



Ron DeSantis GOVERNOR  
J. Alex Kelly SECRETARY

October 3, 2025

The Honorable Kathy Bryant  
Chair, Marion County  
Board of County Commissioners  
601 SE 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Ocala, Florida 34471

Dear Chair Bryant,

FloridaCommerce has completed its review of the proposed comprehensive plan amendment for Marion County (Amendment No. 25-02DRI), which was received on August 4, 2025. FloridaCommerce has reviewed the proposed amendment in accordance with the state coordinated review process set forth in sections 163.3184(2) and (4), Florida Statutes (F.S.), for compliance with Chapter 163, Part II, F.S.

The attached Objections, Recommendations, and Comments Report outlines FloridaCommerce's findings concerning the amendment. FloridaCommerce has identified an objection and has included recommendations regarding measures that can be taken to address the objection. FloridaCommerce is also providing a comment. The comment is offered to assist the local government but will not form the basis for a determination of whether the amendment, if adopted, is "In Compliance" as defined in section 163.3184(1)(b), F.S. Copies of comments received by FloridaCommerce from reviewing agencies, if any, are also enclosed.

The County should act by choosing to adopt, adopt with changes or not adopt the proposed amendment. For your assistance, the procedures for final adoption and transmittal of the comprehensive plan amendment are enclosed.

**The second public hearing**, which shall be a hearing on whether to adopt one or more comprehensive plan amendments, **must be held within 180 days** of your receipt of FloridaCommerce's attached report, or the amendment will be **deemed withdrawn** unless extended by agreement with notice to FloridaCommerce and any affected party that provided comment on the amendment pursuant to section 163.3184(4)(e)1., F.S. **The adopted amendment must be transmitted to FloridaCommerce within the working days after the final adoption hearing or the amendment shall be deemed withdrawn pursuant to section 163.3184(4)(e)2., F.S.**

The Honorable Kathy Bryant

October 3, 2025

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FloridaCommerce staff is available to assist the County to address the objection and comment. If you have any questions related to this review, please contact Avian Williams, Planning Analyst, by telephone at (850) 717-8504 or via email at [Avian.Williams@Commerce.fl.gov](mailto:Avian.Williams@Commerce.fl.gov).

Sincerely,



James D. Stansbury, Chief  
Bureau of Community Planning and Growth

JDS/aw

Enclosures: Objections, Recommendations, and Comments Report  
Procedures for Adoption  
Reviewing Agency Comments

cc: Christopher Rison, Senior Planner, Marion County Growth Services  
Kenneth Weyrauch, Deputy Director, Marion County Growth Services  
John Patterson, Planner III, East Central Florida Regional Planning Council

**Objections, Recommendations and Comments Report**  
**Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment**  
**Marion County, 25-02DRI**

The Florida Department of Commerce (“FloridaCommerce”) has identified one objection and a comment regarding Marion County’s (the “County”) proposed comprehensive plan amendment. The objection and comment are provided below, along with recommended actions the County could take to resolve issues of concern. If the County adopts the plan amendment without adequately addressing the objection, FloridaCommerce may find the amendment not in compliance with Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes (F.S.), pursuant to section 163.3184(4)(e)4., F.S. Comments are offered to assist the local government and will not form the basis for a compliance determination.

FloridaCommerce staff has discussed the basis of the report with local government staff and is available to assist the County to address the objection and comment.

### **I. Objections**

#### **Objection 1: Lack of Demonstrated Public Facilities**

The proposed amendment is not supported with adequate data and analysis to demonstrate that the public facility improvements needed for the World Equestrian Center (“WEC”) land use allowed by the proposed amendment on the subject site have been identified and that the improvements have been included in the comprehensive plan and adequately planned for as required in section 163.3177(1)(f), F.S. The amendment is not based upon surveys, studies and data regarding the amendment site including the availability of water supplies, public facilities and services as required in sections 163.3177(6)(a), 163.3177(6)(b) and 163.3177(6)(c), F.S.

#### Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer

The analysis provided in the transmittal package states that the site is within the Marion County Utilities jurisdiction and is eligible for utility services. Additionally, it is stated that the site is adjacent to existing infrastructure, however this infrastructure does not extend fully into the subject site. Although this information is given, there is no supporting data and analysis demonstrating that there is enough capacity, or planned improvements, to serve for the demands of the proposed 250.86-acre designation change to the WEC Future Land Use.

#### Transportation

A traffic analysis and a traffic methodology for the analysis to be conducted by the applicant were included within the transmittal package. The analysis that was provided related to road conditions and improvements for west Marion County. However, a full analysis for the specific site showing the full impacts of the site on traffic has not been completed and included within the amendment package.

#### Capital Improvements

The Capital Improvements Element was not updated to reflect the needed public facilities improvements that would be necessary for this amendment. The County mentions within the amendment package that public facilities infrastructure does not fully extend into the subject site and an alternative means to providing public facilities may be necessary until connection can occur. However, the proposed improvements and timeframe of the improvements are not outlined within the data and analysis.

**Statutory Authority:** 163.3177(1)(f), 163.3177(2), 163.3177(3), 163.3177(6)(a), 163.3177(6)(b), 163.3177(6)(c), 163.3184(2), and 163.3184(4), F.S.

**Recommendation:** Amendment 25-01DRI, that is running concurrently with this amendment, proposes to allow sports facilities within the WEC and increases the development entitlements for non-residential uses. Considering the potential increase in development potential, the County should clarify which project description will be the effective controlling land use description for the site. The County must support the proposed amendment with adequate data and analysis to demonstrate the effects of the development on public facilities. They must also identify public facility improvements needed for the land use allowed by the proposed amendment on the subject site and that the improvements have been included in the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed amendment must be based upon surveys, studies and data regarding the amendment site, including the availability of water supplies, public facilities, and services.

## II. Comments

### **Comment 1:** Intergovernmental coordination

FloridaCommerce recommends that the County coordinate with the South Florida Water Management District regarding their comments dated August 27, 2025. Additionally, FloridaCommerce recommends that the County work with the St. Johns River Water Management District in updating their Water Supply Facilities Work Plan. Should the transportation analysis conducted find significant impacts to transportation facilities, FloridaCommerce recommends that the County coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation in traffic mitigation efforts.

**SUBMITTAL OF ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS**

**FOR STATE COORDINATED REVIEW**

**Section 163.3184(4), Florida Statutes**

**NUMBER OF COPIES TO BE SUBMITTED:** Please submit electronically using FloridaCommerce’s electronic amendment submittal portal “**Comprehensive Plan and Amendment Upload**” (<https://fldeo.my.salesforce-sites.com/cp/>) or submit three complete copies of all comprehensive plan materials, of which one complete paper copy and two complete electronic copies on CD ROM in Portable Document Format (PDF) to the State Land Planning Agency and one copy to each entity below that provided timely comments to the local government: the appropriate Regional Planning Council, Water Management District, Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of State, the appropriate county (municipal amendments only), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (county plan amendments only), and the Department of Education (amendments relating to public schools), and for certain local governments, the appropriate military installation and any other local government or governmental agency that has filed a written request.

**SUBMITTAL LETTER:** Please include the following information in the cover letter transmitting the adopted amendment:

\_\_\_\_\_ State Land Planning Agency identification number for adopted amendment package.

\_\_\_\_\_ Summary description of the adoption package, including any amendments proposed but not adopted.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ordinance number and adoption date.

\_\_\_\_\_ Certification that the adopted amendment(s) has been submitted to all parties that provided timely comments to the local government.

\_\_\_\_\_ Name, title, address, telephone, FAX number and e-mail address of local government contact.

\_\_\_\_\_ Letter signed by the chief elected official or the person designated by the local government.

**ADOPTION AMENDMENT PACKAGE:** Please include the following information in the amendment package:

\_\_\_\_\_ In the case of text amendments, changes should be shown in strike-through/underline format.

\_\_\_\_\_ In the case of future land use map amendment, an adopted future land use map, **in color format**, clearly depicting the parcel, its existing future land use designation and its adopted designation.

\_\_\_\_\_ A copy of any data and analyses the local government deems appropriate.

**Note:** If the local government is relying on previously submitted data and analysis, no additional data and analysis is required.

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy of executed ordinance adopting the comprehensive plan amendment(s).

Suggested effective date language for the adoption ordinance for state coordinated review:

"The effective date of this plan amendment, if the amendment is not timely challenged, shall be the date the state land planning agency posts a notice of intent determining that this amendment is in compliance. If the amendment is timely challenged, or if the state land planning agency issues a notice of intent determining that this amendment is not in compliance, this amendment shall become effective on the date the state land planning agency or the Administration Commission enters a final order determining this adopted amendment to be in compliance."

\_\_\_\_\_ List of additional changes made in the adopted amendment that the FloridaCommerce did not previously review.

\_\_\_\_\_ List of findings of the local governing body, if any, that were not included in the ordinance and which provided the basis of the adoption or determination not to adopt the proposed amendment.

\_\_\_\_\_ Statement indicating the relationship of the additional changes not previously reviewed by the FloridaCommerce to the ORC report from the FloridaCommerce.

**Harris, Donna**

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**From:** Steve Fitzgibbons <SFitzgibbons@sjrwmd.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 29, 2025 4:57 PM  
**To:** DCPexternalagencycomments  
**Cc:** Rison, Christopher; kenneth.weyrauch@marionfl.org; Williams, Autumn  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] - Marion County proposed comprehensive plan amendments 25-01DRI and 25-02DRI  
**Attachments:** RE: Marion County 10 Year WSP; RE: Marion County 10 Year WSP; Marion County 10 Year WSP

**CAUTION** - "This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe."

Dear Mr. Stansbury and Ms. Harris,

St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) staff have reviewed Marion County proposed comprehensive plan amendments 25-01DRI and 25-02DRI in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. Based on review of the submitted materials, SJRWMD staff have no comments on the proposed amendment. Please note that the County is within the boundaries of both the SJRWMD and Southwest Florida Water Management District. The Southwest Florida Water Management District will provide their comments in a separate response.

However, as a reminder, SJRWMD approved the 2022 Central Springs/East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan (CSEC RWSP) in February 2022. Subsequently, in accordance with Section 163.3177(6)(c)4, *Florida Statutes*, the County was required to adopt an updated Water Supply Facilities Work Plan (WSFWP) and related comprehensive plan amendment within 18 months of approval of the 2022 CSEC RWSP (i.e., by August 2023). Although SJRWMD and County representatives had previously coordinated on the County's efforts to adopt an updated WSFWP, the last point of related communication received by SJRWMD on that effort was in December 2023 (see attached emails). Therefore, SJRWMD is also providing this reminder about the requirement for the County to adopt an updated WSFWP and related comprehensive plan amendment.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me. Please note that all proposed and adopted comprehensive plan amendments can be submitted to SJRWMD by email at [sfitzgibbons@sjrwmd.com](mailto:sfitzgibbons@sjrwmd.com).

Sincerely,  
Steve Fitzgibbons

Steven Fitzgibbons, AICP  
Intergovernmental Planner  
St. Johns River Water Management District  
7775 Baymeadows Way, Suite 102  
Jacksonville, FL 32256  
Office (386) 312-2369  
Email: [sfitzgib@sjrwmd.com](mailto:sfitzgib@sjrwmd.com)  
Website: [www.sjrwmd.com](http://www.sjrwmd.com)  
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[www.sjrwmd.cc](http://www.sjrwmd.cc)

We value your opinion. Please take a few minutes to share your comments on the service you received from the District by clicking this [link](#)

#### Notices

- Emails to and from the St. Johns River Water Management District are archived and, unless exempt or confidential by law, are subject to being made available to the public upon request. Users should not have an expectation of confidentiality or privacy.
- Individuals lobbying the District must be registered as lobbyists (§112.3261, Florida Statutes). Details, applicability and the registration form are available at <http://www.sjrwmd.com/lobbyist/>

**Harris, Donna**

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**From:** Baysinger, Samantha <Samantha.Baysinger@MyFWC.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025 11:31 AM  
**To:** Kenneth.Weyrauch@marionfl.org  
**Cc:** Conservation Planning Services; Hannan, Catherine; DCPexternalagencycomments; Gruver, Pamela  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] - FWC's Comments on Marion County 25-02DRI (Golden Ocala Maps)

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Dear Mr. Weyrauch,

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff reviewed the proposed comprehensive plan amendment in accordance with Chapter 163.3184(3), Florida Statutes. We have no comments, recommendations, or objections related to listed species and their habitat or other fish and wildlife resources to offer on this amendment.

FWC staff appreciates the opportunity to review this project. Please send any requests for further information to [ConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com](mailto:ConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com).

Sincerely,

Samantha Baysinger  
Land Use Planning Program Supervisor  
Office of Conservation Planning Services  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
(850) 354-3578

Marion County 25-02DRI\_63611

**Harris, Donna**

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**From:** Plan\_Review <Plan.Review@dep.state.fl.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 29, 2025 2:48 PM  
**To:** DCPexternalagencycomments  
**Cc:** Plan\_Review  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] - Marion County 25-02DRI Proposed

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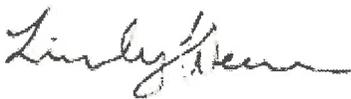
To: Donna Harris, Senior Plan Processor, Florida Commerce Bureau of Community Planning and Growth

Re: Marion County 25-02DRI – State Coordinated Review of Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment

The Office of Intergovernmental Programs of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Department) has reviewed the above-referenced amendment package under the provisions of Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. The Department conducted a detailed review that focused on potential adverse impacts to important state resources and facilities, specifically: air and water pollution; wetlands and other surface waters of the state; federal and state-owned lands and interest in lands, including state parks, greenways and trails, conservation easements; solid waste; and water and wastewater treatment.

Based on our review of the submitted amendment package, the Department has found no provision that, if adopted, would result in adverse impacts to important state resources subject to the Department's jurisdiction.

Please submit all future amendments by email to [Plan.Review@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:Plan.Review@FloridaDEP.gov). If your submittal is too large to send via email or if you need other assistance, contact Lindsay Weaver at (850) 717-9037.





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## Southwest Florida Water Management District

2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604-6899

(352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only)

WaterMatters.org

### Bartow Office

170 Century Boulevard  
Bartow, Florida 33830-7700  
(863) 534-1448 or  
1-800-492-7862 (FL only)

### Sarasota Office

78 Sarasota Center Boulevard  
Sarasota, Florida 34240-9770  
(941) 377-3722 or  
1-800-320-3503 (FL only)

### Tampa Office

7601 U.S. 301 North  
Tampa, Florida 33637-6759  
(813) 985-7481 or  
1-800-836-0797 (FL only)

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**Brian J. Armstrong, P.G.**  
Executive Director

August 27, 2025

Ms. Yazmin Valdez, Deputy Bureau Chief  
State Land Planning Agency  
Caldwell Building  
107 East Madison – MSC 160  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-4120

Subject: **Marion 25-2DRI**

Dear Ms. Valdez:

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) has reviewed the proposed amendment package which includes a map amendment identified as 25-L02(D). We offer the following technical assistance comment for consideration.

### Regional Water Supply

1. The amendment appears to involve an increase in development intensity. Consequently, it should be supported by data and analysis demonstrating the availability of adequate potable water capacity to meet the additional demand due to the land use change, pursuant to Chapter 163.3177(6)(a)8.a., F.S., and Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) guidelines (see page 4, item "B of DEO's publication entitled *A Guide To The Data And Analysis To Support Comprehensive Plan Amendments*). A copy of the Guide is available at the following link:

<http://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/programs/technical-assistance/planning-initiatives/natural-resource-planning/water-supply-planning>

### Floodplains and Floodprone Areas/Wetlands and Other Surface Waters

2. No comments.

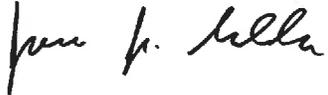
The following comments address regulatory matters:

- According to District records, there are existing wells on the site. If these wells are no longer proposed for use, they would need to be properly abandoned in accordance with the requirements of Rule 40D-3.531, F.A.C. For assistance or additional information, please contact Dave Arnold, well construction manager, at (813) 985-7481 or [davidn.arnold@watermatters.org](mailto:davidn.arnold@watermatters.org).
- A preapplication meeting with District Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) staff is encouraged prior to any site work. For assistance or additional information concerning the District's ERP program, please contact Rob McDaniel, ERP evaluation manager, at (813) 985-7481 or [rob.mcdaniel@watermatters.org](mailto:rob.mcdaniel@watermatters.org).

Ms. Yazmin Valdez, Deputy Bureau Chief  
August 27, 2025  
Page 2

We appreciate this opportunity to participate in the review process. Please provide the District with a copy of the adopted amendment, including any supporting data and analysis. If you have any questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (352) 269-6937 or [james.golden@watermatters.org](mailto:james.golden@watermatters.org).

Sincerely,



James J. Golden, AICP  
Senior Planner

JG

cc: Lindsay Weaver, DEP  
Carriann Adkins, SWFWMD  
Dave Arnold, SWFWMD  
Rob McDaniel, SWFWMD  
Kenneth Weyrauch, Marion County