



**League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County**  
**Issue Analysis**

Prepared by Bill Jonson, Doris Reeves-Lipscomb, Dave Sillman, and Karen Owen, PhD<sup>1</sup>

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**Name:** Clearwater Referendum Lease of Recreation/Open Space Real Property for Light Industrial Use, November 3, 2020 General Election Ballot

**Sponsor:** Clearwater City Council

**Subject:** Converting Open Green Space into Light Industrial Use

**Date:** September 27, 2020

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## **I. Summary**

Our task force concludes that there is considerable evidence to warrant OPPOSING passage of the upcoming referendum. We believe the planning process was flawed, and that the residents, taxpayers and other stakeholders of the City of Clearwater deserve and require a rigorous and comprehensive approach to the Landings Golf Course Property for a long-term land use solution the City and residents agree upon. A few specific reasons we oppose include:

- failure to consider the documented competing needs of the City (2013 *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*) and alternatives to industrial use
- the detrimental effect on the character and value of surrounding residential neighborhoods
- disregard for goals and strategies of the formally adopted City's *Comprehensive Plan* and *Greenprint Framework*
- incomplete exploration of the impact of industrial redevelopment on traffic, noise, and the environment.

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## II. How the referendum, lease, and proffers came about

From Resolution No. 20-31 passed and adopted by the Clearwater City Council on July 16, 2020.<sup>2</sup>

*Section 2. A special city referendum is hereby called and will be held on November 3, 2020, at the general election for the consideration of the voters of the City of Clearwater for the proposed question. The question to appear on the ballot shall be as follows:*

*Lease of Recreation/Open Space Real Property for Light Industrial Use*

*Shall the City Council be authorized to lease approximately 58 acres of municipal real property that is recreation/open space on the land use plan map and is a majority of The Landings Golf Course, located on the east side of Keene Road, on the north side of Airport Drive, whose post office address is 1875 Airport Drive, Clearwater, Florida, for the purpose of development as a light industrial, research, technology, and office park?*

The City of Clearwater is required by its charter to hold a referendum question for city electors to authorize the change from city-owned recreation /open space land use to be sold, donated, or leased for a new use such as a light industrial center.

The proposal was first made public at the May 18, 2020 City Council Work Discussion.<sup>3</sup> Meeting minutes show a proposal to build an industrial center comprising +/- 750,000 SF on 65.49 acres MOL. The proposed developer, Harrod Properties, said the project would be developed in four phases over a 5-7-year period, subject to market conditions and would be secured in four separate ground leases with the same terms and conditions. The term of each lease would be 65 years with up to three successive 10-year renewal options.

The City staff outlined the following policy development steps:

June--staff would present the proposed term sheet for Council approval. The Council would then consider declaring the property as surplus in order to lease the site for industrial center development. If approved, the city attorney would draft a referendum question to be placed on the November 3 ballot.

July--City attorney would present the formal referendum question to the Council for approval on 1st reading.

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<sup>2</sup> Resolution 20-31, City of Clearwater website, considered and approved by the Clearwater City Council, July 16, 2020, [city website](#)

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the May 18 City Council Work Session and May 21 City Council Session, City of Clearwater website, [city website](#).

August--Upon City Council's approval on the second reading, the city staff would transmit the language to the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections for placement on the November 3 ballot.<sup>4</sup>

If Clearwater voters were to approve the referendum, the developer would prepare and submit applications for appropriate land use plan amendment (IL-Industrial Limited), rezoning (IRT), and Flexible Development (FLD) approvals. If these approvals were obtained, the staff would bring the final lease agreement to the City Council for review and approval.

The minutes of the May 21 City Council meeting show that eleven citizens spoke in opposition to the proposal. Eight comments in opposition were also received and read into the record. There were no comments in support of the proposal.

The City Attorney reassured Council members that a vote on the proposal would only authorize staff to bring back a term sheet (draft ground lease document with future tenant) and prepare the ballot language for a referendum.

After discussion for and against leasing the city-owned property for industrial development, Mayor Hibbard, Vice Mayor Albritton, and Council member Hamilton voted as a majority in the May 21 meeting to advance the proposal after a motion to table by City Council members Beckman and Bunker failed.



Figure 1 - From Landings Corporate Center Concept Site Plan

<sup>4</sup> City Staff accelerated the process to present the referendum language for first reading in June and second reading and City Council approval in July. The public received notice of the proposal on May 18 and had brief opportunities to comment at City Council meetings on May 21, June 18, and July 16, 2020.

At its June 18, 2020 publicly noticed meeting, the City Council declared a 66.30-acre portion of the 78.52-acre Landings Golf Course property surplus to develop it for light industrial use.

Of the 66.30-acre surplus parcel, the Council subtracted 8.53 acres to retain as a parkland buffer area between the industrial enterprise and the St. Andrews Cove II condominiums, therefore making the surplus property for lease to Harrod Properties 57.11 acres in size.

The City Council then approved a ground lease proposal, conditioned on voter approval of the proposed use, subsequent Land Use Plan amendment, and rezoning of the 57-acre portion of the property.

According to the proposal, Harrod Properties would build nine buildings containing 710,000 square feet of light industrial workspace on 57.11 acres. All entrances to the industrial zone would be accessed on Keene Road.



### The Landings Corporate Center

Concept Site Plan

6/15/2020

Figure 2- From Landings Corporate Center Concept Site Plan

The lease provides various credits to the developer against ground rent payments. These include \$350,000+/- for paying off a bank loan balance owed by the City to the current tenant (Huston family) for a recently installed golf course irrigation system. Removing debris during Phase 1 of the project would be credited by the

city up to \$300,000. Additionally, development costs incurred in phase 3 of the project up to \$1.7 million would be credited against future ground rent payments.

The remainder of the 78-acre property, approximately 12 acres, bordering Airport Drive, would be redeveloped as an aqua golf driving range leased by the city to the Huston family to operate. There are no requirements or stipulations for the water body portion (treatment chemicals used, runoff, source for recharge during the dry season, etc.) of the aqua golf range.

### **III. Discussion**

#### **Background**

The Huston family of 1970's PGA-golfing fame manages the Landings golf course for the city of Clearwater, generating \$1,000 a month in revenue to the city. The Landings Golf Course website explains that "The Land was originally used as an airpark in the early 1930's which was owned by the Fugazzi Family who gave portions of the land to the City of Clearwater."<sup>5</sup> It is the largest open space/recreational area in central Clearwater.

When asked several questions about the conversion of the property to an industrial use, the Huston family responded with the following statement:

"While we did not spearhead this proposed change, we have been aware of the City's ongoing research and consideration of the property for alternative uses.

We cannot divulge the specifics of our operating budget, but it is no secret that golf courses nationwide face financial pressure due to a decline in the sport and stagnation in greens fees, combined with ever-increasing costs for maintenance and operations. We are excited that the redeveloped property would include an aqua driving range, which we would manage.

We will respect the will of the voters, but if approved the family looks forward to providing a financially viable recreational golfing option in central Clearwater for many years to come."<sup>6</sup>

The portion of the property the Huston family would re-develop and manage is 12 acres. The minutes from the May 18 and May 21, 2020 City Council sessions show that City officials cited language in the City's 2011 Economic Development Strategic Plan to justify the transition to light industrial use. In fact, the language only speaks to the *exploration* of such potential use.

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<sup>5</sup> "Golf Course History," The Landings Golf Course, The Landings Golf Course [website](#).

<sup>6</sup> Huston Family, email message to Doris Reeves-Lipscomb, Subject re: Landings Golf Course Conversion to Industrial Park, September 11, 2020.



- i. "Strategy 1.4: Expand the use of the Industrial, Research and Technology District (IRT)
  1. Action 1: **Investigate** the **long-term feasibility** of converting Clearwater Executive Golf Course to Industrial, Research, and Technology District.
  2. Located adjacent to the Hercules Industrial area, the par 3 golf course represents the best opportunity for expanding Clearwater's stock of undeveloped industrial property. For a built-out, landlocked city with little industrial land this is essential. If the city hopes to expand its manufacturing base, **this and other similarly underutilized city-owned properties should be evaluated for accommodating new industrial development.**" [emphasis added]<sup>7</sup>

When the City Clerk was asked on May 21, 2020 prior to the Council session, whether other city uses/opportunities were considered as an alternative to the proposed light industrial center, the answer came back: "None. The city's Economic Development Plan (November 2011) calls for this type of use at this location."<sup>8</sup>

The May 21 minutes record that "this is a property that city staff and Council have been evaluating for several years." It was noted that city staff and Harrod Properties representatives had discussed the project "for some time" and "conducted numerous studies to obtain the information...to present to Council." In May 2019, for instance, the property was appraised. Between July 2019 and April 2020, the property underwent a limited environmental study, wildlife hazard, and geotechnical study as well.

Meeting minutes, conversations with city staff, and City Council videos do not show that city staff ever explored alternative uses for the golf course property such as multi-purpose recreational fields prior to its public reveal on May 18, 2020 of Harrod Properties becoming the industrial property developer and tenant.

#### **IV. Advantages of Making the Property a Light Industrial Center**

**Projected economic benefits to City** -- City staff initially estimated the 750,000 square foot industrial campus would create up to 1,950 high-wage jobs for the city, 1,823 additional spin-off jobs in the city (indirect and induced), a capital investment of \$131 million and \$11 million in net benefits to the city over a ten year period.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "Florida Economic Development Strategic Plan," City of Clearwater, August 2011 by TIP strategies, 106 East 6th Street, Suite 550, Austin, Texas 78701, page 18.

<sup>8</sup> City Clerk, Attachment to Email response Subject RE: 2020-05-21 Landings Golf to Light Ind Center Questions.doc, to Bill Jonson, May 21, 2020, 12:08 PM.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes, Clearwater City Council meeting, May 21,2020, [Minutes](#)

Another economic analysis prepared by the City of Clearwater Economic Development Department using the DashBoard model designed by Impact DataSource is slightly less optimistic with an estimate of 1,700 permanent jobs and 1,581 additional jobs.<sup>10</sup> It is based on 710,000 square feet of facility space. Both assessments assure jobs with salaries averaging \$60,000-\$65,000 for on-site workers, and an average \$40,000 wage for the spin-off jobs in the area. These wages are at least partly predicated on the experience of Harrod Properties located in Lakewood Ranch where tenants are medical or high-tech manufacturers.

### **Projected Property Tax Revenue to City, County, and Schools**

FISCAL NET BENEFITS OVER NEXT 10 YEARS

City of Clearwater:	\$9,735,149
Pinellas County:	\$6,826,478
Pinellas County Public Schools:	\$7,226,532
SW FL WMD:	\$ 274,562
Emergency Medical Svcs:	\$ 747,859
Juvenile Welfare Board:	\$ 857,934
Pinellas County Planning Council:	\$ 14,329
Transit District:	<u>\$ 612,464</u>
TOTAL	\$26,295,306

### **V. Advantages of Retaining Landings Property as-is or for Alternate Uses in the Future**

**Other Critical City Needs Exist** -- Brian Beckman, Suncoast Sierra Club, posed this question in the August 3 Zoom meeting hosted by the Clearwater Neighborhoods Coalition.<sup>11</sup>

Does the Landings proposal balance the needs, strategies, and priorities for all citizens and stakeholders?

- Environment / Greenprint
- Economic
- Workforce Housing
- Neighborhood Quality of Life - Noise, traffic, property values

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<sup>10</sup> "Detailed Report: The Landings Corporate Center - Impact Report," by the City of Clearwater Economic Development Department using the DashBoard model devised by Impact DataSource, an Austin, TX based economic consulting firm, attachment to email sent by Philip Kirkpatrick upon request to Doris Reeves-Lipscomb, August 28, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Beckman, "Landings Referendum," Clearwater Neighborhoods Coalition meeting video, August 3, 2020, Coalition [Facebook page](#) video

For instance, there is an identified shortage of multi-purpose playing fields in the City Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update 2013.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, workforce housing needs are identified as a priority in the Draft Update Clearwater Greenprint 2020 Strategy Statuses: “The city actively pursues opportunities to transform vacant/underutilized properties suitable for affordable and workforce residential redevelopment.”<sup>13</sup>

**Landings is a Green City Asset** -- Pinellas is already the most densely populated county in Florida with no greenspace to spare. The Landings is the only greenspace in central Clearwater. Most greenspace for city residents is located east of U.S. 19 or on the beaches-side of the city. One evaluation estimates that only 10% of environmental land is in central Clearwater.<sup>14</sup>

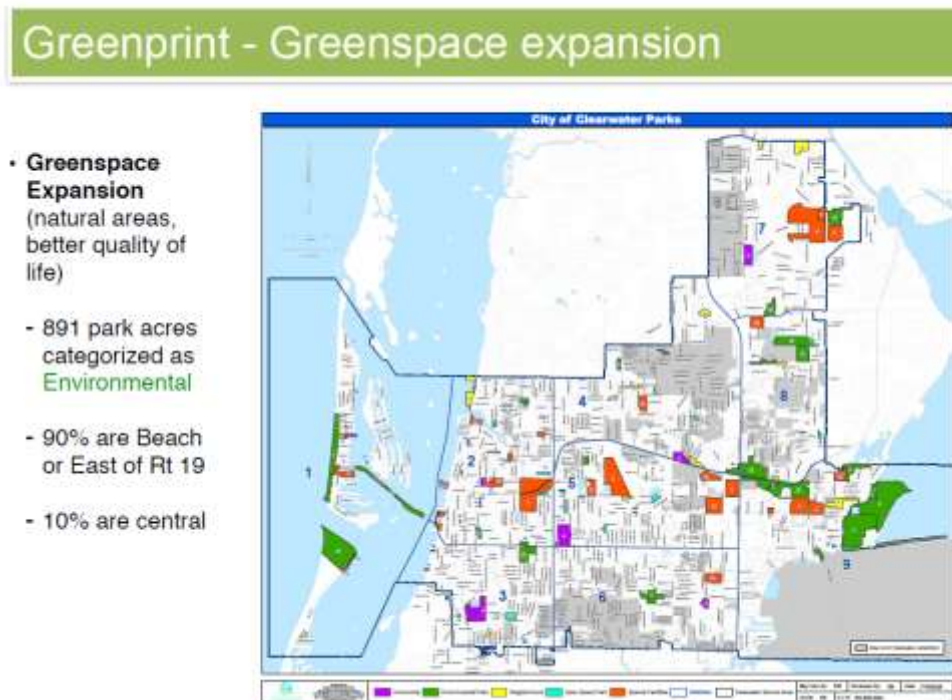


Figure 3 – City of Clearwater Parks and Recreation, Environmental Greenspace

There is no replacement for this city asset. Although we cannot anticipate the best possible future use, citizens, and elected and appointed policy makers should weigh

<sup>12</sup> “Section G: Recreation and Open Space Element,” City of Clearwater comprehensive Plan.

<sup>13</sup> “Draft Update Clearwater Greenprint 2020 Strategy Statuses,” attachment to email from Sheridan Boyle, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Clearwater, upon request to Doris Reeves-Lipscomb, September 1, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Art Kader, “Environmental Land Assessment Map,” City of Clearwater Parks and Recreation, provided upon request to Beth Davis, Clearwater Neighborhoods Coalition, used by Bryan Beckman, presentation on *Landings Referendum*, meeting hosted by the Clearwater Neighborhoods Coalition, August 3, 2020. Video available on Clearwater Neighborhoods Coalition [Facebook](#) page.



a variety of needs for our city and build a consensus for how best to leverage this valuable natural resource.

Developing this parcel into an industrial center will be detrimental to the character of the neighborhood. The open space is a key feature of this neighborhood that improves quality of life, home values and provides an important buffer from the airpark. Homeowners and apartment dwellers moved to this area with the visual and environmental lure of greenspace nearby, not an industrial presence.

**Breach of Promise** -- Established plans for future land use in Clearwater are being disregarded in putting this referendum on the ballot. The proposed industrial property use contravenes numerous principles/goals in the Clearwater *Comprehensive Plan* and *Greenprint*, presumed by citizens to be controlling documents for the city's land use decisions. We include numerous examples of how this proposal runs counter to the professed objectives of protecting natural resources expressed in the City of Clearwater *Comprehensive Plan*, City of Clearwater *Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update 2013* (update to 2002 plan), and *Clearwater Greenprint: A Framework for a Competitive, Vibrant, Green Future*.

By quickly developing and approving the ballot issue language, the Council moved the resolution to the November 3 ballot. The swift pace removed the need to convene more public hearings, thus stopping public forums and citizens' opportunity to ask more questions or offer input. If the referendum passes, proponents and developers may then claim "the voters" gave permission for land use amendments

and retrofitting planning policy to reduce greenspace in Clearwater.

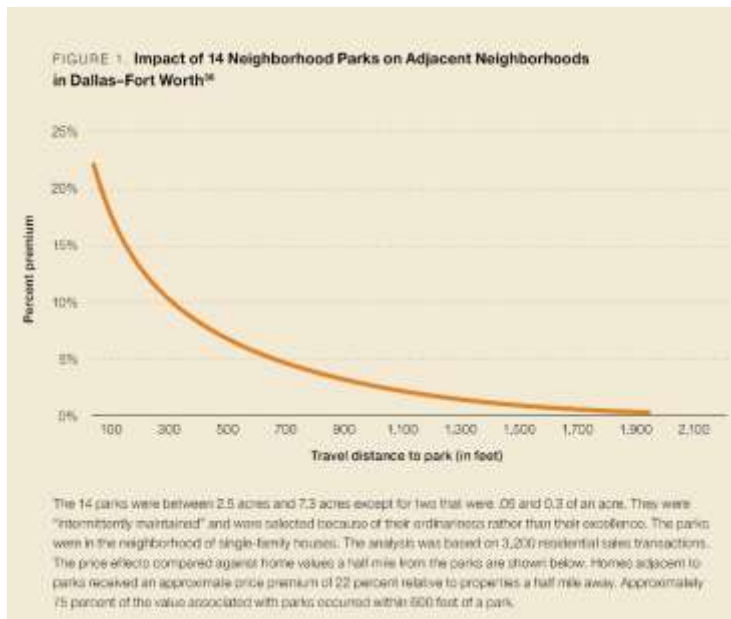


Figure 4

**Effect on Property Values** -- Real estate market data consistently shows that greenspace improves property values to adjacent neighborhoods, which translates to enhanced tax revenue. This process of capitalization of parkland into the value of nearby properties is known as the Proximate Principle.<sup>15</sup> Figure 4 is taken from a research synthesis completed in May 2010.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>John L. Crompton, "The Impact of Parks On Property Values: A Review of the Empirical Evidence," *Managing Leisure*, Dept of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University, 2005, [full text](#) 8

<sup>16</sup>"The Economic Benefits of Open Space, Recreation Facilities and Walkable Community Design," Research Synthesis, May 2010, [activelivingresearch.org](#), [full text](#).

Greenspace also improves property values by enhancing overall desirability, reducing supply of land puts upward pressure on property values, and is an important aid in flooding and stormwater control. Converting the Landings property to industrial use removes these advantages.

**Harrod Properties Development Economic Benefits Are Based on Speculation**-- Neither Mr. Rob Webster, the Harrod Properties representative nor the economic impact study completed by the City working in conjunction with Impact DataSource, a for-profit corporation, guarantees the favorable outcomes of job creation mentioned in City Council meetings. These are only assumptions based on 'like kind' property developments.

Mr. Webster frequently referred to the "speculative" nature of the project's economic impact until his company identifies actual tenants.

The Impact report completed by the City Economic Development Department also contains a broad disclaimer:

*This report is based on a variety of assumptions and contains forward-looking statements...made reasonable efforts to ensure that the project-specific data entered into Impact DashBoard reflects realistic estimates of future activity. Estimates of future activity involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results, performance, or events to differ materially from those expressed or implied in this report.*

*City of Clearwater Economic Development Department and Impact DataSource make no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained herein, and expressly disclaim any and all liability based on or relating to any information contained in, or errors or omissions from, this information or based on or relating to the use of this information.*<sup>17</sup>

This disclaimer substantially reduces the reliability of the Landings Corporate Center Impact Report as an accurate predictor of economic growth from this project for the City.

Additionally, data from other sources on average wages in manufacturing present a lower wage scale across job titles than projected in the Impact report.<sup>18</sup>

**Lack of Citizen Involvement in Proposal Development** -- Prior to May 18, 2020, Clearwater residents had no knowledge of City Economic Development staff

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<sup>17</sup> "Detailed Report: The Landings Corporate Center - Impact Report," by the City of Clearwater Economic Development Department.

<sup>18</sup> "Light Industrial Salaries in the United States," Indeed.com, [website](#).

and Harrod Development collaborating on the research and justification of the proposal. At the public meetings on May 21, June 18, and July 16, 2020, citizens could only speak on the proposal in brief remarks. Most spoke against the conversion.

**Landings Golf Course and Airpark Affect Each Other** -- As noted previously, the Landings property is located next to the Clearwater Airpark. How might the Landings Golf Course rezoning be affected by the Airpark next door? Would any harms or benefits be introduced? Or vice versa?

It should be noted that:

1. The City of Clearwater (the governing municipality of the Airpark) is responsible for any structures <200ft above ground that could possibly interfere with aircraft safety at the Airpark. The FAA becomes involved where structures in flight paths exceed 200ft in height above ground.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, any future buildings constructed <200ft above ground on the leased Landings property are under the jurisdiction of the City of Clearwater. Does the City Liability policy include this type of coverage?
2. The Florida Department of Transportation awarded the Clearwater Airpark its General Aviation of the Year award in 2014 in part due to



Figure 5 - 2014 Clearwater Airpark award

the 'aesthetics' of the Airpark adjacent to the greenspace of a golf course.

3. If the Landings property is redeveloped as a light industrial center, it could attract more business at the Airpark to include more takeoffs and landings of private aircraft and other aviation supported by new commercial enterprise next door. This would lead to more noise and air pollution beyond truck traffic and manufacturing operations expected in a light industrial center.

<sup>19</sup>"FAA Updates Airspace Obstructions Standards," Federal Aviation Administration, [website](#)

Nearby residents are already complaining about the noise from the helicopter training school at the Airpark. An increase in the Airpark operational tempo of private helicopters and private planes produces more noise but is unlikely to lead to a substantial increase in jobs or property tax payments to Clearwater.

**Quality of Life and Visual Impact on Nearby Residents and Commuters --**

With a "speculative" commercial development, it is difficult to assess the noise, impact on traffic, and aesthetic visual changes in advance of the project being brought into existence.

Nevertheless, City Council members and Harrod Properties representatives offered reassuring comparisons of modern light industrial properties with industrial zones of 50 years ago. They stressed the absence of smokestacks and underground storage tanks. They emphasized the beauty of the landscaping instead.

Below are pictures of Harrod Properties from their Landings Corporate Center, May 2020 report.<sup>20</sup> --Starkey III in Largo and Gatewood in Lakewood Ranch.



Case Study - Starkey III, Largo, Florida

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<sup>20</sup> "The Landings Corporate Center," Harrod Properties, Inc., May 2020, City Council [website](#).





Case Study - Starkey III, Largo, Florida



Case Study- Gatewood Corporate Center at Lakewood Ranch, Florida

While these pictures may demonstrate design improvements over similar light industrial land uses elsewhere, we ask:

Do these commercial ventures fit well in a small scale, built-out neighborhood that has several schools nearby, when the enterprises must use city streets to move resources into their industrial production sites and out again as finished cargo in trucks to reach interstate highways, or delivery hubs via UPS or Federal Express, or regional airports such as St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport, all of which are miles away?

Steve Grant, a resident of the St. Andrews Cove II condominium complex, said it doesn't belong, "It's a residential area. It was supposed to be residential. I didn't



move to Keene (Road) into these places to have it be like an industrial section like Hercules.”

In the same [Tampa Bay Newspapers article](#) by Chris George on May 27, 2020, nearby residents claimed “that the project would change the entire complexion of the area.”<sup>21</sup>

## **VI. Charter/Comprehensive Plan Issues**

The land-use conversion of the Landings Golf Course conflicts with stated language in the Clearwater Comprehensive Plan, the Clearwater Greenprint Sustainability Plan, and the City of Clearwater Parks and Recreation Master Plan updated 2013. These public documents include an emphasis on protecting natural resources, preserving open spaces and their connectedness, and increasing recreational spaces for residents. Relevant sections of these documents can be found in Appendix A.

## **VII. League of Women Voters North Pinellas involvement**

The League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County (LWVNPC), a nonpartisan, volunteer civic organization of 199 members (as of 9/25/2020) is concerned with issues that relate to the environment, and advocates for citizen involvement in government decision-making. Therefore, the League undertook this study to determine whether it should take a position to support or oppose this ballot initiative.

## **VIII. Recommendation based on Landings Conversion Analysis**

LWVNPC concludes that there is considerable evidence to warrant OPPOSING passage of the upcoming referendum. We believe the planning process was flawed, and that the residents, taxpayers and other stakeholders of the City of Clearwater deserve and require a rigorous and comprehensive approach to achieve an optimum long-term land use solution. Specific reasons to oppose include:

- failure to consider the documented competing needs of the City (2013 *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*) and alternatives to industrial use
- the detrimental effect on the character and value of surrounding residential neighborhoods
- disregard for goals and strategies of the formally adopted City’s *Comprehensive Plan* and *Greenprint Framework*
- incomplete exploration of the impact of industrial redevelopment on traffic, noise, and the environment.

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<sup>21</sup> Chris George, “Clearwater Takes Next Step Toward Redeveloping Landings Golf Course,” [Tampa Bay Newspapers](#), May 27, 2020.

## **IX. Sources of Information**

Clearwater Comprehensive Plan

Clearwater Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update

Clearwater Sustainability Plan – Greenprint: A Framework for a Competitive, Vibrant, Green Future

Detailed Report \_ The Landings - +- 710,000 SF \_ Impact DashBoard - City of Clearwater Economic Development Department

Draft Update Clearwater Greenprint 2020 Strategy Statuses

Emails to study group members from Clearwater City Clerk and Huston Family

FAA Updates Airspace Obstructions Standards, Federal Aviation Administration  
Indeed.com

Landings Corporate Center Report, Harrod Properties, May 2020

Landings Corporate Center Report – Impact Report, City of Clearwater Economic Development Department

Landings Term Sheet and Site Plan, 6/18/2020

Minutes from Clearwater City Council Meetings on May 18, May 21, June 18, and video of July 16 City Council Meeting

Research - *The Impact of Parks on Property Values: A Review of the Empirical Evidence*

Research Synthesis - *The Economic Benefits of Open Space, Recreation Facilities and Walkable Community Design*

Tampa Bay Newspapers coverage of Landings Golf Course Conversion issue by Chris George

Videos of City Council meetings on May 21, June 18, and July 16, 2020 and of the Clearwater Neighborhoods Coalition Landings issue forum, 8/3/2020

## APPENDIX A

### CONFLICTS WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN<sup>22</sup>

#### Section A: Future Land Use Element

##### Section A: Future Land Use Element

\*\*A.1.1 Objective - **On an ongoing basis, natural resources and systems shall be protected** through the application of local, state, and regional regulations, mitigation and management plans, and permitting procedures as well as **through locally instituted land purchase programs focusing on environmentally sensitive properties and significant open space areas.**

- A.2.1 Objective – **Public institutions, such as hospitals, parks, utility facilities and government facilities, shall be provided sufficient land area to accommodate identified public needs.**
- A.2.2.8 **Commercial land uses shall be located at the intersection of arterial or collector streets and should be sited in such a way as to minimize the intrusion of off-site impacts into residential neighborhoods.**
- A.2.2.9 Industrial land uses shall be located along arterial or major collector streets, with rail access if possible. Siting and operation of **industrial land uses should not create adverse off-site impacts, particularly as these off-site impacts may degrade residential areas.**

Goal A.3: “The City of Clearwater shall ensure that all development or redevelopment initiatives meet the safety, **environmental** and aesthetic needs of the city . . . “

- A.3.2 Objective – All development or redevelopment initiatives within the City of Clearwater shall meet the minimum landscaping / tree protection standards of the Community Development Code in order to **promote the preservation of existing tree canopies, the expansion of that canopy, and the overall quality of development within the City.**
- A.5.1.2 Identify Destination Points: active man-made features that create community wide interest in an area and draw people to them. [I.e. parks, athletic fields]
- A.5.1.8 **Protect community assets such as landmarks, destination points and neighborhood character features through the development review process.**
- A.5.5.1 **Development should be designed to maintain and support the existing or envisioned character of the neighborhood.**

##### Section G: Recreation and Open Space Element

i. GOAL – **To develop a system of open spaces, parks and recreation facilities which are designed for the maximum satisfaction of the recreational needs of Clearwater’s residents and tourists.**

- G.1.2 **Objective** The City of Clearwater shall continue intergovernmental coordination with the private sector and other public entities **to increase public recreational opportunities and open space acreage.**

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<sup>22</sup> [Clearwater Comprehensive Plan](#), Adopted May 18, 2000, Amended December 7, 2017, Prepared by Planning Department.

- G.1.2.1 Continue to enforce the adopted recreation and open space land dedication requirement for **the express purpose of maintaining the existing levels** of service of recreation lands and facilities.
- G.1.4 Objective – **Preserve natural open space areas which constitute aesthetic, and/or ecological community assets.**
- G.1.5 Objective – Enhance and maintain the City’s unique physical characteristics by making the best use of **existing** and potential recreation lands and open spaces.
  - G.1.5.1 The City shall be responsible **for maintaining the environmental integrity of significant and unique areas owned by the City.**
  - G.1.5.6 Enhance open space and natural areas by restoring degraded natural communities and eradicating non-native vegetation.
- G.1.7 Objective – **The City shall take an active role as a facilitator in providing recreation,** park facilities, trails, cultural activities and art opportunities for the needs of citizens and visitors of the City of Clearwater as articulated in the City’s 2002 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan, ...”
  - a. As funds become available, the **City will continue to implement the priority, medium term and long-term actions,** and continuous actions/policies as detailed in the 2002 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan.

## CONFLICTS WITH GREENPRINT<sup>23</sup>

- **Clearwater is largely built out and reliant on infill development, redevelopment, and building rehabilitation and reuse to accommodate growth. the city will need to incentivize reuse and revitalization of the existing structures** so they can remain viable over the long term.
- **[the city will] continue to seek opportunities to create and maintain areas for recreational purposes and protect environmental resources.**

### GOALS

- Create vibrant, mixed-use, walkable, transit-supportive neighborhood activity centers to link people with jobs and services and reduce the need for automobile travel.
- Reuse and recycle land through infill development and redevelopment.
- **Protect and add to the amount of natural areas, public parks, and urban greenspace.**
- **Fully utilize public and other property to sequester carbon and reduce the heat island effect.**
- **The city will support and expand the community’s capacity to manage, develop, and enhance green spaces for natural habitat, recreation, gardening, and outdoor education opportunities.** This includes **improving and maintaining public property**, creating public-private partnerships to transition underutilized land to these uses and enabling and encouraging these uses on private property through public policies and programs. **Enhancing and expanding green space will result in better stormwater management, higher carbon sequestration, and a better quality of life for residents.** The city will develop a program to educate community members
- **The city will consider piloting a forest carbon sequestration project on municipal land**, which along with other existing landscape installations will **sequester carbon** to offset a portion of the community’s annual greenhouse gas emissions.
- From ***Draft Update Clearwater Greenprint 2020 Strategy***: “The city actively pursues opportunities to transform vacant/underutilized properties suitable for affordable and workforce residential redevelopment.”

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<sup>23</sup> “Greenprint: A Framework for a Competitive, Vibrant, Green Future,” [Clearwater’s Sustainability Plan](#), December 2011.

CONFLICTS WITH PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2013<sup>24</sup>

**City of Clearwater Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update 2013 (update to 2002 Plan)**

- a. Mission: Clearwater Parks and Recreation creates diverse and outstanding recreational, natural and cultural experiences within our community to **enrich the quality of life for all of our current residents and for future generations.** **We preserve, enhance and protect our open spaces** as safe and secure environments.
  
- b. Level of Service Analysis – Outdoor Facilities: Table 1 shows that **a shortage of 11 Multipurpose Fields (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse)** with the summary statement **“There is both a service gap and evident support from the community for the development of additional multipurpose fields.”**[1]

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<sup>24</sup> City of Clearwater, *Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update 2013*, received by email September 9, 2020 from Tara Elswick, City of Clearwater | Parks and Recreation Department, page 36