MEMORANDUM

To: Imagine Clearwater Stakeholder Coalition

From: HR&A Advisors, Inc.

Date: July 13th, 2016

Re: Imagine Clearwater Stakeholder Coalition Meeting

Thank you to all for your participation on our June 8th launch of the Imagine Clearwater Stakeholder Coalition to discuss the master planning effort for the Clearwater Waterfront and Bluff. The following is a summary of our meeting and the topics discussed.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION
Clearwater’s downtown waterfront is a beloved civic asset. The bluff’s elevation is unique on Florida’s coastline, providing unparalleled views of the Intracoastal Waterway and Clearwater Beach. Home to Coachman Park, the waterfront is an important community gathering place, hosting cultural events that attract visitors from across the region.

Building on these strengths, there is a tremendous opportunity to rethink the future of the waterfront, improve its connection to downtown, and create a vibrant destination for all. In recent decades, cities across Florida and nationwide have focused on transforming their waterfronts into community-strengthening assets, improving parks and open spaces and creating new opportunities to live, work and play. A reenergized waterfront helps to sustain the vitality of downtown and the greater region, and these areas have become great sources of pride for their communities.
The City of Clearwater has launched *Imagine Clearwater*, a community-focused visioning and master planning effort for its downtown waterfront and bluff. The master plan will establish a framework for the future of a 50-acre area west of Osceola Avenue, bordered by Drew Street to the north and Court Street to the south. The June 8th Stakeholder Coalition meeting was the beginning of a five-month process that will involve extensive community outreach and public meetings during key decision-making milestones.

The Imagine Clearwater master plan will be a comprehensive document that creates a vision for and guides future development for the Waterfront/Bluff area. In partnership with the City of Clearwater, the master planning process is being led by HR&A Advisors, Inc., with Sasaki Associates, Kimley-Horn and Associates, and B2 Communications providing urban design, transportation and parking, and public relations support, respectively. The plan will include two main components:

- **A Framework Plan**, which consists of a site plan, a strategy for access, circulation, and parking, and recommendations for open space and public realm improvements; and,

- **An Action Plan**, which will provide a road map for implementing the plan through a strategy for key partnerships, phasing, and funding opportunities.

**DISCUSSION**

The Stakeholder Coalition discussion began with introductions of each Coalition member present, including members’ preliminary thoughts and goals for the waterfront and the planning effort. Coalition members’ comments can be categorized with respect to two areas: existing site assets and preliminary visions for the site.

**Site Assets.** The site has assets that are unique to its location that a reimagined waterfront plan can leverage and build off of, which include:

- **Adjacency to downtown:** The waterfront and downtown can support each other through improved connections, and a revitalized waterfront can help better active downtown Clearwater.
• **Unique topography:** Very few places in Florida have a bluff like Clearwater’s, creating unparalleled views of the Intracoastal Waterway and Clearwater Beach.

• **Indoor and outdoor public spaces:** The library creates opportunities for activity regardless of weather.

• **Existing programming:** Today, the large–scale events that take place in Coachman Park draw residents and visitors to downtown Clearwater. These events are part of the waterfront’s identity and are one way that downtown Clearwater is distinct and memorable for visitors.

*Preliminary Visions for the Site.* There was general consensus among the Coalition members that the waterfront should be a place that is a source of identity and pride to the greater Clearwater community, a destination where all Clearwater residents would want to spend time. The Coalition discussed preliminary visions for the site, summarized as the following:

- **Anchor to downtown.** Investing in the waterfront as an attractive civic gathering space, a destination that creates a reason for residents and visitors to come to downtown Clearwater;

- **Diverse users, diverse times.** Creating a destination that is many things to many people, serving a diverse set of Clearwater residents, families, workers, and visitors, across a variety of times and seasons;

- **New activity.** Introducing new active uses and programming to the park and waterfront, such as water features, cafés, and arts–related uses, among others;

- **Improved connectivity.** Building connections between the waterfront, downtown, and Clearwater Beach, and encouraging a pedestrian–friendly environment;

- **Incorporating existing assets.** Utilizing and activating the library as part of the waterfront experience;

- **Economic development.** Catalyzing economic activity throughout downtown, including new residential living and renewed retail activity.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

As part of the master planning process, the City and consultant team will be undertaking a comprehensive public engagement strategy, soliciting input and
feedback from a diverse set of Clearwater residents at three major points in the project: (i) input on the community’s aspirations for the waterfront at the outset of the planning effort, (ii) feedback on interim framework plan concepts midway through the planning process, and (iii) thoughts on the draft master plan. Engagement activities will include large-scale public charrette-style meetings, ongoing briefings to the Stakeholder Committee, and public information shared through a project website, email listserv, and social media. The first round of large-scale public engagement activities will take place between August 1st and 3rd, with three outreach events in different sections of the city.

Committee members noted the importance of a comprehensive public engagement process, and generally agreed with the proposed strategy. In addition, several members recommended that some of the engagement meetings be undertaken in partnership with existing community organizations to ensure meaningful turnout and participation, an approach that is now being undertaken as part of the August sessions.

**Next Steps**

We look forward to the first round of large-scale engagement for the Imagine Clearwater master plan, scheduled for August 1st – 3rd. The next Stakeholder Coalition meeting is scheduled for August 3rd, at which we plan to:

- Update the Coalition on what we have heard during the initial public engagement activities, articulating emerging themes, areas of consensus, open areas of discussion, and potential plan principles;
- Provide insights on key existing conditions findings, including physical and market conditions, circulation, and parking, among others;
- Discuss next steps, including the consultant team’s objectives and approach for creating the Framework Plan.