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St. Pete Beach experience seen as an Amendment 4 litmus test

Boarded up dreams: St. Pete Beach hotel stuck in limbo

Tampa Bay Business Journal - by [Michael Hinman](#) Staff Writer

ST. PETE BEACH – Residents still have a direct say on major changes to the city's comprehensive plan, but voters last week overwhelmingly decided they don't need to see every adjustment on the ballot.

They won't be dealing with minor changes, especially issues that need to be fixed because of state requirements. Still, current law in St. Pete Beach makes it ground zero for the "Florida Hometown Democracy" constitutional ballot initiative, now known as Amendment 4, which culminates in a statewide vote less than a year from now. Caught in the crossfire is developer Robert Fleeting.

As a principal of [Coral Reef Partners](#) LLC, Fleeting bought the condemned Coral Reef Hotel in 2005 and quickly shut down the six-story structure. Plumbing and electrical infrastructure was coming apart, and there was no way to salvage the building.

Instead, Fleeting wanted to construct a resort community on the site, playing his role in efforts to transform a row of aging hotels in St. Pete Beach just as the housing boom was gaining steam.

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