

STAFF REPORT

Planning & Zoning Commission: June 13, 2005

Local Planning Agency: July 13, 2005

Board of County Commissioners: July 13, 2005

Board of County Commissioners:

APPLICANT: Priority Developers, Inc. **FILE NUMBER:** CPAM-05-06

PURPOSE: Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Amend the Future Land Use Map of the Hernando County Comprehensive Plan from Rural to Residential

GENERAL

LOCATION: North of Powell Road and East of Wolf Road

LEGAL

DESCRIPTION: A portion of Sections 6 and 7, Township 23 South, Range 19 East, Hernando County FL

FILE STATUS: All the requirements necessary to conduct the public hearing have been satisfied.

CITIZEN RESPONSE: FOR: 0 AGAINST: 0

STAFF FINDINGS:

The applicant, Priority Developers, Inc., is proposing to amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for two parcels located in Sections 6 and 7, Township 23 South, Range 19 East. The first parcel, known as the Weiner parcel, is located on the north side of Powell Road, west of US 41 and contains approximately 78 acres. The second parcel, known as the Hunnicutt parcel, is located northeast of the intersection of Wolf Road and Silent Breeze Street, contains approximately 241 acres. The two parcels are discontinuous and are separated by a parcel similar in size to the Hunnicutt parcel. The Hunnicutt parcel is designated Rural on the County's FLUM. The southern half of the Weiner parcel is designated Residential on the FLUM, with the northern half of the Weiner parcel designated Rural. The proposal is to amend the FLUM for those portions of the two parcels that are designated Rural and place them in the Residential category. This area is approximately 269 acres, since approximately 50 acres of the Weiner parcel are already Residential on the County's FLUM.

Both parcels lie adjacent to and west of the developing Hernando Oaks subdivision. The intent of the applicant, according to the narrative submitted with the application, is to develop both parcels with residential uses totaling no more than 680 units, or a density of approximately 2.14 units per acre over the entire 319 acres of the property. Access to the Hunnicutt parcel will be through the existing Hernando Oaks road system. Access to the Weiner parcel will be from Powell Road and through Hernando Oaks.

The applicant's narrative indicates that the parcels lie within the US 41 corridor, which has recently become a focal point for residential and commercial development in Hernando County. According to the applicant's narrative, given the demand for residential and associated development, the investment in public services and the close proximity of employment, public services and commercial activity, it appears to be an appropriate time to expand the residential corridor along US 41. The applicant's narrative compares the area west of US 41 to the area lying east of US 41 which the City of Brooksville annexed and is being developed as Hampton Ridge.

The applicant's narrative points out that there are several areas of flood plain designations indicated on the FEMA flood plain mapping, especially the northern portion of the Hunnicutt parcel. According to the applicant, the parcels are currently undeveloped and are used for grazing cattle and growing hay. The elevations on the Hunnicutt parcel range from 47 feet MSL in the flood plain area to 77 feet MSL in the center of the property. The elevations on the Weiner parcel range from 71 feet MSL along the Western boundary to 93 feet MSL near the southeast corner.

The applicant's narrative indicates that County's Airport subregional wastewater treatment plant is expandable to 3 MGD and would be more than adequate to serve the project need of 200,000 GPD. The applicant also indicated that the County is designing a 20 inch water main to be run from the Southwest Wellfield to the transmission system that serves the Hernando Oaks area. According to the applicant, the improvements will be more than adequate to serve the potable water demands of 240,000 GPD from the development. The applicant's narrative cites the current traffic counts on the surrounding network and concludes that the roads in the area are adequate to handle the anticipated traffic from the proposed amendment of 422 weekday PM peak hour trips.

The applicant's narrative also provides information on the consistency of the application with the State's Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 187 FS), the Withlacoochee Strategic Regional Policy Plan, and the Hernando County Comprehensive Plan.

Environmental Planning Staff reviewed the proposed FLU map amendment focusing on the two proposed parcels (Weiner and Hunnicutt parcels) but including the parcel which lies between them (Sellers parcel) considering the likely shift of that parcel into a residential category at a future date if residential is approved for the request. There are three primary environmental limitations in the subject area: a heavily karst landscape, wetland features and 100 year floodplain.

The general area that lies between California St., US 41, Wiscon Rd. and Powell Rd. has the highest density of sinkhole activity in the County according to the SPA mapping associated with the Groundwater Protection Ordinance (GPO). The two parcels under review contain 11 solution sinkhole features according to the Soil Survey which is the source of the County's SPA mapping. The Sellers parcel contains 7 sinkhole features. All sinkhole features in the SPA mapping are considered vulnerable features under the GPO unless demonstrated otherwise. There is the distinct possibility that there may be other sinkholes present on the subject properties not present in the Soil Survey mapping due to karst activity that has taken place since the Survey was published in 1977. Prior to any rezoning action, Environmental Planning Staff would

recommend a sinkhole/geotechnical study of the subject properties be conducted should an increase in land use intensity from the current agricultural uses be considered. This is due to the dangers of groundwater contamination that open conduits and sinkholes present and the likelihood of property and infrastructure loss or damage. The following policy language is suggested: A geotechnical study assessing the nature and extent of karst features and activity shall be submitted prior to the zoning process to determine appropriate densities and locations for development and infrastructure.

There are 17 small isolated wetlands present on the two proposed properties and 4 more on the Sellers parcel according to County data resources.

The Weiner parcel contains one area of 100-year floodplain along its western boundary. The Sellers parcel contains five separate areas of floodplain and the Hunnicutt parcel contains two separate areas of floodplain, the largest of which covers approximately the northern quarter of the parcel. In all the three parcels contain approximately 123 acres of 100-year floodplain. This translates to approximately 22% of the entire acreage of the three parcels.

There is the possibility of listed wading bird species using the wetland areas of the subject properties but no known rookeries are present. There is the limited possibility of gopher tortoise being present due to the soils and vegetation. The northern portion of the Hunnicutt parcel within the floodplain contains native hammock vegetation.

The Weiner property is two miles from the County wells on Powell and less than a mile from the ten year capture zone for County wells in the groundwater flow direction. The USEPA's DRASTIC index rating for pollution potential for this area is 180-199 (high) although SWFWMD finds that the indices underestimates the potential for contamination along the Brooksville Ridge due to the direct karst conduits.

The expansion of areas for urban development require a detailed assessment of the effects of the change on the ability of the County to provide adequate levels of public facilities. The applicant has indicated that there is adequate capacity to serve the area of the proposed amendment as Residential with potable water and sanitary sewer from the existing and expanded County systems located in the area. The Planning Staff agrees that there are or will be adequate capacity in the utility systems to serve the area. The applicant has indicated that the road capacity in the surrounding network is currently adequate to serve the intensity of the development as proposed in the comprehensive plan amendment. However, there has been significant land approved for urban development in the area, especially the Hampton Ridge project lying on the east side of US 41 which will absorb a significant amount of traffic capacity from US 41 and to some extent, Powell Road. These other approved projects need to be considered when creating new areas for urban development. In addition, the creation of new urbanizing areas that were previously not considered for such uses will require a study to determine whether the road network in the area needs to be expanded, potentially with new corridors, to serve the needs of the existing areas and any other potential changes in the vicinity of the subject parcels.

The applicant has submitted an amendment for two discontinuous parcels, without discussing the large parcel which lies between them. It is the opinion of the Planning Staff that should the proposal be approved that it in effect would represent a de facto approval of the intervening piece for the same Residential category. The owners of that piece would have to go through the same approval process as the subject application, but it would be difficult to deny such a request. The applicant's narrative indicates that the urban corridor along the west side of US 41 being only a mile in depth is too narrow given the development activity recently shown in the area. The Planning Staff is of the opinion that to approve the subject application for two discontinuous parcels in a larger corridor that may face continuing development pressure would be shortchanging the process. The Planning Staff is of the opinion that there are significant issues that need to be addressed for a much larger area than the two parcels contained in this application. The Planning Staff would recommend that an area from Wiscon Road on the north, Powell Road on the south, US 41 on the east and California Street on the west have a sector study prepared detailing issues such as drainage, flood plain, karst activity, transportation network, the provision of central public facilities, and other needs prior to any decision being made on a parcel by parcel basis. This position is similar to the one the Planning Staff took in the fall of 2000 for the Hampton Ridge area prior to the developer seeking annexation to the City of Brooksville. The Planning Staff agrees with the applicant, where it was pointed out that the situation on the west side of US 41 is similar to that on east side with the Hampton Ridge and therefore is consistent with the recommendation for a sector study prior to approval.

Since portions of the area of the recommended sector study lie within the Joint Planning Agreement boundaries between the City of Brooksville and Hernando County, the County should coordinate the study with the City of Brooksville.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission review the application and recommend to the Local Planning Agency and Board of County Commissioners that the CPAM 05-06 for a FLUM change from Rural to Residential not be transmitted to the Department of Community Affairs.

P&Z RECOMMENDATION:

LPA/BCC ACTION:

DCA ORC REPORT:

STAFF DISCUSSIONS:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

BCC ACTION: