



September 23, 2016

Julia "Alex" Magee, Executive Director
American Planning Association Florida
2017 Delta Boulevard, Suite 201
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Subject: Support for the City of Madeira Beach's Municipal Complex – Great Places in Florida

Dear Ms. Magee:

On behalf of Forward Pinellas, the metropolitan planning organization and planning council for Pinellas County, I am writing in support of the City of Madeira Beach's application to recognize the Municipal Complex as a Great Place in Florida.

Madeira Beach is a small, eclectic barrier island city that has seen nearly a century of tourism and commercial fishing, and now embraces new opportunities for growth and redevelopment. Its Municipal Complex, completed last year, has been a transformational project for the city. A collection of aging municipal buildings and ballfields was demolished and replaced with a state-of-the-art civic and recreational campus, providing a central gathering place for the community. The project has already spurred significant new investment in nearby residential and commercial redevelopment.

The centerpiece of the Municipal Complex is the new city hall. Known as the City Centre, it provides an architecturally modern space for public meetings, recreational classes and special events (including some held by Forward Pinellas) while offering sweeping views of the Intracoastal Waterway. Surrounding the City Centre are tournament-level sports fields, a recreation center, a band shell for concerts, playgrounds, tennis courts, a dog park, a modern fire station, and the Gulf Beaches Library. The complex serves as a civic, recreation and entertainment hub for local residents, while also drawing thousands of tourists for special events and concerts.

Madeira Beach is an important member community of Forward Pinellas, and has been a leader in the effort to bring high-quality redevelopment and renewal to the barrier islands. Therefore, we strongly support this application and urge your favorable consideration of the Municipal Complex as a Great Place in Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Whit Blanton". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a prominent initial "W" and a long, sweeping underline.

Whit Blanton, FAICP
Executive Director
Forward Pinellas