



P.O. Box 296
Largo, FL 33779-0296
LARGO.COM

March 19, 2019

The Honorable Jeff Brandes
State Senator
Pinellas County Legislative Delegation
9800 4th Street N., Ste. 200
St. Petersburg, FL 33702-1300

Dear Senator Brandes,

On behalf of the City of Largo we commend you on the work that the legislature is doing to bring greater transparency and oversight to local governments. Largo shares this same ideal. For this reason the Largo CRA is seeking to continue the good stewardship of redevelopment dollars that have been specifically set aside for reinvestment into safety, infrastructure, and neighborhood revitalization within the community redevelopment districts.

Enclosed, please find an info-graphic prepared by the City of Largo Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for the West Bay Drive and Clearwater-Largo Road Redevelopment Districts. The info-graphic was developed to help dispel common misconceptions regarding how CRAs are managed throughout the state.

As the Chairman of the Largo CRA, I am proud to have witnessed the completion of major milestones in the Community Redevelopment Districts throughout the past 17 years, including highlights such as:

- Transformation of a blighted Mobile Home Park into a regional stormwater pond that services a large section of the historic downtown area and enhances the surrounding neighborhood;
- The major expansion of the Largo Medical Center Campus and new parking structure in the Medical Arts District providing access to critical organ transplant services in our densely populated county;
- The construction of two new apartment complexes that added over 360 much needed mixed-income housing units on two abandoned mobile home parks;
- The sale and redevelopment of the former City Hall into 24,000 square feet of commercial space; 54 single-family homes, and the reconstruction of Fire Station #41; and
- Newly permitted private developments including a mixed-use commercial project spanning two blocks that will bring over 40,000 square feet of commercial space and 123 residential units to downtown; a 9,900 square foot building for the West Florida Dance Studio, plus more than 200,000 square feet of completed new retail, office and commercial space into the districts.

CRAs across the state including Largo, have demonstrated that they dramatically improve the economic and social outcomes within their targeted areas. These outcomes directly benefit the residents and businesses that are located and surround these CRA areas.

As legislators prepare to debate HB 9 (LaMarca) and SB 1054 (Lee), we respectfully request that you oppose any phaseout language for CRAs, and any language related to a two-thirds, supermajority vote by countywide referendum for any new or renewed CRAs. Under the proposed language in HB 9, if a community seeks to

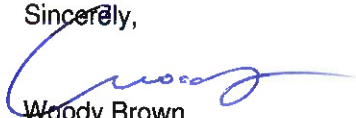
YOUR COMMUNITY OF CHOICE
Naturally

Senator Jeff Brandes
Page Two

establish a CRA for their blight needs, voters from outside of that community will be making decisions for neighborhoods where they don't even live or pay taxes, on matters that may not impact them at all. We believe this decision making power to establish or expand CRAs belongs under the jurisdiction of County Commissioners and their delegated power and oversight to ensure equitable representation.

We sincerely welcome the opportunity for meaningful discussion about this important and highly effective tool that is used by Florida counties and cities of all sizes. Similarly, we would welcome the opportunity to take you on a tour of the City's Redevelopment Districts and show you the drastic changes that have taken place and that are underway today in these districts.

Sincerely,



Woody Brown
Mayor
CITY OF LARGO

Enclosure: Largo Community Redevelopment Agency Info-graphic