



Land Use Change Staff Report

Case No. LUC25-0005

Planning & Zoning Commission: October 13, 2025

City Council (1st Reading): November 18, 2025

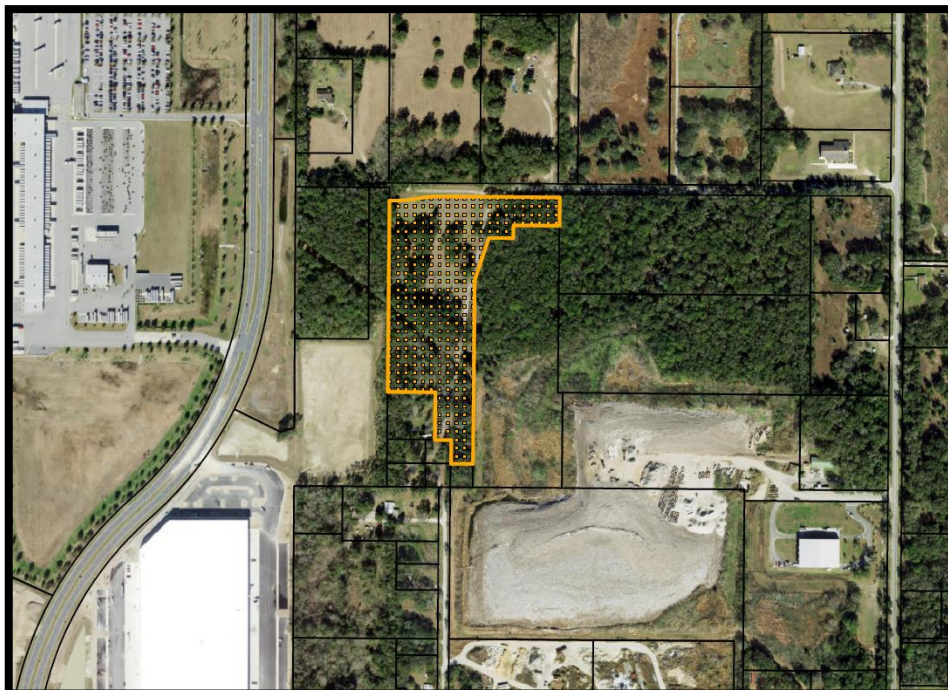
City Council (Adoption): December 2, 2025

Applicant: Friends Recycling LLC
Property Owner: Friends Recycling LLC
Project Planner: Emily W. Johnson, AICP, Senior Planner
Amendment Request: Seeking approval to change the Future Land Use designation for the subject property from Medium Intensity/Special District to Employment Center

Parcel Information

Acres: ±10.36 acres
Parcel(s)#: 21454-000-00
Location: 2500 NW 31st Avenue
Existing use: Vacant and undeveloped
Future Land Use Designation: Medium Intensity/Special District
Zoning Designation: R-1, Single-Family Residential, & R-2, Two-Family Residential
Special District(s)/Plan(s): West Ocala Community Plan – Main Street Mixed Use District
Approved Agreement(s): First Amendment to Chapter 163 Development Agreement (approved January 16, 2024)
Associated Application(s): Rezoning to M-1, Light Industrial (ZON25-0012)

Figure 1. Aerial Location Map



Section 1 - Applicant Request

The applicant is requesting to change the future land use map designation for the subject property from Medium Intensity/Special District to Employment Center on the 10.36-acre site for consistency with a concurrent request for rezoning to M-1, Light Industrial.

The agent, Austin Dailey, Klein & Klein PLLC, is representing the applicant in this request.

Section 2 - Background Information

The subject property encompasses a total of approximately 10.36 acres. The current designations of the properties are:

Zoning: **R-1, Single-Family Residential** district is intended to preserve established single-family neighborhoods and to provide for new areas of low and moderate-density single-family development.

R-2, Two-Family Residential district is intended to be of similar residential character to the single-family districts, but also permits two-family dwellings and two dwellings on one lot.

Future Land Use: **Medium Intensity/Special District**, a minimum of 5 and maximum of 30 dwelling units per acre, a minimum of 0.15 and maximum of 4.0 floor area ratio (FAR).

The owner acquired the subject property as part of a land swap with the city in 2024, which included several single-family properties at the time of the swap. Since the acquisition, the property owner has combined the parcels into one parcel of land totaling approximately 10.36 acres. The applicant has indicated no intention to utilize these properties for a potential expansion of the existing landfill. These properties have existing M-1, Light Industrial zoning to the east (common ownership) and west.

Table 1: Adjacent Property Information:

<u>Direction</u>	<u>Future Land Use</u>	<u>Zoning District</u>	<u>Current Use</u>
North (County)	Employment Center	A-1, General Agriculture R-E, Residential Estate R-1, Single-Family Dwelling	Existing enclave consisting of single-family residential and general agricultural uses
East	Medium Intensity/Special District	M-1, Light Industrial M-2, Medium Industrial	C&D Landfill and Materials Recovery Facility (Friends Recycling)
South	Medium Intensity/Special District	R-2, Two-Family Residential M-2, Medium Industrial	Single-family residence Vacant, undeveloped C&D Landfill and Materials Recovery Facility (Friends

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			Recycling)
West	Medium Intensity/ Special District	M-1, Light Industrial R-1, Single Family Residential	Vacant, undeveloped

The subject property is accessed by NW 28th Street, an unclassified roadway connecting to NW 27th Avenue. North of the subject properties, existing single-family and general agricultural uses are located within a county enclave. Other uses in the area include construction service establishments to the south, the industrially developed Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park to the northwest, and the mixed-use West Oak Planned Development (PD) to the east.

Background - Adjacent Properties (common ownership): As indicated in this staff analysis section of this report, the intended development pattern anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2035, and West Ocala Vision & Community Plan (West Ocala Vision) has changed for the area West of NW 27th Avenue and North of NW 21st Street. As a result, it is relevant to consider the factors and actions associated with the properties in the surrounding area, particularly the adjacent properties to the east, which are under common ownership. Key points regarding these properties include:

- Continued operation of an existing C&D landfill and Materials Recovery Facility dating back to the early 1990s.
- 2009 effort to change the future land use category from Low Density Residential to Medium Industrial and rezone to M-2, Medium Industrial, was denied by the City Council.
- The 2035 Vision Plan was adopted in 2011, and the Friends Recycling facility was considered a nonconforming use.
- In the M-1, Light Industrial, and M-2, Medium Industrial, zoning districts, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) permit for the landfill was expected to expire in 2023.
- August 16, 2022 – City approved land development regulation amendments to establish regulations for a MRF and C&D landfill.
- January 16, 2024 – City approved a Chapter 163 development agreement on the site, limiting height while increasing buffering.
- June 3, 2024 – Property owner granted extension of the FDEP permit (C&D Debris Disposal with Recycling) to June 3, 2029, for the operation of a C&D Debris Disposal and Recycling Facility.
- October 21, 2025, City approves transmittal to the State Department of Commerce for the transmittal of a future land use amendment on landfill and MRF property to change the future land use from Medium Intensity/Special District to Employment Center.

Section 3 – Staff Analysis

This report reviews the proposed land use amendment in alignment with the city's comprehensive plan, including the Ocala 2035 Vision, and relevant land development regulations. It also considers the relevance of the applicant's request to change the future land use on the adjoining owned property to the east.

The Ocala 2035 Vision established the basis for what would ultimately guide development and growth

in the City of Ocala. Following the completion of the 2035 Vision, the comprehensive plan was amended, creating six total Future Land Use (FLU) categories. In doing so, new land uses were designated in this area, considering both existing and future development. The 2035 Vision map identified the subject property and its surrounding area as transitional, between Medium Low Intensity and Low Intensity urban form areas. Thus, the subject property was designated with a future land use category of Medium Intensity/Special District to encourage redevelopment efforts that are appropriately aligned.

Additionally, the 2035 Vision led to the creation of focus area plans. In 2015, the West Ocala Vision & Community Plan (West Ocala Vision) was adopted to establish goals for revitalization in the West Ocala area by focusing on preservation, infill development, and density management. The subject property and surrounding area are identified as the North Gate Way - Main Street Mixed Use District in the West Ocala Vision & Community Plan.

Pursuant to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element (FLUE) Policy 6.2, the Medium Intensity/Special District FLU is intended to identify neighborhood and community-serving activity centers for mixed-use commercial nodes and promote a walkable urban form. Importantly, Light Industrial is the only category of industrial uses indicated as permitted within this category. The City's land development regulations Section 122-2A provide district use categories, where construction and demolition landfill and materials recovery facilities are designated as:

High-impact industrial use includes the following: automobile wrecking yard; construction and demolition landfill; CRA existing industrial uses (off-site expansion); hazardous waste, bulk storage; industrial dry-cleaning plant; manufacturing, heavy; materials recovery facility; and recycling plant.

The High Impact Industrial use designation is not consistent with the permitted use categories of the Medium Intensity/Special District future land use. Other projects, such as the redevelopment of the former Pine Oaks Municipal Golf Course (n/k/a West Oak PD) and the development of the Mary Sue Rich Community Center at Reed Place, provided further indication of shifting the focus of the Medium Intensity/Special District further to the east of NW 27th Avenue.

The analysis of the pending land use change for the Landfill and Materials Recovery Facility, located to the east of the subject properties, is relevant to this proposed amendment. It provides continuity and recognition of the transition of this area of the city, lying north of NW 21st Street and west of NW 27th Avenue. The aforementioned actions indicated in the Background Section of this report represent a change in the intent and purpose of the Medium Intensity/Special District land use category for this area that is more appropriately aligned with the purpose and intent of the Employment Center future land use category. Furthermore, the proposed amendment to the Employment Center's future land use provides consistency with properties to the west, including the Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:

The requested land use change is consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the City of Ocala Future Land Use Element:

1. Future Land Use Element Policy 6.5: Employment Center. The intent of the Employment Center land use is to provide a regionally important hub for business, enterprise, research and development, and employment activities. Employment Centers are generally single-use districts, but may include more than one use if there are appropriate buffers and transitions between complementary uses. Permitted uses shall consist of a primary use and may include a

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secondary use. Primary uses are industrial, office, and commercial. Secondary uses are public, recreation, institutional, and residential, as well as educational facilities. There are no form requirements in this land use category.

Access is primarily from major collectors, arterials, or limited-access highways. The primary modes of transportation include automobiles, trucks, freight rail, buses, and commuter rail transit. Provisions should be made for walking, bicycles, and transit.

There is no minimum density and intensity in this future land use category. The maximum density and intensity before any incentives is 24 dwelling units per gross acre or 2.00 FAR. The location and application of incentives shall be set forth in the Land Development Code.

Staff Comment:

- *The Employment Center Future Land Use category allows for high-impact industrial uses. Additionally, the Employment Center land use is designated on nearby properties, including the Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park.*
 - *The subject property is accessed via a local roadway, which connects to a collector roadway (NW 27th Avenue). This does not specifically align with the access as mentioned in Policy 6.5 for the subject property. However, the subject property is bounded by existing Employment Center land use, which fronts along NW 27th Avenue, an urban collector roadway identified in the Transportation Element Map Series (Functional Classification of Roads map)*
 - *The maximum density and intensity of the Employment Center FLU is 24 dwelling units per acre. Any residential development in this FLU requires a rezoning to a mixed-use Planned Development (PD) zoning district.*
2. Future Land Use Element Objective 14: The City shall continue existing regulations or adopt new regulations to ensure that development is consistent with the Future Land Use Map and are compatible with neighboring development, available services and facilities, and topography and soil conditions.

Staff Comment:

- *The requested land use amendment aligns with development in the surrounding and adjacent areas which currently have Employment Center FLU.*

Table 2: Existing and Proposed Land Use Standards

	Future Land Use Category	Permitted Land Uses	Allowable Density	Allowable FAR
Existing	Medium Intensity/ Special District	Residential, office, commercial, public, recreation, institutional, light industrial, educational facilities	5 to 30 units/acre	0.15 to 4.0 FAR
Proposed	Employment Center	Primary Uses: Industrial, office, commercial Secondary Uses: Public, recreation, institutional, residential, educational	Up to 24 units/acre	Up to 2.0 FAR

		facilities		
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Section 5 - Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

As shown in the table above, the result of the proposed land use amendment would be a reduction in the potential maximum residential dwelling units from 30 units an acre to 24 units per acre and a reduction in the maximum potential FAR from 4.0 to 2.0. As a result, a LOS analysis is not meaningful or beneficial for this amendment.

Summary Staff Comments: *For consideration of the future land use amendment, there are several key factors to consider:*

- *The proposed Employment Center future land use is consistent with surrounding development filling in a gap between existing industrial uses to the east and to the west, such as the Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park.*
- *The development pattern for this area of the city has changed from the intent of the Medium Density/Special District promoting mixed use commercial and residential development to one more closely aligned with the Employment Center category the focuses on higher impact employment uses.*
- *Nearby industrial uses are already serviced by city utilities.*

Section 6 - Staff Findings and Recommendation

- The requested Employment Center Future Land Use designation is more compatible with the high-impact industrial uses of the area to the east and the industrial park west of the subject property.
- The 2035 Vision and West Ocala Vision anticipated redevelopment within this NW area of the city. However, since their adoption, development trends over the last 15 years appear to have shifted the focus of the intent of the Medium Intensity/Special District further to the east of NW 27th Avenue. While the properties North of NW 21st Street and west of NW 27th Avenue continue to be aligned with the intent of the Employment Center future land use which is more focused on employment than on mixed use residential.
- The requested future land use amendment is more consistent with nearby developments like the Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park and other neighboring uses.
- The proposed amendment would result in a reduction to the potential impact to public facilities. Any future development will require further analysis.

Staff Recommendation:	Approval of LUC25-0005
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