

**CITY OF CLEARWATER  
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES**



**D O W N T O W N  
CLEARWATER**

**AMENDED APRIL 2018**

## **FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

Through the Façade Improvement Program, the City of Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) seeks to help property owners and tenants improve the attractiveness of the buildings in the Downtown Clearwater business district. If your commercial building or business is in the Clearwater Community Redevelopment Area, the CRA wants to work with you to restore historic facades and create unique storefronts through our Façade Improvement Program. The Façade Improvement Program has two separate components: Façade Design Services and the Financial Assistance Program. This funding will help you design a new, fresh and appealing look for your building that adheres to the Downtown Design Guidelines while also helping you pay for the actual construction of the work.

The following guidelines explain how to obtain \$4,000 towards design assistance, up to \$25,000 for a fast track grant or a larger grant for up to 50% of façade improvement construction costs through the CRA Board approval process.

Program guidelines were amended in April 2018 to remain consistent with the vision adopted in the 2018 Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

## **FACADE DESIGN SERVICES**

### **Intent**

With the updated 2018 City of Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan, the CRA determined that it is important to actively work to reinvigorate the downtown area with direct investment and programs to encourage private investment. The plan called for further investment to create a “high quality public realm.” This plan builds on earlier studies from 2006 that called for the creation of a ‘Café District’ on Cleveland Street to encourage restaurants and merchants to create opportunities for outdoor dining and other activities on public sidewalks. With the construction of Phase III of the Cleveland Streetscape project, the CRA anticipates that commercial properties on Cleveland Street and Gulf to Bay Boulevard in the Downtown Gateway area will begin to redevelop. Successful implementation of this redevelopment effort requires the CRA to provide some initial technical assistance to property owners and merchants to illustrate the appropriate types of design for the corridor.

The Façade Design Services program was created in 2007 and updated in January 2016 to provide Cleveland Street property owners professional guidance for how to improve the most prominent facades of their buildings. In 2018, it was expanded to include the Downtown Gateway. The CRA is hopeful that development of an architectural plan will lead to capital improvements, but subsequent construction is not a requirement of receiving design assistance. However, it is strongly encouraged that property owners proceed with the illustrated façade improvements.

### **Eligibility**

Façade Design Services are available to business and property owners within the designated area (Exhibit A) that have Cleveland Street or Gulf-to-Bay facing properties. Governmental entities are not eligible, nor will grants or loans be considered for prohibited uses in the Downtown District. Only one application will be considered per address. Business owners must provide a notarized letter of the property owner's consent to participate in this program.

### **Program**

Facade Design Services will be provided to eligible applicants as a \$4,000 grant to be paid to an architect for design services. As a requirement of the grant, a licensed Architect will provide the applicant with the following services:

### Scope of Services

1. Consultation(s) with the Owner/Tenant to discuss needs, desires, and possible budget. City staff to be present at a minimum of one meeting.<sup>1</sup>
2. Photograph existing building.
3. Provide either 2D Photoshop or hand-drawn concept of building street elevation showing suggested changes, preliminary colors, and possible signage. The final design must adhere to the City's adopted Downtown Design Guidelines.

### Cost of Services

Architectural services will be paid by the CRA as a grant of \$4,000.00.

Selected applicants are required to provide the Architect with the following items to facilitate their work and to assure a more usable design:

- ❖ Existing floor plan(s)
- ❖ Any historical photos of the structure
- ❖ Budget for improvements
- ❖ Images of architectural styles or features that the Owner likes or believes is appropriate for the structure

### **Process**

Qualified applicants must schedule an appointment with the CRA Representative prior to preparing an application for submittal. The CRA Representative's office is located on the second floor of City Hall at 600 Cleveland Street, Suite 600 Clearwater, Florida 33755. Appointments may be made by calling (727)562-4044. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and Facade Design Services will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until funds allocated to this program are expended for the fiscal year.

Within ten (10) business days of application submittal, the CRA Representative will review the application for completeness. A post-application submittal conference will be held with the Applicant to discuss any deficiencies or issues with the application. At this time, the CRA Representative may request that the Applicant provide additional information.

Within ten (10) days of receiving the completed application, the CRA Representative will review the application against the review criteria and prepare a recommendation for the CRA Director. Applicants will also be sent a copy of the recommendation.

The CRA Director will determine if the application is approved or denied with or without conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> All projects will have a minimum of two, one-hour consultations.

### **Available Assistance**

The CRA will set the amount of assistance available for the fiscal year in its Annual Budget. The maximum grant contribution per application for design services is set at \$4,000.00 per address. The CRA Board may raise or lower this amount at any time upon a majority vote of its members.

### **Expiration of Facade Design Services**

Applicants must meet with the Architect within sixty (60) days from the date that the CRA Director approves the Facade Design Services request, or the award will expire. Extensions may be granted by the CRA Director under extenuating circumstances.

### **Application**

1. Completed application form.
2. Photographs of the existing building and the proposed project area.

**Selection Criteria**

The CRA Representative will review the completed application to ensure it meets the eligibility requirements and make a recommendation to the CRA Executive Director. If any of the criteria are not met, resulting in a “no” response, then the project is not eligible for a design services grant.

<b>Eligibility Criteria</b> Façade Design Services	
<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
<u>Location/Visibility</u>	
The property is in the CRA	
The front façade of the building is facing Cleveland Street and/or Gulf to Bay Boulevard	
The condition of the current façade does not meet Downtown Design Standards and/or is in poor condition	
<u>Owner Support</u>	
The tenant has a notarized letter of Property Owner's consent to participate in design services	
The business is an allowable use in the downtown zoning district	

# FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## **Intent**

With the updated 2018 City of Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan, the CRA determined that it is important to actively work to reinvigorate the downtown area with direct investment and programs to encourage private investment. The plan called for further investment to create a "high quality public realm." This plan builds on earlier studies from 2006 that called for the creation of a 'Café District' on Cleveland Street to encourage restaurants and merchants to create opportunities for outdoor dining and other activities on public sidewalks. Attractive buildings and storefronts are important elements to creating a walkable and welcoming downtown.

The Financial Incentive Program was created in 2007, updated in January 2016 and amended in April 2018 to provide financial incentives to property owners that have participated in the CRA Façade Design Services program or are proposing to undertake a comprehensive Façade Improvement Program application. The CRA is aware that façade improvements can be a costly and time intensive investment. To reduce the cost to property owners, the CRA has allocated annual funding to offset some of the construction costs of façade improvements. This program is not intended to subsidize the costs of routine maintenance and repairs that are an ongoing responsibility for property owners.

## **Eligibility**

The Financial Incentive Program is available to all commercial property owners within the designated area (Exhibit A). Governmental entities are not eligible, nor will grants or loans be considered for prohibited uses in the Downtown District. Only one application will be considered per address, which can include multiple facades if they are adjacent to a public right of way. The total grant award will be determined by the applicant's score based on CRA staff review and is subject to the approval of the CRA board for grants exceeding \$25,000.

## **Program**

Financial Incentives will be available to property owners for improvements to their building facades that further the goal of creating a high quality public realm and improving the design and appearance of commercial buildings in the CRA. Any planned improvements that do not, in the judgment of the CRA, further the goals of the adopted Downtown Redevelopment Plan will be deemed ineligible. All façade improvements are required to remain for a minimum of 5 years through conveyance of façade easements, zoning agreements or other methods approved by the CRA Board. Grants may be awarded for up to 50% of the façade improvement construction cost. Grants \$25,000 and under may be approved by the CRA Director.

Funds will be available to property owners and must be matched on a \$1:\$1 (dollar-for-dollar) basis by the applicant or property owner for improvements to the façade that contribute to a high quality public realm. Construction must improve the storefront area of the building (e.g., signage, lighting, entryways, windows and other cosmetic or structural work associated with the first floor where customers interact directly with the building) or (2) be in concert with first floor façade improvements as described in (1) above but that may extend vertically to the upper areas of the façade. Isolated building improvements that are not directly connected to improvements at the street level façade are not eligible for funding. Routine maintenance or improvements that do not directly impact the pedestrian experience are not eligible for funding.

### **Process**

Qualified applicants must schedule an appointment with the CRA Representative prior to preparing an application for submittal. The CRA Representative's office is located at 600 Cleveland Street, Suite 600 Clearwater, Florida 33755. Appointments may be made by calling (727) 562-4044. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Within ten (10) business days of application submittal, the CRA Representative will review the application for completeness. A post-application submittal meeting will be held with the Applicant to discuss any deficiencies or issues with the application. At this time, the CRA Representative may request that the Applicant provide additional information.

Within ten (10) days of receiving the completed application, the CRA Representative will review the application against the review criteria and prepare a recommendation for the CRA Director. Applicants will also be sent a copy of the recommendation.

The CRA Director will determine if the application is approved or denied with or without conditions. Applications for funding may be approved on a contingent basis while the property owner awaits approval from the Planning & Development Services Department.

- The Applicant will be notified in writing of the CRA Director's decision within twenty (20) business days of application submittal for a request of a grant in the amount of \$25,000 or below to be approved by CRA Director. If the applicant is requesting more than \$25,000 the item will be brought to the next available CRA meeting. The CRA Director will provide a Notice to Proceed or denial within fifteen (15) days of CRA Board action.

### **Available Assistance**

The CRA will set the amount of assistance available for the fiscal year in its Annual Budget. The maximum grant contribution per application is set at 50% of the total façade improvement construction cost. All CRA grants will be paid out on a schedule established by the CRA Director and the grantee. **The property or business owner must agree to leave the completed project in its approved design for a period of five (5) years from the date of completion to receive this funding.**



### **Expiration of Financial Incentive Program Commitment**

Applicants must undertake construction of improvements within one hundred twenty (120) days from the date that the CRA approves the commitment or the award will expire. Extensions may be granted by the CRA Director under extenuating circumstances.

### **Application**

1. Completed application form.
2. Photographs of the existing building and the proposed project area including surrounding buildings.

## Selection Criteria

The CRA Representative will review the completed application according to the eligibility and review criteria and will submit his/her findings to the CRA Executive Director. Applications that score below 60 points will be recommended for denial. All eligibility criteria must be met to receive grant funding. Applicants are advised that grant and loans funds are provided at the sole discretion of the CRA Director, CRA Board and the findings stated in the recommendation do not create an entitlement to funding.

<b>Eligibility Criteria</b> Financial Incentive Program	
<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>YES/NO</b>
<u>Location/Visibility</u>	
The property is in the CRA	
The front façade of the building is facing a public right of way	
The condition of the current façade does not meet Downtown Design Standards	
<u>Owner Support</u>	
The property owner is providing a \$1:\$1 match for construction costs and materials	
The business is an allowable use in the downtown zoning district	
The property owner will keep and maintain the façade improvements for a minimum of 5 years	
<u>Proposed Design</u>	
Compatible with Downtown Design Guidelines	

<b>Review Criteria Scoring System</b> Financial Incentive Program	
<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
<u>Location/Visibility</u>	<u>50 points total</u>
Proposed improvements will contribute significantly to the public realm <sup>2</sup> (0-20 points)	20
Strategic location of property in facilitating a pedestrian friendly environment (0-30 points)	30
<u>Potential Aesthetic Improvement</u>	<u>50 points total</u>
The ability of the proposed construction to meet the Downtown Design Guidelines (choose one)	
Minimum compliance	10
Fair	10
Good	20
Condition or appearance of façade prior to the project (choose one)	
Poor	30
Fair	20
Good	10
Incorporates public art	5
60 points – CRA will match 10% of total cost 70 points – CRA will match 20% of total cost 80 points – CRA will match 30% of total cost 90 points – CRA will match 40% of total cost 100 points – CRA will match 50% of total cost	<b>100 points possible</b>

## Program Tips

- A. Start early. Funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Only one design grant and/or one construction grant shall be awarded for per property.
- B. Use the Design Guidelines detailed in the Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The plan was created with the help of your neighbors and with the advice of talented architects and urban planners.
- C. Work with your architect of choice and provide them with this application to ensure your architect understands the application and approval process. They will work with you to develop designs that can be approved in a smooth and expeditious manner. The architect will be your personal project advisor. He/she knows how to create and get approved a design that will satisfy regulators and make you and your customers happy.
  - 1. Save and show-off your building's architectural features (such as accessories, awnings, and signs); harmonize them with neighboring structures. No grant monies or matching monies shall be used to perform general repair, structural, or habitable work or otherwise to meet code to occupy the building.
  - 2. Choose color schemes that follow the Downtown Design Guidelines and that accent your building and harmonize with adjacent buildings. The Downtown Plan (available on the City's website at [www.myclearwater.com](http://www.myclearwater.com)) is your guide.
  - 3. Work with your architect/project advisor to create and agree on a façade improvement plan for your building. The plan should include descriptions and drawings of changes. Use the attached checklist as a guide.
- D. Assemble your façade Improvement packet. Include the following:
  - 1. Technical materials and images.
  - 2. Notarized written consent from the building owner if you are a tenant applying for funds. Your City licenses (Business Tax Receipt) must be up to date.
  - 3. Hold Harmless Agreement.
  - 4. Obtain construction estimates from registered contractors with sufficient experience, insurance and bonding.
- E. Submit your application to the CRA office. The CRA may want you to present your proposed changes at a meeting.
  - 1. Expect to match each grant and loan dollar with a dollar of your own investment. Funds up to 50% of construction cost will be awarded upon grant approval.
- F. Wait for your 'notice to proceed' before beginning work. Work that begins without this notice may not be eligible for reimbursement.
- G. Make the planned changes to your building.
- H. Submit a copy of the paid bills for reimbursement. Any unapproved changes will void the grant. If design changes are necessary during construction, coordinate the work with the architect and the CRA Representative.

The CRA reserves the right to grant or loan additional money to targeted projects that they believe will have a significant positive impact on the area.

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<sup>2</sup> Significant contributions to desired environment include restaurants with outdoor seating, neighborhood retail and lifestyle businesses. This also includes restoration of historic structures.

**Façade Improvement Program Application**  
City of Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency

Prior to completion of this application, please contact the City of Clearwater CRA to review this process at (727) 562-4044.

Community Redevelopment Agency  
600 Cleveland Street, Suite 600,  
Clearwater, Florida 33755

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Type of Business\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Business\_\_\_\_\_  
(Street address, name of building if applicable)

Property Owner\_\_\_\_\_Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Contact (if different from owner)\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address\_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner Mailing Address\_\_\_\_\_

*Two-Part Program:*

- 1) *The Façade Design Services program provides a maximum of \$4,000.00 in architectural design assistance to applicants.*
- 2) *The Façade Financial Incentive Program provides up to 50% of the total construction cost, a (dollar-for-dollar) matching grant that can be used towards any exterior architectural improvements to the street-side façade.*

Estimated number of linear feet facing a public-right-of-way:\_\_\_\_\_ (If the building faces onto more than one street, such as a building located on a corner, give the estimated frontage feet of the secondary façade \_\_\_\_\_)

Requested Grant Amount \$\_\_\_\_\_

Requested Loan Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

General description of proposed improvement:

Façade    Windows/Doors    Awnings/Canopies    Lighting    Painting    Signage    Public Art    Other

*I hereby submit this Application for Façade Design Services. I understand that this must be approved by the CRA and that I should not begin any work with the selected Architect until I have received written approval (Notice to Proceed) from the CRA. I also understand that the grant funds will be paid directly to the architect upon completion of their work.*

Signature of Property Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Business Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For Façade Design Services Only - - STOP HERE**

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**CRA Staff use only**

Date of initial contact: \_\_\_\_\_    Electronic submission    In person

Staff representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Design Professional: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Application Meeting    Post-Application Meeting

CRA Board:    Approved    Denied   Date \_\_\_\_\_

Property Site File Number \_\_\_\_\_

Planning Dept:  Approved    Denied   Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed Scope of Work:**

Please provide a brief, general description of the work to be performed, materials to be used, color and material samples (if applicable).

**Exterior Walls** (Includes front facade, second façade (if applicable), structural, decorative and non-functional elements)\_\_\_\_\_

**Windows/Doors**\_\_\_\_\_

**Awnings/Canopies**\_\_\_\_\_

**Lighting**\_\_\_\_\_

**Painting**\_\_\_\_\_

**Signage**\_\_\_\_\_

**Public Art**\_\_\_\_\_

**Other**\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachments:** The following attachments are required:

- Project schedule.
- Photographs of the existing building and proposed project area.
- Schematic drawings illustrating proposed work, or pictures with project description outlines.
- Planning & Development Services Department Review.
- Two (2) cost estimates.

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Legal description: \_\_\_\_\_

Façade Improvement Summary (please add costs and descriptions):

**Grant Funds Usage**

Signage Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Removal  New  Altered/Repaired

Awning Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Painting Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Square feet? \_\_\_\_\_

Cosmetic Alteration Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Describe:

Structural Alteration Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Describe:

Public Art Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Describe:

Total Project Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Requested**

(Not to Exceed 50% of Total Project Cost)\*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Grantee is solely responsible for securing & paying for any permits*

**Loans Funds Usage**

Signage Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Removal  New  Altered/Repaired

Awning Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Painting Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Square feet? \_\_\_\_\_

Cosmetic Alteration Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Describe:

Structural Alteration Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Describe:

Public Art Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Describe:

Total Project Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Requested**

(Not to Exceed 50% of Total Project Cost)\*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Grantee is solely responsible for securing & paying for any permits*

I hereby submit this application for a Façade Improvement Grant. I understand that these building improvements must be approved by the City of Clearwater and no work should begin until I have received written approval from the CRA. I also understand that the grant funds will not be paid until the project is complete. I agree to leave the completed project in its approved design for a period of five (5) years from the date of completion. Signature-Property Owner/Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature-Business Owner/Date \_\_\_\_\_



Please submit this checklist as part of your application

<b>MINOR IMPROVEMENTS</b>		<b>MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS</b>	
<p><b>SIGNS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a color rendering of the design chosen. Your assigned architect/project advisor can do this for you.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Include specifications as to the size and width of the sign.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Note how and where the sign will be hung on the building</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit at least two written estimates from sign companies.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Make sure the design and size comply with City codes.</li></ul> <p><b>AWNINGS: (provide color rendering)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide information about color and style of awning chosen. Remember, awning selection must take into</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> account the architectural style of the building.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Note where awning will be placed on building.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit written estimate. Submit a written estimate from two licensed contractors.</li></ul>	<p><b>PAINT: (provide color rendering)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide samples of the colors chosen</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Mark the location of body colors and accent colors.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit written estimate from painter of your choice.</li></ul> <p><b>COSMETIC IMPROVEMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide pictures and/or samples of the accessories (such as lighting, planter boxes, etc.)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit a written estimate from two licensed contractors.</li></ul> <p><b>PUBLIC ART:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide pictures of the proposed public art.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit a written estimate from artist of your choice</li></ul>	<p><b>MAJOR FAÇADE ALTERATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a rendering of major changes.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide all applicable items from Minor Improvements list on left side of this chart.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide building and construction details, diagrams, and signed and sealed engineering or architectural drawings, as appropriate</li></ul>	

**Hold Harmless Agreement**

Release executed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_, by (Property Owner) \_\_\_\_\_  
and (Tenant if Applicable) \_\_\_\_\_,  
of (Street Address) \_\_\_\_\_,

City of Clearwater, State of Florida, referred to as Releaser(s). In consideration of being granted monies for restoration, modifications, signage, or other physical changes to the property located at the above address, the Releaser(s), understands that they are solely responsible for providing their own contractors, and to assure that those contractors are fully insured and licensed and have obtained all necessary permits in accordance with City regulations. The Releaser(s) waives, releases, discharges, and covenants not to sue the City of Clearwater, City of Clearwater Community Redevelopment Agency, or any successors or assigns for loss or damage, and claims or damages therefore, on account of any work that has been performed in accordance with City or State guidelines. Releaser(s) agrees that this release, waiver, and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the State of Florida and that if any portion of the agreement is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect. Releaser(s) further states that it has carefully read the above release and knows the contents of the release and signs this release as its own free act. Releaser's obligations and duties hereunder shall in no manner be limited or restricted by the maintaining of any insurance coverage related to the above referenced event. This release contains the entire agreement between the parties to this agreement and the terms of this release are contractual and not a mere recital.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Property Owner Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please Print)* \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please Print)* \_\_\_\_\_

Tenant Signature (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

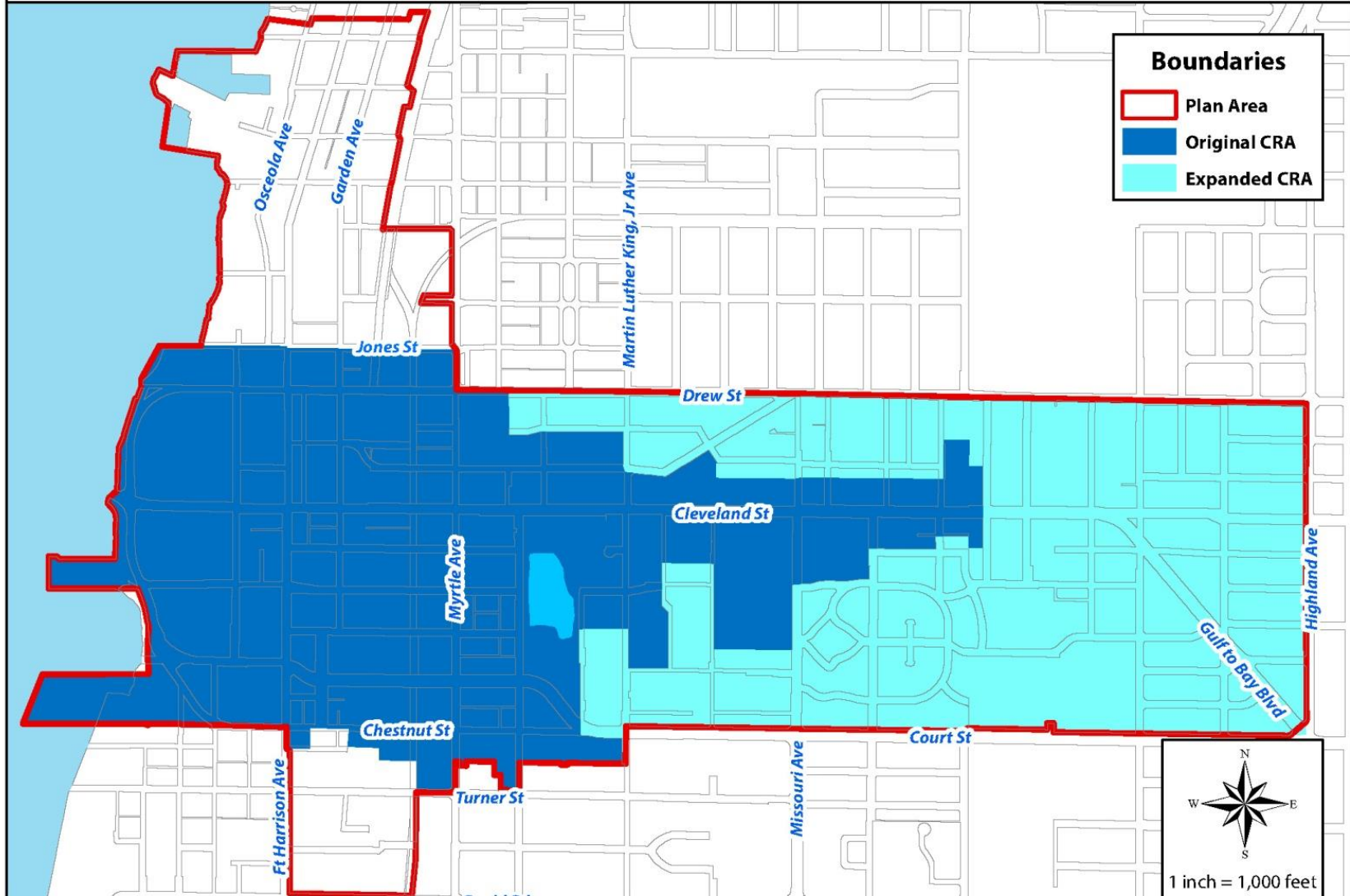
*(Please Print)* \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please Print)* \_\_\_\_\_

# Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan

Map 1  
Plan Area & CRA Boundaries



Sources: City of Clearwater Planning & Development Department; Engineering Department; Pinellas County Property Appraiser  
Prepared by: City of Clearwater Planning & Development Department, November 2017

