Marion County
Board of County Commissioners

Growth Services

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Ocala, FL 34470
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PLANNING & ZONING SECTION
STAFF REPORT

P&Z Date: 2/23/2026	**BCC Date: 3/17/2026**
Case Number	260303SU
EPL Number	PL SUP-000181-2025
Type of Case	**Special Use Permit** for two (2) horses for personal use
Owner	Andres Hernandez & Gladisleidys Gonzalez
Applicant	N/A
Street Address/Site Location	13516 SW 80th Street, Dunnellon, FL 34432
Parcel Number(s)	3490-059-007
Property Size	±1.29 AC
Future Land Use	Rural Land (RL)
Existing Zoning Classification	Single-Family Dwelling (R-1)
Overlays Zones/Special Areas	Secondary Springs Protection Zone (SSPZ)
Staff Recommendation	**DENIAL**
P&Z Recommendation	**TBD**
Project Planner	Jared Rivera-Cayetano
Related Cases	Code Case No. CE25-0327 – Horse(s) in residentially zoned property (Closed)

I. ITEM SUMMARY

Andres Hernandez and Gladisleidys Gonzalez filed a Special Use Permit (SUP) application for two (2) horses on a ±1.29-acre property with a zoning classification of Single-Family Dwelling (R-1). The subject property is located at 13516 SW 80th Street, Dunnellon, FL. The Parcel Identification Number for the subject property is 3490-059-007. Located within the Rolling Hills Unit 1 subdivision, the legal descriptions are provided within the Special Use Permit application (see Attachment A). The site is located outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and within the Secondary Springs Protection Zone (SSPZ). The site is outside the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA). The intention of this Special Use Permit request is to allow two (2) horses for personal use. The Special Use Permit request is in response to Code Case No. CE25-0327. Two (2) horses were found on-site.

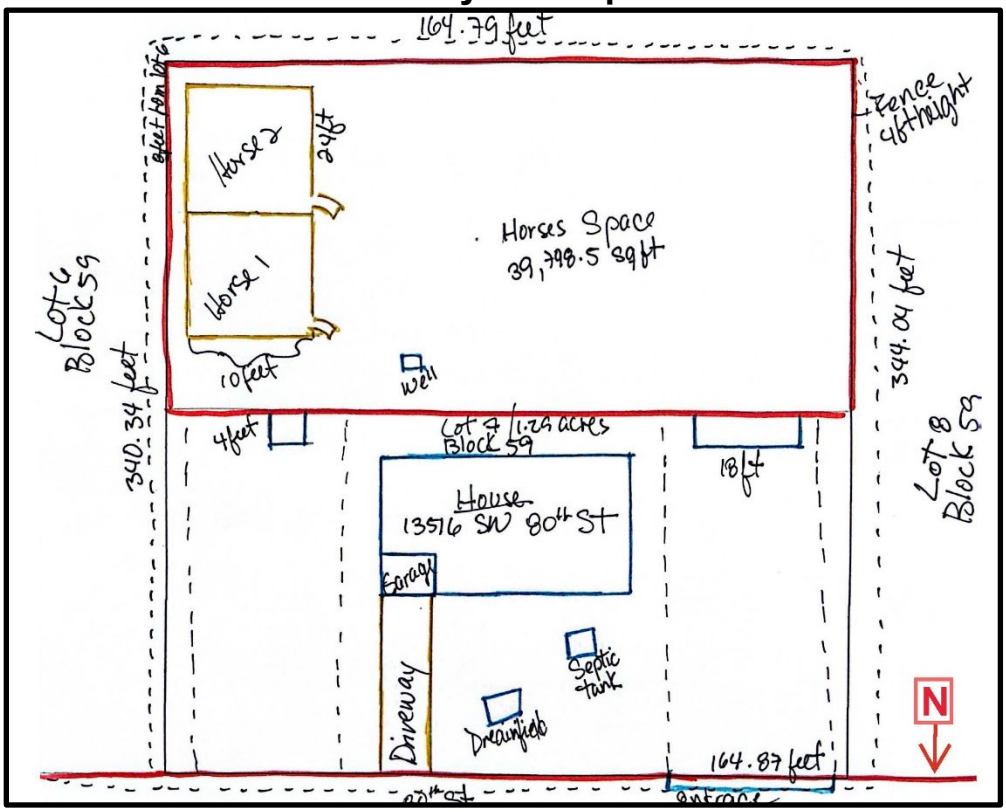
Figure 2 provides a preliminary site plan for the requested special use. The submitted SUP concept plan indicates a fenced area approximately 39,800 square feet in size along the rear of the subject property. The applicant indicates a fence height of four (4) feet, with at least two (2) gates. Stables with food and water for the horses are also indicated. Manure is spread along select plantings, with excess waste collected and moved off-site. The applicant proposes a grass driveway along one side of an existing single-family residence to provide access to the rear yard.

II. STAFF SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **DENIAL.** Although Section 4.2.6.F of the Marion County Land Development Code (LDC) provides standards for keeping horses in residentially zoned properties, Staff has been directed to consult IFAS Best Management Practices (BMPs) for keeping horses. Staff finds the subject property contains insufficient land for horses; simultaneously, the subject property is located within an existing residential subdivision that has seen significant construction activity in recent years. Staff finds the request is thus not consistent with the Marion County Comprehensive Plan, not compatible with the surrounding area, and will not adversely affect the public interest. The conditions in Section VII of this report are recommended to partially address compliance with the requirements in the Marion County Land Development Code (LDC) Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B.

Figure 1
General Location Map

Figure 2
Preliminary Concept Plan



III. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Growth Services Director has interpreted the requirements of Land Development Code (LDC) Sections 2.7.3.C, 2.7.3.B and 2.7.3.E to apply to SUP applications. Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.B., notice of public hearing was mailed to all property owners (11 owners) within 300 feet of the subject property on February 13, 2026. Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.B., public notice was posted on the subject property on February 11, 2026, and consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.E., due public notice was published in the Ocala Star-Banner on February 16, 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, five (5) letters of support/no-objection and one (1) letter of opposition have been received.

IV. BACKGROUND/CHARACTER OF AREA

A. *Existing Site Conditions.*

Figure 1, above, is a general location aerial displaying existing and surrounding site conditions. Figure 2, below, displays the subject and surrounding properties' existing uses as established by the Marion County Property Appraiser Office's Property Code (PC).

The subject property and all adjacent properties are part of the pre-existing Rolling Hills subdivision(s). In general, the surrounding properties are characterized predominantly by low-density residential development, including several properties currently classified as Vacant Residential. Properties characterized as Government Institution are currently used as drainage retention areas.

Staff conducted an initial site visit on January 29, 2026 with University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) staff. An additional site visit was conducted on February 11, 2026.

Staff found that the subject property currently contains a single-family residence. The subject property currently contains a decorative fence in the front yard. Two (2) horses were found on-site within a fenced area approximately quarter acre in size. The horses were found to be in good health and have been on the subject property since the end of 2025/beginning of 2026. Stables are located along the southwestern corner of the subject property, with an additional accessory structure along the southern subject property boundary. Manure was found to be spread along existing plantings on-site.

More than six (6) chickens were also observed; however, the applicant has indicated that several chickens have since been removed in order to meet R-1 standards for chickens.

Small clusters of trees are located across the subject property and along portions of the property boundary; however, Staff notes that the site had been largely cleared during the construction of the existing single-family residence in 2024, with several areas of exposed sand/soils. The property to the west of the subject property (PID 3490-059-107), currently classified as Vacant Residential by MCPA, was found to be under construction for a single-family residence at the time of the initial site visit. Several new single-family residences were observed throughout the Rolling Hills subdivision, including several units under construction.

B. *Zoning Classification.*

Figure 2, below, displays the existing zoning classifications for the subject property in relation to the existing zoning classifications of the surrounding properties. All surrounding properties within the existing Rolling Hills subdivision have a Single-Family Dwelling (R-1) zoning classification.

There is a property (PID 3490-060-112) to the west of the subject property along SW 80th Street that was approved for a horse in 1990. A property (PID 3492-071-109) to the northeast of the subject property along SW 75th Street was approved for one (1) horse, two (2) donkeys, four (4) goats, two (2) zebu, two (2) hogs, ten (10) hens, and nine (9) rabbits for 4-H activities only. No other property within a one-mile radius has been approved for similar SUP requests.

C. *FLUM Designation.*

Figure 4, below, displays the existing Future Land Use (FLU) designation for the subject property in relation to the existing FLU designation of the surrounding properties. All nearby properties are designated as Rural Lands (RL), which is intended for a density up to one (1) dwelling unit per ten (10) acres. Select parcels designated as Public (P) currently serve as drainage retention areas.

The subject property is within the Secondary Springs Protection Overlay Zone (SSPOZ) and outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), as established by the Marion County Comprehensive Plan. The subject property is outside the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA).

Table 1, below, assembles the information in Figures 3, 4, and 5 in tabular form. Figure 6 indicates similar cases within a half,-, one-, and two-mile radius. Site photos are attached to this report (see Attachment C).

TABLE 1. ADJACENT PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
Direction	**FLUM Designation**	**Zoning Classification**	**MCPA Existing Use**
Subject Property	Rural Land (RL)	Single-Family Dwelling (R-1)	Single Family Residential
North	Right-of-Way & Rural Land (RL)	Right-of-Way & Single-Family Dwelling (R-1)	Right-of-Way & Single Family Residential
South	Rural Land (RL)	Single-Family Dwelling (R-1)	Vacant Residential
East	Rural Land (RL)	Single-Family Dwelling (R-1)	Single Family Residential
West	Rural Land (RL)	Single-Family Dwelling (R-1)	Vacant Residential

Figure 3
Existing Use per Property Appraiser Property Code

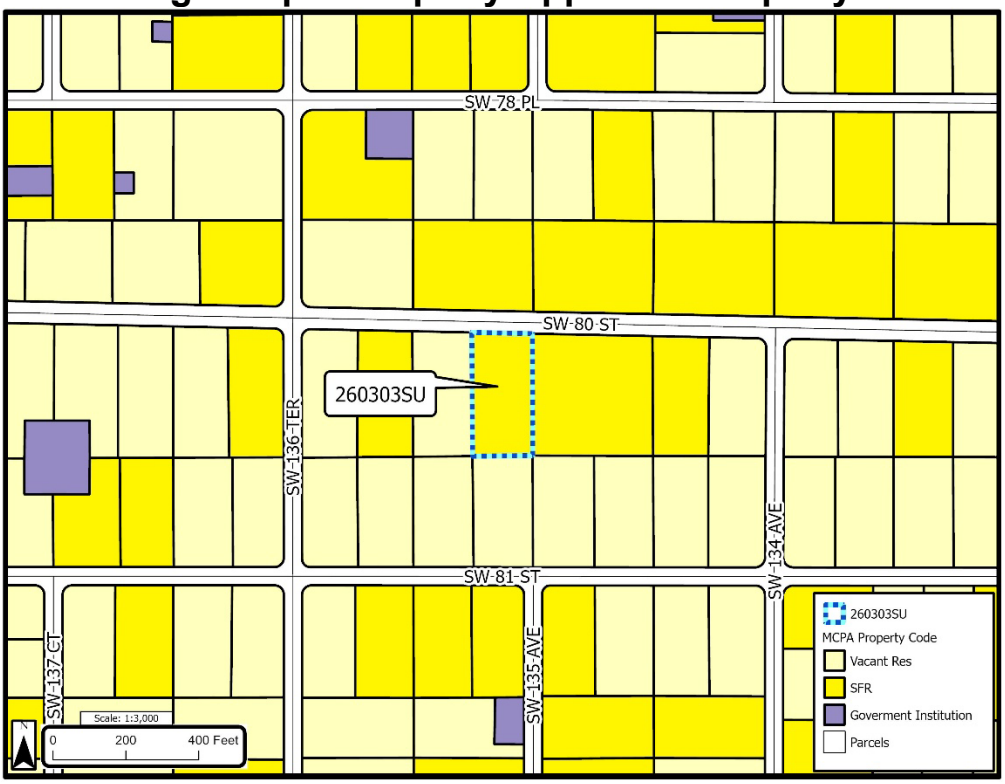


Figure 4
Zoning Classification

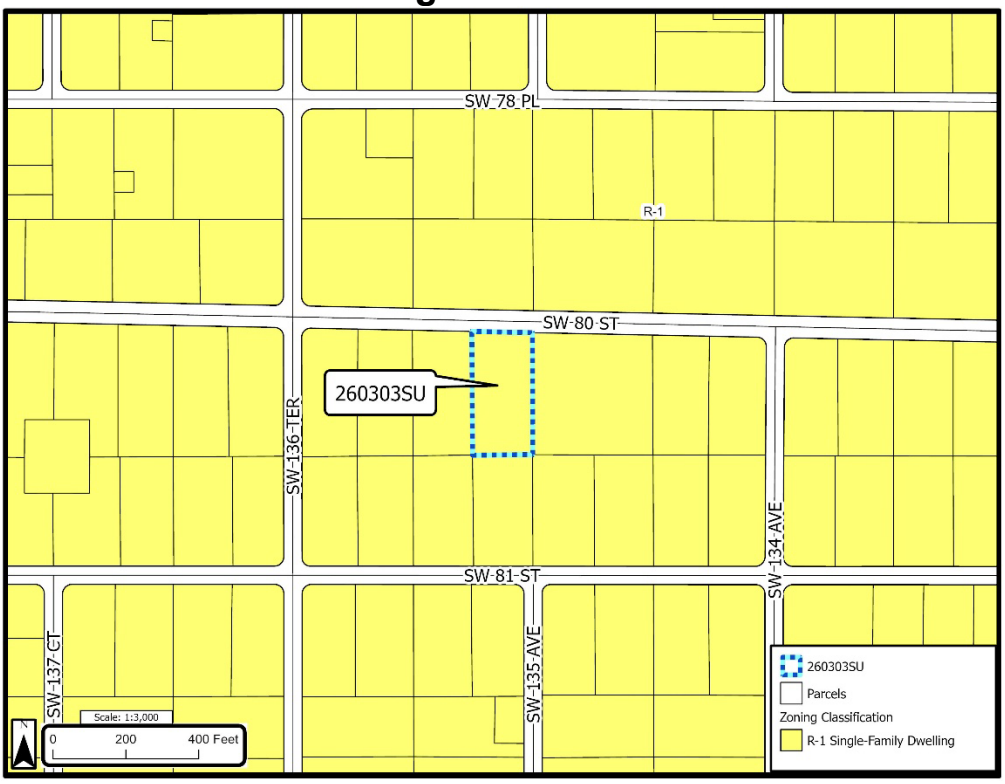


Figure 5
FLUMS Designation

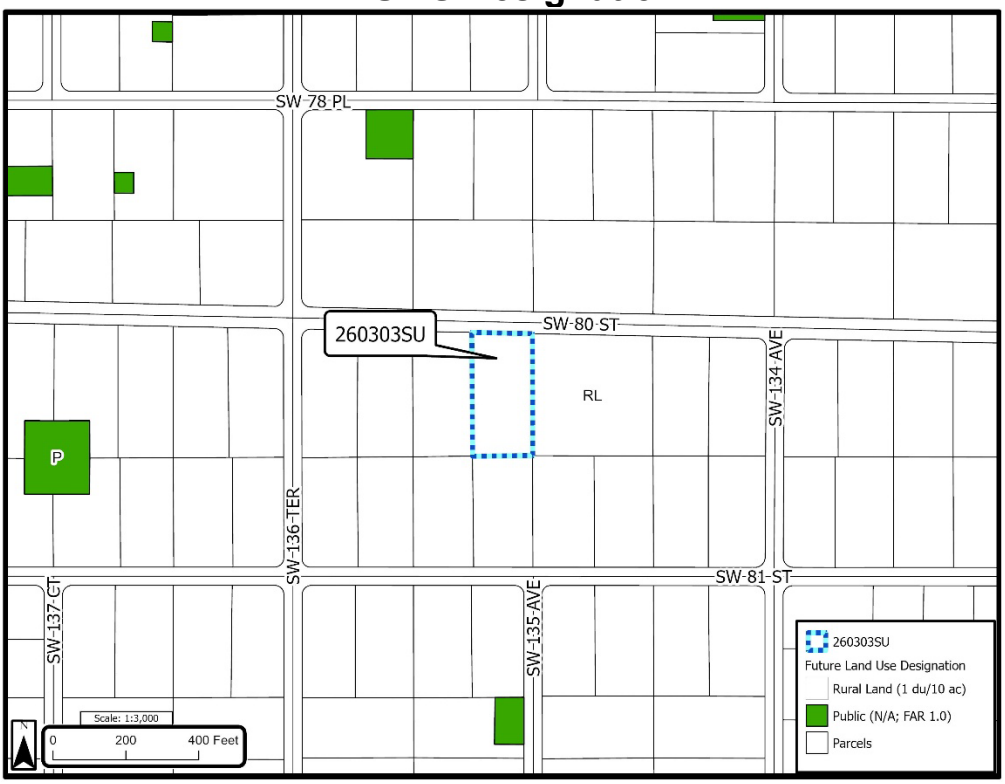
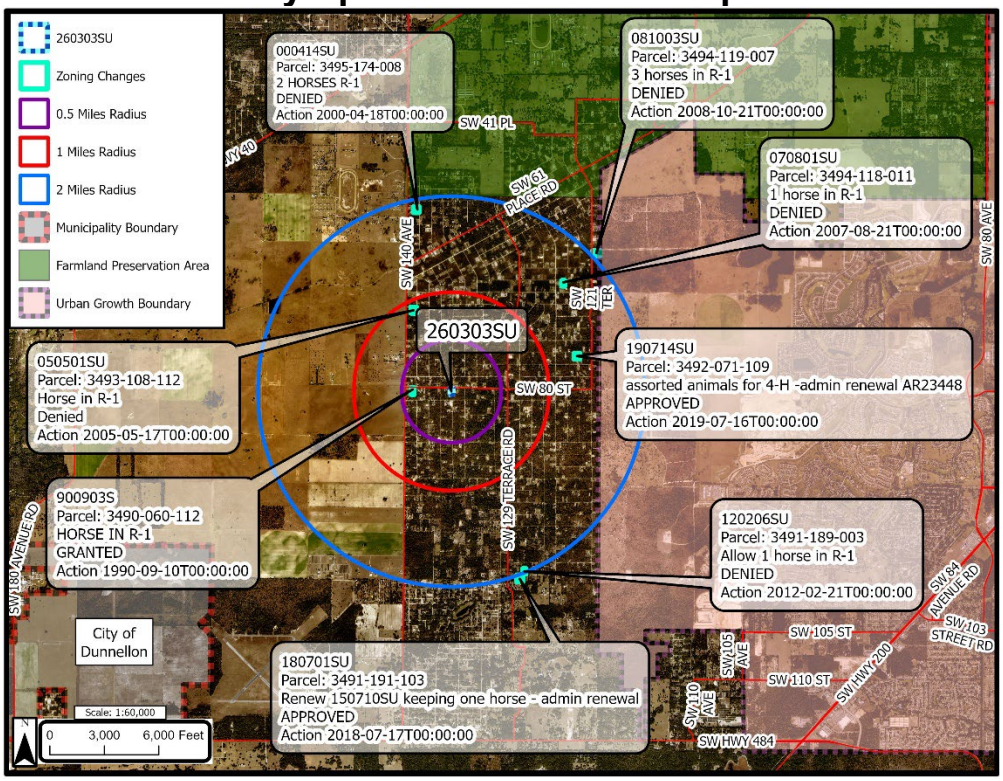


Figure 6
Nearby Special Use Permit Requests



V. ANALYSIS

LDC Section 2.8.2.D provides that in making a recommendation to the Board, the Commission shall make a written finding that granting the SUP will address nine specific requirements. LDC Section 2.8.3.B requires consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff's analysis of compliance with these ten (10) requirements are 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 subject property currently has one (1) permitted driveway apron along SW 80th Street; any additional driveway within the subject property will need to be permitted consistent with County standards. Given that the horses are intended to be for personal use only, the Office of the County Engineer (OCE) does not have traffic concerns with this Special Use Permit (SUP) request.

Staff thus concludes that the application **is consistent** with LDC provisions for ingress and egress, provided that the following condition(s) are met:

- *No commercial activity related to the horses shall be permitted within the subject property. This condition shall not restrict family members or friends*

invited by the subject property owner, from time to time and without compensation, to interact with the horses.

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: The applicant indicates that no commercial activity will occur within the subject property; the applicant proposes horse(s) for personal uses. Therefore, no additional parking will be required. Based on the proposed activity, Staff concludes that the application **is consistent** with LDC provisions for off-street parking and loading.

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

Analysis: Horses can produce between fifty (50) and sixty (60) pounds of manure per day, according to UF/IFAS staff. Staff notes the subject property is within the developing Rolling Hills subdivision; it is thus recognized that manure may produce noxious odors that can affect nearby residential properties.

Furthermore, Staff has been asked to consult IFAS Best Management Practices (BMPs) for keeping horses. Although UF/IFAS staff has generally recommended that pastures be dragged to distribute manure evenly, UF/IFAS staff does not recommend such a practice in this case due to the size of the subject property and the proposed number of horses. The applicant currently spreads manure along select plantings on-site, with excess waste collected and moved off-site. The applicant has indicated that the chickens on-site occasionally feed on seeds in horse manure. Staff notes that some manure appears to have been disposed behind the existing fenced area, into a neighboring property to the south of the subject property.

Staff therefore concludes that the application **is not consistent** with provisions for refuse and service areas. However, in the event that the Special Use Permit request is approved, the following condition(s) are recommended:

- *All manure shall be stored within an enclosed container or on an impervious surface covered by waterproof material. Manure shall be collected and removed from the subject property at least once every week.*

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

Analysis: The subject property is currently served by Duke Energy for electricity. Any electrical work will need to meet applicable County standards at the time of permitting.

The subject property is outside connection distance for central potable water and wastewater service. The applicant indicates the property is currently served by a new well and septic system installed during the construction of the existing single-family residence.

Staff therefore concludes that the application **is consistent** with LDC provisions for utilities.

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

Analysis: The Marion County Land Development Code (LDC) includes several provisions to ensure compatibility between different land uses. Section 6.8.6 of the Marion County LDC indicates that agricultural uses are not required to provide buffers. The subject property currently contains a decorative fence in the front yard, while the two (2) horses were within a fenced area. Small clusters of trees are located across the subject property and along portions of the property boundary.

Staff therefore concludes that the application **is consistent** with LDC provisions for buffering and screening.

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: No signage currently exists within the subject property. At most, the applicant proposes signs indicating the presence of security cameras, which do not require permits according to LDC Section 4.4.4.

Additional lighting is not proposed, but if it is found that lighting needs to be added, a photometric plan will be provided in accordance with the Marion County LDC. Staff therefore concludes that the application **is consistent** with LDC provisions for signs and exterior lighting.

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

Analysis: The applicant indicates approximately 39,800 square feet of pasture area. Staff notes all structures will need to meet R-1 zoning standards, including setbacks and maximum building height. Staff therefore concludes that the application **is consistent** with LDC provisions for required yards and other green space, provided that the following condition(s) are met:

- *All accessory structures, including horses stables and sheds, shall meet minimum zoning requirements as provided in the Marion County Land Development Code (LDC).*

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

Analysis: "Compatibility" is defined in Chapter 163.3164(9) of the Florida Statutes, under the Community Planning Act, 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 1, above, is a general location aerial displaying existing and surrounding site conditions. Figure 3 displays the subject and surrounding properties' existing uses as established by the Marion County Property Appraiser Office's Property Code (PC).

The surrounding properties are characterized predominantly by residential development, including parcels directly to the north, east, and west of the subject property. Staff notes that all surrounding properties are within the pre-existing Rolling Hills subdivision, which is entirely zoned for single-family residential uses. Indeed, this subdivision has seen significant construction activity in recent years, with construction increasing on a year-to-year basis over the last five (5) years. Between January 2021 and January 2025, approximately 409 permit applications had received a Certificate of Occupancy (CO). For reference, only 144 applications had received a CO between 2008 and 2020.

Aside from a single SUP request for a horse in 1990, no other property within a one-mile radius has been approved for similar requests. Staff therefore finds the Special Use Permit request **is not compatible** with the surrounding area.

That said, in the event that the Special Use Permit request is approved, the following condition(s) are recommended to further mitigate compatibility concerns:

- *The site shall be developed and operated consistent with the concept plan. Any required improvements, including the expansion of the existing fenced area, shall be provided within ninety (90) days of approval.*
- *The Special Use Permit shall run with the property owner(s), Andres Hernandez and Gladisleidys Gonzalez.*
- *The Special Use Permit shall expire on March 17, 2031; however, it may be renewed administratively three times for five years each by written instrument signed and issued by the Growth Services Director (or designee), 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 feet 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; and/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 equivalent review process at the time).

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

Analysis: Section 4.2.6.F of the Marion County Land Development Code (LDC) provides standards on keeping horses on residentially zoned properties. The LDC requires at least 9,000 square feet of pasture area for the first animal, and 6,000 square feet for each additional animal. Up to four (4) large farm animals are allowed per acre. On a 1.29-acre property, up to five (5) horses would be allowed by code, with at least 15,000 square feet of pasture area required for the two (2) horses requested by the applicant.

That said, Staff does note that both the applicant-proposed and LDC-required amount of pasture area may not accommodate the intensity of horses on pasture areas.

Staff has been asked to consult IFAS Best Management Practices (BMPs) for keeping horses. UF/IFAS staff generally recommends two (2) acres of pasture area for horses, as well as rotational grazing to maintain pasture health and thereby reduce impacts on surface water/groundwater quality. The submitted SUP concept plan indicates approximately 39,800 square feet of pasture area. Furthermore, Staff notes that the subject property is composed of sandy soils, which are especially susceptible to runoff/erosion and limited in their ability to establish and maintain viable pasture vegetation in the first place. Staff therefore finds the subject property contains insufficient/inadequate land for horses and ultimately recommends **DENIAL** of the Special Use Permit request.

However, in the event that the Special Use Permit request is approved, the following condition(s) are recommended, based on a site visit with UF/IFAS staff:

- *Up to two (2) horses shall be permitted on at least 39,800 square feet of pasture area, with feed to be supplemented by hay.*

J. *Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.*

1. **FLUE Policy 2.1.5** on Permitted and Special Use provides, “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: LDC Section 4.2 explicitly includes horses or cattle for personal use as a special use for Single-Family Dwelling (R-1) zoning; meanwhile, LDC Section 4.2.6.F provides standards on keeping horses on residentially zoned properties generally, including minimum pasture area. The applicant proposes two (2) horses on approximately 39,800 square feet of pasture area.

This application **is thus consistent** with FLUE Policy 2.1.5, provided that all previously-listed conditions are met.

2. **FLUE Policy 5.1.2** on Review Criteria for Changes to Comprehensive Plan and Zoning provides, “Before approval of a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA), Zoning Change (ZC), or Special Use Permit (SUP), the applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed modification is suitable. The County shall review, and make a determination that the proposed modification is compatible with existing and planned development on the site and in the immediate vicinity, and shall evaluate its overall consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and LDC and potential impacts on, but not limited to the following:

(1) Market demand and necessity for the change;
(2) Availability and potential need for improvements to public or private facilities and services;
(3) Allocation and distribution of land uses and the creation of mixed use areas;
(4) Environmentally sensitive areas, natural and historic resources, and other resources in the County;
(5) Agricultural activities and rural character of the area;
(6) Prevention of urban sprawl, as defined by Ch. 163, F.S.;
(7) Consistency with the UGB;
(8) Consistency with planning principles and regulations in the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and LDC;
(9) Compatibility with current uses and land uses in the surrounding area;
(10) Water Supply and Alternative Water Supply needs; and
(11) Concurrency requirements."

Analysis: The subject site is designated as Rural Land (RL) and the applicant requests two (2) horses. This aligns with the definition of Agricultural Use in Policy 2.1.14 and generally aligns with Comprehensive Plan intentions for Rural Areas outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

That said, UF/IFAS staff generally recommends two (2) acres of pasture area for horses to maintain pasture health and thereby reduce impacts on surface water/groundwater quality. The applicant is proposing two (2) horses on approximately 39,800 square feet of pasture area primarily composed of sandy soils, which are especially susceptible to runoff/erosion.

Furthermore, Staff notes that all surrounding properties are within the pre-existing Rolling Hills subdivision, which is entirely zoned for single-family residential uses and which has seen significant construction activity in recent years. Simultaneously, aside from a single SUP request for a horse

in 1990, no other property within a one-mile radius has been approved for agricultural uses. A request for multiple horses within a 1.29-acre property is thus not compatible with the surrounding residential area.

Therefore, this Special Use Permit request does not meet Criteria 4 and 9 of FLUE Policy 5.1.2 and **is thus not consistent** with FLUE Policy 5.1.2.

3. **FLUE Policy 8.1.1** on the Protection of Existing Residential Development provides, "The County shall recognize existing residential development and require that new development address issues of compatibility through implementation and maintenance of LDC that address density and intensity impacts of new development to the surrounding area and uses."

   Analysis: Staff notes that all surrounding properties are within the residential Rolling Hills subdivision, which has seen significant construction activity in recent years. Limited requests for agricultural special uses have been approved in this residential area. Therefore, the proposed special use **is not consistent** with FLUE Policy 8.1.1.

Staff ultimately concludes the SUP request **is not consistent** with LDC Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B. The conditions in Section VII of this report are recommended to further address compliance.

VI. 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 so as to support the approval of the Ordinance with amended conditions, and make a recommendation to the Commission to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS** the Special Use Permit.

B. 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, make a recommendation 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

Staff recommends the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission 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 Special Use Permit. Staff finds the requested special use is not compatible

with the surrounding area, is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and will adversely affect the surrounding area.

To partially address compliance with LDC Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B, the conditions below are recommended in the event that the Board chooses to approve the requested special use:

1. *The site shall be developed and operated consistent with the concept plan. Any required improvements, including the expansion of the existing fenced area, shall be provided within ninety (90) days of approval.*
2. *The Special Use Permit shall run with the property owner(s), Andres Hernandez and Gladisleidys Gonzalez.*
3. *No commercial activity related to the horses shall be permitted within the subject property. This condition shall not restrict family members or friends invited by the subject property owner, from time to time and without compensation, to interact with the horses.*
4. *All accessory structures, including horses stables and sheds, shall meet minimum zoning requirements as provided in the Marion County Land Development Code (LDC).*
5. *All manure shall be stored within an enclosed container or on an impervious surface covered by waterproof material. Manure shall be collected and removed from the subject property at least once every week.*
6. *Up to two (2) horses shall be permitted on at least 39,800 square feet of pasture area, with feed to be supplemented by hay.*
7. *The Special Use Permit shall expire on March 17, 2031; however, it may be renewed administratively three times for five years each by written instrument signed and issued by the Growth Services Director (or designee), unless:*
    a. *There have been unresolved violations of the County Land Development Code, the County Code of Ordinances, and/or the conditions of the Permit;*
    b. *Neighboring property owners within 300 feet 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; and/or*
    c. *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 equivalent review process at the time).*

VIII. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

To be determined. Scheduled for February 23, 2026 at 5:30 PM.

IX. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ACTION

To be determined. Scheduled for March 17, 2026 at 2:00 PM.

X. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

A. Application
B. DRC Comments Letter
C. Site Photos
D. Code Case No. CE25-0327 (Closed)