

Pompano Beach, Florida: Principles to Guide Zoning for Community Residences for People With Disabilities



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Table of Contents

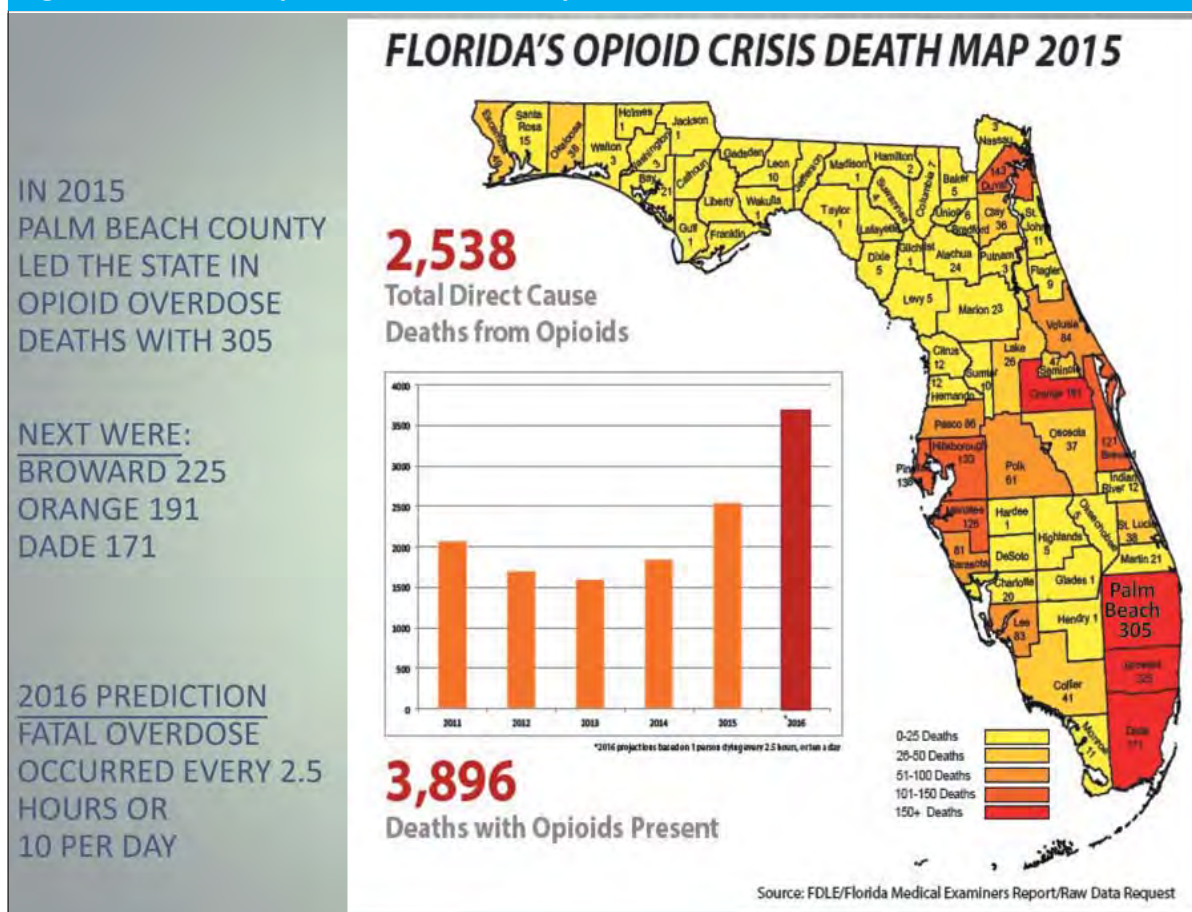
- Introduction..... 1**
- Community residences 6**
 - Types of community residences 9
 - Family community residences 9
 - Transitional community residences 12
- Rational bases for regulating community residences..... 14**
- Clustering and *de facto* social service districts 23**
- Recommended zoning approach 34**
 - Community residences in general 36
 - Recovery communities in general 36
 - Additional issues to consider 41
 - Family community residences 42
 - Transitional community residences 42
 - Special exception backup 43
 - Maximum number of occupants 44
 - Other zoning regulations for community residences 46
 - Factoring in the Florida state statute on locating community residences 47
 - Impact of Florida statute on vacation rentals 52
- Summary..... 54**
- Appendix A: Representative studies of community residence impacts . . 56**
- Appendix B: Sample zoning compliance application form 59**

Introduction

The United States continues to struggle to win the War on Drugs and Alcohol Abuse while in the midst of an opioid, drug, and alcohol addiction epidemic of unprecedented proportions for the past decade. One of the most essential weapons in the War on Drugs and Alcohol Abuse is the recovery residence, recovery community, or sober home. Properly operated and located, these types of community residences offer a supportive family-like living environment that fosters the normalization and community integration essential to attain long-term, permanent sobriety for their residents.

The State of Florida has been experiencing an “Opioid Crisis” with opioids, 2015, the direct cause of 2,538 deaths and present in an additional 3,896 fatalities. *This crisis does not respect municipal boundaries.* While opioid deaths are concentrated in southeast Florida, only Palm Beach County has experienced more deaths due to opioid overdoses than Broward County where Pompano Beach sits.

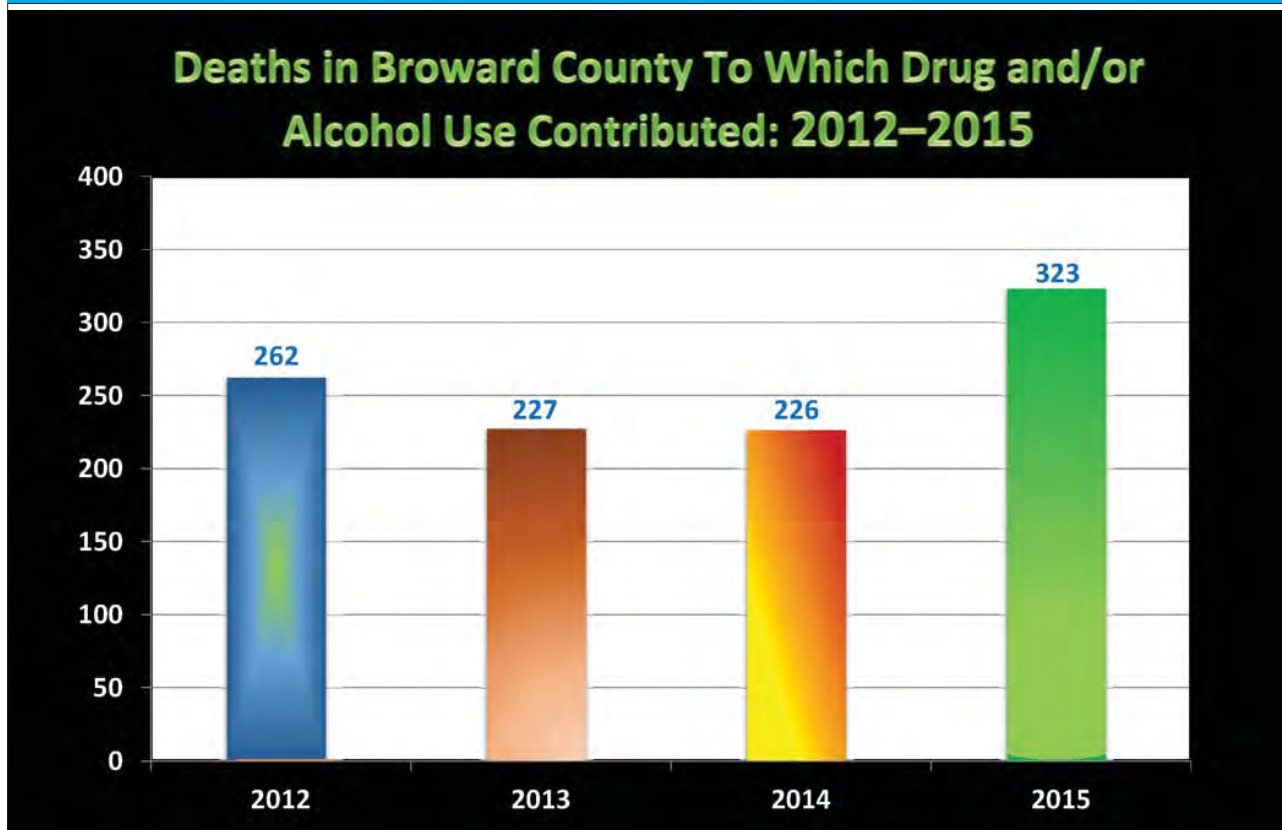
Figure 1: Florida’s Opioid Crisis Death Map 2015



Source: Palm Beach County, *Addressing the Opioid Epidemic: County Staff Report to the Board of County Commissioners* (April 4, 2017) 5.

In Broward County, the frequency of fatalities due to opioid overdoses and alcohol soared by 43 percent from 2014 to 2015, the most recent years for which data are available.

Figure 2: Deaths in Broward County To Which Drug and/or Alcohol Use Contributed: 2012–2015



Source: Annual Drug Raw Data spreadsheets for 2012 through 2015 prepared by Policy and Special Programs, Medical Examiners Commission, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2016.

Sober living homes or recovery residences are a crucial component to achieve long-term recovery and sobriety. Just a few miles north of Pompano Beach is Delray Beach, dubbed “the recovery capital of America” by the newspaper of record a decade ago. The *New York Times* reported that “Delray Beach, a funky outpost of sobriety between Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, is the epicenter of the country’s largest and most vibrant recovery community, with scores of halfway houses, more than 5,000 people at 12-step meetings each week, recovery radio shows, a recovery motorcycle club and a coffeehouse that boasts its own therapy group...”¹ But as noted earlier, *this epidemic does not respect municipal boundaries*.

During the past decade, operators of recovery residences have expanded beyond Delray Beach. As noted on page 24 of this report, there are at least 138 veri-

1. Jane Gross, “In Florida, Addicts Find an Oasis of Sobriety,” *New York Times*, Nov. 11, 2007. Available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/16/us/16recovery.html>

fied recovery residences in Pompano Beach plus at least another 102 that are thought to be recovery residences but not confirmed as such. Delray Beach had 183 verified sober homes and another 64 thought to be sober homes in 2017.²

In more than 40 years of working on zoning for community residences for people with disabilities, the author of this study has rarely seen such large numbers and intense concentrations of community residences of any type in a single town of any size, much less in two nearby cities.

As this report explains, clustering community residences — especially recovery residences — on a block and neighborhood reduces their efficacy by obstructing their ability to foster normalization and community integration. For the residents of these homes to achieve long-term sobriety, it is critical to establish regulations and procedures that assure a proper family-like living environment, free of drugs and alcohol, that weed out the incompetent and unethical operators, and protect this vulnerable population from abuse, mistreatment, exploitation, enslavement, and theft.

The southeast Florida media have been reporting³ on ongoing criminal investigations of sober living operators. These investigations have found so-called sober homes that kept residents on illegal drugs, patient brokering, enslavement of residents into prostitution, kickbacks, bribery, and other abuses.

In the absence of mandatory state licensing or certification of recovery residences, a key expert estimates that at least half of the sober homes in Pompano Beach do not comply with the minimum “Quality Standards” that the National Alliance of Recovery Residences has promulgated.⁴

This failure to comply with even minimal standards of the recovery industry and the clustering of community residences in Pompano Beach may help explain the inability of so many sober living homes in Pompano Beach and southeast Florida to achieve sobriety among their residents and for high recidivism rates. These failures are in contrast to the much lower recidivism rates around the country of residents of certified sober living homes and of homes in the Oxford House network which are subject to the demanding requirements of the Oxford House Charter and an inspection regime Oxford House maintains.⁵

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2. Daniel Lauber, *Delray Beach, Florida: Principles to Guide Zoning for Community Residences for People With Disabilities* (River Forest, IL: Planning/Communications, 3rd ed. August 2017).
 3. A sampling of articles: “Kenny Chatman pleads guilty to addiction treatment fraud,” *mypalmbeachpost.com* (March 16, 2017); Christine Stapleton, “Three more sober home operators arrested in Delray Beach,” *Palm Beach Post* (Feb. 27, 2017); Lynda Figueredo, “Two Delray Beach sober home owners arrested for receiving kickback,” *cbs12.com* (Nov. 19, 2016); Pat Beall, “Patient-brokering charges against treatment center CEO ramped up to 95,” *mypalmbeachpost.com* (Dec. 27, 2016).
 4. Email from John Lehman, CEO and Board Chair, Florida Association of Recovery Residences to Daniel Lauber, Law Office of Daniel Lauber (Nov. 16, 2017, 9:34 a.m. CST) (on file with the Law Office of Daniel Lauber).
 5. L. Jason, M. Davis, and J. Ferrari, The Need for Substance Abuse Aftercare: Longitudinal Analysis of Oxford House, 32 *Addictive Behaviors* (4), (2007), at 803-818. For additional studies, *also see*

The failure to comply with minimal standards was a focus of a grand jury that the Palm Beach County State Attorney’s Office convened to investigate fraud and abuse in the addiction treatment industry. The grand jury reported:⁶

The Grand Jury received evidence from a number of sources that recovery residences operating under nationally recognized standards, such as those created by the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR), are proven to be highly beneficial to recovery. The Florida Association of Recovery Residences (FARR) adopts NARR standards. One owner who has been operating a recovery residence under these standards for over 20 years has reported a 70% success rate in outcomes. The Grand Jury finds that recovery residences operating under these nationally approved standards benefit those in recovery and, in turn, the communities in which they exist.

In contrast, the Grand Jury has seen evidence of horrendous abuses that occur in recovery residences that operate with no standards. For example, some residents were given drugs so that they could go back into detox, some were sexually abused, and others were forced to work in labor pools. There is currently no oversight on these businesses that house this vulnerable class. Even community housing that is a part of a DCF [Department of Children and Families] license has no oversight other than fire code compliance. This has proven to be extremely harmful to patients.

The grand jury reported 484 overdose deaths in Delray Beach in 2016, up from 195 in 2015.⁷ It recommended certification and licensure for “commercial recovery housing.”⁸ For full details on the grand jury’s findings and recommen-

Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, *Recovery Residence Report Fiscal Year 2013–2014 General Appropriations Act*, Florida Department of Children and Families (Oct. 1, 2013), 21–25. Since the report focused on Palm Beach County, it did not provide similar data for cities outside that county.

Oxford House is discussed throughout this study. The later discussion of Oxford House will make it clear that, unlike the recovery residences so prevalent in Pompano Beach and southeast Florida, each Oxford House is a self–run and self–governed sober home completely independent from any treatment center. Also see footnote 8 below.

6. Palm Beach Grand Jury in the Circuit Court of the 15th Judicial Circuit In and For Palm Beach County, Florida, *Report on the Proliferation of Fraud and Abuse in Florida’s Addiction Treatment Industry*, (Dec. 8, 2016) 16–17. While the report focused on Palm Beach County which is immediately north of Broward County, the applicability of its recommendations, like the opioid epidemic, is not limited by municipal boundaries.
7. Ibid. 99–101.
8. Ibid. 18. In contrast to the self–governed Oxford Houses that adhere to the Oxford House Charter and are subject to inspections by Oxford House, “commercial recovery housing” is operated by a profit–making third party entity, sometimes affiliated with a specific treatment program, complete with supervisory staff like most community residences for people with disabilities. In Florida, as elsewhere, such homes are almost always required to obtain a license from the state.

dations, readers should see the grand jury’s report.⁹

Thanks in large part to the crackdown on patient brokering and other discordant practices of illegitimate predator sober homes in Palm Beach County, it has been noted that there is a migration of patient brokering and of sober homes to Broward County. According to the head of the Florida Association of Recovery Residences (FARR), requiring certification or licensing of sober homes appears to deter “those who are driven to enter the recovery housing arena by opportunities to profit off this vulnerable population. When seeking where to site their programs, this predator group evaluates potential barriers to operation. For them, achieving and maintaining FARR Certification is a significant barrier.”¹⁰

This report explains the basis for text amendments that will be proposed to revise the sections of Pompano Beach’s *Zoning Code* that govern community residences for people with disabilities. The proposed amendments based on this study will seek to make the reasonable accommodations for community residences for people with disabilities that are necessary to achieve full compliance with national law and sound zoning and planning practices and policies. The recommended zoning approach is based upon a careful review of:

- ◆ The functions and needs of community residences and the people with disabilities who live in them
- ◆ Sound city planning and zoning principles and policies
- ◆ The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (FHAA) and amended Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. Sections 3601–3619 (1982)
- ◆ Report No. 100–711 of the House Judiciary Committee interpreting the FHAA amendments (the legislative history)
- ◆ The HUD regulations implementing the amendments, 24 C.F.R. Sections 100–121 (January 23, 1989)
- ◆ Case law interpreting the 1988 Fair Housing Act amendments relative to community residences for people with disabilities
- ◆ Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, *State and Local Land Use Laws and Practices and the Application of the Fair Housing Act* (Nov. 10, 2016)¹¹
- ◆ Florida state statutes governing local zoning for different types of community residences: Title XXIX Public Health, chapters 393

9. The grand jury’s report is available online at: <http://www.trbas.com/media/media/acrobat/2016-12/70154325305400-12132047.pdf>.

10. Email from John Lehman, CEO and Board Chair, Florida Association of Recovery Residences to Daniel Lauber, Law Office of Daniel Lauber (Nov. 16, 2017, 9:34 a.m. CST) (on file with the Law Office of Daniel Lauber).

11. At <http://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/909956/download>.

(Developmental Disabilities), 394 (Mental Health), 397 (Substance Abuse Services), 419 (Community Residential Homes); Title XXX, chapters 429 (Assisted Care Communities — Part 1: Assisted Living Facilities, Part II: Adult Family–Care Homes); and Title XLIV, Chapter 760 (Discrimination in the Treatment of Persons; Minority Representation) (2016)

- ◆ Florida state statute establishing voluntary certification of recovery residences: Title XXIX Public Health, chapter 397 (Substance Abuse Services) §397.487 (2016)
- ◆ The actual Florida certification standards for recovery residences as promulgated and administered by the certifying entity, the Florida Association of Recovery Residences based on standards established by the National Alliance of Recovery Residences
- ◆ The existing provisions of Pompano Beach’s *Zoning Code*

Community residences

Community residences are crucial to achieving the adopted goals of the State of Florida and the nation to enable people with disabilities to live as normal a life as possible in the least restrictive living environment. The nation has made great strides from the days when people with disabilities were warehoused in inappropriate and excessively restrictive institutions, out of sight and out of mind.

People with substantial disabilities often need a living arrangement where they receive staff support to engage in the everyday life activities most of us take for granted. These sorts of living arrangements fall under the broad rubric “community residence” — a term that reflects their *residential nature and family-like living environment* rather than the institutional nature of a nursing home or hospital or the non–family nature of a boarding or lodging house. Their primary use is as a residence or a home like yours and mine, not a treatment center, an institution, nor a boarding house.

One of the core elements of community residences is that they seek to emulate a family in how they function. The staff (or in the case of a recovery community, the officers) function as parents, doing the same things our parents did for us and we do for our children. The residents with disabilities are in the role of the siblings, being taught or retaught the same life skills and social behaviors our parents taught us and we try to teach our children.

Community residences seek to achieve “normalization” of their residents and incorporate them into the social fabric of the surrounding community, often called “community integration.” They are operated under the auspices of a legal entity such as a non–profit association, for–profit private care provider, or a government entity.

The number of people who live in a specific community residence tends to depend on its residents’ types of disabilities as well as therapeutic and financial

needs.¹² Like other cities across the nation, Pompano Beach needs to adjust its zoning to enable community residences for people with disabilities to locate in all residential zoning districts, subject to objective conditions via the least drastic means needed to actually achieve a legitimate government interest.

Since 1989, the nation’s Fair Housing Act has required all cities, counties, and states to make a “reasonable accommodation” in their zoning when the number of residents exceeds the local zoning code’s cap on the number of unrelated people who can live together in a dwelling so that community residences for people with disabilities can locate in all residential zoning districts.¹³

When President Reagan signed the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (FHAA), he added people with disabilities to the classes protected by the nation’s Fair Housing Act (FHA). The 1988 amendments recognized that many people with disabilities need a community residence (group home, recovery community, sober living home, halfway house) in order to live in the community in a family-like environment rather than being forced into an inappropriate institution.

Consequently, the act requires all cities, counties, and states to allow for community residences for people with disabilities by making some exceptions in their zoning ordinance provisions that, for example, may limit how many unrelated people can live together in a dwelling unit.

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12. While the trend for people with developmental disabilities is toward smaller group home households, valid therapeutic and financial reasons lead to community residences for people with mental illness or people in recovery from drug and/or alcohol addiction to typically house eight to 12 residents. However, all community residences must comply with minimum floor area requirements like any other residence. If the local building code or property maintenance code would allow only six people in a house, then six is the maximum number of people that can live in the house whether it’s a community residence for people with disabilities or a biological family. *City of Edmonds v. Oxford House* 514 U.S. 725, 115 S.Ct. 1776, 131 L.Ed.2d 801 (1995).
 13. As explained in this study, “family community residences” should be allowed as a permitted use in all zoning districts where dwellings are allowed when located outside a rational spacing distance from the nearest existing community residence and if licensed or certified. “Transitional community residences” should be allowed as of right in districts where multiple family dwellings are permitted uses (subject to spacing and licensing) and as a special use in other residential districts. A special use back-up is needed for proposed community residences that would be located within the spacing distance or for which a license or certification is not available.

*People without disabilities and people with disabilities who pose “a direct threat to the health or safety of others” such as prison pre-parolees and sex offenders are **not** covered by the 1988 amendments to the Fair Housing Act. Therefore, cities do not have to make the same reasonable accommodation for them as cities must for people with disabilities who do not pose “a direct threat to the health or safety of others.” The zoning amendments to be based on this study will not allow as a permitted use halfway houses for people who fall into these categories of dangerous people.*

The Fair Housing Amendments Act’s (FHAA) legislative history states that:

“The Act is intended to prohibit the application of special requirements through land–use regulations, restrictive covenants, and conditional or special use permits that have the effect of limiting the ability of such individuals to live in the residence of their choice within the community.”¹⁴

While many advocates for people with disabilities suggest that the Fair Housing Amendments Act prohibits all zoning regulation of community residences, the Fair Housing Amendments Act’s legislative history suggests otherwise:

“Another method of making housing unavailable has been the application or enforcement of otherwise neutral rules and regulations on health, safety, and land–use in a manner which discriminates against people with disabilities. Such discrimination often results from false or overprotective assumptions about the needs of handicapped people, as well as unfounded fears of difficulties about the problems that their tenancies may pose. These and similar practices would be prohibited.”¹⁵

Many states, counties, and cities across the nation continue to base their zoning regulations for community residences on these “unfounded fears.” The 1988 amendments require all levels of government to make a *reasonable accommodation* in their zoning rules and regulations to enable community residences for people with disabilities to locate in the same residential districts as other residential uses.¹⁶

It is well settled that for zoning purposes, a community residence is a residential use, not a business use. The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 specifically invalidates restrictive covenants that would exclude community residences from a residential district. The Fair Housing Act renders these restrictive cove-

14. H.R. Report No. 711, 100th Cong., 2d Sess. 311 (1988), reprinted in 1988 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2173.

15. *Ibid.*

16. 42 U.S.C. §3604(f)(B) (1988).

nants unenforceable against community residences for people with disabilities.¹⁷

Types of community residences

Within the broad category of community residences are two types of living arrangements that warrant slightly different zoning treatments tailored to their specific characteristics:

- ◆ **Family community residences** which include uses commonly known as group homes and those recovery communities and sober living homes that offer a relatively permanent living environment that emulates a biological family;
- ◆ **Transitional community residences** which include such uses commonly known as halfway houses as well as those recovery communities and sober living homes that offer a relatively temporary living environment like a halfway house does.

The label an operator places on a community residence does *not* determine whether it is a family or a transitional community residence. That is ascertained by the relevant performance characteristics of each community residence.

Family community residences

A *family community residence* offers a relatively permanent living arrangement for people with disabilities that emulates a family. They are usually operated under the auspices of an association, corporation, or other legal entity, or the parents or legal guardians of the residents with disabilities. Some, like recovery communities for people in recovery from alcohol and/or drug addiction, are self-governing.

Residence, not treatment, is the home's primary function. *There is no limit to how long an individual can live in a family community residence. Depending on the nature of a specific family community residence, there is an expectation that each resident will live there for as long as each resident needs to live there. Tenancy is measured in years, not months.* Family community residences are most often used to house people with developmental disabilities (mental retardation, autism, etc.), mental illness, physical disabilities including the frail elderly, and individuals in recovery from addiction to alcohol or drugs (legal or illegal) who are *not* currently "using."

Family community residences are often called *group homes* and, in the case of people with alcohol or drug addictions, *recovery communities*, *recovery resi-*

17. H.R. Report No. 711, 100th Cong., 2d Sess. 311 (1988), reprinted in 1988 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2173, 2184. The overwhelming majority of federal and state courts that have addressed the question have concluded that the restrictive covenants of a subdivision and the by-laws of a homeowner or condominium association that exclude businesses or "non-residential uses" do *not* apply to community residences for people with disabilities — even before passage of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

dences, sober living homes, or sober homes.¹⁸ Their key distinction from transitional community residences is that people with disabilities can reside, are expected to reside, and actually do live in a family community residence for a year or longer, not just months or weeks. In a nation where the typical household lives in its home five to seven years, these are long-term, relatively permanent tenancies. There is no limit on how long someone can dwell in a family community residence as long as they obey the rules or do not constitute a danger to others or themselves, or in the case of recovering alcoholics or drug addicts, do not use alcohol or illegal drugs or abuse prescription drugs.

To be successful, a community residence needs to be located in a conventional residential neighborhood so that normalization can take place. The underlying rationale for a community residence is that by placing people with disabilities in as “normal” a living environment as possible, they will be able to develop to their full capacities as individuals and citizens. The atmosphere and aim of a community residence is very much the *opposite* of an institution.

The family community residence emulates a family in most every way. The activities in a family community residence are essentially the same as those in a dwelling occupied by a biologically-related family. Essential life skills are taught, just like we teach our children. Most family community residences provide “habilitative” services for their residents to enable them to develop their life skills to their full capacity. *Habilitation* involves learning life skills for the first time as opposed to *rehabilitation* which involves relearning life skills.

While recovery communities are like group homes in most respects, they tend to engage more in rehabilitation where residents relearn the essential life skills we tend to take for granted, although for some very long-term alcoholics or drug addicts in recovery, they may be learning some of these life skills for the first time. Recovery communities have been referred to as *three-quarter houses* because they are more family-like and permanent than the better known *halfway house* which falls under the *transitional community residence* category.

The original recovery community concept popularized by Oxford House does not limit how long somebody can live in one. In an Oxford House, the residents periodically elect officers who act in a supervisory role much like parents in a biological family while the other residents are like the siblings in a biological family.¹⁹ In a group home and in structured sober living homes, the staff functions in the supervisory parental role.

Recovery communities are essential for people in recovery for whom a sup-

18. For example, those “sober living homes” that limit how long occupants may live there are most accurately characterized as “transitional community residences.” *It is crucial that a jurisdiction evaluates each proposed community residence on how it operates and not on how its operator labels it.*

19. Each Oxford House is subject to the demanding requirements of the Oxford House Charter which includes a monthly financial accounting and at least an annual inspection. This procedure constitutes a functional equivalent of licensing and for the purposes of zoning ordinances, would serve as a proxy for formal licensing or certification.

portive living environment is needed to learn how to maintain sobriety — *before* they can return to their family. Tenancy in a recovery community can last for years in contrast to tenancy in a sober living environment or small halfway house where there is a limit on length of tenancy measured in weeks or months.

Interaction between the people who live in a community residence is essential to achieving normalization. The relationship of a community residence’s inhabitants is much closer than the sort of casual acquaintances that occur between the residents of a boarding or lodging house where interaction between residents is merely incidental. In both family and transitional community residences, the residents share household chores and duties, learn from each other, and provide one another with emotional support — family-like relationships not essential for, nor present in lodging houses, boarding houses, fraternities, sororities, nursing homes, or other institutional uses.

Interaction with neighbors without severe disabilities is an essential component to community residences and one of the reasons planners and the courts long ago recognized the need for them to be located in residential neighborhoods. Their neighbors serve as role models which helps foster the normalization and community integration at the core of community residences.

As was realized a century ago, being segregated away in an institution only teaches people how to live in an institution. It does nothing to facilitate learning the skills needed to be all you can be and live as independently as possible integrated into the community.

For example, filling an apartment building with people in recovery segregates them away with other people in recovery as their neighbors, depriving them of the interaction with sober neighbors that fosters normalization and community integration. Placing recovery residences in a series of adjacent single-family homes or townhouses has the same effect. While these arrangements possess some of the characteristics of community residences, they also possess many institutional characteristics and function more like mini-institutions than the biological family a community residence is supposed to emulate.

As the courts have consistently concluded, community residences foster the same family values that even the most restrictive residential zoning districts promote. Family community residences comply with the purpose statements for each of Pompano Beach zoning district that allows residential uses.

Even before passage of the 1988 amendments to the Fair Housing Act, most courts concluded that family community residences for people with disabilities must be allowed as of right in all residential zones. Under the Fair Housing Act, a city can require a spacing distance between community residences and a license of community residences allowed as permitted uses when the number of residents in a proposed community residences exceeds the cap on unrelated occupants in the city’s zoning code definition of “family.”

Table 1 illustrates the many functional differences between community residences for people with disabilities, institutional uses, and lodging or boarding houses.

Table 2: Differences Between Community Residences, Institutional Uses, and Rooming or Boarding Houses

Differences Between Community Residences, Institutional Uses, and Rooming or Boarding Houses			
Characteristic	Community Residence for People With Disabilities	Institutional Uses (Including Nursing Homes)	Rooming or Boarding House
Proper Environment	Residential Home-like	Institutional Hospital-like	Residential Hotel-like
Appropriate Zoning Districts	Single-family residential Multiple-family in limited instances	Commercial, medical, institutional	Multiple-family residential
Relationship of Residents	Single housekeeping unit emulating a biological family Sibling-like relationships essential	Relationships not planned nor essential Incidental friendships may develop	No dependency on other residents Incidental friendships may develop Relationships not planned nor essential
Supervision	Staff in the role of the parents; officers in self-governed homes in role of parents	Total staff supervision	Landlord-tenant relationship
Values	Family values	None	None
Purpose	Achieve normalization and community integration Habilitation or rehabilitation	No effort to achieve normalization or community integration	No effort to achieve normalization, community integration, habilitation or rehabilitation
Relationship to Neighbors On the Block	Interaction with neighbors is an essential component of normalization and community integration; neighbors without disabilities serve as role models to foster normalization and	Interaction with neighbors not facilitated; use is largely self-contained. Neighbors have no role related to the occupants of the institutional use	Interaction with neighbors is hit or miss
Residential Integration	Integration with the surrounding community is essential in contrast to the segregation of living in an institution surrounded by people with the same disability	Essentially segregated from the surrounding community such that immediate neighbors are people with the same disability	Not applicable
Primary Functions	Emulate a biological family Provides support in a family-like residential Share family and household tasks Educate residents in areas in which parents normally educate their children: Personal health and hygiene Eating habits Dressing/clothing care Household duties and chores House maintenance House safety Developing social and interpersonal skills Developing shopping skills Developing public behavior skills Developing recreational skills Using public transportation Use and value of money Using public facilities (stores, restaurants, theaters, recreational facilities, banks)	Provide medical treatment and institutional care No family-like living; not a residential nature No family tasks; patients are cared for No educational role	Lodging for unrelated individuals Residents are completely independent of each other Residents do not share household tasks; each boarder functions as an individual; no attempt to emulate a biological family No educational role

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Transitional community residences

In contrast to the group homes and recovery communities that fit in the category of family community residences, *transitional community residences* are a comparatively temporary living arrangement that is more transitory than a group home or recovery community and a bit less family-like. Residency is measured in weeks or months, not years. A recovery community or sober living residence that imposes a limit on how long someone can live there exhibits the performance characteristics of a transitional community residence, much like

the better known small halfway house.²⁰

Typical of the people with disabilities who need a temporary living arrangement like a halfway house are people with mental illness who leave an institution and need only a relatively short stay in a halfway house before moving to a less restrictive living environment. Similarly, people recovering from addictions to alcohol or drugs move to a halfway house, short-term recovery community, or sober living home following detoxification in an institution until they are capable of living in a relatively permanent long-term recovery community or other less restrictive environment.

Halfway houses are also used for prison pre-parolees. *However, such individuals are not, as a class, people with disabilities.* Zoning can be more restrictive for halfway houses for people *not* covered by the Fair Housing Act. Consequently zoning codes can and should treat halfway houses for prison pre-parolees or other populations not covered by the Fair Housing Act differently than classes that the Fair Housing Act protects.

The community residences for people with disabilities that limit the length of tenancy are residential uses that need to locate in residential neighborhoods if they are to succeed. But since they do not emulate a family as closely as a more permanent group home or recovery residence does, and the length of tenancy is relatively temporary, it is likely that a jurisdiction can require a special exception for them in single-family districts while allowing them as a permitted use in multiple family districts subject to the two requisite conditions explained later in this report. *However, it is important to remember that a special use permit — a special exception in Pompano Beach’s zoning*

Federal “Direct threat” exclusion

Individuals with disabilities who “constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of others” are not covered by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988. 42 U.S.C. § 3602(f)(9) (1988). Consequently, municipal ordinances that prohibit such individuals from living in community residences do not run afoul of the Fair Housing Act.

Florida “Direct threat” exclusion

“Nothing in this section shall permit persons to occupy a community residential home who would constitute a direct threat to the health and safety of other persons or whose residency would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others.” *Florida Statutes* §419.001 (10) (2016). This prohibition which applies to homes the state licenses is equivalent to the Fair Housing Act’s exclusion for people who constitute a direct threat.

20. As used in this study, the term “halfway house” refers to the original halfway house concept that is small enough to emulate a biological family; not to the large halfway houses occupied by 20, 50, or 100+ people. The latter are mini-institutions and *not* residential uses. Consequently, sound zoning principles call for them to be located in commercial or institutional zoning districts. A residential neighborhood is not essential for them to function successfully.

code — cannot be denied on the basis of neighborhood opposition rooted in unfounded myths and misconceptions about the residents with disabilities of a proposed transitional community residence.²¹

Rational bases for regulating community residences

Community residences have probably been studied more than any other small land use. To understand the rationale for the guidelines to regulate community residences that are suggested in this report, it is vital to review what is known about community residences, including their appropriate location, number of residents needed to succeed both therapeutically and financially, means of protecting their vulnerable populations from mistreatment or neglect as well as excluding dangerous individuals from living in them, and their impacts, if any, on the surrounding community.

Relative location of community residences. For at least 40 years, researchers have found that some community residence operators will locate their community residences close to other community residences, especially when zoning does not allow community residences for people with disabilities as of right in all residential districts. They tend to be clustered in a community's lower cost or older neighborhoods and in areas around colleges.²² In every jurisdiction for which Planning/Communications has conducted an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, there was clustering or concentrations of community residences when the zoning did *not* require a rationally-based spacing distance between community residences allowed as of right. As discussed below, counterproductive clustering of community residences has developed in quite a few blocks and neighborhoods in Pompano Beach.

Why clustering is counterproductive. Placing community residences too

21. Note that the proposed definitions of “community residence,” “family community residence,” and “transitional community residence” all speak of a family-like living environment. These definitions *exclude* the large institutional facilities for many more occupants that are often called “halfway houses.”

The city's current zoning treatment of those large facilities will remain unchanged. The proposed zoning, however, will provide for an administrative “reasonable accommodation” process under which the operator of a proposed “community residence” for more than ten individuals with disabilities can seek zoning approval if it can prove therapeutic and/or financial need for more than ten residents and demonstrate that the home will emulate a biological family. Spacing and licensing/certification requirements would still apply.

22. See General Accounting Office, *Analysis of Zoning and Other Problems Affecting the Establishment of Group Homes for the Mentally Disabled* (August 17, 1983) 19. This comprehensive study found that 36.2 percent of the group homes for people with developmental disabilities surveyed were located within two blocks of another community residence or an institutional use. Also see Daniel Lauber and Frank Bangs, Jr., *Zoning for Family and Group Care Facilities*, American Society of Planning Officials Planning Advisory Service Report No. 300 (1974) at 14; and *Family Style of St. Paul, Inc., v. City of St. Paul*, 923 F.2d 91 (8th Cir. 1991) where 21 group homes that housed 130 people with mental illness were established on just two blocks.

close to each other can create a *de facto* social service district and can seriously hinder their ability to achieve normalization for their residents — one of the core foundations on which the concept of community residences is based. In today's society, people tend to get to know nearby neighbors on their block within a few doors of their home (unless they have children together in school or engage in walking, jogging, or other neighborhood activities). The underlying precepts of community residences expect neighbors who live close to a community residence to serve as role models to the occupants of a community residence — which requires interacting with them.

For normalization to occur, it is essential that community residence residents have such so-called “able-bodied” neighbors as role models. But if another community residence is opened very close to an existing group home — such as next door or within a few doors of it — the residents of the new home may replace the “able-bodied” role models with other people with disabilities and quite possibly hamper the normalization efforts of the existing community residence. Clustering three or more community residences on the same block not only undermines normalization but could inadvertently lead to a *de facto* social service district that alters the residential character of the neighborhood. All the evidence recorded to date shows that one or two nonadjacent community residences for people with disabilities on a block do *not* alter the residential character of a neighborhood.²³

The research strongly suggests that as long as several community residences are not clustered on the same block face they will not generate these adverse impacts. Consequently, *when community residences are allowed as a permitted use*, it is most reasonable to impose a spacing distance between community residences that keeps them about a block apart in terms of actual walking distance, generally about 660 feet.²⁴ It is also reasonable to not allow another community residence to locate adjacent to an existing community residence *as a permitted use*. But there are times when locating another community residence within the spacing distance of an existing community residence will not interfere with normalization or commu-

23. See General Accounting Office, *Analysis of Zoning and Other Problems Affecting the Establishment of Group Homes for the Mentally Disabled* 27 (August 17, 1983).

24. Some cities and counties establish a different spacing distance between community residences allowed as of right based on the density of the zoning district. The denser the district, the shorter the spacing distance. See Peter Nataralli, *Zoning for a New Kind of Family* 17 (Westchester County Department of Planning, Occasional Paper 5, 1976) where spacing distances vary by the number of persons per square mile. The spacing distance in Clark County, Nevada reduces the 660-foot spacing distance to 100 feet when there is a street, freeway, or drainage channel wider than 99 feet between community residences. See Table 30.44-1, *Clark County Code*, Section 4. Title 30, Chapter 30.44. Also see *An Ordinance Amending Title 6 of the Village of Lincolnshire Village Code (Community Residential Homes)*, Ordinance No. 90-1182-66, adopted December 10, 1990, Lincolnshire, Illinois, which established spacing distances ranging from 500 to 1,500 feet between community residences depending on the zoning district. Lincolnshire has some zoning districts with extremely large minimum lot sizes greater than an acre. Probably due to the complexity involved, very few jurisdictions establish different spacing distances in different zoning districts. Most use the same spacing distance throughout the city or county.

nity integration. Proposals to locate another community residence so close to an existing one warrant the case-by-case consideration.

If the operator of a proposed community residence wishes to locate it within the spacing distance, then the heightened scrutiny of a special use permit is warranted. The special use permit process allows a jurisdiction to evaluate the cumulative effect of locating so close to an existing community residence and whether the proposed community residence would interfere with normalization at the existing community residence or alter the character of the neighborhood. For example, if there is a geographic feature such as a freeway, drainage channel, or hill between the proposed and existing community residences that acts as a barrier between the two, it is unlikely that allowing the proposed community residence would interfere with normalization or alter the community's character — and the special use permit should be granted.

There are several schools of thought on the most appropriate way to measure a spacing distance. They measure from the lot line nearest the existing community residence that is closest to a proposed community residence. One school of thought calls for measuring along the public or private pedestrian right of way. The idea is to measure the actual distance people would have to walk to go from one community residence to another, as opposed to measuring as the crow flies. This approach works when a jurisdiction does not contain any “superblocks,” namely blocks that are substantially lengthier than the typical American urban block of 660 feet. The greater length of a superblock — twice that of a typical block — would facilitate the creation of concentrations by enabling a community residence to locate back to back or lot corner to lot corner with an existing community residence as of right — one of the scenarios that spacing distances seek to prevent from happening. Using the right of way system would render the zoning approach suggested here inoperable due to the presence of a significant number of superblocks in Pompano Beach.

The other school of thought holds that the spacing distance should be measured from the closest lot lines of the existing community residence and the proposed community residence. This method establishes a predictable radius around existing community residences that can quickly be measured using a jurisdiction's geographic information system. Even with superblocks, this approach would preclude a new community residence from locating back to back or lot corner to lot corner with an existing community residence as of right. It is the more appropriate approach to use in Pompano Beach and most other jurisdictions.

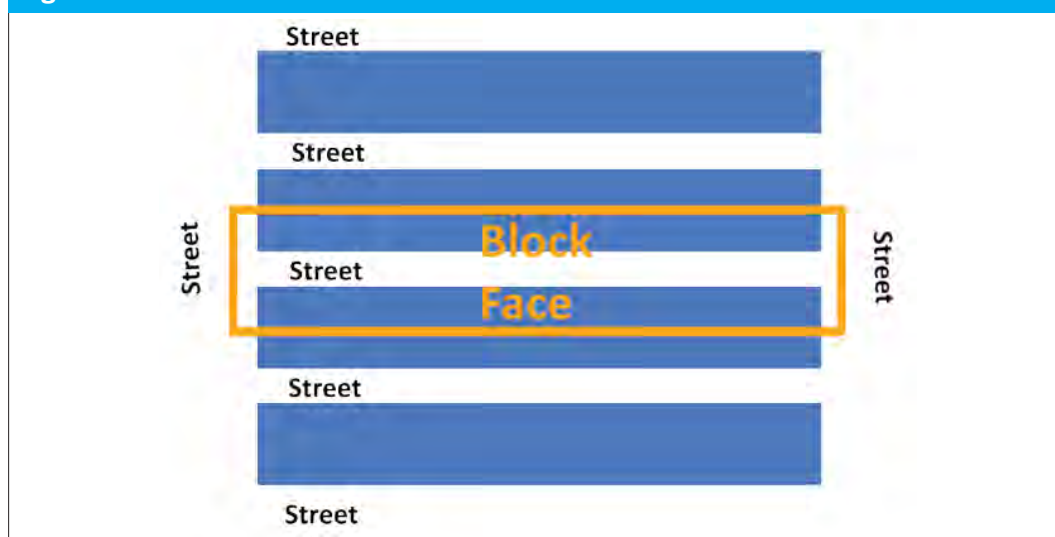
Whichever approach is used, it is necessary for the operator of every proposed community residence to complete a “Community Residence Zoning Application” form that is recommended for Pompano Beach to use so the city can measure spacing distances from existing community residences and implement its zoning provisions for community residences. The city should also maintain a confidential database and map²⁵ of the locations of all existing community residences so it can

25. Confidentiality is recommended because it is possible that releasing the actual addresses of community residences *could* violate privacy laws. City attorneys will need to determine how this

apply the spacing distance to any proposed community residence.²⁶

The technical explanation. Normalization and community integration require that persons with disabilities substantial enough to need a supportive living arrangement like a community residence be absorbed into the neighborhood's social structure. Generally speaking, the existing social structure of a neighborhood can accommodate no more than one or two community residences on a single block face. Neighborhoods seem to have a limited absorption capacity for service-dependent people that should not be exceeded.²⁷

Figure 3: Block Face Illustrated



The area within the orange rectangle is a “block face.”

Social scientists note that this capacity level exists, but an absolute, precise level cannot be identified. Writing about service-dependent populations in gen-

concern over privacy interacts with the requirements of Florida's public record laws. The proposed zoning approach, however, cannot be implemented without maintaining the recommended database and map.

26. It is critical to note that when the number of occupants of a community residence falls within the zoning code's cap on unrelated individuals permitted in the city's definition of “family,” “household,” or “single housekeeping unit,” the *zoning ordinance* must always treat the community residence as a “family” or “household” — to do otherwise would constitute discrimination on its face in violation of the Fair Housing Act. In Pompano Beach, the cap on unrelated individuals is three. Such homes *cannot* be used to calculate spacing distances for *zoning* purposes. Spacing distances are applicable only to community residences for people with disabilities that exceed the cap on unrelated people in the definition of “family,” “household,” or “single housekeeping unit.” This principle is most clearly enunciated in *United States v. City of Chicago Heights*, 161 F. Supp. 2d 819 (N.D. Ill. 2001). *Also see* Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, *State and Local Land Use Laws and Practices and the Application of the Fair Housing Act* (Nov. 10, 2016) 10–12.
27. Kurt Wehbring, *Alternative Residential Facilities for the Mentally Retarded and Mentally Ill* 14 (no date) (mimeographed).

eral, Jennifer Wolch notes, “At some level of concentration, a community may become saturated by services and populations and evolve into a service–dependent ghetto.”²⁸

According to one leading planning study, “While it is difficult to precisely identify or explain, ‘saturation’ is the point at which a community’s existing social structure is unable to properly support additional residential care facilities [community residences]. Overconcentration is not a constant but varies according to a community’s population density, socio–economic level, quantity and quality of municipal services and other characteristics.” There are no universally accepted criteria for determining how many community residences are appropriate for a given area.²⁹

This research strongly suggests that there is a legitimate government interest to assure that community residences do not cluster. While the research on the impact of community residences makes it abundantly clear that two community residences separated by at least several other houses on a block produce no negative impacts, there is very credible concern that community residences located more closely together on the same block — or more than two on a block — can generate adverse impacts on both the surrounding neighborhood and on the ability of the community residences to facilitate the normalization of their residents, which is, after all, their *raison d’être*.

Limitations on number of unrelated residents. The majority view of the courts, both before and after enactment of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, is that community residences constitute a functional family and that zoning should treat the occupants of a community residence as a “family” *even if the community residence does not fit within a jurisdiction’s zoning code’s definition of family.*

At first glance, that approach appears to fly in the face of a 1974 Supreme Court ruling that allows cities and counties to limit the number of unrelated people that constitutes a “family” or “household.” Zoning ordinances typically define “family” or “household” as (1) any number of related individuals and (2) a limited number of unrelated persons living together as a single housekeeping unit. As explained in the paragraphs that follow, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a local zoning code’s definition of “family” can place this cap on the number of unrelated persons living together as a single housekeeping unit.³⁰ *But the Fair Housing Act requires jurisdictions to make a reasonable accommodation for community residences for people with disabilities by making narrow exceptions to these caps on the number of unrelated people living together that qualify as a “family” or “household.”*

28. Jennifer Wolch, “Residential Location of the Service–Dependent Poor,” 70 *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, at 330, 332 (Sept. 1982).

29. S. Hettinger, *A Place They Call Home: Planning for Residential Care Facilities* 43 (Westchester County Department of Planning 1983). See also D. Lauber and F. Bangs, Jr., *Zoning for Family and Group Care Facilities* at 25.

30. *Belle Terre v. Borass*, 416 U.S. 1 (1974).

In *Belle Terre*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the resort community’s zoning definition of “family” that permitted no more than two unrelated persons to live together. It’s hard to quarrel with the Court’s concern that the specter of “boarding housing, fraternity houses, and the like” would pose a threat to establishing a “quiet place where yards are wide, people few, and motor vehicles restricted.... These are legitimate guidelines in a land–use project addressed to family needs....”³¹ Unlike the six sociology students who rented a house during summer vacation in Belle Terre, Long Island, a community residence emulates a family, is not a home for transients, and is very much the antithesis of an institution. In fact, community residences for people with disabilities foster the same goals that zoning districts and the U.S. Supreme Court attribute to single–family zoning.

One of the first community residence court decisions to distinguish *Belle Terre* clearly explained the difference between community residences and other group living arrangements like boarding houses. In *City of White Plains v. Ferraioli*,³² New York’s highest court refused to enforce the city’s definition of “family” against a community residence for abandoned and neglected children. The city’s definition limited occupancy of single–family dwellings to related individuals. The court found that it “is significant that the group home is structured as a single housekeeping unit and is, to all outward appearances, a relatively normal, stable, and permanent family unit....”³³

Moreover, the court found that:

“The group home is not, for purposes of a zoning ordinance, a temporary living arrangement as would be a group of college students sharing a house and commuting to a nearby school. (c.f., *Village of Belle Terre v. Boraas*, [citation omitted]). Every year or so, different college students would come to take the place of those before them. There would be none of the permanency of community that characterizes a residential neighborhood of private homes. Nor is it like the so–called ‘commune’ style of living. *The group home is a permanent arrangement and akin to the traditional family, which also may be sundered by death, divorce, or emancipation of the young.... The purpose is to emulate the traditional family and not to introduce a different ‘life style.’*”³⁴

The New York Court of Appeals explained that the group home does not conflict with the character of the single–family neighborhood that *Belle Terre* sought to protect, “and, indeed, is deliberately designed to conform with it.”³⁵

31. *Ibid.* at 7–9.

32. 313 N.E.2d 756 (N.Y. 1974).

33. *Ibid.* at 758–759.

34. *Ibid.* at 758 [citation omitted]. *Emphasis added.*

35. *Ibid.*

In *Moore v. City of East Cleveland*,³⁶ Justice Stevens favorably cited *White Plains* in his concurring opinion. He specifically referred to the New York Court of Appeals' language:

“Zoning is intended to control types of housing and living and not the genetic or intimate internal family relations of human beings. So long as the group home bears the generic character of a family unit as a *relatively permanent household*, and is not a framework for transients or transient living, it conforms to the purpose of the ordinance.”³⁷

Justice Stevens' focus on *White Plains* echoes the sentiments of New York Chief Justice Breitel who concluded that “the purpose of the group home is to be quite the contrary of an institution and to be a home like other homes.”³⁸

Since 1974, the vast majority of state and federal courts have followed the lead of *City of White Plains v. Ferraioli* and treated community residences as “functional families” that should be allowed in single-family zoning districts despite zoning ordinance definitions of “family” that place a cap on the number of unrelated residents in a dwelling unit. In a very real sense, the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 essentially codifies the majority judicial treatment of zoning ordinance definitions with “capped” definitions of “family.”

Pompano Beach's definition of “family” allows a single housekeeping unit of up to three unrelated people to live together. The full definition reads:³⁹

An individual or two or more persons related by blood, marriage, state-approved foster home placement, or court-approved adoption — or up to three unrelated persons — that constitute a single housekeeping unit.

Any community residence for people with disabilities that would house more than the three unrelated individuals allowed under Pompano Beach's definition of “family” is entitled to a “reasonable accommodation” which is the regulatory landscape this study proposes for Pompano Beach's Zoning Code within the precepts of the nation's Fair Housing Act.

However, as explained below, *no matter what cap a city's zoning ordinance places on the number of unrelated individuals that constitutes a “family,” the city code provisions applicable to all rental residential uses determines the maximum number of people that can occupy any type of rental residence.*⁴⁰ Since the occu-

36. 431 U.S. 494 (1977) at 517 n. 9.

37. *Ibid.* *Emphasis added.*

38. *City of White Plains v. Ferraioli*, 313 N.E. 2d at 758.

39. *City of Pompano Beach, Florida, Land Usage Code*, Chapter 155, “Zoning,” Article 9, Part 5 “Terms and Definitions.”

40. Pompano Beach has adopted the *Rental Housing Code* which serves as the “Minimum Housing Code” of the City of Pompano Beach for the purposes provided for in the *Florida Building Code*. The *Rental Housing Code* requires every room used for sleeping purposes to have a gross floor

pants of community residences are effectively tenants, community residences constitute a rental use subject to the same Rental Housing Code as all other rentals in Pompano Beach.

The U.S. Supreme Court brought this point home in its 1995 decision in *City of Edmonds v. Oxford House*.⁴¹ The Court ruled that housing codes that “ordinarily apply uniformly to all residents of all dwelling units ... to protect health and safety by preventing dwelling overcrowding” are legal.⁴² Zoning ordinance restrictions that focus on the “composition of households rather than on the total number of occupants living quarters can contain” are subject to the Fair Housing Act.⁴³

As the discussion above implies, classifying community residences on the basis of the number of residents is inappropriate. A more appropriate and rational approach is proposed beginning on page 36 of this report.

Protecting the residents. People with disabilities who live in community residences constitute a vulnerable population that needs protection from possible abuse and exploitation. Community residences for these vulnerable individuals need to be regulated to assure that their residents receive adequate care and supervision. Licensing and certification are the regulatory vehicles used to assure adequate care and supervision.⁴⁴ Florida, like many other states, has not established licensing or certification for some populations with disabilities that community residences serve. In these situations, certification by an appropriate national certifying organization or agency that is more than simply a trade group can be used in lieu of formal licensing. Licensing or certification also tends to exclude from community residences people who pose a danger to others, themselves, or property. As noted earlier, such people are *not* covered by the Fair Housing Act.

Therefore, there is a legitimate government interest in requiring that a community residence or its operator be licensed in order to be allowed as of right as a permitted use. If state licensing does not exist for a particular type of community residence, the residence can meet the certification of an appropriate national certifying agency, if one exists, or is otherwise sanctioned by the federal or state government.⁴⁵ Florida law appears to allow a city or county to establish

area of at least 70 square feet. A room in which more than one person sleeps must have at least 50 square feet for each occupant. *Pompano Beach, Florida Code of Ordinances*, §153.23.

41. 514 U.S. 725, 115 S.Ct. 1776, 131 L.Ed.2d 801 (1995).

42. *Ibid.* at 1781[*emphasis added*]. See the discussion of minimum floor area requirements beginning on page 18.

43. *Ibid.* at 1782.

44. Any local or state licensing must be consistent with the Fair Housing Act. Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice, *State and Local Land Use Laws and Practices and the Application of the Fair Housing Act* (Nov. 10, 2016) 13.

45. For example, the U.S. Congress has recognized and sanctioned the recovery communities that operate under the auspices of Oxford House. Oxford House maintains its own procedures and

its own licensing requirements for community residences not covered by state licensing. If there is no governmental or quasi-governmental body that requires licensing or certification for a particular type of community residence and no level of government has sanctioned it, then the heightened scrutiny of a special exception is warranted so the city can make sure that the residents of a proposed community residence are protected.

The State of Florida does not *require* licensing or certification of recovery residences. Instead, in 2015, the state established *voluntary certification* for recovery residences.⁴⁶ The state statute required the state's Department of Children and Family Services to approve at least one credentialing entity by December 1, 2015.⁴⁷ The department named the Florida Association of Recovery Residences as a credentialing entity. As §397.487 mandates, the association promulgates and administers requirements for certifying recovery residences and established procedures for the application, certification, recertification, and disciplinary processes. It has established a monitoring and inspection compliance process, developed a code of ethics, and provided for training for owners, managers, and staff.⁴⁸

As the state statute requires, the operator of a proposed recovery residence must submit with its application and fee a policy and procedures manual that includes job descriptions for all staff positions; drug-testing requirements and procedures; a prohibition of alcohol, illegal drugs, and using somebody else's prescription medications; policies that support recovery efforts; and a good neighbor policy.⁴⁹ Each certified recovery residence must be inspected at least once a year for compliance. The certification process allows for issuance of provisional certification so the home can open. Actual certification is issued only after the home has been inspected and residents and staff interviewed after the home has been in actual operation for a specific length of time.

The requirements of Florida's voluntary certification process and standards for recovery residences are comparable to the state's existing licensing processes and standards for community residences that serve other populations of people with disabilities.

Impacts of community residences. The impacts of community residences have been studied more than those of any other small land use. Over 50 statistically-valid studies have found that licensed community residences *not clus-*

staff to inspect and monitor individual Oxford Houses to enforce the organization's strict charter and standards designed to protect the residents of each Oxford House and foster community integration and positive relations with its neighbors. An Oxford House can lose its authorization if found in violation of the Oxford House Charter. The charter and inspections are the functional equivalent of licensing or certification.

46. *Florida State Statutes*, §397.487 (2016).

47. *Ibid.* at §397.487(2).

48. *Ibid.* The standards that the Florida Association of Recovery Residences adopted are based on the nationally-accepted standards of the National Alliance of Recovery Residences.

49. *Ibid.* at §397.487(3).

tered on a block face do not generate adverse impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. They do not affect property values, nor the ability to sell even the houses adjacent to them. They do not affect neighborhood safety nor neighborhood character — *as long as they are licensed and not clustered on a block face*. They do not create excessive demand on public utilities, sewer systems, water supply, street capacity, or parking. They do not produce any more noise than a conventional family of the same size. All told, *licensed, unclustered* group homes, recovery communities, and small halfway houses have consistently been found to be as good a neighbor as biological families.

Clustering community residences only undermines their ability to achieve their core goals of normalization and community integration. A community residence needs to be surrounded by so-called “normal” or conventional households, the sort of households this living arrangement seeks to emulate. Clustering community residences adjacent to one another or within a few doors of each other increases the chances that their residents will interact with other service-dependent people living in a nearby community residence rather than conventional households with non-service dependent people who, under the theory and practice that provide the foundation for the community residence concept, are to serve as role models.

Appendix A is an annotated bibliography of representative studies. The evidence is so overwhelming that few studies have been conducted in recent years since the issue is well settled: *Community residences that are licensed and not clustered on a block face do not generate adverse impacts on the surrounding community*.

Clustering and *de facto* social service districts

Development Services Department staff at the City Pompano Beach have compiled the following maps that show two categories of community residences for people with disabilities:

- ① **“Licensed Community Residences”** which are community residences for people with disabilities that have been either (1) certified under the Florida state statute establishing voluntary certification of recovery residences: Title XXIX Public Health, chapter 397 (Substance Abuse Services) §397.487 (2016) or (2) licensed under Title XXIX Public Health, chapters 393 (Developmental Disabilities), 394 (Mental Health), 397 (Substance Abuse Services), 419 (Community Residential Homes); Title XXX, chapters 429 (Assisted Care Communities — Part 1: Assisted Living Facilities, Part II: Adult Family-Care Homes); and Title XLIV, Chapter 760 (Discrimination in the Treatment of Persons; Minority Representation) (2016).
- ② **“Confirmed Community Residences”** are locations that the Broward County Sheriff’s Department has concluded are operating as a recovery residence. These are recovery residences that have not applied for state certification issued through the Florida Association of Recovery Residences and that have not obtained the required zoning approval or reasonable accommodation. In each instance, the Sheriff’s

Department has conducted a site visit which either found signage indicating the site is a recovery residence or received a verbal confirmation from the owner or an occupant of the home that is it operating as a recovery residence.

- 3 **“Unconfirmed Community Residences”** are locations where the Broward County Sheriff’s Department has reason to conclude that a recovery residence is operating, but has not yet confirmed it. These, too, are recovery residences that have not applied for state certification issued through the Florida Association of Recovery Residences and that have not obtained the required zoning approval or reasonable accommodation. The Sheriff’s Department concluded that these sites — many of which were the subject of a phone call made to Code Compliance or the Sheriff’s Department — are likely to be operating as recovery residences based on field observations that suggest use as a recovery residence: large multi-passenger commercial vans routinely parked at the property or loading/unloading groups of passengers from the property; “no trespassing” signs used to keep drug dealers away from the home; commercial-style warnings that unauthorized vehicles will be towed; numerous vehicles parked on the lawn or overflow parking on the street; and significantly greater amounts of litter including cigarette butts and soda cans on the front lawn than would be expected from a biological family of comparable size. Language on official forms filed with the city also suggests that some of these sites are operating as recovery residences.

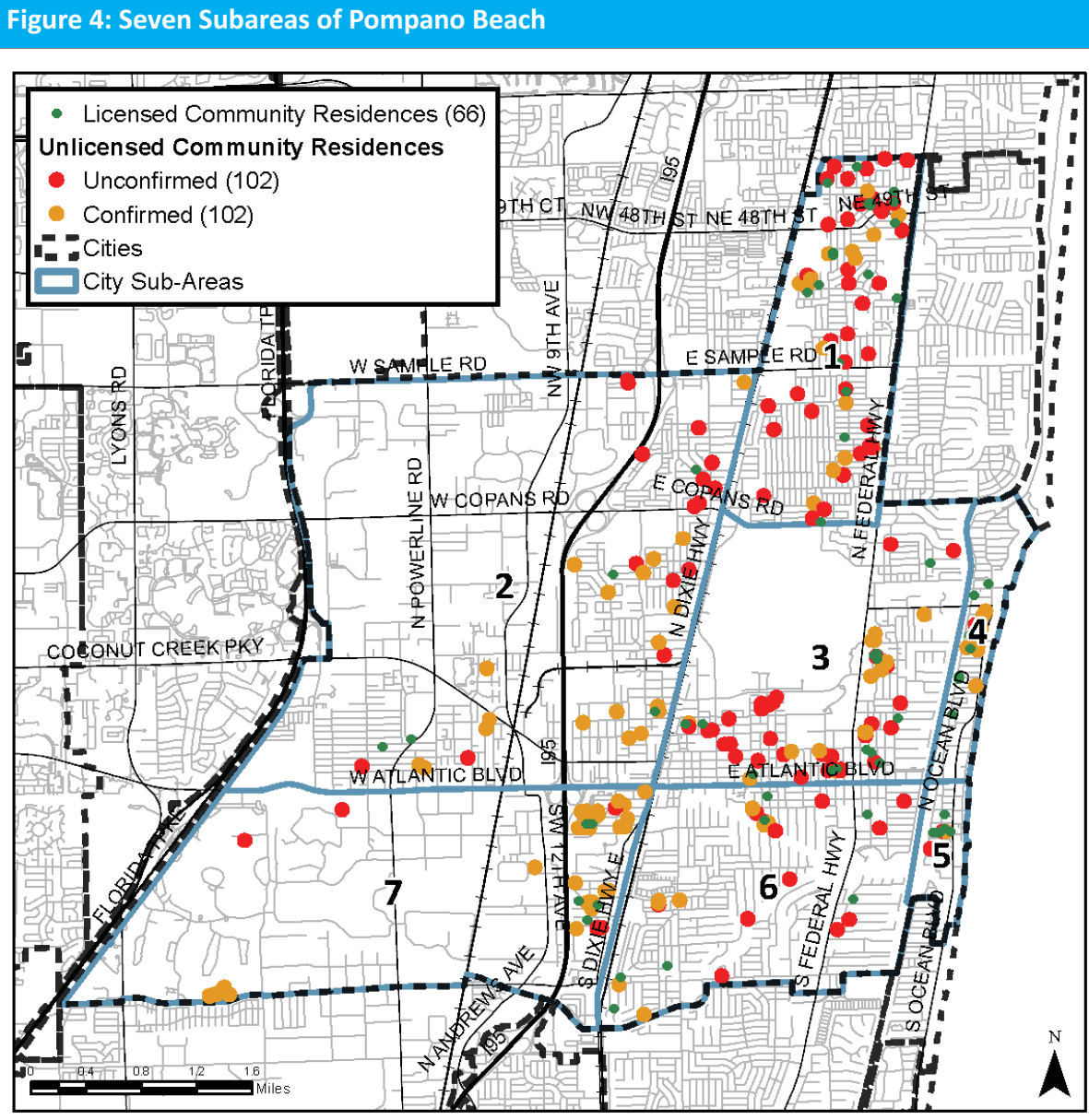
To facilitate analysis, the maps divide the city into seven subareas as shown in the map below. The maps that follow show the relative locations of community residences for people with disabilities in each of the seven subareas based on licensing or certification information or are a suspected, but unconfirmed location.

As shown in the legend of the citywide map on page 25, Pompano Beach has verified the existence of 66 certified or licensed community residences for people with disabilities within its borders. In addition, there appear to be 102 locations that the Broward County Sheriff has confirmed are recovery residences as well as another 102 locations thought to be recovery residences, but not confirmed as such. These are unusually large numbers for a community the size of Pompano Beach with an estimated 109,000 residents in 2016.

The city is aware of at least nine “recovery residences” in Pompano Beach located in multifamily buildings where the operators place up to three individuals in an apartment. One operator has set up four apartments housing a total of 24 people in each of four buildings on the same block — for a total of 96 people in recovery in the four buildings.

Another operator has placed 168 people in recovery on the same block. Still another operator has filled 28 apartments with 58 people in recovery at the same address. Another has placed 29 people in recovery in six apartments in the same building. At least four others have placed ten to 18 people in recovery in three to eight dwelling units in a building.

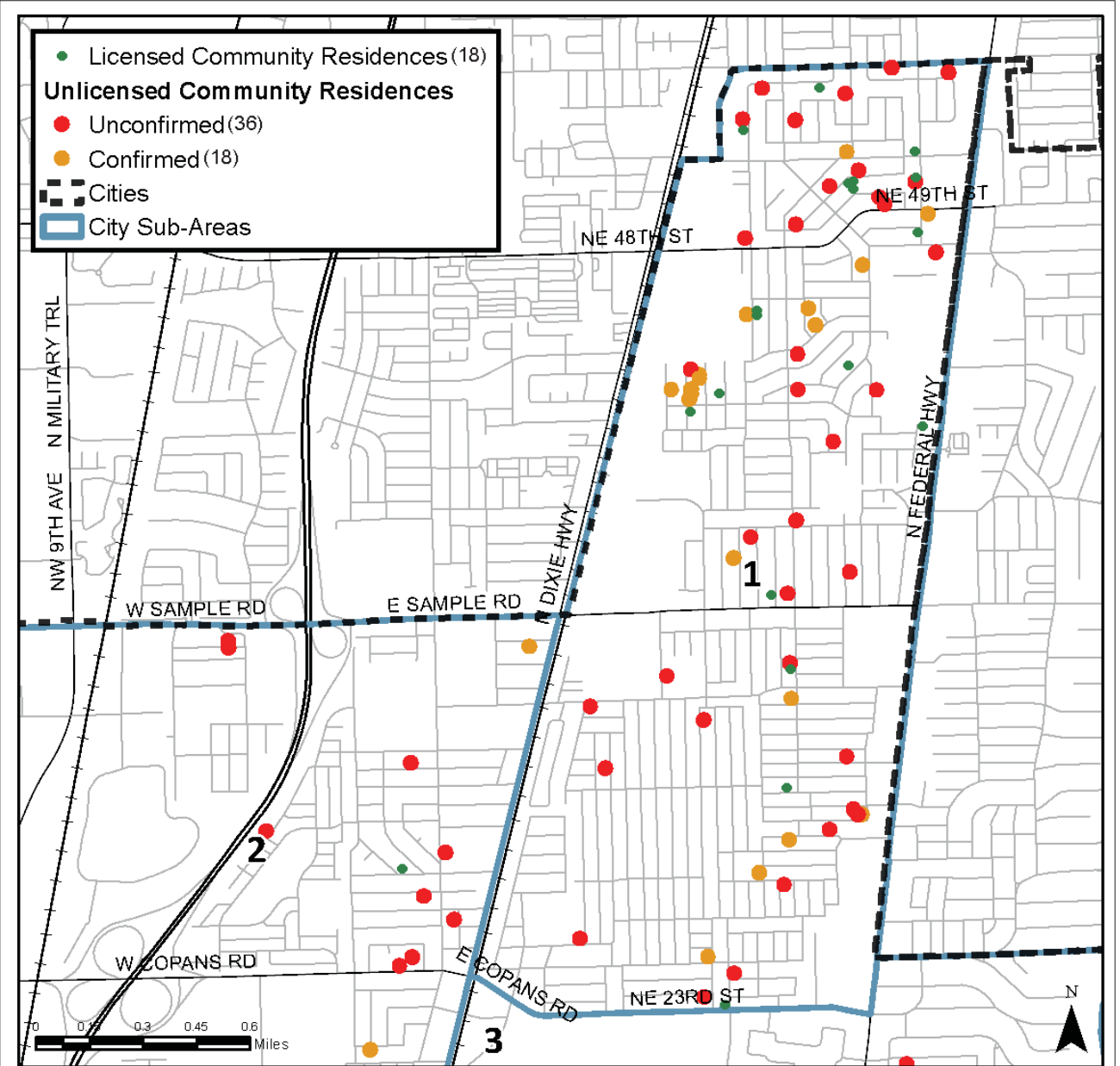
These kinds of *de facto* social service districts fall far outside the foundations upon which the courts have long based their decisions to treat community residences as residential uses including emulating a biological family and utilizing nearby neighbors without disabilities as role models to help achieve normalization as well as participation in the nondisabled community to achieve community integration.



Source: City of Pompano Beach, Florida, November 2017.

The above map shows the relative locations of the seven subareas in the maps that follow as well as an overview of where community residences are currently located in Pompano Beach.

Figure 5: Locations of Known and Unconfirmed Community Residences for People With Disabilities in Subarea 1, Highlands, Cresthaven in August 2017



Source: City of Pompano Beach, Florida, November 2017.

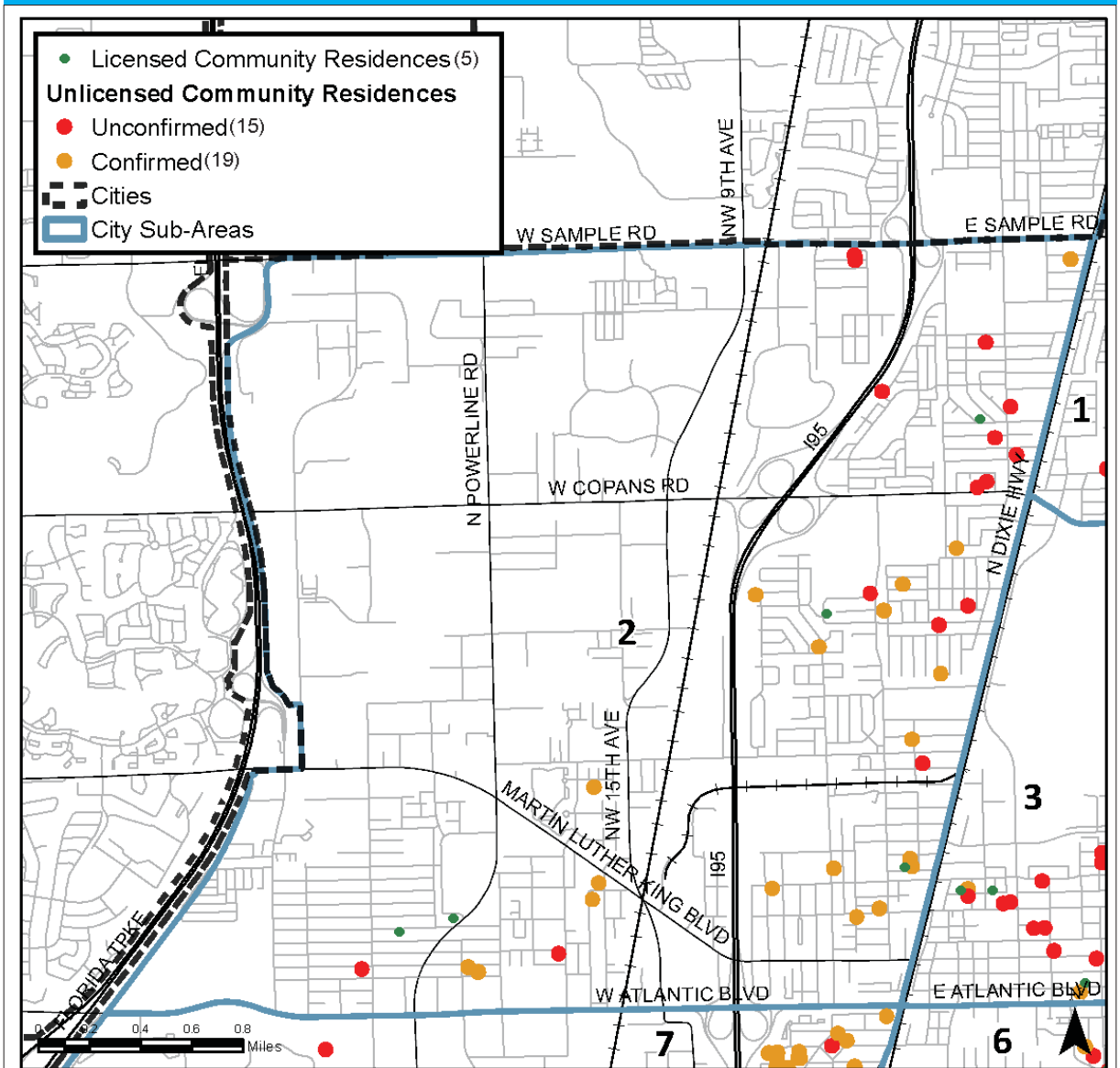
Figure 5 above shows at least two clusters of community residences in the Highlands, Cresthaven Subarea. One cluster of more than 20 community residences runs from the north border of the subarea to two blocks south of NE 49th Street between Dixie Highway and North Federal Highway. The concentration is particularly intense close to NE 49th Street where it appears that a *de facto* social service district may be developing.

An intense concentration of seven community residences appears about two blocks south of NE 48th Street and just east of Dixie Highway — very possibly

already a *de facto* social service district.

While other community residences are pretty well scattered in the rest of the subarea, there are a few areas in what could be the early stages of clustering if additional community residences were to locate within a few doors or a block of existing community residences.

Figure 6: Locations of Known and Unconfirmed Community Residences for People With Disabilities in Subarea 2, Northwest Pompano Beach, as of August 2017

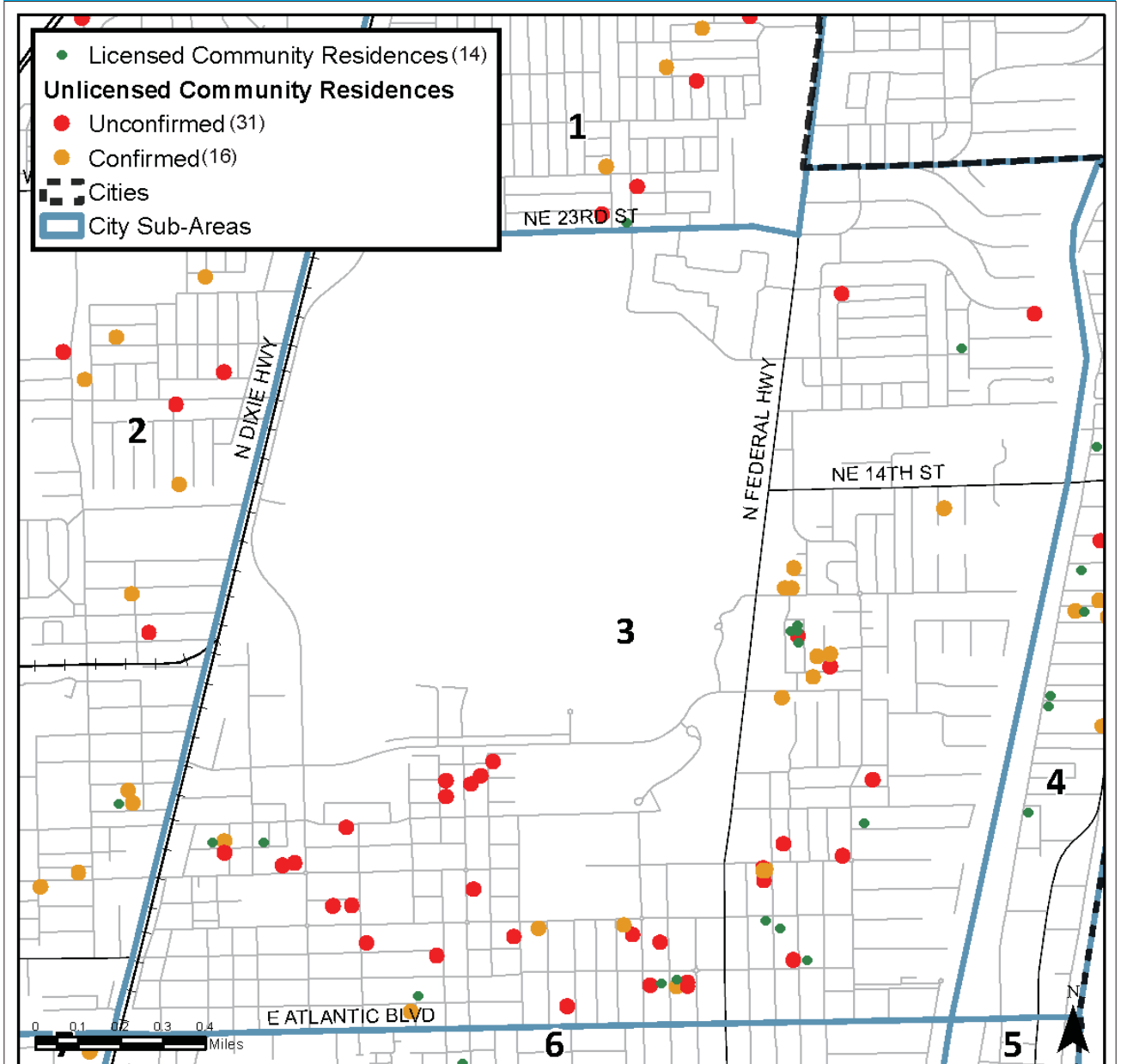


Source: City of Pompano Beach, Florida, November 2017.

The sort of clustering and concentrations in Subarea 1 is not present in Northwest Pompano. There is one instance of two community residences very close to each other and another with three very close to each other. There are a

small number of other community residences located within a block of each other, but most community residences are pretty scattered in Subarea 2.

Figure 7: Locations of Known and Unconfirmed Community Residences for People With Disabilities in Subarea 3, Northeast Pompano Beach, as of August 2017



Source: City of Pompano Beach, Florida, November 2017.

As shown in Figure 7 above, many of the community residences in Northeast Pompano Beach are clustered together on a block and within a block of each other. There's a pretty dense concentration of about a dozen community residences on the blocks south of NE 14th Street and just east of North Federal Highway. There's a cluster of eight community residences just north of East Atlantic Boulevard and west of North Federal Highway. Most of the other community res-

idences here are located within a few lots of another community residence.

Voluntary Certification of Sober Homes in Pompano Beach

Since the state's voluntary certification law described beginning on page 22 went into effect, 17 different providers have applied for certification for 112 single family or multiple family dwelling units at 37 locations in Pompano Beach. These recovery communities can house a total of 598 individuals.

Eleven of these 17 programs with locations in Pompano Beach have been certified. As of this writing, six applications are pending from providers with 71 dwelling units and 247 beds in 14 locations.

The Florida Association of Recovery Residences (FARR) uses a demanding certification process that determines whether a recovery residence is actually operated in accord with certification standards rather than depending on a prospective operator's promises of how she will operate the home. The six steps required to achieve certification are available at <http://farronline.org/certification/apply-for-certification>. Detailed certification and compliance protocols are available to download at <http://farronline.org/document-library>.

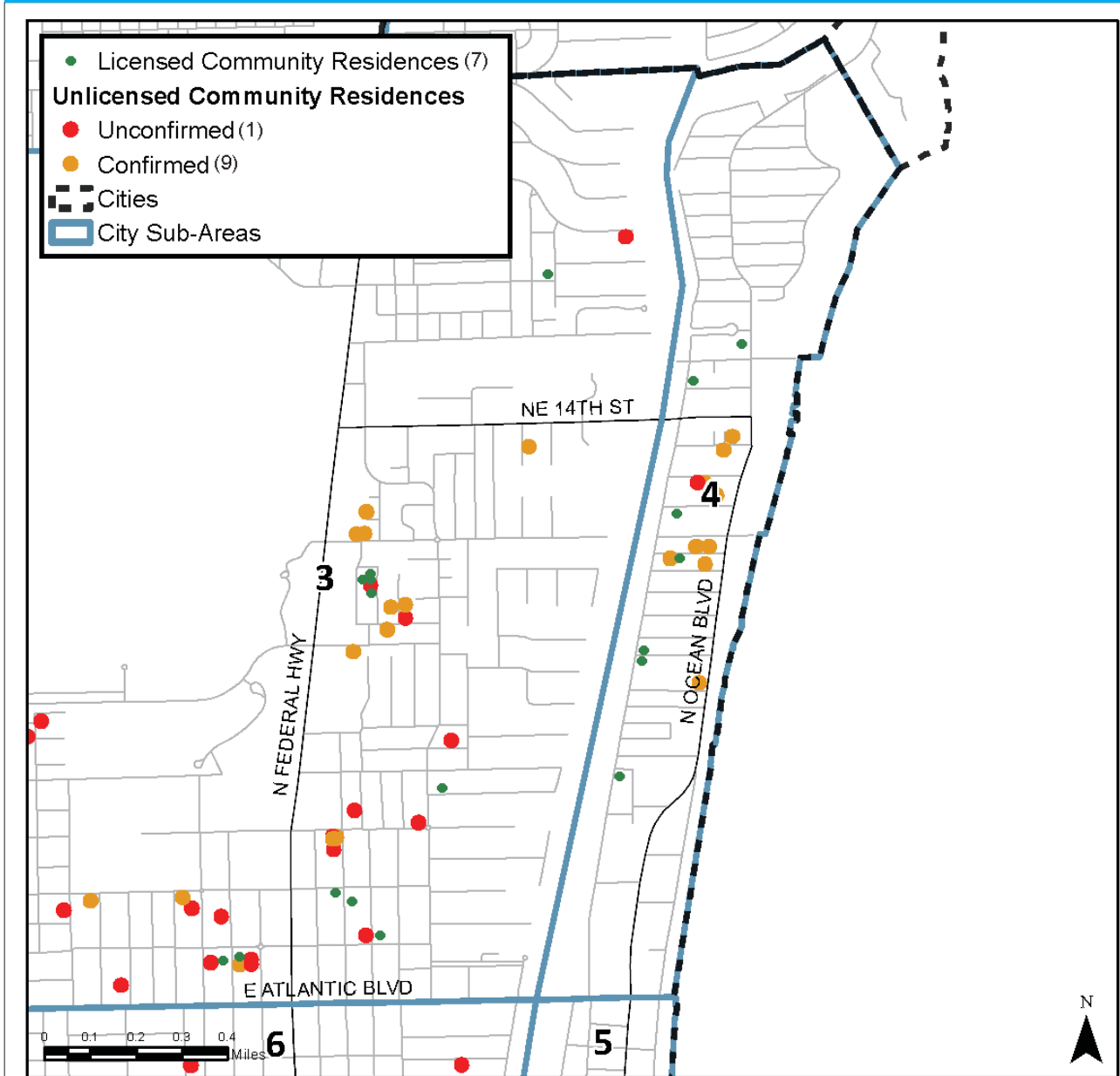
FARR requires unrestricted access to interview management, staff, and residents to ensure that policies, procedures, and protocols are actually being followed at the recovery residence.⁵⁰

So while an applicant must meet FARR's initial criteria to open a recovery residence, FARR makes its final determination on certification after the recovery residence has existed for a specified period of time.

When a jurisdiction requires licensing or certification for community residences, FARR issues an initial provisional certification until annual certification can be determined.

50. Emails from John Lehman, Executive Director of the Florida Association of Recovery Residences to Daniel Lauber, Law Office of Daniel Lauber (Nov. 17, 2017, 9:34 a.m. CST and Nov. 20, 2017, 11:27 a.m. CST) (on file with the Law Office of Daniel Lauber).

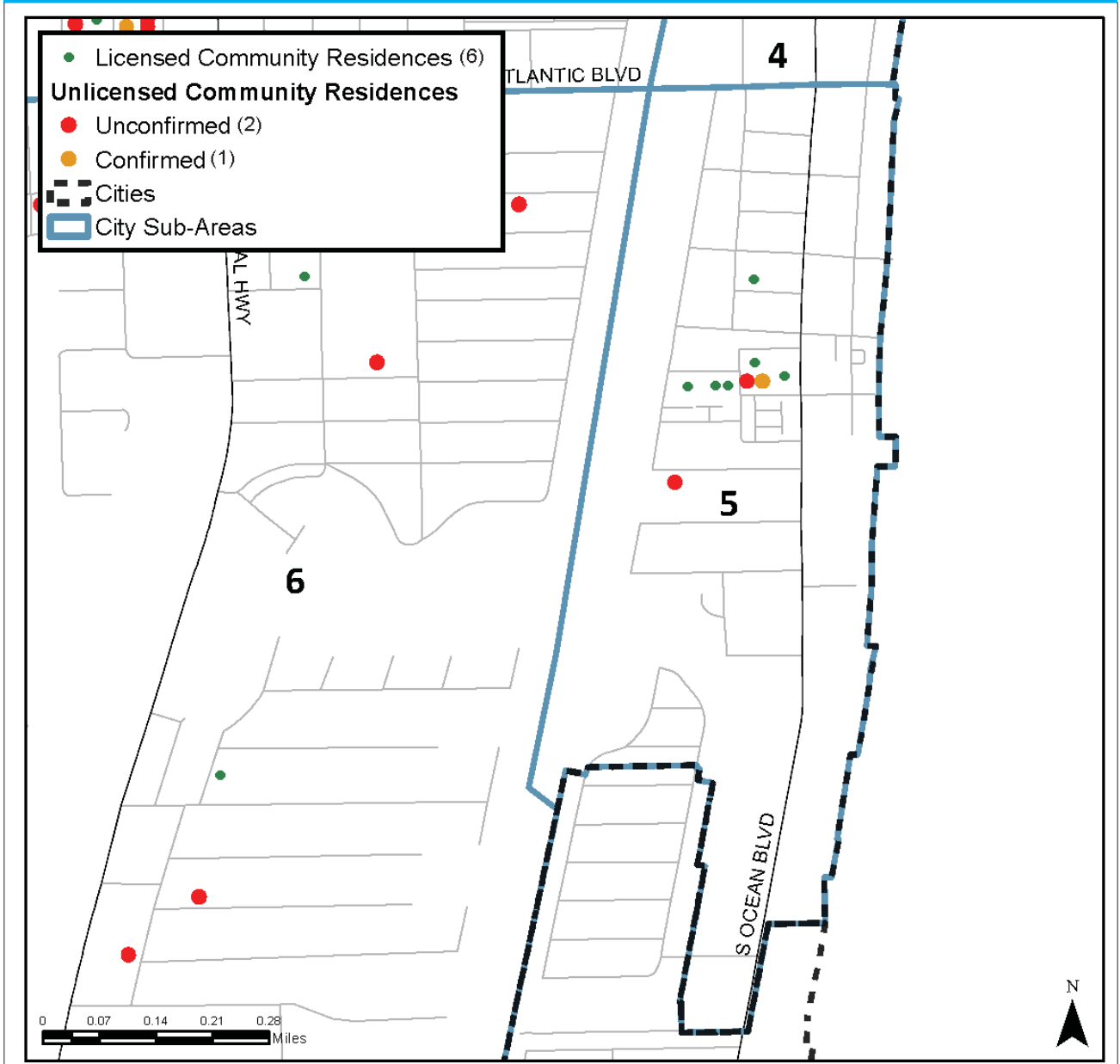
Figure 8: Locations of Known and Unconfirmed Community Residences for People With Disabilities in Subarea 4, Beach (North), as of August 2017



Source: City of Pompano Beach, Florida, November 2017.

As Figure 8 above shows, the city has identified 16 community residences for people with disabilities in Beach (North) plus one unconfirmed. All are located in the central third of the subarea. Nearly a dozen are located within four blocks of each other with several pairs on a block. This situation is illustrative of a concentration developing.

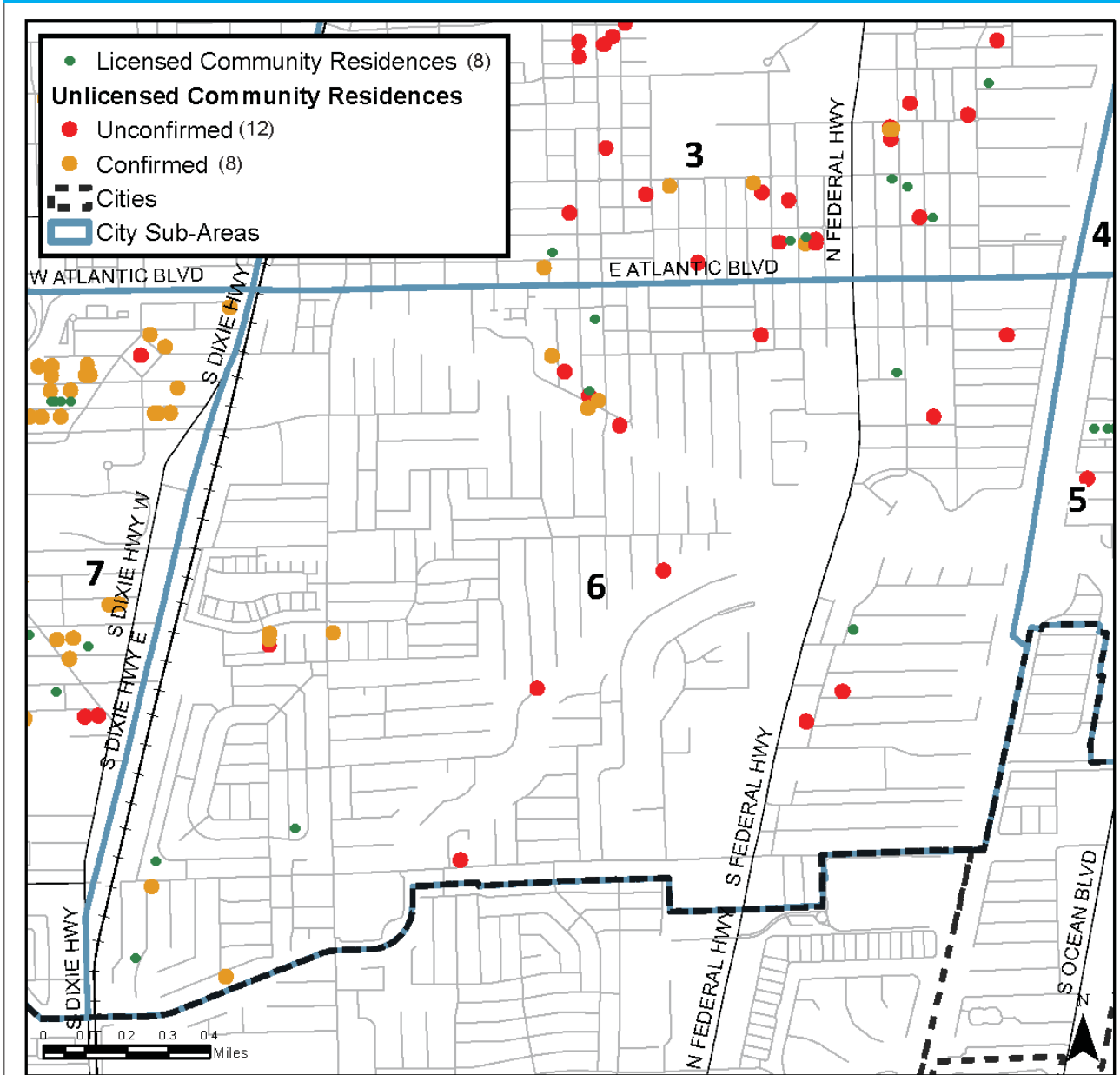
Figure 9: Locations of Known and Unconfirmed Community Residences for People With Disabilities in Subarea 5, Beach (South), as of August 2017



Source: City of Pompano Beach, Florida, August 2017.

There appear to be seven community residences on two blocks in the center of Subarea 5. As explained beginning on page 14, this clustering of community residences for people with disabilities in the Beach (South) subarea runs counter to the underlying principles of community residences and interferes with achieving their core goals of normalization and community integration. In addition, clustering can effectively create a *de facto* social service district.

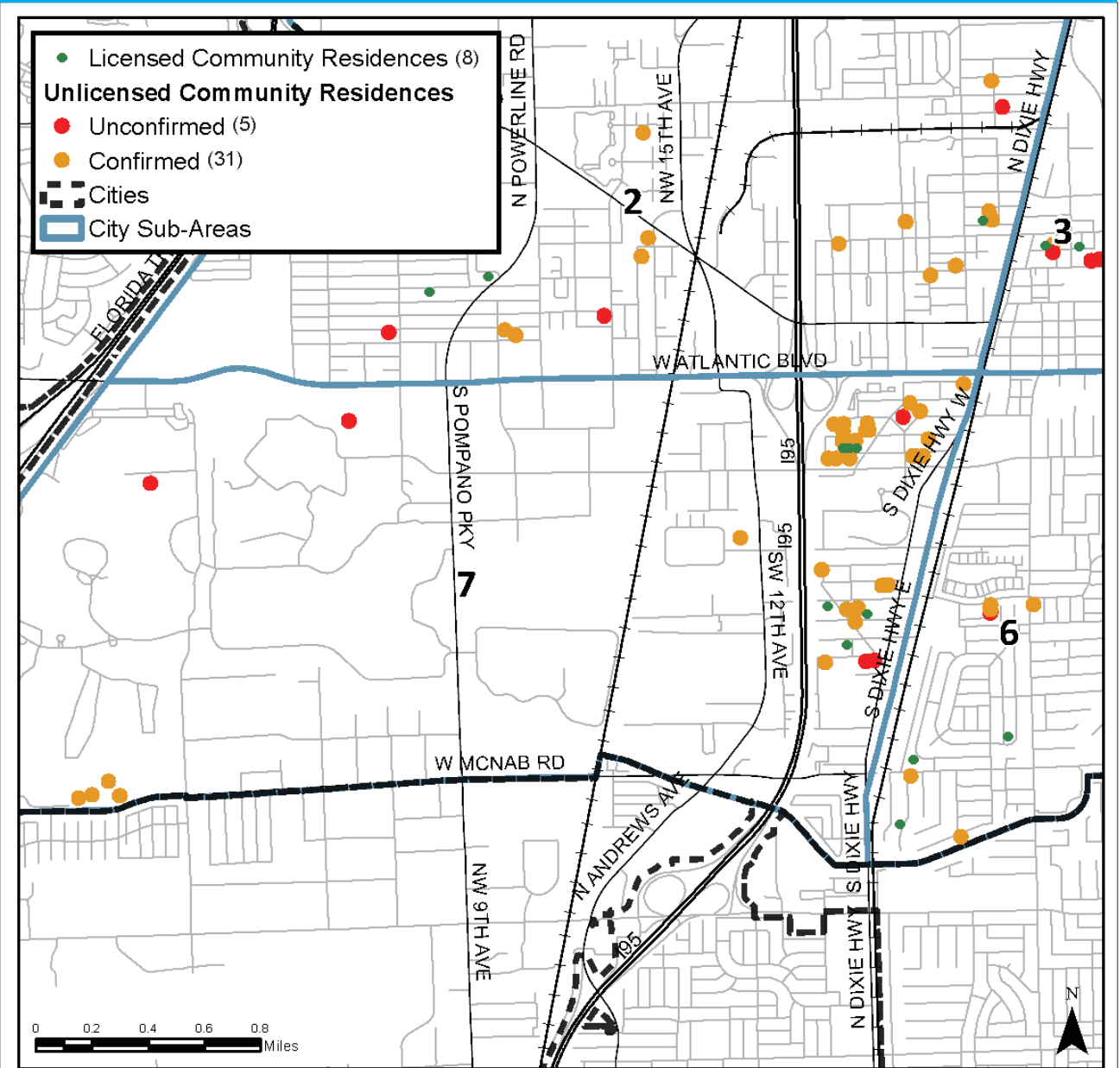
Figure 10: Locations of Known and Unconfirmed Community Residences for People With Disabilities in Subarea 6, Southeast Pompano, of August 2017



Source: City of Pompano Beach, Florida, November 2017.

Most of the community residences in Southeast Pompano are scattered. However there is a cluster of seven on just a few short blocks in the center of the north end of Subarea 6. Note also the concentration of community residences just north of East Atlantic Boulevard in adjacent Subarea 3.

Figure 11: Locations of Known and Unconfirmed Community Residences for People With Disabilities in Subarea 7, Southwest Pompano, as of August 2017



Source: City of Pompano Beach, Florida, November 2017.

There is a small cluster of four community residences in the southwest corner of Subarea 7. There is a much more intense and larger concentration of community residences south of West Atlantic Boulevard between I-95 and South Dixie Highway West. The core of this concentration consists of a dozen community residences on three adjacent blocks with two clusters, each consisting of three more community residences to the east. There is a strong possibility that this intense concentration may hinder the ability to achieve normalization and community integration and of the area becoming an identifiable *de facto* social service district.

Another concentration of a dozen community residences has developed a few blocks south with a core cluster of five community residences in the center of the concentration. Here, too, there is a good possibility that this concentration may hinder the ability to achieve normalization and community integration and of the area becoming an identifiable *de facto* social service district.

Overall, there is some clustering of community residences in every subarea of Pompano Beach. Most intense concentrations of community residences have developed and are developing in Pompano Beach in six of seven subareas.

Without adequate zoning safeguards, these concentrations can — and likely will — grow more intense and expand creating *de facto* social service districts and altering the character of the residential neighborhoods in which they have located.

Recommended zoning approach

The 1988 amendments to the nation’s Fair Housing Act require all government jurisdictions to make a “reasonable accommodation” in their zoning codes and other rules and regulations to enable group homes and other community residences for people with disabilities to locate in the residential districts essential to them succeeding. The zoning ordinance amendments that will be proposed for Pompano Beach make this reasonable accommodation that the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 requires for those people with disabilities who wish to live in a community residence. The legislative history of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 makes it clear that jurisdictions *cannot* require a conditional use permit or special exception in residential districts for family community residences for people with disabilities. It does *not*, however, prohibit requiring a conditional use permit or special exception in single-family districts for transitional community residences. Nor does the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 require that a city allow community residences for persons who do *not* have disabilities in residential districts.

General principles from the case law. Like any other dwelling, when a community residence — whether it be “family” or “transitional” — fits within the cap on the number of unrelated persons the zoning definition of “family” or “single housekeeping unit” sets, it must be allowed as of right in *all* residential districts the same as any other family or single housekeeping unit. The case law is very clear: No additional zoning restrictions can be imposed on a community residence for people with disabilities *that fits within the cap on the number of unrelateds in the local definition of “family.”* Consequently, if a zoning code allows up to three unrelated people to constitute a “family,” the zoning ordinance *cannot* require licensing or a spacing distance around a community residence with as many as three occupants with disabilities.⁵¹

51. However, there is a distinction to be made between local zoning and licensing. A licensing statute or ordinance *can* require licensing of community residences of any number of residents, including recovery residences, and licensing *can* establish rational spacing requirements between

As explained beginning on page 20, Pompano Beach’s *Land Usage Code* allow up to three unrelated people living as a single housekeeping unit to be a family. As explained earlier, any community residence for people with disabilities that fits within this cap of three must be treated as a “family” and it cannot be used for calculating spacing distances required by *local zoning*, as explained in a footnote beginning on page 17.

But when a proposed community residence would house more than the maximum of three unrelated individuals that Pompano Beach’s zoning code allows to live together as a single housekeeping unit, the zoning must make a “reasonable accommodation” to enable these homes to locate in the residential districts in which they need to locate to achieve their purpose.

Taken as a whole, the case law suggests that any reasonable accommodation must meet these three tests:

- ◆ The proposed zoning restriction must be *intended* to achieve a legitimate government purpose.
- ◆ The proposed zoning restriction must *actually achieve* that legitimate government purpose.
- ◆ The proposed zoning restriction must be the *least drastic means necessary to achieve* that legitimate government purpose.

In *Bangerter v. Orem City Corporation*, the federal Court of Appeals said the same thing a bit differently, “Restrictions that are narrowly tailored to the particular individuals affected could be acceptable under the FHAA if the benefits to the handicapped in their housing opportunities clearly outweigh whatever burden may result to them.”⁵²

But the nation’s Fair Housing Act is not the only law that affects how cities and counties in Florida can regulate community residences for people with disabilities. The State of Florida has adopted several statutes that restrict local zoning of community residences for specific populations with disabilities that are licensed by the state.

The proposed zoning amendments take into account both federal fair housing law and the Florida statutes that restrict local zoning.⁵³

The proposed zoning amendments seek to enable community residences to locate in all residential zoning districts through the least drastic regulation needed to accomplish the legitimate government interests of preventing clustering (which undermines the ability of community residences to accomplish

community residences of any number of residents — even those that fit within a jurisdiction’s definition of “family.” This is a nearly universal practice by states across the nation.

52. 46 F.3d 1491 (10th Cir. 1995) 1504.

53. Our review suggests that there is a need to coordinate the state statutes and revise them to eliminate their weaknesses and facilitate more rational zoning treatment of community residences for people with disabilities throughout the State of Florida. The state statutes contain provisions that likely do not fully comply with the nation’s Fair Housing Act.

their purposes and function properly, and which alters the residential character of a neighborhood) and of protecting the residents of the community residences from improper or incompetent care and from abuse. They are narrowly tailored to the needs of the residents with disabilities to provide greater benefits than any burden that might be placed upon them. And they constitute the requisite legitimate government purpose for regulating community residences for people with disabilities.

Key to establishing a zoning approach in compliance with the Fair Housing Act is classifying community residences on the basis of functionality rather than on the number of people living in the community residence — at least as much as the legal provisions of Florida’s statutes allow.

As they are now, community residences for people with disabilities (both family and transitional) that house no more than Pompano Beach’s cap of three unrelated residents in a single housekeeping unit would be treated the same as any other family and would not be included when calculating spacing distances between community residences for people with disabilities.

Community residences in general

As emphasized throughout this report, emulating a biological family is an essential core characteristic of every community residence. It is difficult to imagine how more than ten to 12 individuals can successfully emulate a biological family. Once the number of occupants exceeds a dozen, the home tends to take on the characteristics of a mini-institution rather than a family or a residential use. Pompano Beach should consider defining community residences as housing no more than a ten or 12 people,⁵⁴ while allowing for a reasonable accommodation process for proposed community residences that demonstrate they can emulate a family and need more than 10 or 12 residents for therapeutic and/or financial reasons.⁵⁵

Recovery communities in general

Community residences are not the only vehicle available for people in recovery from drug and/or alcohol addiction or abuse. Recovery communities offer a more intensive living arrangement with more people than can emulate a family and a more segregated, institutional-like atmosphere than a community residence.

54. The maximum number of residents allowed as of right should be an even number to accommodate the established need of assuring all recovery home residents have a roommate.

55. As explained beginning on page 44, community residences for people with disabilities are subject to the building code provisions to prevent overcrowding that apply to all residential uses. So if the building code would allow just seven people in a dwelling unit, then that is the maximum number of people who can live in that dwelling unit whether it is occupied by a biological family, children in foster care, or the functional family of a community residence for people with disabilities.

A recovery community consists of multiple dwelling units in a single multi-family structure that are *not* available to the general public for rent or occupancy. A recovery community provides a drug-free and alcohol-free living arrangement for people in recovery from drug and/or alcohol addiction. But, unlike a community residence, a recovery community does *not* emulate a biological family. As explained below, a recovery community is a different land use than a community residence and it warrants a different zoning treatment.

Unlike a community residence that seeks to function like a biological family with no more than ten or 12 occupants in a dwelling, a recovery community is more akin to a mini-institution in nature and number of occupants.

Figure 12: Cluster of Four Clustered Recovery Communities in Pompano Beach



Four of the buildings in the center of this photo from Google Earth are each occupied by 24 people in recovery, for a total of 96 people in 16 apartment units.

As noted on page 24, some operators in Pompano Beach have established recovery communities in multifamily buildings, often in several adjacent buildings: 96 people at four addresses on a single block, 168 people at three addresses on a block, 58 people in 28 units in one building. The reality is that these are functionally segregated mini-institutions that do not emulate a family or foster integration into the surrounding community like a community residence does.⁵⁶

56. Many of these recovery communities offer what is called “Level IV” support, the highest, more intense degree of support. In its description of “support levels” that service providers offer, the

Operators of recovery communities are known to move residents from one apartment to another — unlike how a family or three roommates behave. This sort of arrangement certainly does *not* constitute a community residence in any sense of the words — remember that the essence of a community residence is to emulate a biological family. The segregated housing a recovery community creates runs counter to the core purpose of a community residence: to achieve normalization and community integration with the “able-bodied” neighbors as role models.

Figure 13: Uncertified Recovery Community in Pompano Beach



This 28-unit apartment building with pool housed 58 people in recovery. The Florida Association of Recovery Residences recently rejected its application for certification. The mini-institution has since ceased operations.

Few jurisdictions have adjusted their zoning provisions to account for recovery communities. In the absence of zoning provisions for recovery communities, some providers have skirted zoning provisions to prevent adverse clustering and concentrations by misusing the cap on the number of unrelated individuals in the local zoning code’s definition of “family.” In these instances, when a city has a cap of three unrelateds in its definition of “family” like Pompano Beach does, the operator places three people in recovery in each unit in an apartment

Florida Association of Recovery Residences (FARR) notes that “Level IV” “[m]ay be a *[sic]* more institutional in environment.” See <http://farronline.org/standards-ethics/support-levels>.

building and sometimes several nearby buildings. The people in recovery, however, function as a single large “community,” not as individual functional families. Concentrations and clusters of these mini-institutions can and do alter the residential nature of the surrounding community even more so than a concentration of nursing homes would since the occupants of recovery communities are ambulatory and frequently maintain a motor vehicle on the premises.

These clusters and concentrations of recovery communities in Pompano Beach are very similar to the situation in other jurisdictions where the courts have concluded that an institutional atmosphere was being recreated. In *Larkin v. State of Michigan Department of Social Services*, the Sixth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals arrived at this conclusion when it referenced the decisions in *Familystyle*. In the *Familystyle* case, the operator sought to increase the number of group homes on one and a half blocks from 21 to 24 and the number of people with mental illness housed in them from 119 to 130. Referring to the federal district and appellate court decisions in *Familystyle*, the *Larkin* court noted, “The courts were concerned that the plaintiffs were simply recreating an institutionalized setting in the community, rather than deinstitutionalizing the disabled.”⁵⁷

That is exactly what is happening at the sites in Pompano Beach described here as well as other sites in the city and elsewhere in southeast Florida. In fact, the density of these mini-institutions is often greater than in the *Familystyle* case. The operators have recreated an institutional setting in the midst of a residential district. These mini-institutions not only interfere with the core goals of normalization and community integration, but also alter the character of the neighborhood and the city’s zoning scheme.

As noted earlier, a key basis for community residences locating in residential zoning districts has long been that the “able-bodied” neighbors serve as role models for the people with disabilities. Consequently, this essential rationale for community residences expects the occupants of the community residences to interact with their neighbors. Filling apartment buildings with people in recovery is hardly conducive to achieving these fundamental goals. Instead the occupants of the recovery community will almost certainly interact nearly exclusively with the other people in recovery rather than with the “clean and sober” people in the surrounding neighborhood.

Introducing such mini-institutions can and has altered the residential character of the surrounding area. In addition, there is a lack of evidence that such arrangements do not affect property values, property turnover rates, or neighborhood safety. The studies of the impacts of community residences examined actual community residences that emulate a family, not these mini-institutions. The *de facto* social service districts that clusters of recovery communities produce fall far outside the foundations upon which the courts have long based their decisions to treat community residences as residential uses, including

57. *Larkin v. State of Michigan Department of Social Services*, 89 F.3d 285 6th Cir. (1996). See also *Familystyle of St. Paul, Inc. v. City of St. Paul*, 728 F.Supp. 1396 (D. Minn. 1990), *aff’d*, 923 F.2d 91 (8th Cir. 1991).

emulating a biological family and utilizing nearby neighbors without disabilities as role models to foster normalization as well as participation in the broad community to achieve community integration.

It is important to remember that zoning is based on how each land use functions. The original community residence concept is based on the community residence behaving as a “functional family” that emulates a biological family. Such homes need to be in a residential neighborhood where the so-called “able bodied” neighbors serve as role models. Those are key cornerstones upon which the court rulings that require community residences to be allowed in residential districts rest.

But filling a multifamily building with people in recovery — or even filling a block of houses with people in recovery — hardly emulates a biological family in a residential neighborhood. Instead of “clean and sober” people in the surrounding dwelling units to act as role models, everybody is surrounded by other people in recovery. It is difficult to imagine how such segregated living arrangements foster the normalization and community integration at the core of the community residence concept. Such arrangements are like a step back to the segregated institutions in which people with disabilities were placed before deinstitutionalization became the nation’s policy more than half a century ago.

These are among the reasons why spacing distances are so crucial to establishing an atmosphere in which community residences can enable their occupants to achieve normalization and community integration. And these are among the reasons that zoning should treat recovery communities as the mini-institutions that they functionally are.⁵⁸

Since recovery communities are located in multi-family buildings, it makes no sense for a zoning code to allow new recovery communities to be located in single-family districts where new multi-family housing is not permitted. But they should be allowed in multi-family and other districts where multi-family housing is allowed,

As explained beginning on page 17, the capacity of a neighborhood to absorb service dependent people into its social structure is limited. When recovery communities are clustered on a block or concentrated in a neighborhood, there is little doubt that they exceed this capacity. This situation warrants a significantly greater spacing distance for recovery communities allowed as of right in a zoning district than between community residences allowed as of right, subject to rational spacing and certification/licensing standards. When a recovery community is proposed to be located within the spacing distance of a community residence or another recovery community, the heightened scrutiny of a special exception is warranted to identify the likely impacts of the proposed re-

58. The case law that requires *zoning* to treat a community residence residence that fits within the cap on unrelateds in the definition of “family” is based on fact situations involving actual, individual community residences. The case law under the Fair Housing Act regarding community residences for people with disabilities is very fact specific. It is difficult to imagine that a court would fail to recognize that, for example, placing 96 people with disabilities in four buildings on a block is an attempt to subvert the definition of “family” and would be anything but an institutional use plopped down in a residential area.

covery community on the nearby existing community residence or recovery community, as well as their combined impacts on the neighborhood.

Under the zoning amendments that Pompano Beach adopts, some existing recovery communities may become legal nonconforming uses (or special exceptions). Such recovery communities, like any other legal nonconforming use, are not allowed to expand or become a more intense nonconforming use.

Additional issues to consider

The precise language of the zoning amendments will need to make allowances for the legal provisions in the Florida state statutes on zoning for certain types of community residences for people with specific disabilities.

Note that the state statute governing local zoning for most types of community residences for people with disabilities (called “community residential homes”) allows local governments to adopt zoning that is less restrictive than the state statutes.⁵⁹ While the zoning proposed here is broader in scope than the state statutes — covering all types of community residences for all types of disabilities — some of the suggested zoning regulations fall within this statutory provision.

The state statutes, however, do *not* establish any zoning standards for recovery residences — sober homes, recovery communities, and small halfway houses for people in recovery. As discussed earlier, the state statutes do establish a voluntary credential for recovery residences administered by the Florida Association of Recovery Residences. The credentialing standards and processes are as demanding or even more demanding than some existing licensing laws in other states.

While there are few Oxford Houses in Florida as of this writing, local zoning provisions for community residences must provide for these unstructured, self-governed recovery communities. Oxford House has been recognized by Congress and has its own internal monitoring system in place to inspect and maintain compliance with the Oxford House Charter.⁶⁰ The standards and procedures that both Oxford House and the State of Florida’s voluntary certification of recovery residences employ are functionally comparable to licensing requirements and procedures for recovery communities in other states. The zoning approach suggested here recommends that Oxford House and certified recovery residences be treated the same as state certification.

59. *Florida Statutes*, §419.001(12). “State law on community residential homes controls over local ordinances, but nothing in this section prohibits a local government from adopting more liberal standards for siting such homes.”

60. Oxford House does not allow its recovery communities to open in a state until Oxford House has established its monitoring and inspection processes to assure that Oxford Houses will operate within the standards the Oxford House Charter establishes.

- ◆ The specific community residence or its operator must receive authorization to operate the proposed transitional community residence by receiving the license that the State of Florida requires, the voluntary certification available through the Florida Association of Recovery Residences, or a self-imposed inspection and set of criteria that are the functional equivalent of certification or licensing (Oxford House);⁶² and
- ◆ The proposed transitional community residence is not located within a rationally-based distance (660 feet, the length of a typical block) of an existing community residence as measured from the nearest lot lines.

Special exception backup

Sometimes an operator will seek to establish a new community residence within the spacing distance of an existing community residence. For some types of community residences, the local jurisdiction, the State of Florida, and the federal government may not require a license, certification, or accreditation, nor recognize or sanction the congregate living arrangement. In these situations, the heightened scrutiny of a special exception review is warranted to protect the occupants of the prospective community residence from the same mistreatment, exploitation, incompetence, and abuses from which licensing, certification, accreditation, or recognition from Congress protects them. There are two circumstances under which a special exception could be sought:

- (1) **Locating within the spacing distance.** To determine whether a community residence should be allowed within the 660-foot spacing distance from an existing community residence, The city would need to consider whether allowing the proposed community residence will hinder the normalization for residents and community integration in the existing community residence and/or whether the proposed community residence would alter the character of the neighborhood.
- (2) **When no local, state, or federal licensing, certification, or accreditation program is applicable.** If the operator of a proposed community residence seeks to establish a community residence in Pompano Beach for which the city, State of Florida, or the federal government does not require or offer a license or certification or is not under a self-imposed license equivalency like Oxford House, the operator must show that the proposed community residence will be operated in a manner that protects the health, safety, and welfare of its resi-

62. There appears to be no legal reason why any local Florida jurisdiction could not require recovery residences to obtain certification from the State of Florida to satisfy this criterion. As noted above, Oxford House, which is recognized by Congress, maintains its own standards and procedures that are comparable to the standards and procedures of licensing laws in jurisdictions outside Florida. Consequently, Oxford Houses, as well as recovery residences certified by the State of Florida, would meet this first criterion.

dents that is comparable to typical licensing standards.⁶³

Under the proposed zoning amendments if the required license, certification, or accreditation has been denied to a proposed community residence or its operator, it is ineligible for a special exception and cannot be located in Pompano Beach.

In evaluating an application for a special exception, a city *can* consider the cumulative effect of the proposed community residence because altering the character of the neighborhood or creating a *de facto* social service district interferes with the normalization and community integration at the core of a community residence. A city can consider whether the proposed community residence in combination with any existing community residences will alter the character of the surrounding neighborhood by creating an institutional atmosphere or by creating a *de facto* social service district by concentrating community residences on a block or in a neighborhood.

It is vital to stress that the decision on a special exception must be based on a record of factual evidence and not on neighborhood opposition rooted in unfounded myths and misconceptions about people with disabilities. As explained earlier in this report, restrictive covenants *cannot* exclude a community residence for people with disabilities — and such restrictions are, of course, irrelevant when evaluating an application for the special exception.

Maximum number of occupants

State licensing regulations for community residences often establish the maximum number of individuals that can live in a community residence. Even with these state-imposed caps, the number of residents *cannot* exceed the number permissible under the occupancy provisions of Pompano Beach’s building code that apply to *all* residences. For example, if the formula in the city’s housing or building code limits the number of residents in a dwelling unit to five, no more than five people can live there whether the residence is occupied by a biological family or a functional family of a community residence.

Pompano Beach’s *Rental Housing Code* establishes minimum dwelling space requirements to prevent overcrowding.⁶⁴ The code requires a minimum of 150 square feet of floor space for the first occupant of a dwelling unit and at least 100 additional square feet for each additional occupant, based on the total

63. When evaluating a proposed recovery residence’s application for a special exception under these circumstances, a local jurisdiction would be perfectly within its rights to apply the standards for the state’s voluntary credentialing program in the interest of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the proposed recovery residence.

64. City of Pompano Beach, Florida, *Land Usage Code*, Chapter 153, “Rental Housing Code,” §153.23. “Minimum Standards for Interior of Buildings.””

area of all habitable rooms. No dwelling unit shall have less than 350 square feet of gross floor area.⁶⁵

The code also requires a minimum of 70 square feet gross floor area for a sleeping area occupied by one person. For bedrooms occupied by two or more people, the code requires at least 50 additional square feet for each occupant of the sleeping area.⁶⁶ ***These minimum floor area requirements apply to all residences in Pompano Beach, including community residences for people with disabilities.***

Under this formula, a bedroom in which just one person sleeps could be no smaller than seven feet by ten feet or other dimensions that add up to 70 square feet. A bedroom in which two people sleep could be no smaller than 100 square feet, or ten by ten, for example. A bedroom for three people must be at least 150 square feet, or ten by 15, for example.⁶⁷ Keep in mind that these are minimum criteria to prevent overcrowding based on health and safety standards. Bedrooms, of course, are often larger than these minimums. This sort of provision is the type that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled applies to all residences including community residences.⁶⁸

Under fair housing case law, it is quite clear that *for determining the maximum number of occupants*, community residences established in single-family structures are to be treated the same as all other single-family residences. Those located in a multiple-family structure are to be treated the same as all other multiple-family residences. The number of occupants is typically regulated for health and safety reasons. Pompano Beach's current occupancy provisions meet these criteria.

Under the Fair Housing Act, it is clearly improper to apply building or housing code standards for institutions, lodging houses, boarding houses, rooming houses, or fraternities and sororities to community residences for people with disabilities.

However, given that emulation of a biological family is a core component to

65. *Ibid.* at §153.23 (A)(1).

66. *Ibid.* at §153.23 (A)(2).

67. Obviously these dimensions are examples. A 150 square foot room could also be 12 feet by 12.5 feet as well as other dimensions that add up to 150 square feet.

68. *City of Edmonds v. Oxford House, Inc.*, 514 U.S. 725, 115 S.Ct. 1776, 131 L.Ed.2d 801 (1995). "Maximum occupancy restrictions... cap the number of occupants per dwelling, typically in relation to available floor space or the number and type of rooms. See, e. g., International Conference of Building Officials, *Uniform Housing Code* § 503(b) (1988); Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc., *BOCA National Property Maintenance Code* §§ PM-405.3, PM-405.5 (1993) (hereinafter *BOCA Code*); Southern Building Code Congress, International, Inc., *Standard Housing Code* §§ 306.1, 306.2 (1991); E. Mood, APHA—CDC Recommended Minimum Housing Standards § 9.02, p. 37 (1986) (hereinafter *APHA—CDC Standards*).[6] *These restrictions ordinarily apply uniformly to all residents of all dwelling units. Their purpose is to protect health and safety by preventing dwelling overcrowding.* See, e. g., *BOCA Code* §§ PM-101.3, PM-405.3, PM-405.5 and commentary; Abbott, *Housing Policy, Housing Codes and Tenant Remedies: An Integration*, 56 B. U. L. Rev. 1, 41-45 (1976)." At 733. [*Emphasis added*]

community residences for people with disabilities, it is reasonable for a jurisdiction to establish the maximum number of individuals in a community residence that certainly can emulate a biological family. It is likely that as many as ten to 12 unrelated individuals in a community residence can emulate a biological family. It is very doubtful if larger aggregations can. Consequently the proposed zoning amendments will cap community residences at 10 occupants and establish a structured administrative “reasonable accommodation” procedure to lift the cap for a specific community residence on a case-by-case basis. The burden will be on the applicant to show the therapeutic or financial need for more than 10 residents and to convincingly demonstrate how the residents will emulate a biological family. The proposed community residence will be subject to the spacing and licensing/certification requirements applicable to all community residences for people with disabilities.

Other zoning regulations for community residences

All regulations of the zoning district apply to a community residence including height, lot size, yards, building coverage, habitable floor area, off-street parking, and signage. There is no need for the land development code to repeat these requirements in its sections dealing with community residences.

The state’s statute reinforces this basic concept:

A dwelling unit housing a community residential home established pursuant to this section shall be subject to the same local laws and ordinances applicable to other noncommercial, residential family units in the area in which it is established.⁶⁹

Off-Street Parking. Even within the context of the state statute quoted immediately above, localities can establish off-street parking requirements for community residences for people with disabilities. Some community residences generate parking needs that exceed what a biological family might generate. However, there has to be a rational, factual basis for imposing other zoning requirements on community residences for people with disabilities that exceed the cap of three in Pompano Beach’s definition of “family.” For example, different types of community residences may generate very different off-street parking needs. Generally the residents of community residences do not drive. People with developmental disabilities and the frail elderly do not drive and will not generate a need for off-street parking for their occupants. They will get around town with a vehicle and driver the operator provides. A very small percentage, if any, of people with mental illness may drive.

But unlike the other categories of disabilities, people in recovery often drive and have a motor vehicle. A vehicle is critical for the recovery of many, especially if public transportation is not easily accessible. An essential component of their rehabilitation is relearning how to live on their own in a sober manner. So one of the most common conditions of living in a legitimate recovery community

69. *Florida Statutes*, §419.001(8) (2016).

or sober living home is that each resident agrees to spend the day at work, looking for a job, or attending classes. They cannot just sit around the house during the day. Visitor parking can be accommodated on the street as it is for all residential uses. In warm-weather climates like Pompano Beach, many recovery homes residents own and drive electric or gas-powered scooters which, obviously require less space to park than automobiles.

It is, however, rational to require off-street parking for staff, whether it be live-in staff or staff that works on shifts. The city needs to carefully craft off-street parking requirements for community residences for people with disabilities that allow for the varying needs of community residences for people with different disabilities.

Factoring in the Florida state statute on locating community residences

The State of Florida has adopted statewide zoning standards for a mixed bag of what it calls “community residential homes” licensed by the Department of Elderly Affairs, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Children and Families, or the Agency for Health Care Administration.⁷⁰ *Some of these homes house people with disabilities while others do not.*⁷¹ This review focuses on community residences occupied by people with disabilities, the class protected under the nation’s Fair Housing Act.

Before reviewing the impact of the State of Florida’s statute on zoning for community residences, it is important to note that the statute gives localities some leeway to craft local zoning provisions:

Nothing in this section requires any local government to adopt a new ordinance if it has in place an ordinance governing the placement of commu-

State Statute’s Limited Scope

It is vital to remember that limitations on local zoning that the state statute on the location of “community residential homes” establishes apply only to the community residences licensed by the five state agencies. Local jurisdictions are perfectly free to establish different zoning regulations for community residences not licensed by these five state agencies. None of these five state agencies licenses recovery residences.

70. The zoning standards appear in Title XXX, Social Welfare, Chapter 419, “Community Residential Homes,” §419.001, “Site selection of community residential homes,” *Florida State Statutes*, §419.001 (2016).

71. The nature of the residents of these homes are defined in *Florida State Statutes*. Among those with disabilities are “frail elder” as defined in §429.65, “person with handicap” as defined in §760.22(7)9(a), and “nondangerous person with a mental illness” as defined in §394.455. Two other categories that may or may not include people with disabilities are “child found to be dependent” as defined in §39.01 or §984.03 and “child in need of services” as defined in §984.03 or §985.03. As of this writing, the State of Florida does not require licensing of community residences that serve people in recovery, although it offers voluntary credentialing.

nity residential homes that meet the criteria of this section. State law on community residential homes controls over local ordinances, but *nothing in this section prohibits a local government from adopting more liberal standards for siting such homes.*⁷²

Consequently, any local jurisdiction is free to adopt its own zoning regulations for community residences for people with disabilities that are “more liberal” or less restrictive than the state’s.⁷³

As will become apparent from the analysis that follows, the state statute is a bit confusing, seems to contradict itself, and contains a provision that, if challenged in court, would very likely be found to run afoul of the nation’s Fair Housing Act.

No state law, including Florida’s, provides a “safe harbor” for local zoning. A state statute that regulates local zoning for community residences for people with disabilities *can* violate the nation’s Fair Housing Act. For example, the State of Nevada had a state statute that required municipalities and counties to treat certain types of community residences for people with disabilities as residential uses, much like Florida’s statute does. In 2008, a federal district court found that several other provisions in the Nevada’s statute on community residences for people with disabilities violated the Fair Housing Act.⁷⁴

When sued in 2015 over its zoning treatment of community residences for people with disabilities, Beaumont, Texas claimed that it was merely complying with a 1987 state law that established a half-mile spacing distance between community residences for people with disabilities. Beaumont was applying that spacing distance to group homes that fit within its zoning code’s definition of “family” which limits to three the number of unrelated people that can constitute a “family.” Beaumont settled the case for \$475,000 in damages while agreeing to discontinue imposing its unsupportable half-mile spacing distance as well as its excessive building code requirements.⁷⁵

In Florida, the state statute defines “community residential home” as a dwelling unit licensed by one of the five state agencies listed above that “provides a living environment for 7 to 14 unrelated residents who operate as the functional equivalent of a family, including such supervision and care by supportive staff as may be necessary to meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of the residents.”⁷⁶ This language gives the impression that “community residential homes” house seven to 14 residents.

72. *Florida State Statutes*, §419.001(10) (2016). *Emphasis added.*

73. While the author has never before seen statutory language using the phrase “more liberal,” the most rational interpretation of the phrase is that it means the same as “less restrictive.”

74. *Nevada Fair Housing Center, Inc. v. Clark County*, 565 F.Supp.2d 1178 (D. Nevada, 2008).

75. *United States of America v. City of Beaumont, Texas*, Consent Decree Civil Action No. 1:15-cv-00201-RC (E.D. Texas, May 4, 2016).

76. *Florida State Statutes*, §419.001(1)(a) (2016).

That's not the case. Later the statute speaks of “[h]omes of six or fewer residents which otherwise meet the definition of a community residential home shall be deemed a single-family unit and a noncommercial, residential use for the purpose of local laws and ordinances.”⁷⁷

Without any stated rational basis, the statute treats homes for up to six residents differently than those for seven to 14 residents. Community residential homes for up to six residents must “be allowed in single-family or multifamily zoning without approval by the local government, provided that such homes are not located within a radius of 1,000 feet of another existing such home with six or fewer residents or within a radius of 1,200 feet of another existing community residential home.”⁷⁸ “Another existing community residential home” *appears* to mean a home for seven to 14 residents.

The smaller homes are not required to comply with the statute’s notification provisions if, before it receives its license, the “sponsoring agency” supplies to the local jurisdiction the “most recently published data compiled from the licensing entities that identifies all community residential homes within the jurisdictional limits of the local government in which the proposed site is to be located.” This is required in order to show that the proposed homes would not be located within the 1,000 foot spacing distance from an existing community residential home for six or fewer residents or the 1,200 foot spacing distance of an existing community residential home for seven to 14 individuals. When the home is actually occupied, the sponsoring agency is required to notify the local government that the requisite license has been issued.⁷⁹

This statute does not affect the legal nonconforming use status of any community residential home lawfully permitted and operating by July 1, 2016.⁸⁰ In addition, the statute states that nothing in the statute “shall be deemed to affect the authority of any community residential home lawfully established prior to October 1, 1989, to continue to operate.”⁸¹

The state statute departs from the rationality of sound planning and zoning practices when it flips basic concepts on their head and requires a more intensive review of “community residential homes” in multiple family zoning districts than in single-family districts.⁸² Unlike in single-family districts, the

77. *Ibid.* at §419.001(2) (2016).

78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.* A sponsoring agency is “an agency or unit of government, a profit or nonprofit agency, or any other person or organization which intends to establish or operate a community residential home.” At §419.001(1)(f) (2016).

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.* At §419.001(9) (2016).

82. Florida’s statute is the first time in more than 40 years of monitoring zoning regulations for community residences that the author has seen more heightened scrutiny for locating community residences in multiple-family zones than in single-family zones. Normally the greater scrutiny is applied in single-family zones. The basis on which the legislature wrote this provision is an unknown.

state statute gives local governments the ability to approve or disapprove of a proposed “community residential home.”

When a site for a community residential home has been selected by a sponsoring agency in an area zoned for multifamily, the agency shall notify the chief executive officer of the local government in writing and include in such notice the specific address of the site, the residential licensing category, the number of residents, and the community support requirements of the program. Such notice shall also contain a statement from the licensing entity indicating the licensing status of the proposed community residential home and specifying how the home meets applicable licensing criteria for the safe care and supervision of the clients in the home. The sponsoring agency shall also provide to the local government the most recently published data compiled from the licensing entities that identifies all community residential homes within the jurisdictional limits of the local government in which the proposed site is to be located. The local government shall review the notification of the sponsoring agency in accordance with the zoning ordinance of the jurisdiction.⁸³

If a local government fails to render a decision to approve or disapprove the proposed home under its zoning ordinance within 60 days, the sponsoring agency may establish the home at the proposed site.⁸⁴

*This provision appears to conflict with the earlier paragraph in the state statute establishing that “community residential homes” for six or fewer individuals “shall be allowed in single-family or multifamily zoning **without** approval by the local government” when the spacing distances are met.*⁸⁵

The state statute specifies three bases on which a local government can deny the siting of a “community residence home” if the proposed home:

- ◆ Doesn’t conform to “existing zoning regulations applicable to other multifamily uses in the area”⁸⁶
- ◆ Doesn’t meet the licensing agency’s applicable licensing criteria, “including requirements that the home be located to assure the safe care and supervision of all clients in the home”⁸⁷
- ◆ Would result in such a concentration of community residential homes in the area in proximity to the site selected, or would result in a combination of such homes with other residences in the community, such that the nature and character of the area would be substantially altered. A home that is located within a radius of 1,200 feet of another existing community residential home in a multifamily zone shall be an

83. Ibid. at §419.001(3)(a) (2016).

84. Ibid. at §419.001(3)(b) (2016).

85. Ibid. at §419.001(2) (2016).

86. Ibid. at §419.001(3)(c)1. (2016).

87. Ibid. at §419.001(3)(c)2. (2016).

overconcentration of such homes that substantially alters the nature and character of the area. ***A home that is located within a radius of 500 feet of an area of single-family zoning substantially alters the nature and character of the area.***⁸⁸

While the first criterion is most reasonable, it is also unnecessary because all residential uses are naturally required to conform to zoning regulations. It is unclear why the state statute needed to single out community residences for people with disabilities.

The second standard is unnecessary because a proposed home that doesn't meet the licensing agency's criteria would not receive the license required to operate. It is unclear what circumstances might exist where a community residence would receive a state license and then fail to "be located to assure the safe care and supervision of all clients in the home."

The third criterion almost certainly runs afoul of the nation's Fair Housing Act in several ways. The statute declares that locating a new community residence within the spacing distance constitutes "an overconcentration" of community residences "that substantially alters the nature and character of the area."⁸⁹

In more than 40 years working with zoning for community residences for people with disabilities, we have never come upon any factual basis for that conclusion. The rationale behind this report's recommendation to require a special exception for a community residence proposed to locate within the spacing distance is to enable a case-by-case examination of the facts to determine whether the proposed home would, indeed, interfere with the ability of any existing community residence to achieve its core functions of normalization and community integration of its residents. We are unaware of any factual information to suggest that the *mere presence* of another community residence within the spacing distances of an existing community residence *always* creates an overconcentration or that it always substantially alters the nature and character of any area.⁹⁰

Finally, the statute's declaration that locating a community residential home within 500 feet of single-family zoning "substantially alters the nature and character of the area" simply lacks any factual foundation. It is difficult to imagine a scenario in which a legal challenge to this statutory provision would fail.

The state statute simply does not allow for the proper review of an application to establish a community residence within the spacing distance required to be allowed as of right. It is critical that zoning allow for the case-by-case review of proposals for such homes to evaluate on the facts presented whether al-

88. *Ibid.* at §419.001(3)(c)3. (2016). *Emphasis added.*

89. *Ibid.* at §419.001(3)(c)3 (2016).

90. For a thorough discussion of these points, see American Planning Association, *Policy Guide on Community Residences* (Chicago: American Planning Association, Sept. 22, 1997) 8, and for more detailed analysis, Daniel Lauber, "A Real LULU: Zoning for Group Homes and Halfway Houses Under the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988" *John Marshall Law Review*, Vol. 29, No 2, Winter 1996, 369-407.

lowing the proposed community residence would actually result in an overconcentration or actually alter the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The Florida statute effectively prevents the proper review.

These state statute provisions regarding overconcentrations and alteration of the nature and character of an area constitute unsubstantiated conclusions that obstruct the ability of a local jurisdiction to make the “reasonable accommodation” that the nation’s Fair Housing Act requires for community residences for people with disabilities. The state needs to remove these provisions from the state law if it wishes to comply with the Fair Housing Act.

However, as explained beginning on page 46, the state statute allows local jurisdictions to adopt zoning provisions less restrictive than the state’s — which authorizes cities and counties to ignore these unjustifiable and almost certainly illegal state provisions and avoid exposing themselves to legal liability for housing discrimination. As Beaumont, Texas learned so painfully, following an illegal state statute does not protect the city from legal liability.

The actual zoning amendments for community residences for people with disabilities will be crafted to abide by with the provisions of the state statutes that comply with the nation’s Fair Housing Act.⁹¹

Impact of Florida statute on vacation rentals

In some circles there appears to be confusion over the major differences between vacation rentals and community residences for people with disabilities. These are diametrically different land uses subject to different zoning and licensing or certification treatments.

The Florida legislature has adopted a state statute that pre-empted home rule and now allows vacation rentals in residential zoning districts throughout the state. Local laws regulating vacation rentals, like Pompano Beach’s that were in place on June 1, 2011, were allowed to stand.⁹²

This state law has no impact on how a jurisdiction can zone for community residences for people with disabilities. Vacation rentals are nothing like community residences for people with disabilities. The former are commercial uses akin to a mini-hotel while the latter are residential uses. The former do not make any attempt to emulate a biological family; the host is a landlord and there is no effort for the guests to merge into a single housekeeping unit with the owner of the property.

91. Local governments have learned that state statutes that violate the Fair Housing Act do *not* offer a “safe harbor.” The statutes of the State of Texas had required a plainly illegal 2,500 foot spacing distance between group homes for people with disabilities. Attempts by cities to justify their 2,500 foot spacing distances based on the state statute failed to shield them from being in violation of the Fair Housing Act.

92. *Florida State Statutes*, §509.032(7)(b) (2016).

The language in the state statutes does not suggest any similarities between vacation rentals and community residences for people with disabilities. The Florida state statutes define “vacation rental” as:

any unit or group of units in a condominium or cooperative or any individually or collectively owned single-family, two-family, three-family, or four-family house or dwelling unit that is also a transient public lodging establishment but that is not a timeshare project.⁹³

The state statutes define “transient public lodging establishment” as:

any unit, group of units, dwelling, building, or group of buildings within a single complex of buildings which is rented to guests more than three times in a calendar year for periods of less than 30 days or 1 calendar month, whichever is less, or which is advertised or held out to the public as a place regularly rented to guests.⁹⁴

Community residences for people with disabilities constitute a very different land use than a “transient public lodging establishment.” No community residence for people with disabilities is “held out *to the public* as a place regularly rented to guests” [*emphasis added*]. Each community residence houses people with a certain type of disability — *not* members of the general public. In fact, by definition, occupants of a community residence are not “guests” in any sense of the word. They are residents, not vacationers.

In contrast to a “vacation rental” which, by state law, is a “transient public lodging establishment,” a community residence by definition is a single house-keeping unit that seeks to emulate a biological family to achieve normalization and community integration of its occupants with disabilities. Family community residences offer a relatively permanent living arrangement that can last for years — far different than a vacation rental. Transitional community residences establish a cap on length of residency that can be as much as six months or a year — very different than vacation rentals.

Unlike the guests in a vacation rental unit, the occupants of a community residence for people with disabilities constitute a vulnerable service-dependent population for which each neighborhood has a limited carrying capacity to absorb into its social structure. The occupants of a community residence are seeking to attain normalization and community integration — two core goals absolutely absent from vacation rentals. The occupants of a community residence rely on their so-called “able bodied” neighbors to serve as role models to help foster habilitation or rehabilitation — a concept completely foreign to a transient public lodging establishment. It is well-documented that the vulnerable occupants of a community residence need protection from unscrupulous operators and care givers. In terms of type of use, functionality, purpose, operations, nature of their occupants, and regulatory framework, there is nothing

93. Florida State Statutes, §509.242(1)(c) (2016).

94. Florida State Statutes, §509.013(4)(a)1 (2016).

comparable between community residences for people with disabilities including recovery residences and transient public lodging establishments including vacation rentals.

Summary

The proposed regulatory approach offers the least restrictive means needed to achieve the legitimate government interests of protecting people with disabilities from unscrupulous operators, assuring that their health and safety needs are met, enabling normalization and community integration to occur by preventing clustering of community residences, and preventing the creation of *de facto* social service districts. Protecting the residents of community residences for people with disabilities also protects the neighborhoods in which the homes are located. These provisions help assure that adverse impacts will not be generated. As with all zoning issues, city staff will enforce zoning code compliance.

The proposed amendments will not change the cap of three unrelated individuals functioning as a single housekeeping unit in the zoning code's definition of "family." The zoning amendments will treat community residences that comply with the cap of three unrelated individuals in the city's definition of "family" the same as any other family. They will impose no additional zoning requirements upon them.

However, when the number of unrelated occupants in a proposed community residence exceeds three unrelated individuals, the proposed amendments will make "family community residences" for people with disabilities a permitted use in all residential districts subject to objective, rationally-based licensing and spacing standards. Transitional community residences will be permitted as of right in all multifamily districts subject to these same two criteria and allowed in single-family districts via a special exception based on standards that are as objective as possible to promote compatibility with the single-family neighborhood.

When a proposed community residence for four or more people does not satisfy the spacing and licensing criteria to be permitted as of right, the heightened scrutiny achieved by requiring a special exception is warranted. Consequently, the operator would have to obtain a special exception if her proposed community residence would be located within the 660 feet spacing distance from an existing community residence for four or more people or if the proposed home does not fit within any licensing, certification, or accreditation program of the State of Florida, the federal government, or the Oxford House Charter. The burden rests on the operator to show that the proposed home would meet the standards Pompano Beach requires for issuing a special exception. A community residence that has not been issued a *required* license, certification, or accreditation would *not* be allowed in Pompano Beach at all. But when no certification, licensing, or accreditation is required or available, then the community residence operator can seek a special exception under the special exception backup provision.

Since the zoning amendments that will be proposed are strictly for community residences *for people with disabilities*, there will be no change in how Pompano Beach regulates halfway houses for prison pre-parolees or sex offenders.

To implement and administer these amendments, the city will need to maintain a map and its own internal database of all community residences for people with disabilities within and around Pompano Beach⁹⁵ — otherwise it would be impossible to implement the spacing distances required by the proposed zoning and by existing state licensing of some types of community residences. To balance the privacy interests of the residents of community residences for people with disabilities with implementing the zoning amendments, availability of the map should be limited to city staff and verified potential applicants seeking to establish a community residence for people with disabilities — as much as is permitted under federal and Florida law.

95. Since it is possible that community residences for people with disabilities may be located within whatever spacing distance the city chooses to adopt, it is critical that the city be fully aware of any community residences outside its borders, but within the chosen spacing distance. The adverse effects of clustering community residences do not respect municipal boundaries.

Appendix A: Representative studies of community residence impacts

More than 50 scientific studies have been conducted to identify whether the presence of a community residence for people with disabilities has any effect on property values, neighborhood turnover, or neighborhood safety. No matter which scientifically-sound methodology has been used, the studies have concluded that community residences that meet the health and safety standards imposed by licensing and that are not clustered together on a block have no effect on property values — even for the house next door — nor on the marketability of nearby homes, neighborhood safety, neighborhood character, parking, traffic, public utilities, nor municipal services.

The studies that cover community residences for more than one population provide data on the impacts of the community residences for each population in addition to any aggregate data.

These studies cover only community residences. They do not include recovery communities.

The following studies constitute a representative sample. Few studies have been conducted recently simply because this issue has been studied so exhaustively and their findings of no adverse impacts have been so consistent. Consequently, funding just isn't available to conduct more studies on a topic that has been studied so exhaustively.

Christopher Wagner and Christine Mitchell, *Non-Effect of Group Homes on Neighboring Residential Property Values in Franklin County* (Metropolitan Human Services Commission, Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 1979) (halfway house for persons with mental illness; group homes for neglected, unruly male wards of the county, 12–18 years old).

Eric Knowles and Ronald Baba, *The Social Impact of Group Homes: a study of small residential service programs in first residential areas* (Green Bay, Wisconsin Plan Commission June 1973) (disadvantaged children from urban areas, teenage boys and girls under court commitment, infants and children with severe medical problems requiring nursing care, convicts in work release or study release programs).

Daniel Lauber, *Impacts on the Surrounding Neighborhood of Group Homes for Persons With Developmental Disabilities*, (Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities, Springfield, Illinois, Sept. 1986) (found no effect on property values or turnover due to any of 14 group homes for up to eight residents; also found crime rate among group home residents to be, at most, 16 percent of that for the general population).

Minnesota Developmental Disabilities Program, *Analysis of Minnesota Property Values of Community Intermediate Care Facilities for Mentally Retarded (ICF-MRs)* (Dept. of Energy, Planning and Development 1982) (no difference in property values and turnover rates in 14 neighborhoods with group homes during the two years before and after homes opened, as compared to 14 comparable control neighborhoods without group homes).

Dirk Wiener, Ronald Anderson, and John Nietupski, *Impact of Community-Based Residential Facilities for Mentally Retarded Adults on Surrounding Property Values Using Realtor Analysis Methods*, 17 *Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded* 278 (Dec. 1982) (used real estate agents' "comparable market analysis" method to examine neighborhoods surrounding eight group homes in two medium-sized Iowa com-

munities; found property values in six subject neighborhoods comparable to those in control areas; found property values higher in two subject neighborhoods than in control areas).

Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, *Property Sales Study of the Impact of Group Homes in Montgomery County* (1981) (property appraiser from Magin Realty Company examined neighborhoods surrounding seven group homes; found no difference in property values and turnover rates between group home neighborhoods and control neighborhoods without any group homes).

Martin Lindauer, Pauline Tung, and Frank O'Donnell, *Effect of Community Residences for the Mentally Retarded on Real-Estate Values in the Neighborhoods in Which They are Located* (State University College at Brockport, N.Y. 1980) (examined neighborhoods around seven group homes opened between 1967 and 1980 and two control neighborhoods; found no effect on prices; found a selling wave just before group homes opened, but no decline in selling prices and no difficulty in selling houses; selling wave ended after homes opened; no decline in property values or increase in turnover after homes opened).

L. Dolan and J. Wolpert, *Long Term Neighborhood Property Impacts of Group Homes for Mentally Retarded People*, (Woodrow Wilson School Discussion Paper Series, Princeton University, Nov. 1982) (examined long-term effects on neighborhoods surrounding 32 group homes for five years after the homes were opened and found same results as in Wolpert, *infra*).

Julian Wolpert, *Group Homes for the Mentally Retarded: An Investigation of Neighborhood Property Impacts* (New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Aug. 31, 1978) (most thorough study of all; covered 1570 transactions in neighborhoods of ten New York municipalities surrounding 42 group homes; compared neighborhoods surrounding group homes and comparable control neighborhoods without any group homes; found no effect on property values; proximity to group home had no effect on turnover or sales price; no effect on property value or turnover of houses adjacent to group homes).

Burleigh Gardner and Albert Robles, *The Neighbors and the Small Group Homes for the Handicapped: A Survey* (Illinois Association for Retarded Citizens Sept. 1979) (real estate brokers and neighbors of existing group homes for the retarded, reported that group homes had no effect on property values or ability to sell a house; unlike all the other studies noted here, this is based solely on opinions of real estate agents and neighbors; because no objective statistical research was undertaken, this study is of limited value).

Zack Cauklins, John Noak and Bobby Wilkerson, *Impact of Residential Care Facilities in Decatur* (Macon County Community Mental Health Board Dec. 9, 1976) (examined neighborhoods surrounding one group home and four intermediate care facilities for 60 to 117 persons with mental disabilities; members of Decatur Board of Realtors report no effect on housing values or turnover).

Suffolk Community Council, Inc., *Impact of Community Residences Upon Neighborhood Property Values* (July 1984) (compared sales 18 months before and after group homes opened in seven neighborhoods and comparable control neighborhoods without group homes; found no difference in property values or turnover between group home and control neighborhoods).

Metropolitan Human Services Commission, *Group Homes and Property Values: A Second Look* (Aug. 1980) (Columbus, Ohio) (halfway house for persons with mental illness; group homes for neglected, unruly male wards of the county, 12–18 years old).

Tom Goodale and Sherry Wickware, *Group Homes and Property Values in Residential Areas*, 19 Plan Canada 154–163 (June 1979) (group homes for children, prison pre-parolees).

City of Lansing Planning Department, *Influence of Halfway Houses and Foster Care Facilities Upon Property Values* (Lansing, Mich. Oct. 1976) (No adverse impacts on property values due to halfway houses and group homes for adult ex-offenders, youth offenders, alcoholics).

Michael Dear and S. Martin Taylor, *Not on Our Street*, 133–144 (1982) (group homes for persons with mental illness have no effect on property values or turnover).

John Boeckh, Michael Dear, and S. Martin Taylor, *Property Values and Mental Health Facilities in Metropolitan Toronto*, 24 *The Canadian Geographer* 270 (Fall 1980) (residential mental health facilities have no effect on the volume of sales activities or property values; distance from the facility and type of facility had no significant effect on price).

Michael Dear, *Impact of Mental Health Facilities on Property Values*, 13 *Community Mental Health Journal* 150 (1977) (persons with mental illness; found indeterminate impact on property values).

Stuart Breslow, *The Effect of Siting Group Homes on the Surrounding Environs* (1976) (unpublished) (although data limitations render his results inconclusive, the author suggests that communities can absorb a “limited” number of group homes without measurable effects on property values).

P. Magin, *Market Study of Homes in the Area Surrounding 9525 Sheehan Road in Washington Township, Ohio* (May 1975) (available from County Prosecutors Office, Dayton, Ohio). (found no adverse effects on property values.)

Appendix B: Sample zoning compliance application form

In order to implement the proposed zoning amendments, Pompano Beach will need to create a form for applicants wishing to establish a community residence for any number of people with disabilities. The form will enable city staff to determine whether the proposed community residence:

- ◆ Is allowed as of right under the zoning code's definition of "family"
- ◆ Is allowed as of right in the zoning district in which it would be located,
- ◆ Is required to apply for a special use permit (a special exception in the case of Pompano Beach)
- ◆ Needs to also request a reasonable accommodation to house more than ten individuals
- ◆ Meets the minimum floor area requirements to which all rental housing is subject, and
- ◆ Provides the required minimum number of off-street parking spaces.

The application form that Delray Beach uses is a good example of such a form. It can be adapted for use in Pompano Beach.

It is crucial that the operators of *all* proposed community residences be required to complete this form so the city can identify spacing distances between community residences and determine appropriate zoning treatment. Completing this form places no burden on people with disabilities while offering them substantial benefits by helping to prevent clustering to foster the normalization and community integration essential to operate a community residence.



Community Residence Zoning Application

Applicants: Please complete this form so city staff can identify the zoning requirements that apply to your proposed community residence for people with disabilities.

Instructions: This application must be completed to establish a community residence for people with disabilities in Delray Beach or to recertify a reasonable accommodation applied for *before* July 19, 2017. The city will issue a determination on an application to establish such a community residence for 3 or fewer occupants within 2 business days of receiving the *completed* application. When an application to establish such a community residence for 4 or more occupants meets the criteria for a community residence for people with disabilities allowed as of right by the *Delray Beach Land Development Regulations*, the city will issue a statement of approval within 10 business days of receiving the *completed* application. Any review of a completed application that takes longer than stated here does *not* constitute automatic approval of the application. No public hearing is required. If a conditional use permit is required, a public hearing is necessary and you will need to apply for a conditional use permit. If a reasonable accommodation is needed, staff will provide instructions and any required application form.

Please keep a copy of this completed application for your records.

Date this application submitted to the City of Delray Beach: _____, 20__

Full address of proposed community residence: _____

Zoning district in which the proposed community residence would be located: _____

Application Purpose (check only one):

- Initial application Recertification of reasonable accommodation applied for *before* July 19, 2017

Applicant information:

Applicant's name and title: _____

Applicant's signature: _____

By signing this form, I attest under penalties of perjury, that the information provided is true and accurate.

Name of entity (or individual) that owns the proposed community residence:

- Check box if owner of the property is also the operator

Owner of the property contact information

Address: _____

City-State-Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Cell phone: _____ Email: _____

Operator information if different than owner of the property:

Name of Operator (entity or individual): _____

Address: _____

City-State-Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Cell phone: _____ Email: _____

Owner's Consent: (This consent section must be completed by ALL property owners. Reproduce this page for additional owners and include with your application.)

I, _____, (print owner's name) the fee simple owner of the property located at _____, Delray Beach, Florida, Property Control Number _____, hereby petition to the City of Delray Beach for (check one):

- Zoning approval to establish a community residence at the aforementioned address
- Recertification of the reasonable accommodation for this property that was granted before July 19, 2017 to establish a community residence for people with disabilities at this address

I certify that I have examined the application and that all statements and diagrams submitted are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I consent to inspection and photographing of the subject property by the Planning and Zoning Department staff for purposes of consideration of this application and/or presentation to the approving body or entity. Further, I understand that this application, attachments and fees become part of the Official Records of the City of Delray Beach, Florida, and are not returnable.

Owner's signature: _____

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this _____ day of _____, 20____ by _____, who is personally known to me or has produced _____ (type of identification) as identification and who did (did not) take an oath.

(Printed name of notary public)

(Signature of notary public)

Commission #: _____

My commission expires: _____

(Notary's Seal)

Residency

Check and fill in the *maximum* length of time residents may live in the proposed community residence:

_____ days _____ month(s) _____ year(s) _____ No limitation

How long will residents *typically* live in the home? _____ week(s) _____ month(s) _____ year(s)


Number of occupants

A Number of people with disabilities who will live in the proposed community residence: _____

B Number of live-in staff (if any): _____

Total number of occupants: Add **A + B =** _____

To determine compliance with the City of Delray Beach's *Housing Code*, please enter the requested information:

Bedroom	Width and length in feet of each bedroom <u>excluding</u> closets	Total square feet in bedroom <u>excluding</u> closets	Number of residents (including any live-in staff) to sleep in each bedroom	Total gross floor area of all habitable rooms
1				<p>If unsure how to measure this, ask city staff for instructions.</p> <p>Print the total gross floor area in the cell below</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
Totals			_____ residents	_____ square feet

If an answer to a question will not fit within the space allotted, please feel free to add additional pages as needed.

Licensing and Certification

Describe the general nature of the residents' disabilities (developmental disabilities, recovery from addiction, mental illness, physical disability, frail elderly, etc.). *Do not discuss specific individuals:*

Check the appropriate box(es) below and provide the information requested:

The State of Florida (including FARR) has issued the certification or required license or to operate this community residence as a _____

(License categories include, but are not limited to: "community residential home" and "assisted living facility"; certification includes "recovery residence")

FARR Certification Level (if applicable): _____

Name of Certified Recovery Residence Administrator (if applicable): _____

Name of state licensing or certification agency:

Statutory number under which license is required: _____

Provide official verification that certification or the requisite license has been issued or applied for.

Check here if certification has been applied for and provisional certification has been issued.

Date on which provisional certification was issued: _____, 20____

If provisional certification, annual certification, or a required license has *not* been issued, please explain why and when it is expected to be issued:

The State of Florida does **not** require a license or offer certification for this type of community residence

The proposed community residence is sanctioned by Congress (example: Oxford House)

Off-street parking

Number of residents allowed to have a motor vehicle on the site: _____

Number of staff present at any one time (excludes during shift changes): _____

A Number of off-street parking spaces on the site: _____ spaces

B Number of off-street parking spaces off the site at a remote location(s): _____ spaces

Total number of off-street parking on the site and off the site at remote location(s):

Add **A + B =** _____

Address(es) of off-site location(s) for any remote off-street parking:

For CITY Staff Use Only

Findings

Zoning District: _____

The closest existing community residences within a 660 foot radius of the proposed community residence:

Address	Distance from proposed community residence

- _____ Number of residents who are people with disabilities
- _____ Total number of residents including live-in staff *[more than 10 requires a reasonable accommodation unless the home is licensed by the State of Florida; then 14 are allowed]*
- _____ Maximum number of occupants allowed under Delray Beach *Housing Code*
- _____ Minimum number of off-street parking spaces required on site or at remote location(s)

Proposed use is a (check only one):

- Family community residence Transitional community residence
- Not a community residence *for people with disabilities*

Licensing/Certification Status (check all that apply):

- The State of Florida requires a state license to operate the proposed community residence
- The State of Florida does **not** require a state license or **does not offer** certification for this use
- Proposed use or operator has been issued a required state license, state certification, or is sanctioned by Congress (Oxford House) *[see next line for provisional certifications]*
- Operator has been issued provisional certification to operate the proposed recovery residence
- Operator has applied for state certification or a required state license, but has not been issued the certification or license sought. Expected date of issuance: _____, 20__
- Operator or proposed use has been **denied** certification or required state license

Zoning Determination Check all applicable boxes

- Off-street parking requirements are met
- Complies with Delray Beach *Housing Code*
- Use constitutes a “family” of 3 or less and is allowed without spacing or licensing
- Use is allowed as of right
- Use requires a conditional use permit
- Use requires a reasonable accommodation
- Use issued state license or certification
- Use may open only *after* receiving state license or provisional certification
- Recertify existing reasonable accommodation

- Application denied** *(Check all applicable reasons):*
 - Lacks certification or required license
 - Not allowed as of right
 - Not eligible for a conditional use permit
 - Not a community residence for people with disabilities
 - Doesn't comply with *Housing Code*
 - Doesn't meet off-street parking minimum
 - Doesn't meet requirements to recertify existing reasonable accommodation

Staff review conducted by: _____
 Signed: _____
 Date: _____, 20__