



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): TBD

City Council (Adoption): TBD

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 Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)

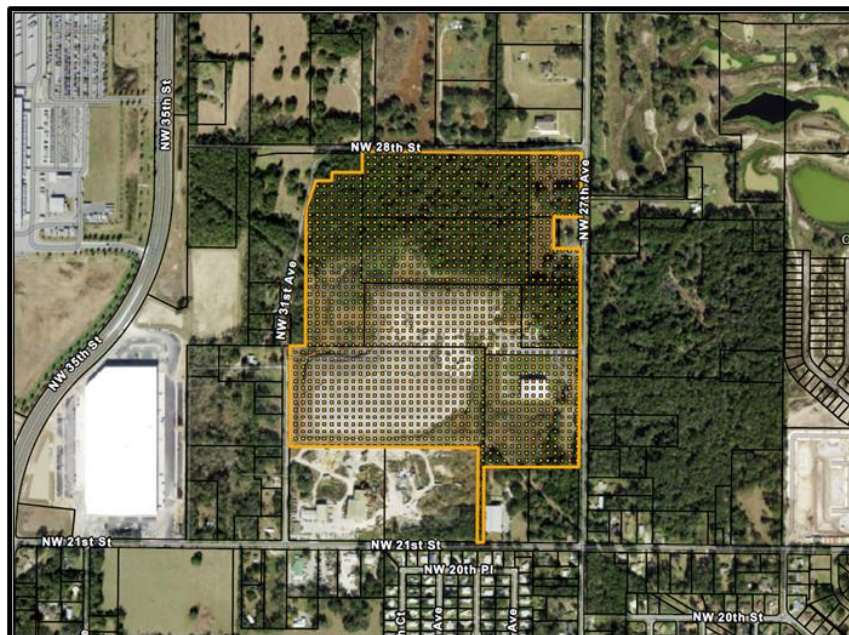
Future Land Use Designation: Medium Intensity/Special District

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

The applicant is requesting to change the future land use designation from Medium Intensity/Special District to Employment Center for consistency with existing zoning and the active Construction & Demolition (C&D) landfill and materials recovery facility (MRF) uses on the 74.11-acre site. The proposed amendment will be transmitted to the Florida Department of Commerce (FLCommerce) for an expedited state review consistent with F.S. 163.3184(3).

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 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. Therefore, the subject parcels ultimately received a Medium Intensity/Special District future land use category to encourage redevelopment efforts consistent with the 2035 Vision Plan and associated comprehensive plan amendments. Subsequently, there have been additional agreements, property acquisitions, permit extensions, and amendments to the code which allow for the continued operation and increased expansion potential of the existing facility including:

- A chapter 163 development agreement on the site limiting height while increasing buffering;
- Purchase of additional properties to allow for greater expansion of the use;
- Land development regulation amendments to establish regulations for a MRF and C&D landfill; and
- Extension of the FDEP permit to 2029 for the operation of a C&D Debris Disposal and Recycling Facility.

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 | 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 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. Following adoption of the community plan, the focus area for the intended redevelopment has shifted east. The city participated in 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 redefining the envisioned mixed-use commercial node.

The current use of the property continues, with plans to extend operations. This conflicts with the current Future Land Use (FLU) designation and the 2035 Vision and West Ocala Vision. The existing use aligns with the Employment Center FLU category. The adjacent industrial development at Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park has 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:

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 MRF. Additionally, Employment Center exists nearby, as properties to the west have been designated and developed as part of 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.*

Future Land Use Change Staff Report

Case No. LUC25-0004

- *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

The maximum allowable density for the subject properties with the Employment Center land use is 1,778 dwelling units, with a maximum FAR of 6,456,463 square feet. In staff's review of comprehensive plan future land use map amendments, conducting an analysis of LOS impact based upon maximum potential buildout (density/intensity) is not very meaningful. This is emphasized because the maximum impact is typically unrealistic. Additionally, further detailed LOS impact analysis will be required to address the specific proposed development as part of subsequent application review.

Future Land Use Change Staff Report

Case No. LUC25-0004

For this staff report, the following LOS analysis provides a review of the potential impact on public facilities based upon the existing uses. Additional LOS analysis will be required at the time of expansion of the uses, or future redevelopment.

A. Required Public Facilities (adopted LOS standards in the comprehensive plan):

The existing C&D landfill and MRF are already serviced by city utilities. At this time, plans for expansion of the facilities have not been provided. Additional LOS analysis will be required at the time of expansion of the uses, or future redevelopment.

Transportation: The subject properties have frontage on NW 27th Avenue which is identified as a Collector roadway. Automotive traffic will likely access the property via NW 35th Street to the north, and NW 21st Street to the south. The 2023 congestion management data from the Ocala-Marion TPO for the affected roadway(s) is provided below.

• Adopted LOS / Available Capacity:

| Road/ Street Name | Lanes | Speed Limit | Functional Classification | Adopted LOS | LOS Capacity | 2023 AADT | Existing LOS |
|-------------------------------|-------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| NW 27 th Avenue | 2 | 40 | Collector | E | 14,040 | 6,300 | C |

Developments proposing to generate 100 or more net new PM peak hour trips are required to submit a traffic study as part of the subdivision review.

LOS Impact: Additional trips are not contemplated as a result of the proposed FLU change. Specific traffic analysis will be required through a traffic study prior to any expansion of the existing uses or future redevelopment.

Potable Water: The properties are currently serviced by City of Ocala Utilities. City utilities are available at this location; connections will be determined during the site plan review process. A city water main runs along NW 21st Street and NW 27th Avenue.

- *Adopted Level of Service (LOS) Potable Water:* 300 gallons per day (gpd) per equivalent residential unit (ERU), or the equivalent of 167 gallons per capita daily (gpcd).
- *Available Capacity:* Capacity is available. The permitted capacity of the City's water system is 24.4 million gallons daily (mgd).

LOS Impact: Additional demand is not contemplated as a result of the proposed FLU change. Staff has indicated the approximate daily flows are 17 mgd, leaving a remaining capacity of approximately 7.4 mgd; additional capacity analysis will be required at the time of site plan review for any expansion of the existing uses or future redevelopment.

Sanitary Sewer: The properties are currently being serviced by City of Ocala Utilities. City utilities are available at this location; connections will be determined during the site plan review process. A city force main is available along NW 27th Avenue.

- *Adopted Level of Service (LOS) Sanitary Sewer:* 250 gallons per day (gpd) per equivalent residential unit (ERU), or the equivalent of 80 gallons per capita daily (gpcd).
- *Available Capacity:* Capacity is available. The permitted capacity of Water Reclamation Facility #2 is 6.5 million gallons daily (mgd) and the permitted capacity of Water Reclamation Facility #3 is 4.0 million gallons daily (mgd).

LOS Impact: Additional demand is not contemplated as a result of the proposed FLU change. Staff has indicated the approximate daily flows are 6.5 mgd leaving a remaining capacity of approximately 4 mgd; additional capacity analysis will be required at the time of site plan review for any expansion of the existing uses or future redevelopment.

Solid Waste: The subject property is located within the City's service area; refuse pickup will be determined during the site plan review process.

- *Adopted Level of Service (LOS) Solid Waste:* 0.0112 pounds per square foot of occupied building space per day for nonresidential development.

LOS Impact: Solid waste is transported to facilities outside of the city, the capacity of these facilities is under others jurisdiction.

Parks and Recreation Facilities:

- *Adopted Level of Service (LOS) Solid Waste:* 4.6 developed park acres per 1,000 population for each Regional Park Service Area (RPSA).
- *Available Capacity:* Capacity is available. The City's population of 69,283 requires 318.70 developed park acres. The city currently owns and maintains 622.27 developed park acres, pursuant to the Fall 2024 Activity Guide released by the Recreation and Parks Department.

LOS Impact: The existing industrial uses generally do not generate additional demand for parks. Additional capacity analysis will be required at the time of rezoning and site plan review, if a residential redevelopment is contemplated in the future.

B. Other Public Facilities:

The following public facilities do not have adopted Level of Service standards and are provided as additional information.

Stormwater: The subject properties are partially located within FEMA Flood Zone "A". This is a Special Flood Hazard Area with a 1% annual chance of flooding (100-year floodplain). Portions of the subject properties were assessed during the Ocala Flood Study and determined to have a base flood elevation (BFE) of 64.00. Any future development must retain runoff on-site to match pre-development conditions. Facilities must be designed to provide flood protection for a 100 year, 24-hour storm event and subsequent 14-day recovery.

Electric: The subject properties are within the Ocala Electric Utility service territory.

Fiber: Service is not currently available at this location.

Fire Service: Ocala Fire Rescue Station #1 is located approximately 2.1 miles from the subject properties. This distance exceeds the desired industry standard of 1.5 miles for fire service.

Schools: The proposed amendment is not anticipated to impact schools.

Staff Comment: Preliminary review of Required Public Facilities does not indicate any capacity issues for the city to be able to accommodate the existing C&D landfill and MRF. Further LOS analysis will be required prior to any expansion or future redevelopment as part of subsequent site plan reviews.

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

- *The C&D landfill and 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 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 C&D landfill and MRF 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 existing Construction & Demolition landfill and Materials Recovery Facility.
- The 2035 Vision and West Ocala Vision envisioned redevelopment within the area but recent efforts have shifted east, making a mixed-use commercial node at this location less feasible.
- 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.
- City utilities are available at this location, and no level of service issues have been identified for public facilities.

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Staff Recommendation: | Approval of LUC25-0004 |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|