



**Marion County
Board of County Commissioners**

Growth Services

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Ocala, FL 34470
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**PLANNING & ZONING SECTION
STAFF REPORT**

Public Hearing Dates	P&Z: 5/28/2025 Continued from 3/31/2025 after being continued from 1/27/2025	BCC: 6/16/2025
Case Number	250203ZC	
CDP-AR	32251	
Type of Case: Rezoning	From: General Agriculture (A-1) To: Community Business (B-2)	
Owner	SECO Energy / Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. (previously Southern Hills Limited, Inc.)	
Applicant	Victoria Diaz, Bowman Consulting	
Street Address / Site Location	12644 SW 16 th Avenue (affiliated with 12830 and 12940 SW 16 th Avenue)	
Parcel Number(s)	41200-012-00 (affiliated with 41200-020-00, and 41200-020-01)	
Property Size	±39.2 acres	
Future Land Use	Employment Center (EC)	
Existing Zoning	General Agriculture (A-1)	
Overlays Zones & Special Areas	Outside Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), Marion Oaks/I-75 & Hwy 484 Urban Area, Secondary Springs Protection Zone (SSPZ), Marion County Utilities SW Service Area, and CR 475A Visual Enhancement Gateway Development Overlay (<i>CR 475A Overlay</i>)	
Staff Recommendation	APPROVAL	
P&Z Recommendation	TBD	
Project Planner	Christopher D. Rison, AICP, Senior Planner	
Related LU & Zoning Cases	2010-L03: Large-Scale Land Use Amendment from Rural Land (RL) to Equestrian Commercial Support District (ECSD); 2011-Comp Plan Update: From Equestrian Commercial Support District (ECSD) to Employment Center (EC) as ESCS land use was discontinued. 250204SU: Utility company service yard including office building, warehouse, and outdoor equipment and material storage “lay-down yard.”	
Code Cases	N/A	

I. ITEM SUMMARY

Victoria Diaz, with Bowman Consulting, filed a rezoning application on behalf of Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SECO Energy), to change a ± 39.20 acre site from General Agriculture (A-1) to Community Business (B-2). The Parcel Identification Number for the property is 41200-012-00; the site is addressed as 12644 SW 16th Avenue, Ocala, and the legal description is provided within the application (see Attachment A). The site is located outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) - in the Marion Oaks/I-75 & Hwy 484 Urban Area, in the Secondary Springs Protection Zone (SSPZ), in the Marion County Utilities SW Regional Service Area, and in the CR 475A Visual Enhancement Gateway Development Overlay (CR 475A Overlay). The application proposes rezoning the subject property for all uses permitted. *A concurrent Special Use Permit Application (250204SU) including this site and two parcels to the south has been submitted; that application proposes a utility company service yard consisting of an office building, warehouse, and outdoor equipment and material storage "lay-down yard."* This request was continued from the January 27, 2025, and March 31, 2025, Planning and Zoning Commission public hearings at the request of the applicant.

Figure 1
Aerial Map



II. STAFF SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the rezoning application. Staff finds the requested zoning does conform to LDC Section 2.7.3.E(2) as it would not adversely affect the public interest, is compatible with the Marion County Comprehensive Plan, and is compatible with the surrounding area.

III. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.B., public notice was posted on the subject property May 18, 2025. Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.C., notice of public hearing was mailed to all property owners (8 owners) within 300-feet on May 9, 2025. Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.E., due public notice was published in the Ocala Star-Banner on May 12, 2025. Evidence of the above-described public notices is on file with the Growth Services Department and is incorporated herein by reference. Letters of opposition and support have been received related to this request.

IV. ANALYSIS

LDC Section 2.7.3.E.(2) provides that in making a recommendation to the Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall make a written finding that granting the rezoning is compatible with land uses in the surrounding area, that it will not adversely affect the public interest, and that the proposed zoning change is consistent with the current Comprehensive Plan. Staff's analysis of compliance with these three criteria are addressed below.

A. *How is the request compatible with surrounding uses?*

Compatibility is defined as a condition in which land uses, or conditions can coexist in relative proximity to each other in a stable fashion over time such that no use or condition is unduly negatively impacted directly or indirectly by another use or condition.

Generally, the subject site and surroundings are located along SW 16th Avenue (CR Hwy 475A), north of SW Hwy 484 and south of the Florida Horse Park's public entrance. The site, shown in prior Figure 1, extends from SW 16th Avenue west to I-75, and the site is ±0.74 miles north of SW Hwy 484 and ±0.5 miles south of the Cross-Florida Greenway, and ±0.8 miles from the Florida Horse Park public entrance. The site is outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and outside the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA), but is part of the Marion Oaks / I-75 & Hwy 484 Urban Area. The site is also located in the county-wide Secondary Springs Protection Zone (SSPZ) and in Marion County Utilities' Southwest Utility Service Area. Of particular note, the site is in the CR 475A Visual Enhancement Gateway Development Overlay (CR 475A Overlay - see Attachment C) that begins on the north side of Hwy 484 and extends north between SW 16th Avenue (Hwy 475A) and I-75 to the south boundary of the Cross-Florida Greenway as illustrated in following Figure 2.

0 1,000 2,000 3,000
Feet

CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY

FLORIDA HORSE PARK

N

SW 123rd PL

SW 128th LN

SW 130th STREET RD

SW 134th ST

SW 20th AVENUE RD

SW 17th CT

SW HWY CR 475A

SW HWY CR 484

SW 8th AVE

INTERSTATE 75

CR 475A Visual Enhancement Gateway Development Overlay Boundary

2502032C

SW 16 AVE

SW 130 STREET RD

0 300 600 US Feet

Future Land Use Designation

Rural Land (1 cu/10 ac)

Employment Center (0 - 16 du/ac; FAR 2.0)

Preservation (N/A; N/A)

Parcels

Scale: 1 in. = 600 ft

Prior Figure 3 identifies the site and surroundings' current future land use designations. The site's future land use designation is Employment Center (EC),

established in 2011 when the site's then Equestrian Commerce Support District (ECSD) future land use designation was discontinued and the general Employment Center (EC) future land use designation established. Staff further notes, that while the rezoning request is for a Community Business (B-2) zoning, under the Florida's "Live Local Act" the site could be used residentially in an administrative manner, subject to the County's maximum land use density of 16 DU/AC which in this instance corresponds to the site's Employment Center (EC) future land use designation.

Figures 4a and 4b display the current and requested zoning district classification for the site, and the existing zoning for the surrounding properties. The requested Commercial Business (B-2) zoning is consistent with the site's Employment Center land use designation, *and also consistent with the CR 475A Overlay's use restrictions that limits uses to those identified in the B-2 zoning classification*, unless considered by Special Use Permit or Planned Unit Development applications. South of the east part of the site, the properties are zoned B-2 similar to this request. South of the west part of the site are properties that are zoned General Agriculture (A-1). East, across SW 16th Avenue, the area is zoned General Agriculture (A-1), and the properties to the north, extending up to the Cross-Florida Greenway are also zoned General Agriculture (A-1). West, across I-75, the area is zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD).

Figure 4a
Current Zoning Classification

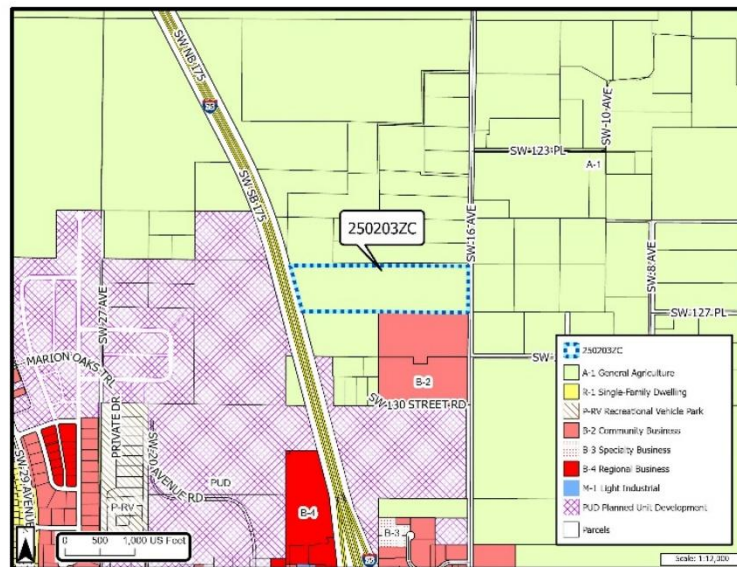


Figure 4b
Requested Zoning Classification

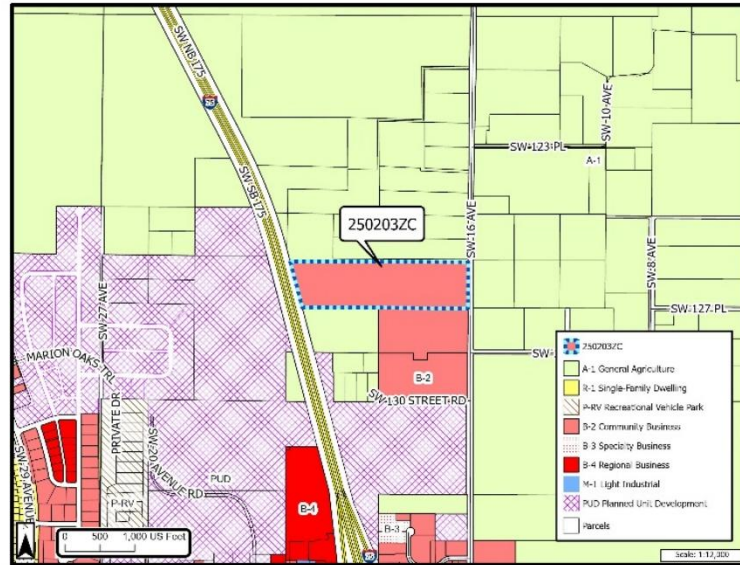


Figure 5 displays the site and surrounding properties' existing uses as identified by the Marion County Property Appraiser Office's Property Code (PC). Figure 6 then displays a broader aerial image of the site and surrounding properties with the surrounding subdivisions noted, including the western portion of the Kimberly Ranchettes Subdivision to the southeast of the site. Table A displays the information of Figures 3, 4, and 5 in tabular form.

Figure 5
Existing Use per Property Appraiser Property Code

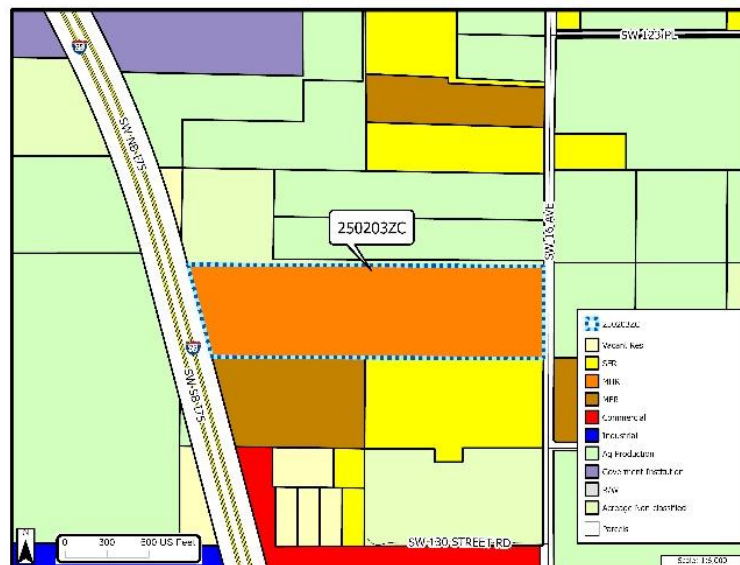


Figure 6
Aerial Map with Surrounding Subdivisions



TABLE A. ADJACENT PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
Direction	FLUM Designation	Zoning Classification	Existing Use Per MCPA Property Code
Subject Property	Employment Center (EC)	General Agriculture (A-1)	Manufactured Home with farm
North	Employment Center (EC)	General Agriculture (A-1)	Acreage Non-classified & Ag. Production
South - West	Employment Center (EC)	General Agriculture (A-1)	Single-family home with guest home/cottage
South - East	Employment Center (EC)	Community Business (B-2)	Single-family home
East	Rural Land (RL)	General Agriculture (A-1)	Acreage tracts under Ag Production, some with SFR or MH
West	Employment Center (EC)	Planned Unit Development (PUD)	Transwestern Commerce Park North Extension

The site is part of the I-75/Hwy 484 Interchange's northeast quadrant with an Employment Center (EC) future land use designation. Further, the site is in the CR 475A Overlay that focuses on Community Business (B-2) level uses in an effort to reflect the site's unique physical location along the primary access route to Florida Horse Park's public entrance driveway located ± 0.8 miles to the north and the Hwy 475A Landbridge Tailhead driveway located ± 1.4 miles to the north. The site represents 16% of the I-75/Hwy 484's northeast quadrant Employment Center (EC) designation and 12% of the CR 475A Overlay. The proposed Community Business (B-2) zoning district will enable non-residential uses pursuant to and consistent with the Employment Center (EC) land use designation and CR 475A Overlay. Future development of the site will be required to provide for buffering to the surrounding properties, and along I-75 and CR 475A, particularly in compliance

with the enhanced buffer standard required along CR 475A as required by the CR 475A Overlay.

*Based on the above findings, the proposed rezoning application is **compatible** with the existing and future surrounding land uses.*

B. *How does the request affect the public interest?*

1. Transportation impacts. These include roadways, public transit, and other mobility features.

a. Roadways.

- SW 16th Avenue (Hwy 475A) – Paved public 2-lane Collector roadway, maintained by Marion County.
- SW Hwy 484 – Paved public 4-lane Arterial roadway that is maintained by Marion County east of SW 16th Avenue and maintained by FDOT west of SW 16th Avenue.

The site's access is SW 16th Avenue (aka S. Hwy 475A), a Collector roadway parallel to I-75 and providing access to the Florida Horse Park's public entrance and the Cross-Florida Greenway's CR 475A Landbridge Tailhead. Staff notes that traffic operations along the segment of SW 16th Avenue are a concern due to operations to the south at its intersection with Hwy 484 that is then located ± 0.25 miles east of the I-75 interchange. The Traffic Engineering division does not support the request as the range of uses under the B-2 zoning classification may result in significant traffic impacts. The B-2 zoning classification, however, *establishes a reduced floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.0* for development in that zoning. Further, non-residential development in Marion County often ranges closer to 0.25 FAR, wherein the development of general commercial retail shopping facility (Use 820) could generate 16,032 daily trips and 1,618 PM peak hour trips at a FAR of 0.25, significantly lower than the Employment Center (EC) land use designation's potential FAR of 2.0. Staff notes that a site development proposal will be required to provide a Traffic Impact Analysis based on the formally proposed use at the time, and development of the site will then be required to provide for the mitigation of transportation impacts identified consistent with the LDC. The I-75/Hwy 484 and Hwy 484/Hwy 475A intersections are experiencing significant traffic impacts at this time; while some improvements are currently underway, said improvements are not due for completion until the spring of 2025; however, currently, per recent FDOT 2024 traffic counts, the current AADT for CR 475A is 7,000 AADT, with a road capacity of 29,300 Trips for a Vehicle/Capacity (V/C) ratio of 23.8%, and a trucking (T) factor of 9.4%.

b. Public transit. There are no fixed route services in the area.

- c. Other mobility features. The CR 475A Overlay requires development to provide a minimum 8-foot wide paved sidewalk/trail along CR 475A integrated into or provided alongside a enhanced Type C Buffer (increase width to 20-feet), and compliance will be a site development requirement, similar to the General RV site that has provided the required sidewalk/trail along its CR 475A frontage.

Based on the above findings, the rezoning roadway **impacts would adversely affect the public interest.**

2. Potable water impacts. Potable Water Element Policy 1.1.1 adopts a level of service (LOS) standard of 150 gallons per person per day for residential demand and approximately 2,750 gallons per acre per day for nonresidential demand. Based on the non-residential calculation, the proposed rezoning would not result in a potential increase in demand; however, residential use of the site could result in a potential demand of 224,640 gallons per day.

The property is within Marion County Utilities' Service Area and an existing 12-inch water main is located ± 0.25 miles to the south at SW 130th Street Road, likely within connection distance for development at this time. Based on the above findings, the rezoning's **potable water impacts would not adversely affect the public interest.**

3. Sanitary sewer impacts. Sanitary Sewer Element Policy 1.1.1 adopts a LOS standard of 110 gallons per person per day for residential demand and approximately 2,000 gallons per acre per day for commercial and industrial demand. Based on the non-residential calculation, the proposed rezoning would not result in a potential increase in demand; however, residential use of the site could result in a potential demand of 164,736 gallons per day.

The property is within Marion County Utilities service area and an existing 12-inch sanitary sewer forcemain is located on the west side of Hwy 475, within connection distance. Based on the above findings, the rezoning's **sanitary sewer impacts would not adversely affect the public interest.**

4. Solid waste impacts. Solid Waste Element Policy 1.1.1 adopts a LOS standard of 6.2 pounds of solid waste generation per person per day for residential demand. A commercial/industrial level of service standard is not currently in place for Marion County as such operations are required to provide for individual commercial collection wherein disposal within Marion County is alternatively addressed. Residential use of the site could result in a potential demand of 9,324 pounds of solid waste per day; however, such demand would be created by a likely multiple-family use which often coordinates for individual commercial collection. Based on the above, the rezoning **solid waste impacts would not adversely affect the public interest.**

5. Recreation. Recreation Element Policy 1.1.1. adopts a level of service standard of two (2) acres per 1,000 persons. A commercial/industrial level of service standard is not currently in place for Marion County. As a non—residential zoning classification, recreation impacts are not typically anticipated by the proposed request; however, as a commercially zoned property, the site would be eligible for use under the State of Florida “Live Local Act” that enables qualified affordable housing developments in a commercial zoning as a permitted administrative use. At a rate of 16 DU/AC, up to 624 residential dwelling units could be possible, establishing a residential recreation/open space need of 3 acres. Based on the proposed zoning, the rezoning **recreation impacts would not adversely affect the public interest.**
6. Stormwater/drainage. Stormwater Element Policy 1.1.1 adopts varying levels of service standards based on the characteristics of the development site. The site does not include any flood plain areas but does contain some flood prone areas. Development of the site will be required to comply with a 100-year frequency 24-hour duration design storm as the site development proceeds through Marion County’s site development review processes. Based on the above, the rezoning **stormwater/drainage impacts would not adversely affect the public interest.**
7. Fire rescue/emergency services. The Marion Oaks Fire Station #24, located at 102 Marion Oaks Lane, is ±4.8 miles southwest of the subject property. The Comprehensive Plan does not establish a level of service standard for fire rescue/emergency services. Still, Marion County has established a 5-mile drive distance from the subject property as evidence of the availability of such services. Based on the above, the rezoning fire rescue/emergency impacts would not adversely affect the public interest and the application is **consistent** with this section.
8. Law enforcement. The Sheriff’s Marion Oaks District Office, located at 294 Marion Oaks Lane, is ±4.4 miles southwest of the subject property. The Comprehensive Plan does not establish a level of service standard for law enforcement/sheriff services. Based on the above, the application’s **law enforcement impacts would not adversely affect the public interest.**
9. Public schools. As a non-residential zoning classification, no recreation impacts are anticipated by the proposed request, unless the site were utilized for a qualified “Live Local Act” affordable housing development. However, such affordable residential development of the site could generate up to 624 dwelling units generating an estimated 85-elementary, 34-middle, and 41-high school students for a total of 161 students. The following figures are provided for the current school year: Belleview-Santos Elementary (93.08%), Belleview Middle School (104.50%), and Belleview High School (117.46%). While there are areas of overcrowding, overall, there is capacity within Marion County Schools. Based on the above findings, the proposed development would not adversely affect public

interest. Therefore, it is concluded that the application is **consistent** with this section.

In summation, staff concludes that the application satisfies the majority of the above criteria, except for potential concerns related to traffic generation from the site. However, the site is located in an existing Employment Center (EC) designated area and within the CR 475A Overlay that provides for limited uses and increased design standards intended to support and establish connectivity with the Florida Horse Park and Landbridge Trailhead. As a traffic impact study would be required for any proposed development, the study would establish transportation mitigation improvements to be provided by the development in order to proceed consistent with the LDC. As such, staff offers that the proposed rezoning, overall, **will not adversely affect the public interest**, particularly due to traffic impact analysis and improvement requirements of the LDC.

C. *How is this request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?*

1. FLUE Policy 1.1.1: Marion County Planning Principles - The County shall rely upon the following principles to guide the overall planning framework and vision for the County:
 1. Preserve, protect and manage the County's valuable natural resources.
 2. *Recognize and protect the rural equestrian and agricultural character as an asset of the County's character and economy while providing clear, fair and consistent standards for the review and evaluation of any appropriate future development proposals.*
 3. Support the livability of the existing cities and towns in the County by planning for the logical extension of development in a manner that enhances the scale, intensity and form of these areas through the introduction of sustainable smart growth principles and joint planning activities.
 4. *Support economic development through government practices that place a priority on public infrastructure necessary to attract such activities and that foster a local economic development environment that is conducive to the creation and growth of new businesses, the expansion of existing businesses, and is welcoming to private entrepreneur activities.*

Analysis: The requested zoning change for the site would enable site development of a suitably designated Employment Center (EC) site, while also requiring compliance with the CR 475A Overlay that limits the type and extent of development while enabling uses that would be supportive of a gateway effect when approaching the Florida Horse Park and 475A Landbridge Trailhead. The application is **consistent** with FLUE Policy 1.1.1.

2. FLUE Policy 2.1.23: Employment Center (EC) - This land use is intended to provide a mix of business, enterprise, research and development, light to moderate intensity commercial, and light industrial, activities. This

designation also allows residential uses, campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks (RVP). - This land use designation will allow for and encourage mixed use buildings. The density range for residential units shall be up to sixteen (16) dwelling units per one (1) gross acre and a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0, as further defined by the LDC. This land use designation an Urban land use designation.

Analysis: The requested Community Business (B-2) zoning would provide for lower limited intensity uses that would also be supportive of the Florida Horse Park and 475A Landbridge Trailhead. The limited range of uses would further be consistent with the CR 475A Overlay's use limitation, and provide for enlarged buffer and sidewalk/trail requirements as part of the supportive design efforts regarding the Florida Horse Park and 475A Landbridge Trailhead. As such, the application is **consistent** with FLUE Policy 2.1.23.

3. FLUE Policy 5.1.3 on Planning and Zoning Commission provides, "The County shall enable applications for CPA, ZC, and SUP requests to be reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Commission, which will act as the County's Local Planning Agency. The purpose of the advisory board is to make recommendations on CPA, ZC, and SUP requests to the County Commissioners. The County shall implement and maintain standards to allow for a mix of representatives from the community and set standards for the operation and procedures for this advisory board.

Analysis: The proposed zoning change is scheduled for the January 27, 2025 Planning and Zoning Commission and, therefore, the application is **consistent** with this FLUE Policy 5.1.3.

4. FLUE Policy 5.1.4 on Notice of Hearing provides, "The County shall provide notice consistent with Florida Statutes and as further defined in the LDC."

Analysis: Public notice has been provided as required by the LDC and Florida Statutes and, therefore, the application is being processed **consistent** with FLUE Policy 5.1.4.

5. FLUE Objective 10.4 on Innovative Planning Strategies provides, "To develop and enforce innovative planning techniques and LDC designed to protect residential neighborhoods, enhance the economic viability of the community, promote the efficient use of infrastructure, preserve natural resources, reinforce the market area concepts, and reduce the proliferation of urban sprawl."

Analysis: The proposed zoning change is located in the CR 475A Overlay established to focus on that area's unique location between the I-75/Hwy 484 interchange and the Florida Horse Park and the Cross-Florida Greenway 475A Landbridge Tailhead. Use limitations and design requirements for enlarged roadside buffers and sidewalks/trails are

intended to support connectivity between the interchange area and the Florida Horse Park and Landbrige Trailhead facilities. The proposed zoning will be consistent with the CR 475A Overlay use limitations and enables uses that focus on hospitality and hospitality supporting uses, wherein the application would be **consistent** with FLUE Object 10.4.

Based on the above findings, the proposed rezoning **is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan**.

V. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

- A. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, adopt the findings and conclusions contained herein, and make a recommendation to **DENY** the requested rezoning.
- B. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, and make a recommendation to **APPROVE** the requested rezoning.
- C. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, identify any additional data and analysis needed to support a recommendation and make a recommendation to **TABLE** the application for up to two months in order for the applicant to provide the identified data and analysis needed to make an informed recommendation on the proposed Ordinance.

VI. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board enter into the record the Staff Report, and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, adopt the findings and conclusions contained herein, and make a recommendation to **APPROVE** the proposed rezoning because the application:

- A. **Will not adversely** affect the public interest.
- B. **Is consistent** with the Comprehensive Plan because it is in conformance with:
 - 1. FLUE Policies 1.1.1, 2.1.23, 5.1.3, 5.1.4, and Objective 10.4.
- C. **Is compatible** with the surrounding uses because the proposed zoning would allow a limited range and intensity of uses in an Employment Center (EC) designated area that is consistent with the CR 475A Overlay that includes use limitations and design requirements intended to support the Florida Horse Park and Cross-Florida Greenway 475A Landbrige Trailhead.

VII. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

- A. January 27, 2025 - The Planning and Zoning Commission voted to continue the Application's consideration to March 31, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.;
- B. March 31, 2025 - The Planning and Zoning Commission voted to continue the Application's consideration to May 28, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.;
- C. May 28, 2025 – **To be determined.**

VIII. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACTION

To be determined.

IX. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- A. Application.
- B. DRC Staff Review Comments.
- C. LDC Division 5.8 – CR 475A Visual Enhancement Gateway Development Overlay (CR475A Overlay).
- D. June 7, 2016 BCC Minutes Excerpt - CR 475A Overlay Adoption.
- E. Site Survey (includes full concurrent SUP Application 250204SU site).
- F. Site and Sign Pictures