



Land Use Change Staff Report

Case No. LUC25-0004

Planning & Zoning Commission: September 8, 2025

City Council (Transmittal): October 21, 2025

City Council (1st Reading): April 7, 2026

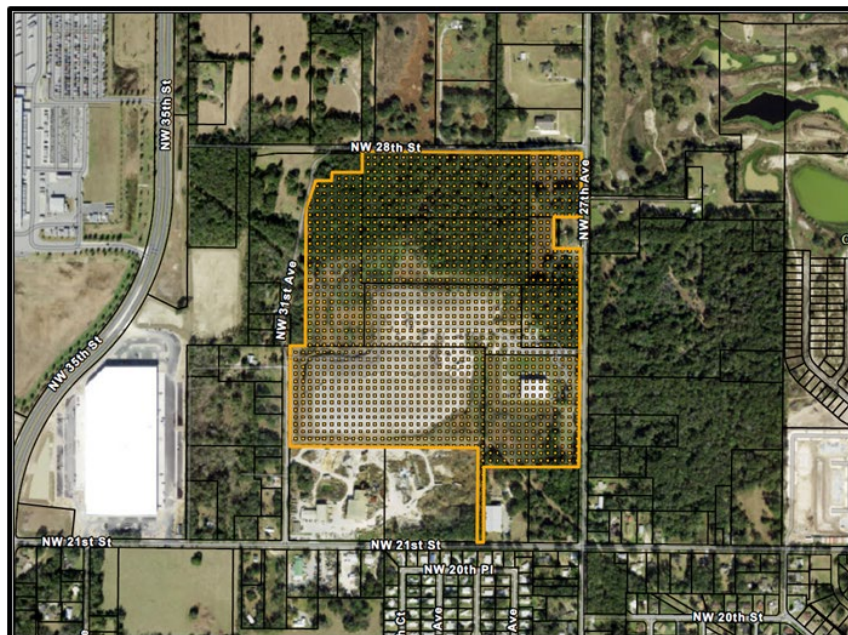
City Council (Adoption): April 21, 2026

Applicant: Friends Recycling LLC
Property Owner: Friends Recycling LLC & Friends Real Estate Holdings 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: ±74.11 acres
Parcel(s)#: 21492-000-00, 21477-000-00, 21474-002-00, 21476-000-00, 21474-000-00, 21474-001-00, 21480-000-00, 21494-000-00, and 21478-000-00
Location: located in the 2300 block of NW 27th Avenue
Existing use: Construction & Demolition (C&D) Landfill and Recycling Center Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)
Future Land Use Designation: Medium Intensity/Special District
Zoning Designation: M-1, Light Industrial & M-2, Medium Industrial
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)

Figure 1. Aerial Location Map



Section 1 - Applicant Request

At the request of staff, the petitioner is requesting to change the future land use map designation for the subject properties from Medium Intensity/Special District to Employment Center. The land use amendment is necessary to resolve the conflict between the existing comprehensive plan future land use designation of Medium Intensity/Special District existing uses of the property that include a Construction & Demolition (C&D) landfill and a Recycling Center (see attached letter reaffirming use of property dated March 13, 2026) ~~materials recovery facility (MRF)~~ on the 74.11-acre site. While these uses are permitted within the current zoning for the properties (M-1 and M-2), the uses are not identified as permitted uses within the Medium Intensity/Special District future land use category.

The amendment was transmitted to the Florida Department of Commerce (FL Commerce) for an expedited state review consistent with F.S. 163.3184(3) on November 3, 2025. No comments nor objections were received from any state agency.

The agent, Fred Roberts, Klein & Klein PLLC, is representing the applicant in this request.

Section 2 - Background Information

The subject properties are comprised of nine parcels of land (Parcel ID# 21492-000-00, 21477-000-00, 21474-002-00, 21476-000-00, 21474-000-00, 21474-001-00, 21480-000-00, 21494-000-00, and 21478-000-00) encompassing a total of approximately 74.11 acres. The current designations of the properties are:

Zoning:

M-1, Light Industrial district is intended primarily for wholesale distribution, warehouse storage, research and development, showroom sales, and light manufacturing of finished or semi-finished products.

M-2, Medium Industrial district is intended primarily for the wholesale distribution, warehouse storage, outdoor storage and sales, research and development and light manufacturing of finished or semi-finished products in multiple-use facilities or structures.

Future Land Use:

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

Operation of the existing C&D landfill and MRF uses on the subject properties date to the early 1990s. In 2009, efforts to change the future land use category from Low Density Residential to Medium Industrial and rezone to M-2, Medium Industrial, were denied by City Council. When the 2035 Vision Plan was adopted in 2011, 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.

The subject properties were identified as part of a future redevelopment location with the anticipation that the use would cease upon expiration of the FDEP permit. As a result, the subject properties were designated with the Medium Intensity/Special District future land use category to encourage redevelopment efforts consistent with the 2035 Vision Plan and subsequent comprehensive plan amendments. Since the implementation of Vision 2035 and the related comprehensive plan amendments, there have been further actions by the city and property owner which indicate the continued allowance and recognition of the existing industrial uses of the properties. The actions include:

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- 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.
- January 16, 2024 - A chapter 163 development agreement on the site limiting height while increasing buffering.
- August 16, 2022 - Land development regulation amendments to establish regulations for a MRF and C&D landfill.

Table 1: Adjacent Property Information:

Direction	Future Land Use	Zoning District	Current Use
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	Neighborhood Medium Intensity/Special District	R-1, Single Family Residential R-3, Multi-family Residential PD, Planned Development	Single-Family Residences Vacant, undeveloped residential adjacent to NW 27 th Ave
South	Medium Intensity/Special District Neighborhood	M-1, Light Industrial M-2, Medium Industrial MH, Mobile Home Park	Construction service establishments (Counts Construction & One Stop Flooring) Vacant, undeveloped industrial
West	Medium Intensity/Special District	R-1, Single Family Residential R-2, Two-Family Residential	Single-Family Residences Vacant, undeveloped residential adjacent to NW 31 st Ave

The subject property fronts NW 27th Avenue to the east which is classified as an urban collector roadway. 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.

Section 3 – Staff Analysis

This report reviews the proposed land use amendment for alignment with the city's comprehensive

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plan, including Ocala Vision 2035, and relevant land development regulations.

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 FLU categories. In doing so, new land uses were designated in this area considering both existing and future development. The 2035 Vision map indicated the subject properties as a transitional area located between a Medium Low Intensity and Low Intensity urban form area. Thus, the subject properties were designated as Medium Intensity/Special District to encourage redevelopment efforts.

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 properties and surrounding area are identified as the North Gate Way - Main Street Mixed Use District in the West Ocala Vision & Community Plan.

Pursuant to 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 ~~are and materials recovery facilities~~ as designated as:

High-impact industrial use includes the uses: 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 developed 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.

As previously indicated, there have been additional actions by the city and property owner to further suggest that the area north of NW 21st Street and west of NW 27th Avenue has shifted away from the intent of the Medium Intensity/Special District through subsequent actions. Specifically, the amendment to the development agreement for the landfill and material recover facility and amendment to the land development code support the shift away from the intent of the Medium Intensity/Special District land use. Specifically, the land development code revisions established the conditions for which a C&D landfill ~~and Material Recover Facility~~ may be located and operated.

The existing uses of the subject property more appropriately align with the Employment Center FLU category. This FLU category identifies the industrial use category as a primary permitted use, that includes the High Impact Industrial use category. Other properties in the area (the Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park properties to the west) currently have an Employment Center FLU designation. According to Comprehensive Plan FLUE Policy 6.5, this designation is intended to develop a key regional hub for business, research, and employment.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:

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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 (1) use if there are appropriate buffers and transitions between complementary uses. Permitted uses shall include a primary use and may include a 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, bus, 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 and is a more appropriate designation for the existing C&D landfill and a Recycling Center MRF. 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 collector roadway (NW 27th Avenue), consistent with the location criteria for the Employment Center FLU.*
 - *The existing C&D landfill and MRF uses are not generally conducive to a high floor area ratio (FAR), as the uses take place primarily outside of an enclosed building. Therefore, the lack of a minimum intensity, and a maximum intensity of 2.0 FAR are more appropriate for continuation and potential expansion of the existing uses, than the current Medium Intensity/Special District FLU.*
 - *The maximum density and intensity of the 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 City adopted Ordinance 2024-7 which amended the Land Development Regulations to allow for greater expansion and operation of the existing C&D landfill and MRF within the M-1 and M-2 zoning districts in conjunction with a Chapter 163 Development Agreement.*
- *The requested land use amendment aligns with the existing and anticipated continued use of the subject properties. Development in the surrounding and adjacent areas currently has 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 facilities	Up to 24 units/acre	Up to 2.0 FAR

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 C&D landfill and Recycling Center MRF uses have existed on site since the early 1990s.*
- *The intensity and nature of the existing facility are incompatible with the intention of the current Medium Intensity/Special District land use.*
- *The proposed Employment Center future land use is more consistent with the existing M-1 and M-2 zoning districts, and the existing C&D landfill and ~~MRF~~ Recycling Center uses.*
- *The proposed Employment Center future land use is consistent with nearby development to the west as part of the Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park.*
- *The existing development and use of the property is currently served with city utilities. No issue or additional impact is anticipated as a result of the proposed amendment.*

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 existing Construction & Demolition landfill ~~and Materials Recovery Facility~~.
- The 2035 Vision and West Ocala Vision envisioned redevelopment within the area but recent actions appear to have shifted the focus of the Medium Intensity/Special District intent further to the east of NW 27th Avenue and the intent of the Employment Center future land use more appropriate to properties North of NW 21st Street and west of NW 27th Avenue.
- The requested future land use amendment is more consistent with the current and anticipated use of the properties and nearby developments like the Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park.
- The proposed amendment would result in a reduction to the potential impact to public facilities.

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Any future development will require further analysis.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of LUC25-0004
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