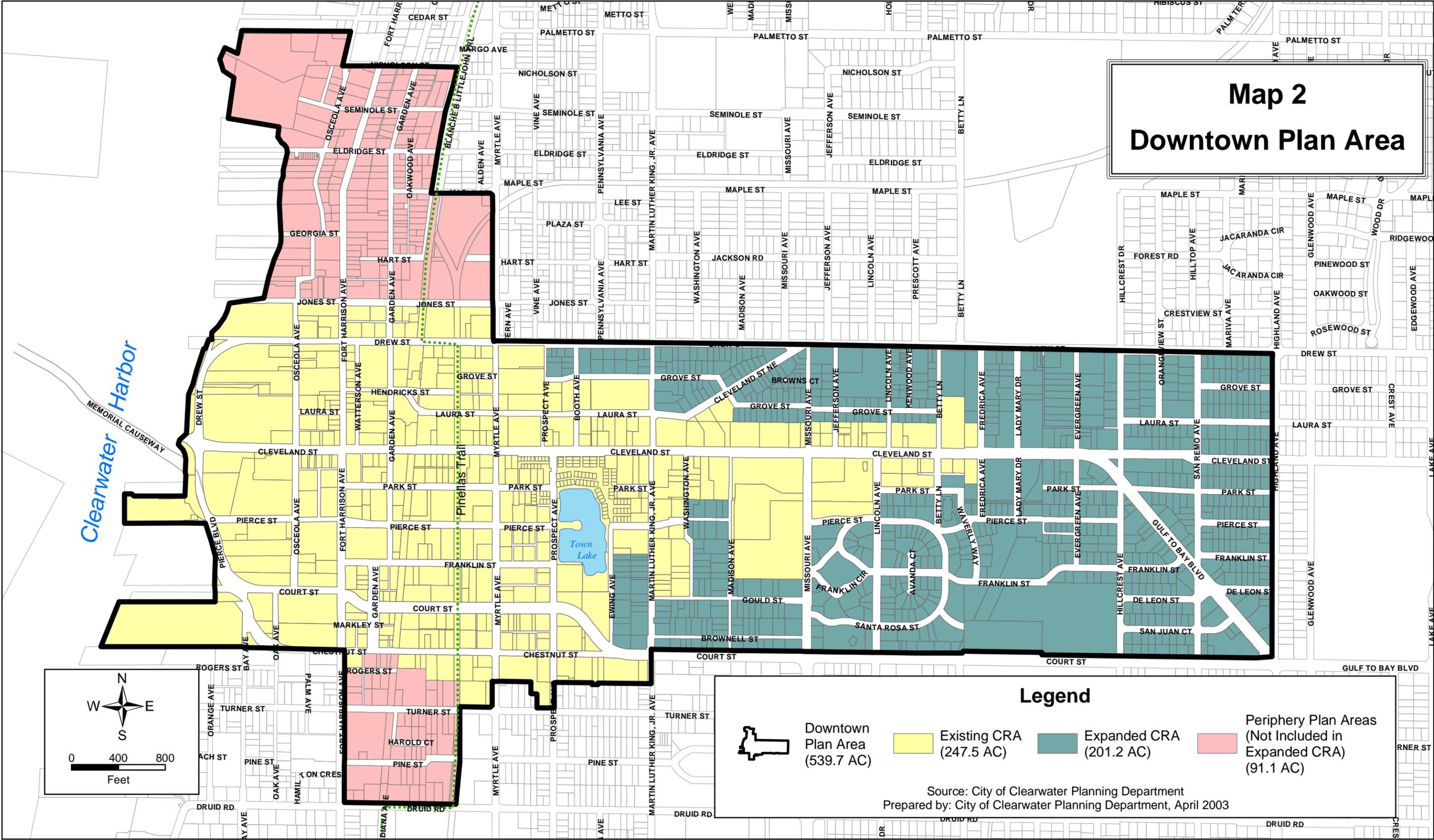
The City Commission and Board of County Commissioners expanded the Clearwater Downtown CRA boundaries to include this area (see Map 1, page 9).

LAND USE

Clearwater's Downtown encompasses 539.7 acres comprised of 1,740 parcels of land. A total of 448.7 acres, or 83 percent of the Plan area, is located within the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). Map 2, page 17, illustrates the Plan area, as well as the CRA boundary. Downtown is characterized by a variety of uses with varying intensities and densities. Its form and function also varies depending on the specific location within the Downtown. The traditional business core is the most intensely developed area with a mix of historic buildings and new construction. Downtown enjoys a unique location on a bluff overlooking Clearwater Harbor with a significant public park along that waterfront. There are also near-town neighborhoods rich in Florida vernacular architecture and neighborhood commercial areas. The far eastern area of Downtown includes newer housing, more suburban in style and older neighborhood commercial development.

The City's Future Land Use Map designates well over half of the land within Downtown as Central Business District and is located within the original CRA and Periphery Plan areas. Additional categories, ranging from Residential Urban to Commercial, exist in the newly expanded CRA to the east of the Downtown core. Table 1, below, and Map 3, page 21, illustrate the Future Land Use in the area.

Map 2 Downtown Plan Area



Legend

-  Downtown Plan Area (539.7 AC)
-  Existing CRA (247.5 AC)
-  Expanded CRA (201.2 AC)
-  Periphery Plan Areas (Not Included in Expanded CRA) (91.1 AC)

Source: City of Clearwater Planning Department
 Prepared by: City of Clearwater Planning Department, April 2003

**Table 1
Future Land Use**

Future Land Use Designation	Number of Parcels	Acreage	Percent of Acreage
Residential Urban	24	5.6	1.0%
Residential Medium	355	61.6	11.4%
Residential High	128	31.6	5.9%
Residential/Office General	133	23.1	4.3%
Commercial General	96	29.7	5.5%
Recreation/Open Space	1	4.0	0.7%
Institutional	8	17.0	3.2%
Central Business District	975	367.1	68%
Total	1720	539.7	100.0%

The major zoning category of the Plan area is D, Downtown District, and like the CBD Future Land Use category, is located within the original CRA and former Periphery Plan areas. The remainder of the area, which includes the majority of the newly expanded CRA, has a variety of residential and nonresidential categories. Table 2, below, and Map 4, page 23, depict the zoning of the Downtown Plan area.

**Table 2
Existing Zoning Districts**

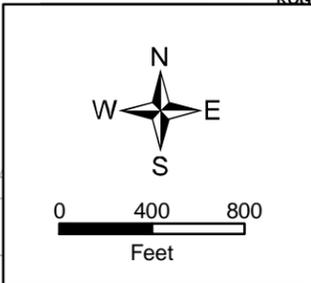
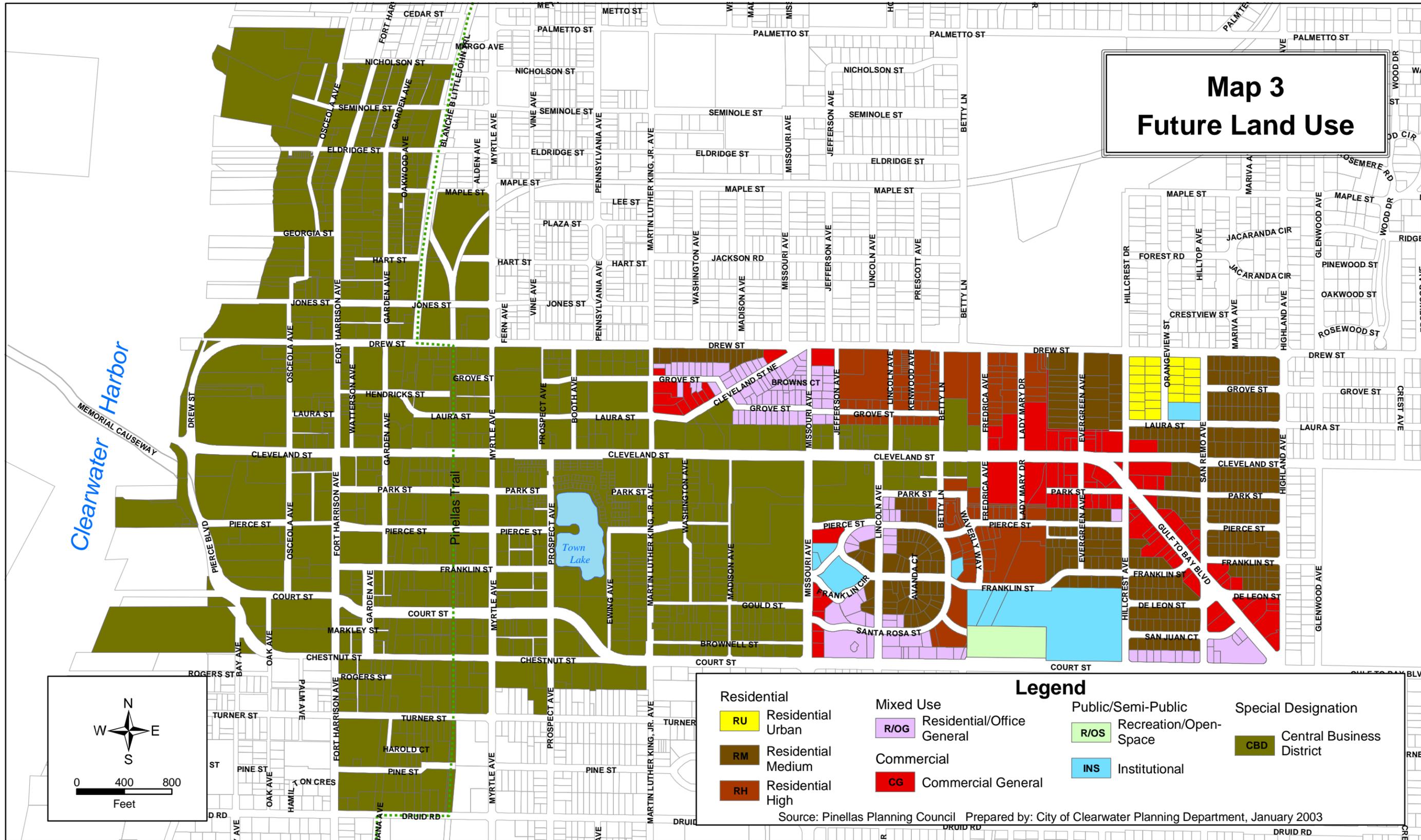
Zoning	Number of Parcels	Acreage	Percent of Acreage
Low Medium Density Residential	24	5.6	1.0%
Medium Density Residential	362	62.3	11.5%
Medium High Density Residential	122	27.0	5.0%
High Density Residential	2	4.0	0.7%
Commercial	93	29.2	5.4%
Office	131	22.7	4.2%
Institutional	9	17.3	3.2%
Open Space/ Recreation	1	4.0	.07%
Downtown	976	367.6	68.1%
Total	1720	539.7	100.0%

Downtown has a variety of existing land uses with the majority (51.7 percent) being residential, office and retail. Almost nine percent of the total land area is vacant and is located generally in the areas immediately surrounding the Downtown core. This vacant land consists of small residential-sized parcels and several very large ones. It should be noted that a portion of the property considered vacant around the “Prospect Lake Park” is under construction with townhouse development. Industrial and vehicle service uses comprise 7.7 percent of the land area within Downtown and are generally concentrated in the vicinity of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, Pierce Street between Myrtle and Prospect Avenues, and between Blanche B. Littlejohn Trail and North Fort Harrison Avenue Avenue. These uses were once permitted; however, the 1999 Community Development Code rendered them nonconforming. Government facilities and institutional uses are generally concentrated in the historic core of Downtown and together occupy almost 16 percent of the total land area. The remaining uses are devoted to overnight accommodations, utility/infrastructure, recreation and parking. Table 3 below and Map 5, page 25, illustrate existing land uses within the Downtown.

**Table 3
Existing Land Use**

Land Use	Number of Parcels	Acreage	Percent of Acreage
Single-family	306	50.0	9.2%
Two-family	182	27.0	5.0%
Multi-family	208	71.8	13.3%
Office	204	65.7	12.2%
Retail	195	64.9	12.0%
Vehicle Services	66	21.3	4.0%
Overnight Accommodations	18	12.1	2.2%
Industrial	68	20.8	3.9%
Utility/Infrastructure	39	17.4	3.2%
Parking	47	23.7	4.4%
Government Facilities	47	34.2	6.3%
Institutional	82	51.8	9.6%
Recreation	37	32.3	6.0%
Vacant	221	46.6	8.6%
Total	1720	539.7	100%

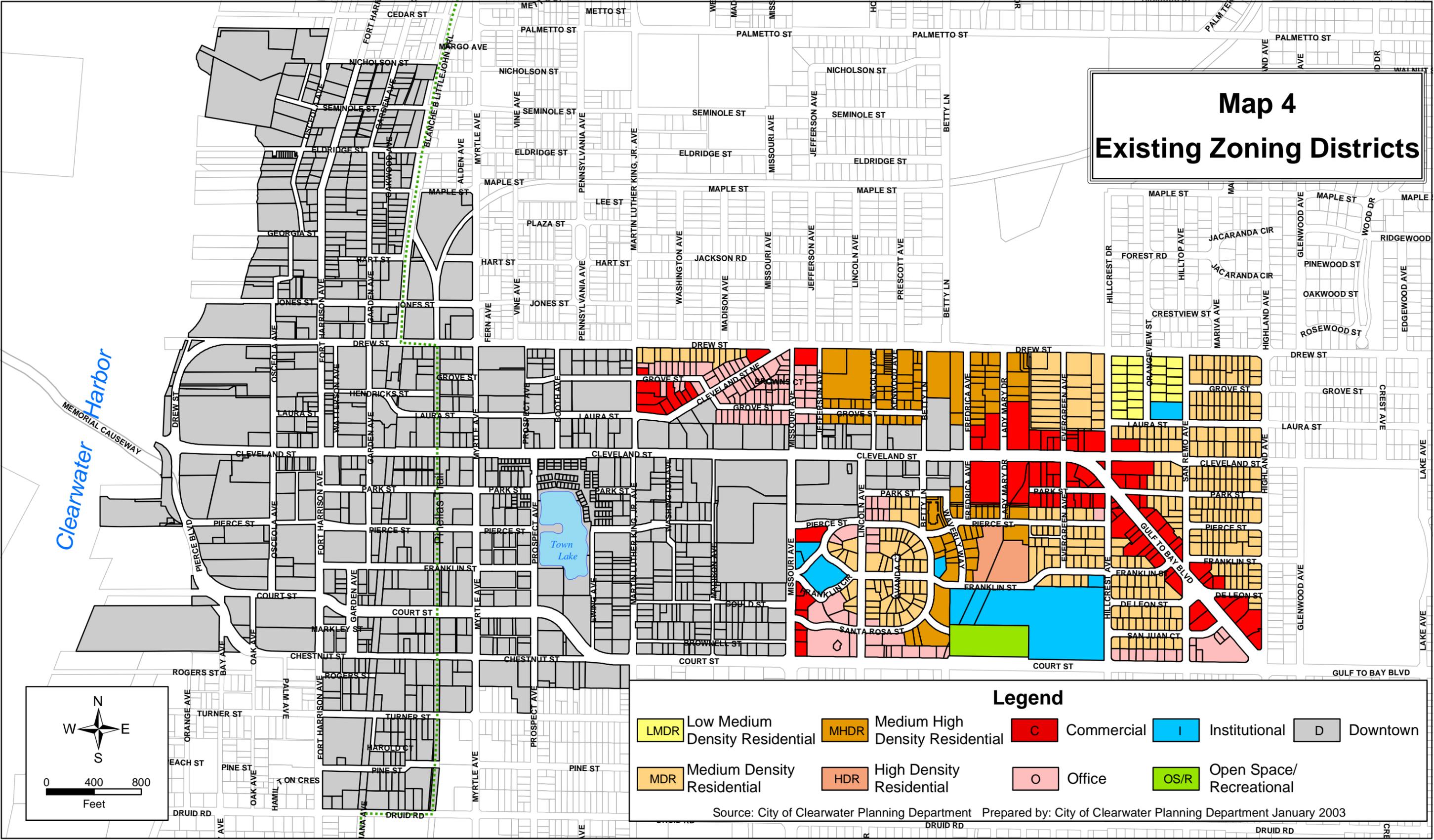
Map 3 Future Land Use



Legend			
RU Residential Urban	R/OG Residential/Office General	R/OS Public/Semi-Public Recreation/Open-Space	CBD Special Designation Central Business District
RM Residential Medium	CG Commercial General	INS Institutional	
RH Residential High			

Source: Pinellas Planning Council Prepared by: City of Clearwater Planning Department, January 2003

Map 4 Existing Zoning Districts

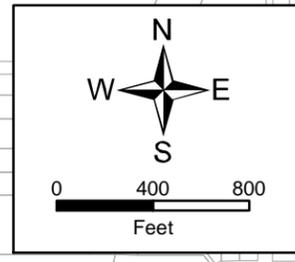
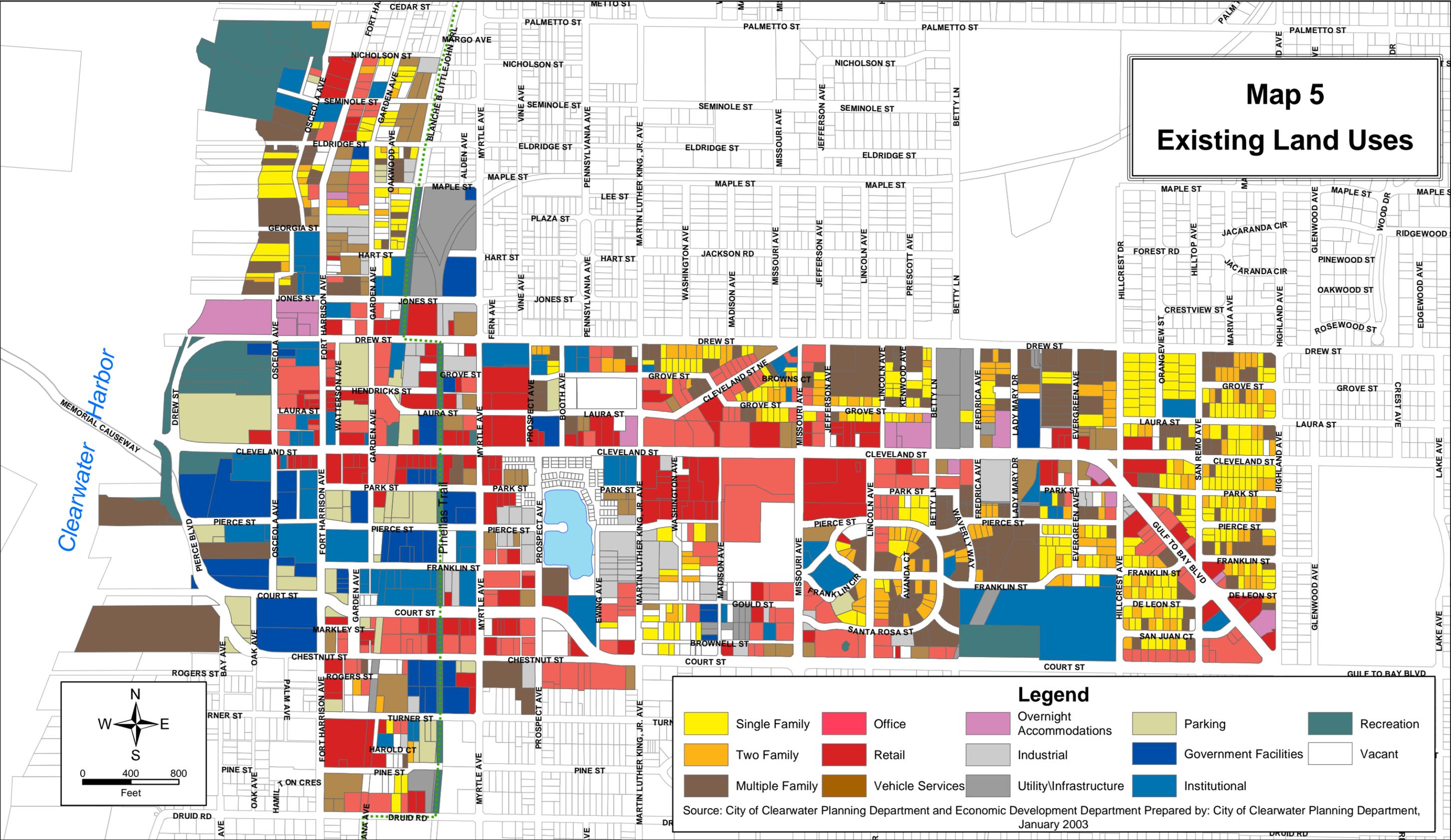


Legend

LMDR Low Medium Density Residential	MHR Medium High Density Residential	C Commercial	I Institutional	D Downtown
MDR Medium Density Residential	HDR High Density Residential	O Office	OS/R Open Space/Recreational	

Source: City of Clearwater Planning Department Prepared by: City of Clearwater Planning Department January 2003

Map 5 Existing Land Uses



Legend

Single Family	Office	Overnight Accommodations	Parking	Recreation
Two Family	Retail	Industrial	Government Facilities	Vacant
Multiple Family	Vehicle Services	Utility/Infrastructure	Institutional	

Source: City of Clearwater Planning Department and Economic Development Department Prepared by: City of Clearwater Planning Department, January 2003

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Downtown Clearwater maintains much of its built heritage through the existing buildings in the traditional Downtown core, and in the near-town residential neighborhoods surrounding the core. Limited, recent research has been conducted to determine the location and numbers of historic resources within Downtown. Based on existing knowledge and fieldwork, it is evident that historic resources are concentrated in the historic core of Downtown, the area formerly known as the Northwest Periphery Plan Expansion Area and the area of Grove Street.

Two properties located within the Downtown Plan area are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Cleveland Street Post Office and the Old Pinellas County Courthouse. To date, six other buildings have been identified as potentially eligible for listing on the National Register and are as follows:

- Seaboard Air Line Railroad Depot - 657 Court Street;
- Calvary Baptist Church - 331 Cleveland Street;
- Guaranty Title and Trust Building - 409 Cleveland Street;
- Coachman Building – 505 – 513 Cleveland Street;
- Fort Harrison Avenue Hotel - 210 South Fort Harrison Avenue Avenue; and
- Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church – 110 South Fort Harrison Avenue Avenue.

In order to determine the extent and quality of resources within the Downtown, additional survey work will be necessary.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

Clearwater's population continues to expand despite the fact that Clearwater is largely developed. The City grew by 10 percent (from 98,784 to 108,787 residents) between 1990 and 2000. This trend is also evident in the Downtown area with a population increase from 4,825 in 1990 residents to 5,160 in 2000, which is an increase of almost seven percent. The mix of population, however, showcases dramatic changes. Specifically, the African American population has declined in Downtown by almost eight percent and the Hispanic population has seen dramatic increases of almost 24 percent. The majority of the Hispanic growth has occurred in the most eastern portion of the newly expanded CRA and is mainly attributable to an influx of immigrants, particularly from the State of Hidalgo in Mexico.

Gender and Age

The percentage of male and female residents City-wide remains relatively stable; however, in the Downtown area, the percentage of males has increased from 43.8 percent in 1990 to 51.6 percent in 2000. These increases have primarily occurred in the expanded CRA to the east of the Downtown core.

The average and median age of Clearwater residents has declined slightly over the last decade. Currently the population's median age is 41.8 years and the average age is 42.6 years. The age of the population within Downtown varies greatly depending on location. An older population, with an average and median age of 76.5 and 82.7 respectively, is concentrated in the historical core. In the area formerly known as the Northwest Expansion Area of the Periphery Plan, the average and median age is 39 years while in the eastern area of the expanded CRA, median age is as low as 32 years representing a significant decrease from 37 in 1990.

Households

The number of households in the Downtown area has changed in direct correlation with population figures, declining in the historic core and increasing in the eastern portion of the newly expanded CRA. The household size (average number of persons per household) has remained stable, at 2.2 persons, for the City as a whole, as well as within the Downtown core area. The area formerly known as the Northwest Expansion Area of the Periphery Plan saw a slight decline in household size from 2.2 persons in 1990 to 2.1 persons in 2000. The eastern section of the expanded CRA experienced the greatest increase in household size for the decade, from 1.8 to 2.3 persons, an increase of 27 percent.

Housing

The City as a whole has experienced an 8.7 percent increase in the number of housing units over the last decade. In contrast, however, Downtown has experienced a reduction in the number of units, with the exception of the most eastern area of the CRA. The City's median value of owner-occupied housing experienced a 39 percent increase over the decade from \$81,492 in 1990 to \$113,416 in 2000. The Downtown saw similar patterns of change in housing values with the exception of the eastern area of the expanded CRA. Housing values in this area increased by only 15 percent. Furthermore, the median value is significantly less for this eastern area (\$80,556) compared to the City as a whole (\$113,416). The percentage of renter-occupied units in the City remains relatively high at 38 percent and is significantly higher in Downtown, ranging from 60 percent in the area formerly known as the Northwest Expansion Area of the Periphery Plan to a high of 91 percent in the area formerly known as the Southwest Expansion Area of the Periphery Plan.

Income

The median household income for the City grew by almost 52 percent between 1990 and 2000, from \$26,689 to \$40,480. Areas within Downtown also experienced dramatic growth in income during the same period. However, when compared to the City's median income, all areas within Downtown except for the core are significantly less, ranging from \$19,000 to \$33,102 or 47 percent to 82 percent of the overall City's median. The Downtown has significant populations that clearly fall within low-moderate income levels.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water

The Downtown area is served by the City of Clearwater water system as illustrated on Appendix Map 5A. The system receives water from City-owned wells, in addition to water purchased from Pinellas County Utilities. The City is currently expanding its wellfield capacity by construction of a reverse osmosis treatment plant at Sid Lickton Park, which is north of Downtown. The plant is scheduled to commence service in August 2003. Additionally, Pinellas County does not limit the amount of water the City can purchase at this time. Adequate water transmission and distribution pipelines are currently in place.

Wastewater

Downtown Clearwater is served by the City's Marshall Street Advanced Pollution Control Facility, which has a permitted capacity of 10 million gallons per day (MGD). Current average flows are six to seven MGD. The State Department of Environmental Protection has approved a Capacity Analysis Report for this treatment plant which concludes that the annual average daily flow is expected to approach 75% capacity near the year 2010. In order to make available additional capacity at the Marshall Street Facility, the City is investigating pipeline routes and pump station locations that can redirect much of the wastewater flow from the southern portions of the City that currently go to the Marshall Street Facility to the Northeast Pollution Control Facility. The City is also actively implementing capital projects defined from a comprehensive evaluation of the sewage collection system. These projects include pump station refurbishment, collection system cleaning and lining, and force main cleaning. The Downtown area is a priority for collection system maintenance projects. Appendix Map 5B, portrays sanitary sewer service within Downtown.

Stormwater

Downtown lies within three drainage basins: Coastal, "Prospect Lake Park" and Stevenson's Creek. The Coastal basin is the area west of Myrtle Avenue which drains directly to Clearwater Harbor through outfalls at Turner Street and Pierce Street. These storm drain systems, depicted in Appendix Map 5C, have been in place for many years and are operating at full capacity. The drainage system will need to be upgraded as part of future redevelopment and streetscape projects.

The central part of the Downtown area is within the "Prospect Lake Park" drainage basin. The "Prospect Lake Park" is a regional stormwater detention and water quality facility scheduled for completion in 2003. It will provide stormwater attenuation and treatment for an approximately 150 acre drainage basin, eliminating the need for on-site stormwater facilities in the basin. The outfall from the "Prospect Lake Park" to Clearwater Harbor is being upgraded as a part of the Myrtle Avenue Improvements project scheduled for completion in mid-2004.

The eastern part of the Downtown area lies within the Stevenson's Creek watershed. The 2002 Stevensons Creek Watershed Master Plan identifies areas within the 100- and 500-

year floodplains adjacent to the creek, as well as projects that will reduce the size of the floodplain areas. One such project is the Glen Oaks Stormwater Detention Facility, which is a 20 acre flood control and water quality project. A portion of the project will reduce the size of the 100-year floodplain between Drew and Court Streets and positively impact properties located in the expanded CRA. A total of nine structures containing 19 dwelling units will no longer be located in the floodplain upon completion of this project. This reduction will also decrease flood levels on Cleveland, Court and Drew Streets and Lady Mary Drive.

Reclaimed Water

A reclaimed water transmission main was installed in the northwestern portion of the Downtown area that connects with Clearwater Beach. At this time, it does not provide service to properties within Downtown. Another reclaimed water transmission main has been installed in the eastern portion of the Downtown area and service is available to properties immediately adjacent to it. Both of these transmission lines are shown on Appendix Map 5D. The construction of the Harbor Oaks reclaimed distribution project will begin in 2003 and will be completed in 2004. This project will provide reclaimed water service to properties located south of Chestnut Street and west of Myrtle Avenue. The remaining areas of Downtown are not scheduled to receive reclaimed water service until 2017-2019.

Gas

Clearwater Gas has a natural gas distribution system throughout the Downtown area, which is illustrated on Appendix Map 5E. Underground gas mains are located on most streets and alleys; service lines exist throughout the area.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are intermittent throughout the Downtown area. The sidewalk network is planned to be upgraded over the next five years as part of future redevelopment and streetscape projects, or as funding allows.

Downtown Fiber Optic Loop

A fiber optic loop connecting major City facilities is being installed to facilitate City business requirements and meet expected service levels to citizens. This loop will be installed to connect the following facilities: Municipal Services Building, Police Department, Fire Station 45, City Hall, Harborview Center, new Main Library, Gas Administration Building, Graphics Buildings and the Engineering Field Office. The new fiber ring will support all voice, data and video needs between the facilities located on the loop. This loop has the ability to provide private access and such opportunities will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and be subject to City Commission approval.

TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

The functionality of a roadway is graded on a level of service (LOS) scale, which is a national standard used by traffic engineers that indicates that amount of congestion on a roadway. The use of LOS standards is also mandated by the Florida Department of Transportation and Department of Community Affairs. The LOS standards range from A to F with LOS A representing roadways with free flowing traffic and LOS F representing those that have traffic approaching a point that exceeds the amount that can be served. The Clearwater Comprehensive Plan establishes the acceptable LOS for major streets in Clearwater at a C average daily/D peak hour, except those identified as backlogged or constrained by the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Under current conditions, the main thoroughfares carrying traffic through and within Downtown are Fort Harrison, Myrtle, and Missouri Avenues and Drew, Cleveland, Court and Chestnut Streets. However, the opening of the new Memorial Causeway Bridge and the re-designation of State Road 60 and Alternate U.S. Highway 19 will have a major effect on the traffic patterns and functions of these thoroughfares and the secondary roads that feed into them.

Current Conditions

East-West Corridors

To date, the existing Cleveland Street corridor functions as the primary east-west connection through and into the Downtown core, and has the State Road 60 designation. This commercial corridor is classified as a four-lane divided principal arterial roadway to the east of Myrtle Avenue and as a two-lane divided urban principal arterial, with on-street parking west of Myrtle Avenue. The State Road 60 designation generates an increased flow of traffic from areas to the east and west seeking travel to destination points within and outside of the Downtown. It is due to this designation that much of the Cleveland Street corridor within the Plan area operates at levels of service (LOS) E and F.

At the southern portion of the Plan area, the State Road 60 Bypass provides travel around the Cleveland Street corridor via Court Street, which eventually is aligned into Court and Chestnut Streets as it enters the Downtown core. Court Street's primary function is to provide an alternative for traffic accessing destinations within the Downtown, as well as a connection to the Memorial Causeway Bridge. To the east of the Court/Chestnut split, the corridor is classified as a four-lane divided principal arterial, with a LOS of E. However, the western portion of the State Road 60 Bypass, consisting of both Court and Chestnut Streets, is classified as a one-way pair carrying vehicles into the southern portion of the Downtown core and to and from the Memorial Causeway Bridge via three lanes each at lower travel speeds. This dual, one-way corridor currently functions at a LOS B.

Drew Street functions as a secondary east-west travel option for the northern portion of the Plan area and provides access to the Memorial Causeway Bridge via the Cleveland Street/Pierce Boulevard intersection. The portion of Drew Street east of Fort Harrison Avenue Avenue, designated State Road 590, is classified as a four-lane undivided minor arterial roadway, operating at a LOS D and E. To the west of Osceola Avenue, Drew Street functions as a two-lane, undivided roadway with on-street parking on both sides and operates at a LOS C.

North-South Corridors

Currently, Fort Harrison Avenue functions as the primary north-south, continuous connection through and within the Downtown. To the north of Cleveland Street, the commercial corridor is classified as a divided, urban arterial, two-lane highway with a center turning lane. To the south of Cleveland Street, the commercial corridor is classified as an undivided, urban arterial four-lane highway. Designated Alternate U.S. 19, the corridor generates an increased level of traffic from areas in north and south Pinellas County seeking to access destinations within Downtown and traveling through to destinations beyond. The corridor currently operates at a LOS C and D.

The Myrtle Avenue corridor provides an alternative travel option to a portion of the Fort Harrison Avenue corridor and ultimately aligns with Fort Harrison Avenue north of the Plan area. Myrtle Avenue functions as a secondary north-south travel option through and into the Downtown core. The corridor is classified as a four-lane, undivided minor arterial roadway and operates at a LOS C and D.

The main north-south corridor in the central portion of the Plan area is Missouri Avenue. The roadway primarily functions as a commercial corridor that delivers traffic into and out of Downtown from the south and terminates at the northern boundary. Within the Downtown Plan area, Missouri Avenue is classified as a four-lane, divided arterial roadway and operates at a LOS C.

Projected Impacts of Current Projects

The realignment of the Memorial Causeway Bridge will have several effects on the road network within the Downtown Plan area. Most notably, through-traffic utilizing the bridge will be re-distributed from Cleveland Street to Court and Chestnut Streets, with Cleveland Street no longer designated State Route 60 and terminating at Osceola Avenue. This change will remove a significant level of traffic from Cleveland Street throughout the Plan area, dramatically improving traffic circulation and making it easier for motorists to locate parking. The realignment of the bridge access is projected to increase the level of service on Cleveland Street to a C. The final completion date for the bridge is proposed for July 2004; however, the bridge will be open to traffic early in 2004.

As the new State Road 60 designation, Court and Chestnut Streets will now receive the majority of traffic seeking to utilize the new bridge to connect to Clearwater Beach. The capacity of these roadways will be decreased, but will remain a LOS C on segments west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue within the Downtown core. However, the segment of

Court Street between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Missouri Avenues will be downgraded from a LOS E to a LOS F, while the segment from Missouri Avenue to Highland Avenue will be decreased from a LOS E to a LOS F.

The new Memorial Causeway Bridge alignment will also affect the configuration of Drew Street. Access to the bridge will no longer be available via Drew Street, as this roadway will end at Clearwater Harbor. This reconfiguration will increase capacity on Drew Street and increase its LOS from a D/E to a C/D throughout the Plan area.

The re-designation of Alternate U.S. Highway 19 from Fort Harrison Avenue to Myrtle Avenue will have a favorable impact on the capacity of the Fort Harrison Avenue corridor and the levels of traffic within Downtown. With much of the through-traffic being redirected from Fort Harrison Avenue to the new Myrtle Street/Court Street/Missouri Avenue configuration, the capacity on Fort Harrison Avenue may slightly increase. It is not anticipated that traffic levels and levels of service will be greatly affected on Fort Harrison Avenue Avenue, as it will continue to be a major connection into Downtown Clearwater and for destinations in north and south Pinellas County.

Multi-Modal Transportation

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) and the Jolley Trolley Company currently provide bus service within Downtown. PSTA currently offers 11 routes from Downtown to locations throughout Clearwater, as well as to the surrounding municipalities in Pinellas County. In addition, a PSTA main bus terminal is located within the Downtown core at the northwest corner of Pierce Street and Garden Avenue. Table 4 below summarizes the PSTA routes available from the Plan area.

**Table 4
Existing PSTA Routes from Downtown**

Route	From	To
18	PSTA Station	Downtown St. Petersburg via Seminole
52	PSTA Station	Downtown St. Petersburg via Largo
60	PSTA Station	Jasmine Court
61	Indian Rocks	Dunedin via PSTA Station
66	Tarpon Springs	Indian Rocks via PSTA Station
67	PSTA Station	Oldsmar
76	PSTA Station	Countryside Mall
78	PSTA Station	Countryside Mall via Dunedin
80	PSTA Station	Sand Key
82	PSTA Station	Countryside Mall via Safety Harbor
98	PSTA Station	Carrilon Office Complex

In addition to the service offered by PSTA, the Jolley Trolley Company provides bus service between Downtown and Clearwater Beach. These routes operate every 35 minutes from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, and from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities exist throughout the Plan area, and most noticeably in the Downtown core. The Pinellas Trail operates through the eastern portion of the Downtown core and continues to north and south Pinellas County. This transportation/recreation facility provides an alternative link from the traditional core of Downtown to destinations beyond. Currently, the Memorial Causeway Bridge provides narrow, insufficient bike paths to travel over Clearwater Harbor. The new bridge alignment will provide pathways that will more than adequately accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists seeking to travel over Clearwater Harbor. In addition to the bicycle and pedestrian facilities located on the bridge, a spur from the Pinellas Trail will connect to the bridge via Turner and Oak Streets to safely carry cyclists to and from the bridge. Improvements to the Trail within the Downtown core are also proposed along the East Avenue right-of-way, which will increase the Trail's width between Drew Street and Druid Road.

Pinellas Mobility Initiative and Bluff to Beach Guideway

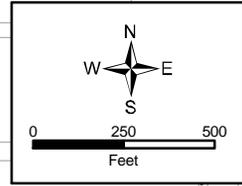
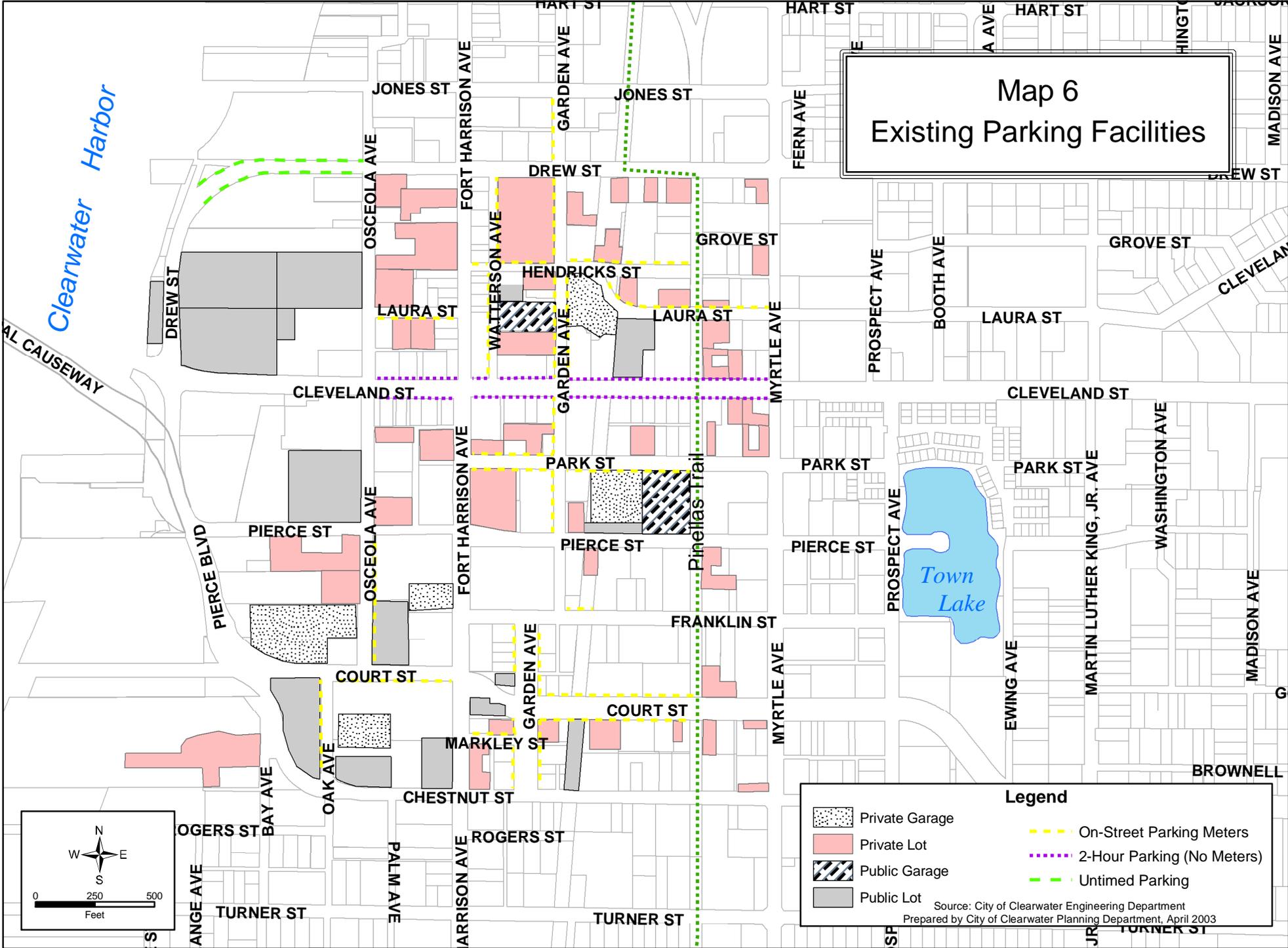
Two major transportation studies are currently underway that are exploring alternative modes of transportation. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is conducting the Pinellas Mobility Initiative, which is an effort aimed at developing an implementation plan for rail, monorail, or next generation bus service in corridors linking Clearwater to St. Petersburg and the beaches with an extension to north Pinellas County. The general alignment includes sections in Downtown Clearwater and Gulf to Bay Boulevard. A major element of the initiative is to provide mobility choices through other options that support the rail system. This would include increased bus service, additional bicycle trails and facilities, additional trolleys, and interconnections from station areas to existing neighborhoods and development.

In addition to the Pinellas Mobility Initiative, a preliminary feasibility study has been completed for a guideway system from Downtown to Clearwater Beach. The purpose of this project is to explore how best to integrate Downtown Clearwater with the beach area through the construction of an innovative guideway transit link. The Clearwater City Commission recently approved Phase 2 of the Bluff to Beach Guideway study, which will provide more detailed analysis and information regarding ridership projections, cost estimates and alignment alternatives.

Public Parking

To evaluate the current and future needs for new parking facility development and/or the expansion of existing facilities (based on current and future parking deficits or surpluses) the City of Clearwater recently hired Urbitran Associates, Inc. in conjunction with Chance Management Advisors, Inc., to conduct a parking needs assessment and feasibility study for the Downtown core. The 2002 study documented the location, occupancy and parking demand for 5,382 existing parking spaces located in a variety of locations and facilities. Table 5, below, illustrates the types and number of spaces analyzed and Map 6, page 35, depicts their location.

Map 6 Existing Parking Facilities



Legend

-  Private Garage
-  Private Lot
-  Public Garage
-  Public Lot
-  On-Street Parking Meters
-  2-Hour Parking (No Meters)
-  Untimed Parking

Source: City of Clearwater Engineering Department
Prepared by City of Clearwater Planning Department, April 2003

**Table 5
Existing Parking Facilities***

Number of Parking Spaces	Type of Parking Space
223	On-street meter spaces
61	On-street spaces with no meters
271	Public parking garage
1,191	18 municipal public parking lots
1,656	5 private sector parking garages
1,980	50 private-sector parking lots

*Excludes two parking garages owned by Pinellas County and the parking spaces associated with the Fort Harrison Avenue Hotel

The report found that the overall weekday occupancy rate for publicly-owned on and off-street parking is 60 percent. Several lots have peak hour parking occupancy rates exceeding 90 percent and include the municipal lots at Stein Mart, the Courthouse and the lot located at Court Street and Osceola Avenue. Occupancy is also high (89 percent) for the on-street parking spaces along Cleveland Street. Parking south of Cleveland Street, with the exception of South Garden Avenue and Park Street, has a very low average weekday occupancy rate of 33 percent. With regard to private garages, occupancy rates range between 50 percent and 72 percent. With regard to the 50 private parking lots analyzed, the study determined the overall occupancy for these lots is approximately 53 percent. The lots located south of Cleveland Street and west of South Fort Harrison Avenue have the highest average occupancy rate of 85 percent.

Because on-street parking spaces are occupied during peak periods and garages are not immediately visible, there is a perception that the Downtown core does not have sufficient parking. However, based on current supply and demand the existing parking is more than adequate. Implementation of the Downtown Plan will change that and several sites for new parking facilities have been identified to accommodate redevelopment in the Capital Improvement Plan contained in Chapter 4, Plan Implementation. Furthermore, the new Memorial Causeway Bridge will result in the realignment of Court and Chestnut Streets and will require the elimination of the parking lot located on the northeast corner of Pierce Street and Pierce Boulevard and will require the reconfiguration of the parking lot located near the Pinellas County Courthouse.

PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES

A total of 45.3 acres or 6.5 percent of the total land within Downtown is occupied by City-owned parkland and is illustrated on Map 7, page 39. There are a variety of facilities within Downtown and several in close proximity to the Plan boundaries. Several of the parks are concentrated in the traditional Downtown core. Coachman Park, almost seven acres in area, is located in the western-most portion of the core along Clearwater Harbor. The park is primarily passive, however, it has an amphitheater that attracts nationally-known artists and serves as a regional entertainment venue. On the west side of Coachman Park adjacent to Clearwater Harbor are the Bayfront Memorial

Parks. These are small passive parks providing parking along the water and are best known for housing two sculptures. One sculpture pays tribute to the World War I American Doughboys and the second one memorializes the World War I Navy.

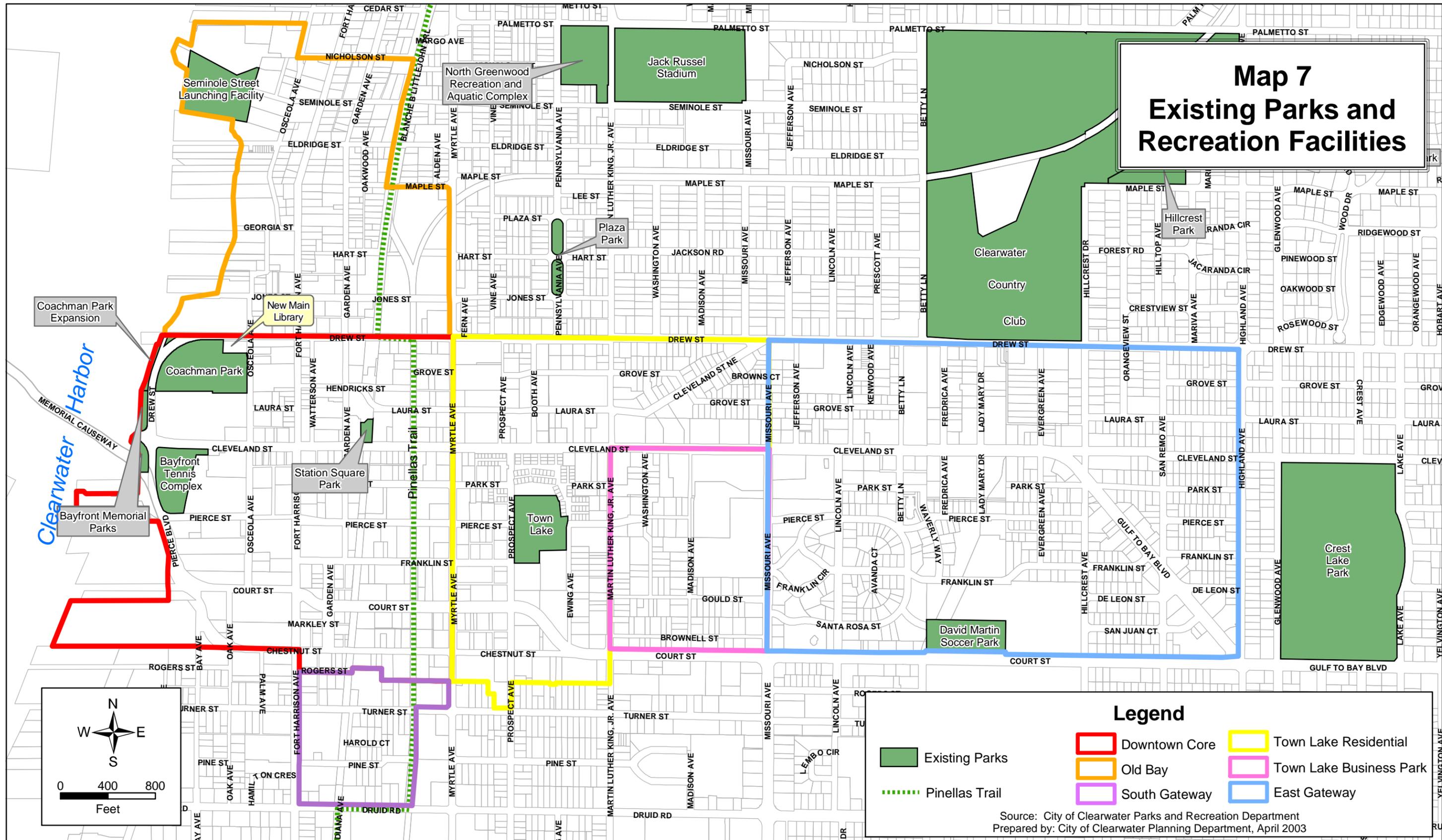
The Bayfront Tennis Complex is located to the west of City Hall on the lower end of the bluff and is the City's first tennis complex. One urban pocket park, Station Square Park, is located in the center of the historic commercial core on Cleveland Street and is used by many Downtown workers. Station Square Park also hosts a variety of special events in addition to being the home of the Farmer's Market. Lastly, the Fred E. Marquis Pinellas Trail, a countywide trail system, traverses Downtown running north/south. A significant portion of the Trail shares the East Avenue right-of-way but north of Drew Street the Trail is located within a dedicated greenway corridor.

The Seminole Street Launching Facility is located in the most northwestern section of Old Bay and functions as the City's main boat launching facility. It has eight boat ramps and a fishing pier, as well as a picnic area. The facility accommodates approximately 25,000 launches per year. The facility offers monthly and yearly launch passes.

Prospect Lake Park, located east of the core on the west side of Prospect Avenue, is principally completed. Prospect Lake Park is a passive urban lake providing a unique amenity within Downtown. David Martin Soccer Field is the only active recreation facility in Downtown and is located on the north side of Court Street west of Hillcrest Avenue. This field will be relocated south of its current location, as part of the Glen Oaks Stormwater Detention Facility and will then be located immediately south of Downtown.

Even though Downtown has a significant amount of parkland, it lacks small pocket parks and playgrounds within the residential neighborhoods. Several recreation facilities are located along the perimeter of the Downtown including the Clearwater Country Club golf course and Crest Lake Park, which is a community park with playground facilities, a lake and the City's first dog park.

Map 7 Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities



Legend

 Existing Parks	 Downtown Core	 Town Lake Residential
 Pinellas Trail	 Old Bay	 Town Lake Business Park
	 South Gateway	 East Gateway

Source: City of Clearwater Parks and Recreation Department
Prepared by: City of Clearwater Planning Department, April 2003

This is not a map of survey. G:\mxd\parks.mxd

EXISTING DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Several programs have been established to support Downtown redevelopment efforts. A description of the main programs is listed below and a more comprehensive listing of incentives available to the private sector is provided in Chapter 4, Plan Implementation.

Downtown Development Board

Pursuant to Florida Statutes, the Downtown Development Board (DDB) was established in 1970. In 1971, Downtown property owners approved a referendum that created a Special Downtown Tax District to assist in revitalization efforts of the Downtown area and preserve property values. The DDB has seven elected board members and two ex-officio members from the CRA and represents the interests of Downtown property owners in addition to supporting the Main Street program. The CRA provides professional staff support to the DDB.

Main Street Program

The City of Clearwater was designated a Main Street Community by the Florida Division of Historical Resources in 1998. This program is an integral part of Florida's historic preservation program based on the national model developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Main Street approach involves the private sector through four areas: organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring.

Brownfields Program

In order to assist in the redevelopment of abandoned, idled, or underutilized industrial and commercial properties that have or are perceived to have environmental contamination, the City of Clearwater established a Federal and State Brownfields program in 1996. This program has provided assistance to conduct environmental site assessments, remove hydraulic lifts, monitor groundwater, develop site-specific quality assurance plans, absorb impact fees, implement revolving loan funds and provide site remediation. At this time, over 200 Brownfields sites have been identified in the Downtown Plan area. The sites are dispersed with concentrations found along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, Chestnut Street, Missouri Avenue, Fort Harrison Avenue and Cleveland Street.

Enterprise Zone

In an effort to reduce poverty levels, unemployment, physical deterioration and economic disinvestment, the Clearwater Enterprise Zone Development Agency (EZDA) was created in September 1998. A significant portion of the Enterprise Zone is located within Downtown. Businesses may receive credits or tax refunds on State Sales and Use Tax or Florida Corporate Income Tax if they meet the requirements.

Downtown-Gateway Strategic Action Program

In 2002, the City's first Downtown-Gateway Strategic Action Program was developed through a partnership of the CRA, Downtown Development Board, Main Street Joint Venture Committee and Regional Clearwater Chamber of Commerce. This is a three-year program that defines the work program for the City's Economic Development Department with regard to Downtown. The program identifies various programs, projects, and costs and is reviewed and revised on a yearly basis.

INVESTMENT IN DOWNTOWN

Since the inception of the original Downtown CRA in 1981, considerable public and private investment has been made in the Downtown area. Below is a list of the significant program and projects undertaken by the City and/or CRA.

- Assisted in improvements to Coachman Park;
- Purchased the Maas Brothers property, now the location of the City's Harborview Center;
- Purchased land and constructed parking lot adjacent to Station Square Park;
- Purchased and sold property for construction of an office development located at Cleveland Street and Garden Avenue and built a parking garage now a private garage;
- Improved Cleveland Street streetscape with new sidewalks, electrical improvements and new plantings;
- Purchased and sold property (through the CRA) to the City for the construction of the Municipal Services Building located at 100 South Myrtle Avenue;
- Issued façade improvement grants for over 30 buildings totaling approximately \$100,000 since 1996. These improvements have been made to properties primarily located along Cleveland Street and Fort Harrison Avenue Avenue;
- Purchased and assisted in cleaning several Brownfields sites that have been or are currently being developed by the private sector. (Harbor Oaks Shopping Center, Mediterranean Village, IMR Global); and
- Subsidized Jolley Trolley, a non-profit trolley system that provides service between Downtown and the Beach.

Three major public investments are currently under construction within Downtown that will have major impacts on future redevelopment.

- A new four-lane, high-level fixed bridge that has a vertical clearance of approximately 74 feet is replacing the existing State Road 60 (Memorial Causeway) bascule bridge that connects Downtown with Clearwater Beach. The construction of this \$64.3 million project, funded by the Federal Government, Florida Department of Transportation, Pinellas County and the City of Clearwater (Penny for Pinellas), began in February 2002 and is expected to open for traffic in early 2004 with completion in July 2004. Removal of the existing bridge will be complete by mid-2004.
- The new Main Library is being constructed on the southwest corner of Osceola Avenue and Drew Street (100 North Osceola Avenue) and is estimated to open in early 2004. The cost of this project is \$20.25 million and was funded through a variety of sources including City of Clearwater (Penny for Pinellas), the Clearwater Library Foundation, a bequest and the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative. This project was identified in the 1995 Downtown Redevelopment Plan as part of the project known as the “City Public Quad”. The library is being constructed on its original site overlooking Clearwater Harbor instead of the site envisioned by the 1995 Plan.
- “Prospect Lake Park”, a four-acre stormwater treatment pond and park amenity, is being constructed in the vicinity south of Cleveland Street, east of Myrtle Avenue, north of Court Street and west of Ewing Avenue. The purpose of the project is to reduce existing flooding problems and provide stormwater treatment to protect the water quality of Clearwater Harbor, designated an Outstanding Florida Waterbody. This facility establishes a “stormwater buy-in district” within which development and redevelopment projects can make a payment in-lieu-of on-site stormwater retention for City and State stormwater treatment requirements. This project was identified as Park Lake Project No. 8 in the 1995 Redevelopment Plan and is located in the general area identified by the Plan; however, it is significantly smaller than originally recommended.

In addition to new businesses that have located within existing Downtown buildings, substantial new redevelopment has been constructed or is currently under construction. One project was made possible by funding from the Division of Historical Resources (Old Pinellas County Courthouse) and several others have been made financially feasible due to the redevelopment programs operated within the Downtown area. Collectively, these projects include:

- Walgreen’s located at the northeast corner of Cleveland Street and Myrtle Avenue;
- Budget Self-Storage located on the east side of Myrtle Avenue between Cleveland Street and Drew Street;

- CGI located at the southwest corner of Cleveland Street and Missouri Avenue. This major redevelopment project includes two buildings and reflects a \$50 million investment. Formally IMR Global, it currently employs 100 people;
- Harbor Oaks Shopping Center, which includes a Publix grocery store, located on the southeast corner of South Fort Harrison Avenue and Turner Street;
- Old Pinellas County Courthouse, the subject of an extensive restoration is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and located at the southern terminus of South Osceola Avenue at Court Street;
- Mediterranean Village in the Park, a 100-unit townhouse development, located on the south side of Cleveland Street and north of the new Prospect Lake Park. The CRA purchased land and sold to the developer, cleaned the site and agreed to pay impact fees, permit fees and utility connections fees as construction occurs;
- Laura Street Townhomes, an 18-unit townhouse development, located on the north side of Laura Street east of Myrtle Avenue;
- Sabbides Office building, a 3,700 square foot contractor's office located on Gould Street; and
- Church of Scientology Ministerial Training & Pastoral Counseling Center, a religious facility approximately 370,000 square feet of floor area located on the southeast corner of South Fort Harrison Avenue and Pierce Street. This building provides the City's first elevated walkway crossing above South Fort Harrison Avenue connecting to the Fort Harrison Avenue Hotel.