



Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA

Regulatory Order/Family: Reform/Growth Management

Summary

Tampa shares important features of all Florida metropolitan areas thanks to the state's strong growth management laws. It is totally planned and zoned, and zoning is rarely if ever used to exclude high-density development from entire jurisdictions. Growth management is universal as well via controls on infrastructure access; developers must pay to grow or else seek out a location where there is slack capacity.¹ Metropolitan Tampa's counties also use growth boundaries to contain growth, which may have helped reduce sprawl somewhat more than was the case in Orlando in the 1980s and 1990s.

Governance Framework and Growth Trends

The Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater MSA had 2.4 million residents in 2000, up 16 percent (330,000 residents) from 1990. The metro area has four cities over 50,000 residents—Tampa (300,000 residents), St. Petersburg (250,000), Clearwater (110,000), and Largo (70,000)—but its most populous jurisdiction is Hillsborough County with nearly 650,000 people living in unincorporated areas. Pasco and Pinellas Counties both had over 250,000 residents in their unincorporated areas in 2000, and the fourth county, Hernando, had about 125,000. Consequently, only 43 percent of the population in 2000 lived in municipalities. Aside from the large jurisdictions, there are 11 medium-sized and 20 small ones which together accounted for 13 percent of the population and 5 percent of the land area.

Tampa's urbanized land base grew nearly 50 percent between 1982 and 1997 while its population grew 35 percent. Its density dropped from 4.1 to 3.7 persons per urbanized acre, a slower-than-average decline that helped it climb from 30th to 26th densest MSA in the top 50. About 90 percent of the land area was privately owned in 1992, with most of the public land in the hands of state government.

Regulatory Environment

We received responses from eight cities and three counties, which accounted together for 77 percent of the metropolitan population and 68 percent of the land area. We developed estimates for the other jurisdictions based on responses from both Tampa and elsewhere in Florida.

Metropolitan Tampa is entirely zoned, but exclusionary zoning is very rare, with no jurisdictions estimated to have low-density-only zoning; one or two of the small cities might bar our hypothetical apartment development, but none of the respondents would. Three quarters of the cities and three of

¹ James C. Nicholas and Ruth L. Steiner, "Growth Management and Smart Growth in Florida." *Wake Forest Law Review* 35,3 (Fall) (2000): 645–670.



the four counties have a zoning category allowing at least 15 dwellings per acre. About 80 percent of the metro area's population and land area are in such jurisdictions.

Like all of Florida, Metro Tampa operates under state growth management rules that require comprehensive planning and mandate concurrency between development and infrastructure. Consequently, all the jurisdictions have plans, almost all have an APFO, and 88 percent have impact fees of some kind. Permit caps are not used in Florida, and only one or two jurisdictions have imposed moratoria. Finally, about one-third of the jurisdictions with 70 percent of the residents are estimated to use an incentive based affordable housing program of some kind.