



**Marion County
Board of County Commissioners**

Growth Services

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**PLANNING & ZONING SECTION
STAFF REPORT**

	P&Z Date: 4/27/2026	BCC Date: 6/2/2026
Case Number(s)	260503SU	
CDP-AR	000415-2026	
Type of Case	Special Use Permit Food Waste Depacking and Vegetative Composting	
Owner(s)/ Applicant(s)	WRR of Marion County – Levin Gaston	
Agent(s)	Denali Water Solutions	
Street Address	8510 NW Gainesville Road	
Parcel Number(s)	12869-001-00 & 12907-003-00	
Property Size	36.77 ac	
Future Land Use (s)	Commerce District (CD)	
Zoning Classification(s)	Heavy Industrial (M-2)	
Overlay Zone/Scenic Area(s)	Springs Protection Overlay – Primary & Secondary	
Staff Recommendation	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS	
P&ZC Recommendation	APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS (3-1)	
Project Planner	Kenneth Odom, Transportation Planner	
Related Case(s)	110808SU (Resolution #11-R-395) – Food wastes included in vegetative debris composting. 160612SU (Resolution #16-R-202) – 150,000 gallon of septage system for composting. (Being Removed)	

I. ITEM SUMMARY

Wood Resource Recovery LLC (WRR) and Denali Food Waste Recycling Inc. have filed an SUP to be permitted to transfer food waste to the current vegetative debris composting facility. The vegetative debris operation has been in constant operation at this location since 2009 and they were previously approved under SUP 110808SU (Resolution #11-R-395) to be permitted to utilize food waste products to augment the vegetative debris composting in November of 2011. The technology was not implemented at that time so SUP 110808SU was never renewed. The food de-packing mechanical technology has advanced over the past fifteen years and WRR has now partnered with Denali in order to earnestly incorporate these systems into the vegetative debris recycling operations to produce more robust compost and soil additives for sale and internal production. These products are not intended for pelletized fuel sources.

The food products that are to be utilized in this operation will initially be primarily from grocer food sources. Future sources may include restaurants and farm sources as well. All biological products to be incorporated into this operation will be from "human consumption" grade food products regardless of the source. The food products will be brought in by freight vehicles and off-loaded into the transfer portion of the de-packing facility where they will then be loaded into the food-de-packing machine by a skid steer or small front-end loader. The de-packing machine uses a rotating hammer/grinder system to separate the organic products from their inorganic containers. These containers can be composed of plastic, metal, paper, various plastic types, foil, etc. Glass containers are not included in this process.

Once the materials have been separated, the remnants of the food containers are loaded into containment vessels where they will be regularly removed from the site and transported to the Marion County landfill transfer facility. The processed food materials have been converted into a slurry and liquid form which is then augured into distribution vessels which are then pressurized and sprayed onto vegetative debris piles aligned in wind rows. Natural processes to compost the vegetative debris are dependent on the type of vegetative debris that is being utilized, the time of the year (heat/humidity/rainfall) and to some extent the consistency and the type of the processed food waste that is being applied. The completion of the composting process then allows for these materials to be transported to other processing facilities where they are incorporated into soil and fertilizer products.

Figure 1
Aerial Photograph



II. STAFF SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **APPROVAL with the conditions** specified in Section VII.B. of this Staff Report. The recommended conditions are being imposed to address compliance with the requirements in LDC Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B.

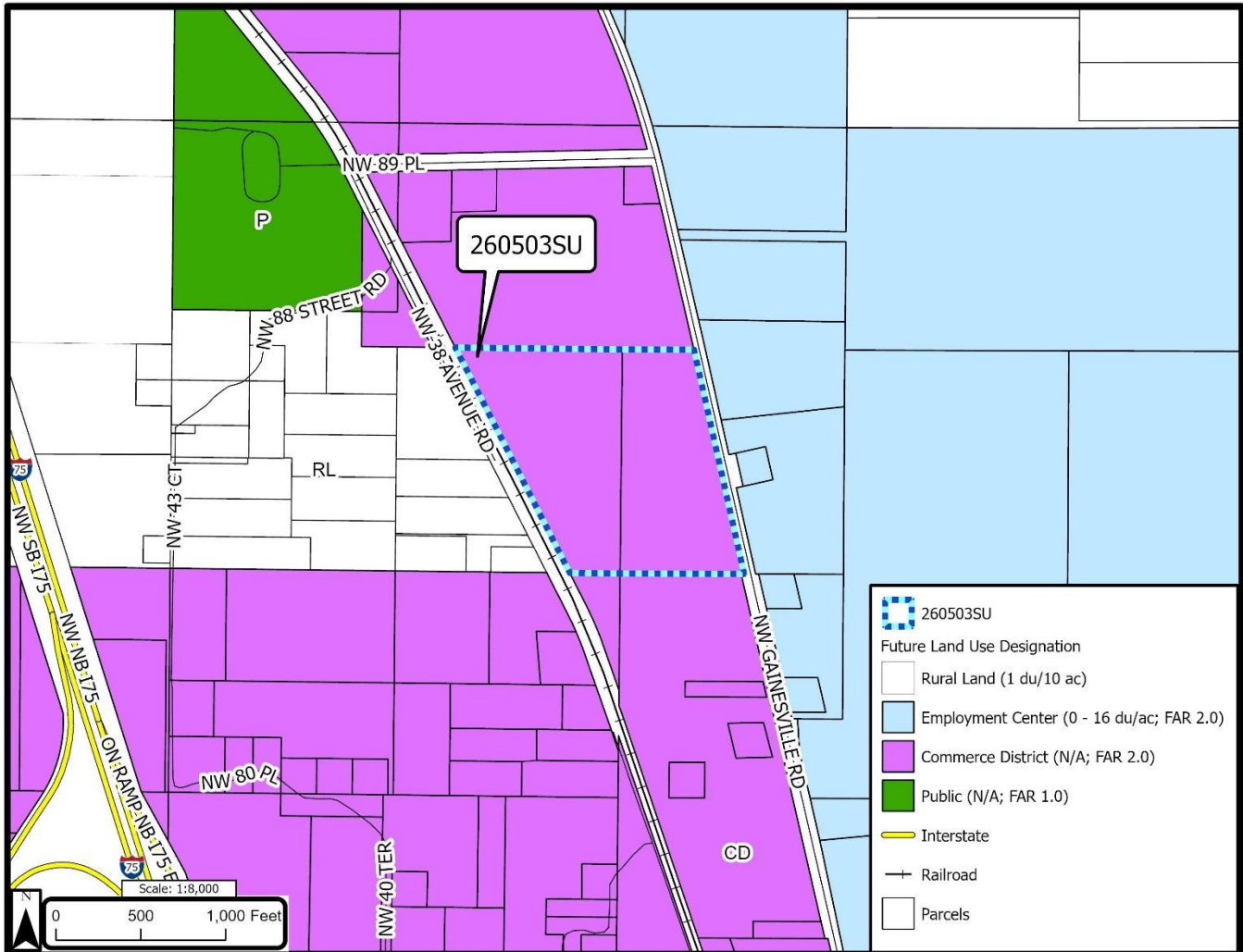
III. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Growth Services Director has interpreted the notice requirements of Land Development Code (LDC) Sections 2.7.3.C and 2.7.3.B to apply to SUP applications. LDC Section 2.7.3.C requires notice of public hearing to be mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property and notice was mailed to 15 owners on April 10th, 2026. Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.B., public notice was posted on the subject property on April 17th, 2026, and consistent with LDC Section 2.8.3.E. due public notice was published in the Ocala Star-Banner on April 13th, 2026. Evidence of the above-described public notices are on file with the Growth Services Department and is incorporated herein by reference. As of the date of the initial distribution of this staff report, no letters of opposition or support have been received.

IV. BACKGROUND/CHARACTER OF THE AREA

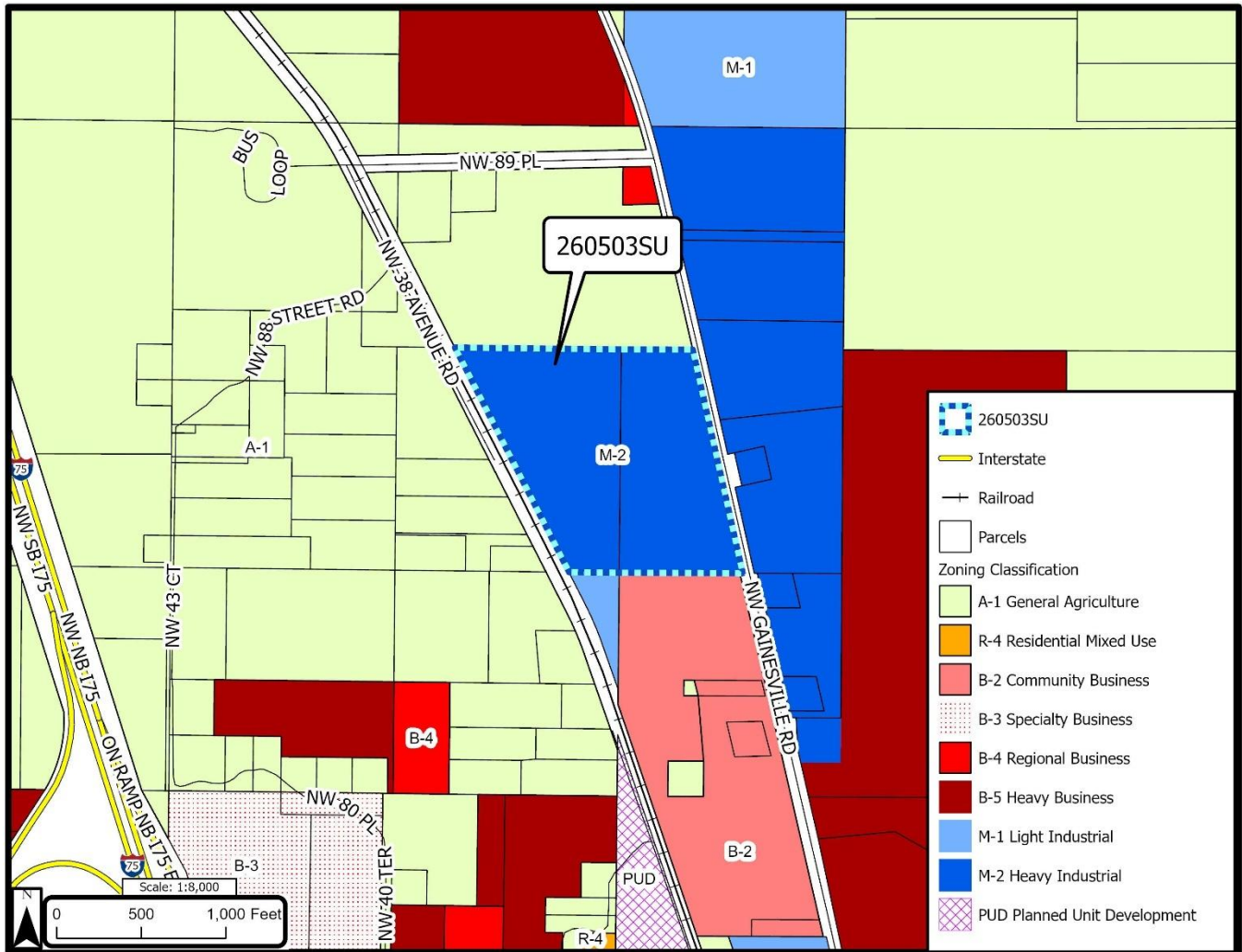
- A. *Existing site conditions.* According to the property appraiser's website, the subject parcels are ± 36.77 acres in size and located on the west side of NW Gainesville Road. This somewhat rectangular-shaped site has ± 1,350' of frontage on SW 27th Avenue and is ± 1,400' deep at its widest point. The site currently operates as a vegetative debris composting site and has one operational office in the form of a manufactured building of approximately 450 sq. ft. A site visit was conducted on Wednesday, April, 1 2026 where photos of the site were taken during the inspection of the property (see Attachment B). The site currently operates under Special Use Permits 160612SU (Resolution #16-R-202) and 110808SU (Resolution #11-R-395). SUP 160612SU was for the operation of a commercial septage system with a maximum capacity of 150,000 gallons, which includes processing amounts of no more than 50,000 gallons per day. This operation was intended to augment composting of vegetative debris on site by using the processed septage. This system has been voluntarily terminated by the applicant and is currently in the process of being removed from the site. SUP 110808SU was intended to allow for a similar process to what the applicant is requesting now in that food wastes would be added to the vegetative debris on site in order to fortify and augment the composting process. This SUP has expired.
- B. *FLUMS designation.* Figure 2 is the FLUMS and it shows the subject property and surrounding properties are Commerce District (CD). This land use is intended to provide for more intense commercial and industrial uses than may be suitable in the Employment Center (EC) designation due to noise, odor, pollution, and other nuisance issues. A maximum Floor Area Ratio of 2.0 is allowed, as further defined by the LDC. This land use designation an Urban land use designation.

Figure 2
FLUMS Designations

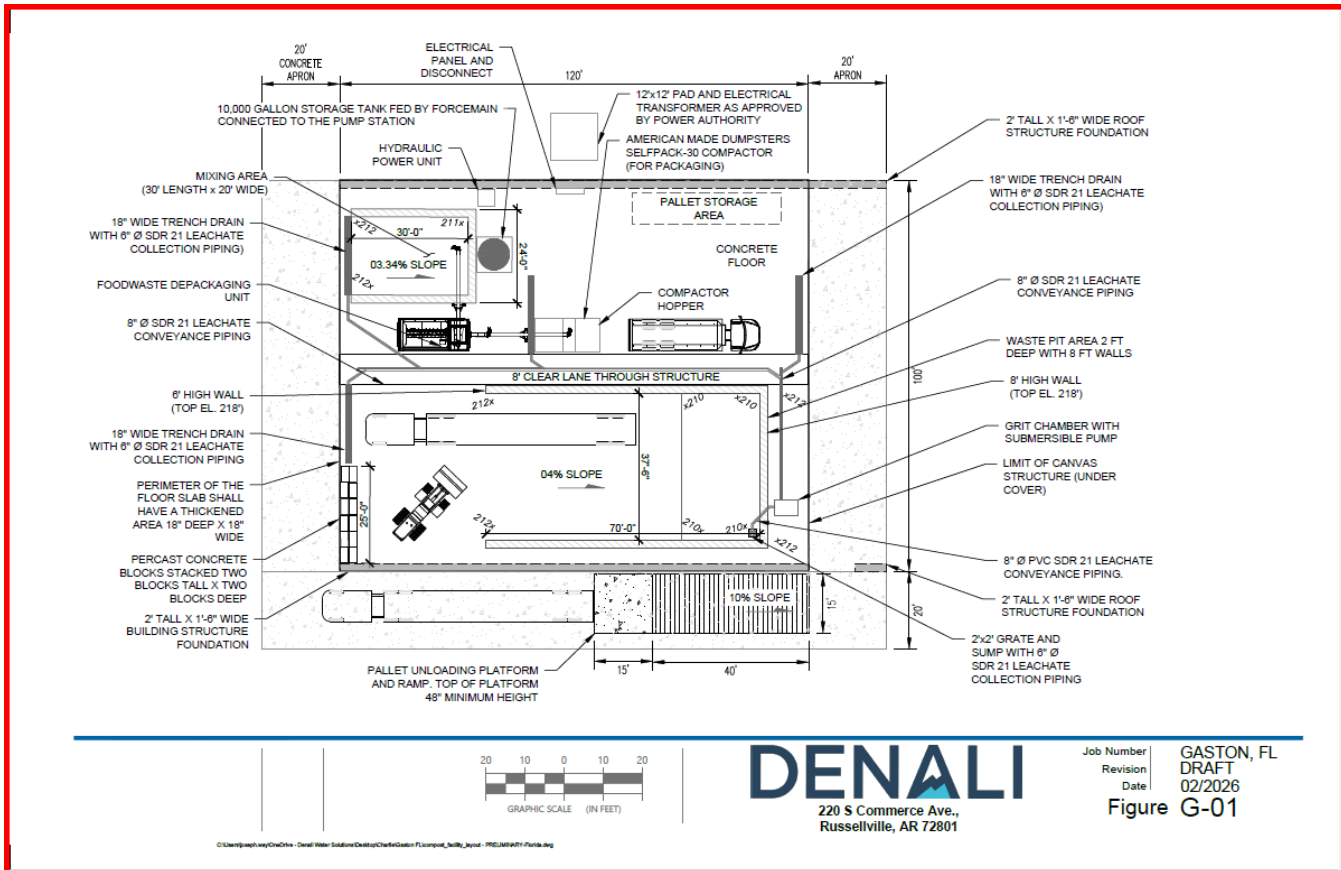


C. *Zoning district map.* Figure 3 shows the subject properties are located within the Heavy Industrial (M-2) zoning classification. The Heavy Industrial (M-2) zoning is consistent with the Commerce District (CD) FLUMS and it allows for vegetative recycling.

Figure 3 Zoning Classification



**Figure 5
De-Packing Facility**



V. ANALYSIS

LDC Section 2.8.2.D provides that in making a recommendation to the Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall make a written finding the SUP addresses nine (9) specific requirements. LDC Section 2.8.3.B requires consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff’s analysis of compliance with these ten (10) requirements is addressed below.

- A. *Provision for **ingress and egress** to property and proposed structures thereon with particular reference to automotive and pedestrian safety and convenience, traffic flow, and control and access in case of fire or catastrophe.*

Analysis: The applicant will continue to utilize the established commercial entrance that exists allowing for ingress/egress from NW Gainesville Road. No additional access points are being requested.

- B. *Provision for **off-street parking and loading areas**, where required, with particular attention to the items in (1) above and the economic, noise, glare, or odor effects of the SUP on adjoining properties and properties generally in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: LDC Section 6.8.7 addresses parking areas and vehicular use areas. This location has been in operation for over twenty-years and the addition of the de-packing facility to augment the composting operations will not required any additional parking for visitors to the location. Any additional employees being added to the location will be minimal and previously approved parking areas have capacity to easily accommodate the project two to five additional vehicles that may be added.

- C. *Provisions for refuse and service area, with particular reference to the items in (1) and (2) above.*

Analysis: LDC Section 6.8.9. addresses the screening of the utility area (or refuse and service area) and requires a planting area a minimum of three feet wide and shall form a continuous three-foot high landscaped screen or a buffer fencing with a minimum height of three feet. It also requires garbage collection areas (dumpster pads) to be screened with a wall, buffer fencing, or a landscape screen capable of reaching a minimum height of six feet within three years. Based on the large size of the parcel and the distance between lots, screening of the refuse and service area is not required.

Refuse is currently removed by a commercial service on a weekly basis. The addition of the food de-packing facility will generate a significantly larger amount of waste in addition to the low amount of non-vegetative waste that is generated under the current operations for the vegetive composting operation. Commercial removal will still be utilized and those services will have to be increased in order to compensate. Waste removal will be increased to still ensure that all generated waste on site is completely removed on a week to week basis.

- D. *Provision for utilities, with reference to locations, availability, and compatibility.*

Analysis: The applicant's findings of facts state electric utilities are provided by the Duke Energy, and the property is on well and septic.

- E. *Provision for screening and buffering of dissimilar uses and of adjacent properties where necessary.*

Analysis: LDC Section 6.8.6. addresses buffers and it is the intent of that section to eliminate or reduce the negative impacts of the adjacent uses upon each other such that the long-term continuance of either use is not threatened by such impacts and the uses may be considered compatible. Buffers are required to provide a year-round screen and provide an aesthetic quality, especially along public rights-of-way, which enhance travel corridors and screen unsightly areas from public view. Buffers may consist of landscaping, buffer walls, fencing, berms, or combinations thereof which work cohesively to achieve the intent of buffering. Plant species shall be mixed to provide diversity and appeal. Every development, with the exception of the construction of an individual single-family residence or duplexes on an individual parcel of record, shall provide sufficient buffering when topographical or other barriers do not provide reasonable screening. If buffers are

required, the length shall be measured along each property line and shall exclude driveways and other access points. LDC Table 6.8-2 identifies the land use categories for buffers. The proposed use is agricultural and the permitted or existing use on all surrounding properties is agricultural. LDC Table 6.8-2 does not require a buffer for the subject property because the proposed use and permitted or existing uses of the surrounding properties are the same.

The site is adequately buffered on all sides of the utilized parcels. The singular addition of the de-packing facility is set into the south-central portion of the combined properties, approximately three-hundred fifty feet back from the main entrance to the facility. No additional buffering shall be required.

- F. *Provision for **signs**, if any, **and exterior lighting** with consideration given to glare, traffic safety, economic effects, and compatibility and harmony with properties in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: The applicant's response indicates that signs on the property are existing. A site visit confirmed there are existing signs located on site and they are approximately 3'x4' and located on the perimeter of the front fenceline. New signage is proposed and will be required to conform to all LDC requirements.

- Any new signage will be required to conform to all elements of the Marion County Land Development Code.

- G. *Provision for **required yards and other green space**.*

Analysis: LDC Section 4.2.28 does not have minimum lot area but does require minimum lot width of two-hundred feet is required. The subject parcels are 19.73 acres in size and have a width of $\pm 1,350'$. No additional requirements for green space are required because of the industrial use of this location.

- H. *Provision for general **compatibility** with adjacent properties and other property in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: 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. Figure 2 shows the subject properties are zoned Heavy Industrial (M-2), which allows for the vegetative debris composting, and is surrounded by heavy industrial zoning and uses.

These parcels have been utilized for this type of use since 2009. No code related violations have been recorded in that time and the addition of the food waste de-packing facility is to be located in the south-central area of both parcels combined. The location of the facility, nor the processed food materials will be detrimental to the surrounding area. Based on the above, staff concludes the proposed use is compatible with the adjacent properties.

- I. *Provision for meeting any **special requirements** required by the site analysis for the particular use involved.*

Analysis: The applicant's findings of facts indicate they are willing to consider any further requirements presented by the Board of County Commissioners.

Staff notes that unlike a variance, which runs with the land and is recorded in the public records, a special use permit is conditioned based on the owner's consent.

- J. *Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.*

1. FLUE Policy 2.1.5: **Permitted & Special Uses** – “The county shall identify permitted and special uses for each land use designation and zoning classification, as further defined in the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and LDC”.

Analysis: Vegetative debris recycling/ composting is permitted in the current zoning designation of Heavy Industrial (M-2). The SUP requirement is the food de-packing facility and materials processing and application is an, as of yet, untested technology locally and not addressed by current land development code. Thus, the application is consistent with FLUE Policy 2.1.5.

2. TE Policy 2.1.4: **Determination of Impact** – “All proposed development shall be evaluated to determine impacts to adopted LOS standards”.

Analysis: The subject property is located within the Urban Growth Boundary and within a Commerce District land use area. NW Gainesville Road Avenue is a 2-lane county-maintained collector roadway with a maximum capacity of 16,100 vehicles per day and adopted level of service “C”. The 2021 traffic count indicates approximately 6,900 vehicles per day, which is approximately 43% of the capacity utilized at this time. The proposed SUP will not significantly increase traffic counts since projected freight trips ingressing and egressing the site would be less than ten per day, thus it is consistent with TE Policy 2.1.4.

3. PWE Policy 1.2.2: “The County's LDC will maintain guidelines for requiring existing water treatment plants to connect/interconnect to centralized systems when such systems are available and connection is economically feasible”.

Analysis: The subject property is currently on well system; however; Marion County Utilities Department states the subject property is located within the Marion County Utility service area but is outside of the connection distance. Connection would be required within 365 days' notice of

availability. The septage system that was previously operating on site has been decommissioned and is actively being removed at this time. A separate septic system for the office is still currently online. One of the imposed conditions requires the applicant to comply with MCU's conditions. Thus, the application is consistent with PWE Policy 1.2.2.

4. SSE Policy 1.2.5: "Septic systems on Onsite Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS) shall adhere to all applicable Sanitary Sewer Element policy and LDC requirements, including to connect to larger sanitary sewer facilities when they become available. Septic systems shall not be exempt from requirements to connect to larger sanitary facilities based on their lower cost".

Analysis: The subject property is currently on a septic system; however; The Utilities Department states the subject property is located within the Marion County Utility service area but is outside of the connection distance. Connection would be required within 365 days' notice of availability. One of the imposed conditions requires the applicant to comply with MCU's conditions. Thus, the application is consistent with SSE Policy 1.2.5.

5. SWE Policy 1.1.5: "Permits shall be denied for development that would either increase demands on an already deficient facility or cause a facility to exceed its capacity until such time that the facility may provide service in accordance with the adopted LOS standard".

Analysis: WRR LLC will remove the solid waste debris from the de-packing process as needed, usually weekly. Based on the above, the application is consistent with SWE Policy 1.1.5

Based on the above findings, staff concludes the SUP is consistent with LDC Section 2.8.3 B provided the recommended conditions are adhered to by the applicant.

VI. ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE AS CONDITIONED** the special use permit.
- B. 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 the Board of County Commissioners to **DENY** the special use permit amendment.

- C. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, amend the findings and conclusions contained herein so as to support the approval of the Ordinance with amended conditions, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE WITH AMENDED CONDITIONS** the special use permit.
- D. 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 on the proposed Ordinance, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to **TABLE** the application for up to two months in order to provide the identified data and analysis needed to make an informed recommendation on the proposed Ordinance.

VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- A. Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE AS CONDITIONED** the special use permit.
- B. To address compliance with LDC Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B, the following conditions are imposed:
1. The site shall be developed and operated consistent with the submitted conceptual plan and the conditions as provided with this approval.
 2. Development of the site is limited to a composting facility for green waste (e.g. vegetation, waste wood and wood mulch), animal bedding and food waste only. Expansion or modification of the number, type, approximate size, or location of any of the proposed use or site operations beyond those shown on the conceptual plan is prohibited; however, a new Special Use Permit Application may be submitted for consideration to expand the uses/operations.
 3. All primary composting process activity (2nd step) shall occur within an “in-vessel” system as defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) per 40 CFR Part 503 Rule.
 4. All food waste materials shall be held within the transfer portion of the de-packing facility building upon arrival, and all food waste shall be processed and stored in airtight containment within twenty-four hours of receipt on site in order to mitigate offensive odors and animal intrusion at this location.
 5. A minimum of four monitoring wells shall be provided on site and quarterly reporting provided to the Marion County Solid Waste Department. The report shall include at a minimum TKN, NH₄, phosphorus and ortho-phosphorus levels.
 6. Prior to commencing the composting operations authorized by this Special Use Permit, the applicant shall install the monitoring wells referenced in Condition #5 and provide baseline data reporting from each well. The report shall include at a minimum the existing levels of TKN, NH₄, total phosphorus, and ortho-phosphorus, in order to establish a baseline data set on site. The applicant shall be responsible for the costs of all testing requirements including ambient air testing if deemed necessary by Marion County Solid Waste staff.
 7. Per Marion County Code *Section 4.3.9(E) Performance Standards for Commercial and Industrial Zoning: No odor shall be permitted at any facility property line exceeding the lowest amount set forth in the Table III, "Odor Thresholds" of Chapter 5 of the Air Pollution Abatement Manual (APAM) of the Manufacturing Chemists Association. For*

compounds not described in the table, odor thresholds shall be described in Chapter 5 of APAM, and no odor shall be permitted at any facility property line exceeding the amount determined by such method. Odor from the composting process must be managed and remain below levels established by APAM and best practice standards by the EPA. If offensive levels or odor are determined to occur off-site a meeting with staff members from Marion County Solid Waste and a mitigation plan must be established within ten (10) working days. Filtration, scrubbers, bio-covers, tarping systems or the use of odor sequestering gases and/or liquids (ECOSORB/ATMOS) shall be used by the applicant if deemed necessary at any time that this SUP is active.

8. The applicant shall maintain processing records for the food grade materials processed on site including total amounts per month and per annum to the Marion County Solid Waste Department. This shall include the total weight of food-depacking product received on site and then the processed weights of the separated materials. The applicant shall also make these ongoing records available to staff of the Growth Management Department or its divisions, if requested, within 30 calendar days of receiving such a request.
9. Liquid by-products from the de-packing process shall be captured in on-site drains, within the de-packing facility, and shall be included in with the primary processed food grade materials as indicated on the conceptual plan in accordance with the applicable federal, state, and local regulations.
10. Development of the site shall comply with all applicable Springs Protection Zone requirements; the applicant may not obtain a LDC waiver from these requirements.
11. No composting operations, including storage or curing areas, shall be located in the on-site wetland.
12. The ingress/egress will continue to be from the existing commercial entrance on NW Gainesville Rd. using the paved driveway apron.
13. Existing buffers shall be maintained as they currently exist.
14. The Special Use Permit shall expire May 19th, 2031; however it may be renewed administratively for up to 3 consecutive times by a written instrument signed and issued by the Growth Services Director (or position equivalent to the Growth Services Director at that time), unless:
 - There have been unresolved violations of the County Land Development Code, the County Code of Ordinances, and/or the conditions of the Permit,
 - Neighboring property owners within 300' of the subject property have complained to the County Code Enforcement, Zoning, or equivalent/similar Departments/Divisions about the uses of the subject property by this Permit, or
 - The Growth Services Director determines that renewal should be considered directly by the Board of County Commissioners through the Special Use Permit review process (or review process equivalent at that time).

VIII. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Approval with Conditions (3-1)

IX. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ACTION

TBD

X. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- A. SUP application filed on January 2026.
- B. Site photographs.
- C. DRC Comments.
- D. Building Plan