SUPPLEMENTAL JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

Future Land Use Map Amendment and Rezoning

HRPB 26-00300001 & 26-01300002
Ordinances 2026-14 and 2026-13

October 20, 2026, First Reading - 504 3rd Avenue South and Associated Property at 228 South L Street
City Commission Review

These applications give the City Commission a proactive opportunity to shape the future of a 60-year-old historic-district resource. By approving the requested Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment and rezoning, the Commission can actively champion a historic preservation and adaptive reuse project rather than leaving the site's trajectory to speculative chance.

The proposed Mixed Use East (MU-E) designation provides the exact regulatory key required to breathe new life into a distinctive four-story historic structure whose unique physical footprint is fundamentally incompatible with the existing and restrictive Medium Density Residential (MDR/MF-20) framework. Transitioning to MU-E enables adaptive reuse as a high-quality boutique hotel—addressing a critical, long-standing shortage of quality lodging for visiting tourists, business travelers, and local families in Lake Worth Beach. This while still respecting the neighborhood's existing fabric and the building's street presence.

1. A Proactive Opportunity: Adaptive Reuse vs. Theoretical Redevelopment

The central policy decision before the City Commission is clear: should the City proactively guide this 60-year-old building toward a vibrant, economically viable, and historically preserved future, or evaluate the request through the lens of unanchored theoretical maximums? Arguments against rely on hypothetical build-out scenarios that ignore the site's physical reality and the applicant's clear intent.

Responsible planning demands distinguishing between speculative maximum density calculations and realistic, beneficial land use. The applicant's vision offers a tailored, preservation-first approach that directly fulfills key municipal goals while safeguarding neighborhood character.

Several compelling facts strongly favor adaptive reuse as the realistic outcome for this property:

- a prominent, structurally sound 60-year-old four-story building already anchors the property;
- the applicant is actively and voluntarily seeking contributing historic-resource status to permanently protect the building;
- demolition is explicitly avoided, keeping the historic architectural fabric intact;
- while the existing room layout presents unique architectural challenges for an appropriate adaptive reuse, a thoughtful, preservation-forward design approach will successfully repurpose it into a charming boutique hotel;
- site constraints naturally limit intrusive expansions or overdevelopment;
- lodging operations will undergo subsequent rigorous Conditional Use public hearings;
- all exterior refurbishments remain subject to Historic Resources Preservation Board (HRPB) design guidelines; and
- future operations will strictly comply with municipal parking, traffic, and service requirements.

This initiative directly mirrors the core directives of the Lake Worth Beach Comprehensive Plan. The Housing and Neighborhoods Element urges the City to champion projects that integrate adaptive reuse and historic preservation into cohesive neighborhood enhancement. At the same time, the Economic

Development Element emphasizes leveraging historic architectural assets to stimulate local commerce, elevate municipal identity, and support heritage tourism.

The City has a limited inventory of conventional lodging and instead relies on short-term rental properties that can create negative externalities, including noise disruptions, parking congestion, and a loss of long-term housing stock. Approving MU-E captures this unfulfilled lodging demand, transforming an underutilized resource into a preserved historic asset that generates stable municipal revenue, supports downtown merchants, and offers a professionally managed solution. This action does not request or authorize increased height, out-of-scale additions, or demolition. An MF-20 text amendment would open large parts of the city's multi-family residentially zoned property to commercial uses, rather than providing a targeted solution. The MU-E map amendment is surgical, appropriate, and site-specific.

By approving this request, the City Commission actively chooses a defined, desirable, and historically sensitive project over possible future decay and unknown/unpredictable future redevelopment.

The choice before the Commission is simple: leave the future of a landmark to chance, or take a proactive role and catalyze a potentially award-winning historic preservation success story.

2. Scope of the Present Applications

The current applications seek Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map amendments to establish the policy foundation for reuse. They do not grant blanket site plan or construction approvals.

No increase in height, additions, or demolition is requested or authorized by this action. The existing building footprint remains the cornerstone of the proposal.

The City’s November 2025 zoning determination confirms that MU-E is the appropriate and supportable framework to enable adaptive reuse of this building as a boutique hotel, noting that full Conditional Use approval will follow to ensure complete public oversight.

Approval at this stage establishes the necessary regulatory doorway while preserving city control over operational specifics later.

3. Harmonious Alignment with Existing Land-Use Patterns

Rather than creating an isolated land-use pocket, assigning MU-E to this site is a seamless, logical extension of the existing municipal fabric.

Established MU-E zoning and Future Land Use already exist directly across South M Street. City staff specifically highlighted this immediate adjacency, finding the requested use compatible and planning-sound.

The Comprehensive Plan explicitly envisions MU-E as a vibrant transitional zone accommodating lodging, residential, office, and commercial uses adjacent to the city core.

Extending MU-E across South M Street creates a logical continuation of the existing MU-E pattern, aligning a large-scale four-story asset with the land-use designation best suited to its long-term viability.

Future land use designations and zoning district lines extend to the centerline of the South M Street right-of-way, with zoning already reaching blocks along the east side of South M Street. While those properties could theoretically be assembled in the future for a mixed-use or Live Local project, nothing in their present condition or development pattern indicates that such an outcome is probable. The same is true with this property, plus it has a large four-story building soon to be identified as a contributing historic resource to the Southeast Lucerne Historic District.

4. Clarification of Potential Redevelopment Scenarios

During the HRPB meeting discussion, questions were raised regarding potential redevelopment maximums and statutory density options such as the Live Local Act. Review with City staff confirms that realistic redevelopment of this site is constrained by established zoning and site development criteria—including height restrictions, mandatory parking ratios, setbacks, open space requirements, and overall infrastructure capacity.

Specifically, staff confirms that the site's maximum building height is capped at 45 feet and four stories—matching the height of the existing building. Furthermore, strict municipal parking and site design requirements make theoretical maximum unit counts practically unfeasible on a site of this size and layout.

No Live Local Act development project or formal site plan application for new high-density construction is currently pending or proposed before the City. These facts demonstrate that adaptive reuse of the historic building represents a logical and practical path forward for the property.

5. Thorough Oversight and Infrastructure Readiness

The project fully respects municipal infrastructure standards and level-of-service mandates set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

The applicant has requested confirmation from the City's utility and public works departments regarding available service capacity. Those responses will supplement the record and provide additional information on the comparatively limited demands associated with reusing the existing building.

Every subsequent operational step will remain subject to full engineering, fire, life-safety, and concurrency verification.

6. Comprehensive Safeguards and Public Oversight

Approving this map amendment begins a collaborative, highly regulated public process—not the end of it.

The required Conditional Use permit for any principal use will grant the city, neighborhood, and Historic Resource Preservation Board full authority to review operational details, site design, and parking solutions. The HRPB will guide exterior rehabilitation.

This layered oversight ensures the City retains substantial review authority over any future proposal while empowering a landmark preservation project to move forward.

7. Conclusion: Championing Preservation and Vision

The decision before the City Commission is a powerful opportunity to exercise visionary leadership.

At 504 3rd Avenue South, Lake Worth Beach possesses a 60-year-old historic-district resource seeking a viable, dignified future. The current MDR/MF-20 designation locks this building in regulatory limbo, whereas MU-E provides the exact tool needed to secure its historic restoration and adaptive reuse as a boutique hotel.

This first step enables a project that will meet a limited supply of conventional lodging for tourists and local families, stimulate downtown commercial vitality, and honor the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, all while maintaining rigorous public board oversight before any such approval is granted.

The choice before the Commission is simpler: leave the future of this historic resource to chance, or take a proactive role in facilitating a historic preservation success story.