



Tara April Special Exception

Planning & Zoning Board

January 13, 2026

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Background



• Property Size & Location

- Parcel 03020-000-000
- Approximately 58 acres
- Near I-75 / US 441 Interchange (April Blvd.)

• Presentation Topics

- Tara April Timeline
- Master Plan
- Project Benefits
- Special Exception Standards Consistency
- Comprehensive Plan Consistency
- Relevant Data & Analysis

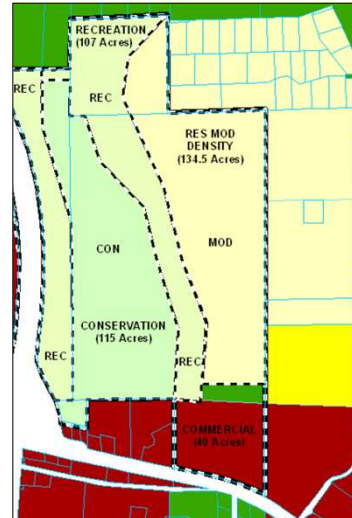
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Tara April Timeline



2008-2010: Future Land Use Amendment and Rezoning

- Property owner initiated a change to the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Atlas, including 356 acres east of I-75 and North of Hwy 441
- Property owner set aside 222 acres in conservation and recreation land use = **62% of the property set aside**



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Tara April Timeline



2015: Lift Station Donation


- At the request of the City, the property owner donated to the City a property on Hwy. 441 for a future lift station to serve future wastewater needs on the owner's property and properties south of Hwy. 441

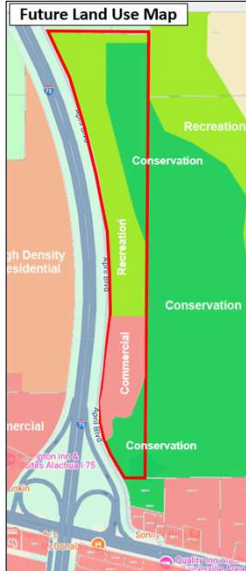
2016: Public Utilities Easement Donation

- At the request of the City, the property owner donated to the City an easement 725 feet in length by 40 feet in width along Hwy 441 to make improvements to its water and wastewater infrastructure

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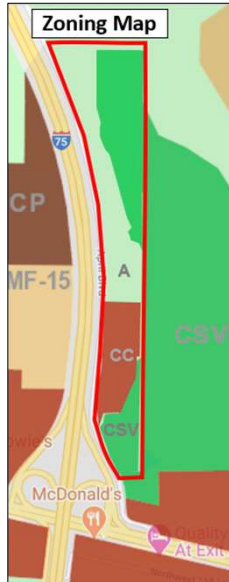
Tara April Timeline






2021: Future Land Use Amendment and Rezoning

- Property owner initiated a change to the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Atlas, on 10.5 acres on the Tara April site
- Change made to commercial land use and zoning facilitates stormwater quality treatment of I-75 runoff



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Tara April Timeline



2021: Comprehensive Plan Amendment

- As a companion with the land use and zoning change, a Comprehensive Plan text amendment was approved to provide standards and **requirements for treating currently untreated stormwater runoff from I-75 that discharges into Mill Creek**, as directed by City, otherwise stormwater would continue untreated
- Ties the timing of commercial development on Tara April to the construction of stormwater treatment of I-75 runoff
- Must treat the first **0.5 inch of runoff from I-75**
- Must include passive recreation in the form of **pathways or nature trails**
- Stormwater system and walking & biking trails must **be privately owned and maintained**

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Tara April Timeline



Public Hearings

- These approvals granted over the past 15+ years represent **more than 18 public hearings** between the Planning & Zoning Board and the City Commission
- All public hearings were noticed, including signs posted on the properties, mailed notices to neighboring property owners, mailed notices to government agencies (including County), and published notices in newspapers
- These public hearings are in addition to public neighborhood workshops held to introduce the applications to the public, receive comments and provide feedback
- Testimony at these hearings was clear regarding the purposes of these approvals and Tara's future development plans

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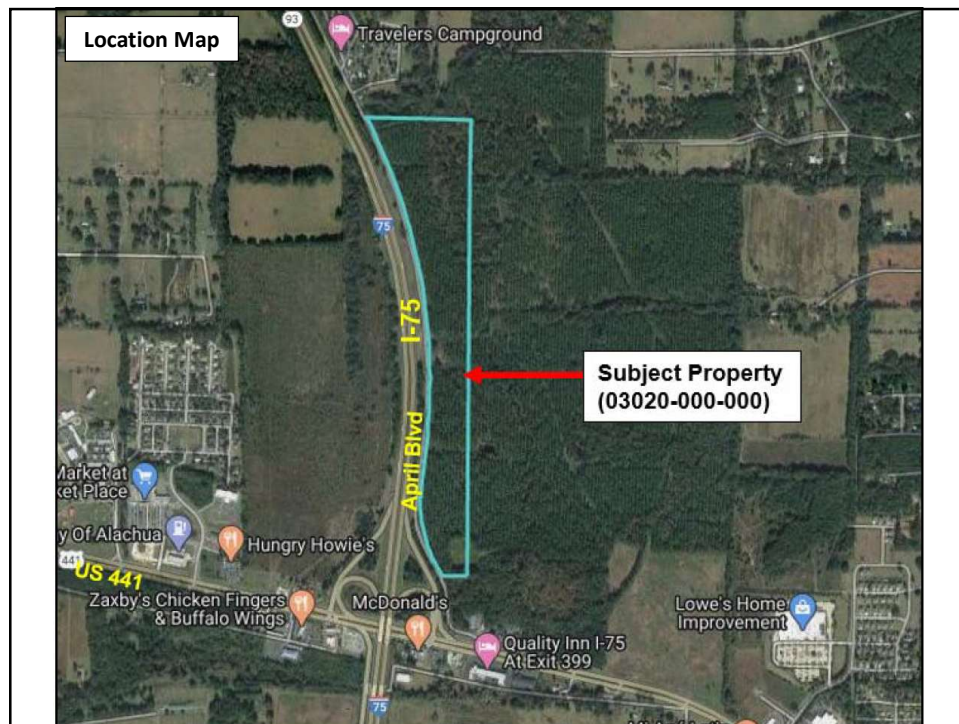
Tara April Timeline



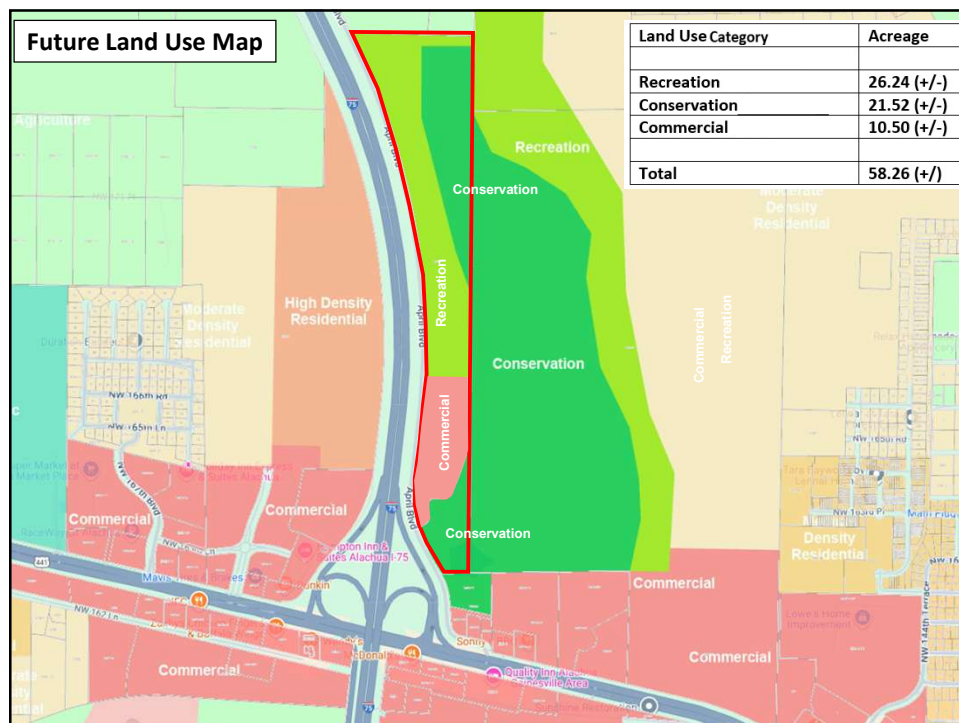
Today

- Request for a Special Exception Permit to provide stormwater management facilities (minor utilities) in agriculture zoning
- City of Alachua LDR Sec. 4.3.2(1)(4)(a) provides a mechanism to locate stormwater detention facilities on properties with less intense zoning district designations
"Stormwater detention and retention facilities may be permitted by special exception permit on properties with less intense zoning district designations under common ownership..."
- Provides ability to construct stormwater treatment for the immediately adjacent commercial parcel
- Facilitates construction of stormwater treatment of I-75 runoff that currently flows untreated into Mill Creek

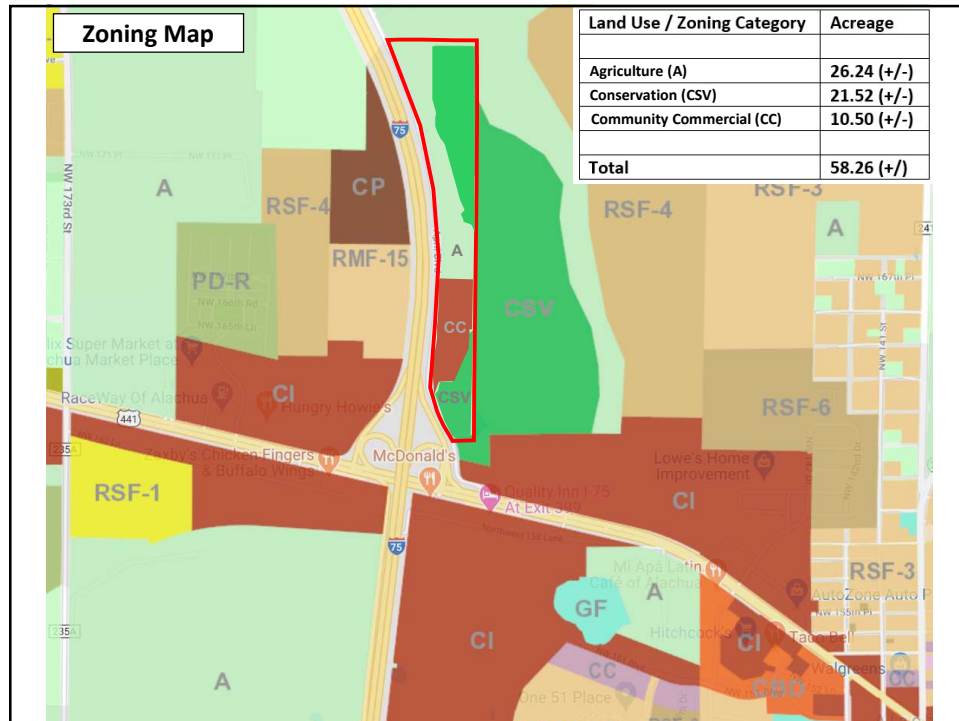
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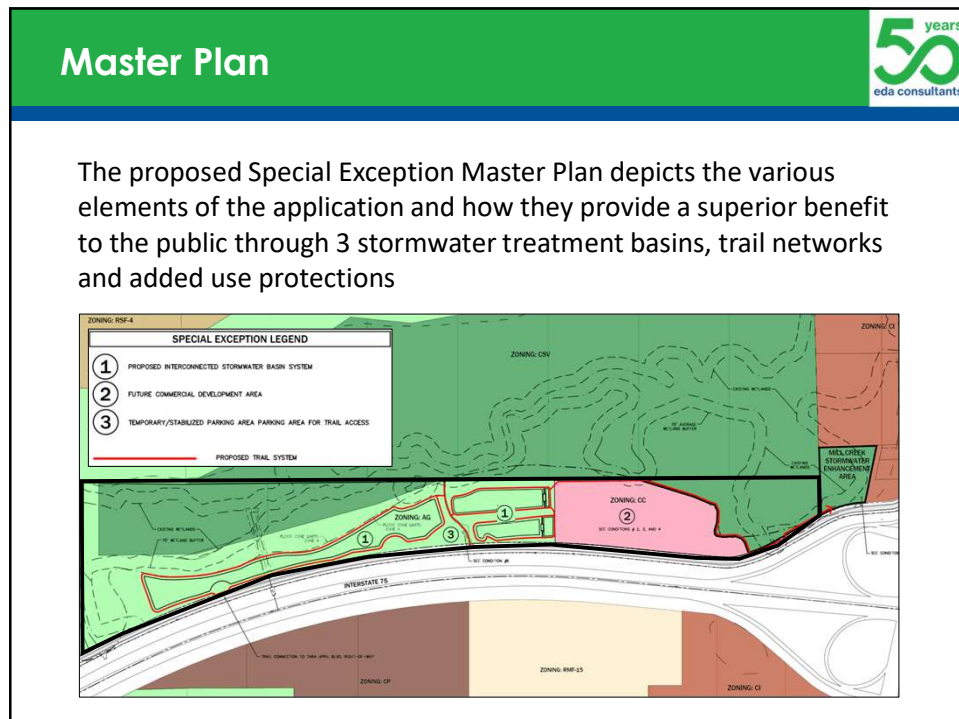
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Project Benefits



Specific Request

- Permit minor utility (stormwater basins) in Agriculture zoning to support development in commercially-zoned area
- Implements Master Plan for Tara April property and makes feasible the construction of I-75 stormwater treatment area

Summary of Benefits:

- Limits Specific Commercial Uses With Potential to Harm Water Quality
- Provides Public Pedestrian & Bike Trail Network & Interconnectivity, linking open space areas, future commercial development, City stormwater treatment park and future residential development.
- Provides Interpretive Kiosk
- Provides Treatment of I-75 Runoff

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Project Benefits



Limits Specific Commercial Uses With Potential to Harm Water Quality

The following uses are permitted within the current **Community Commercial** zoning area on the Tara April site; however, **the property owner has agreed to prohibit these uses** as part of the Special Exception Permit. (Condition #2)

- Gasoline Sales
- Industrial Service (primary use)
- Laundry and Dry Cleaning and Carpet Cleaning (primary use)
- Tire Sales and Mounting (primary use)
- Parking Lot (primary use)
- Park and Ride Facilities

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Project Benefits



Provides Public Trail Network & Interconnectivity

- Trail network will be constructed around stormwater facilities
- Trail network to interconnect with adjacent natural areas and future residential and commercial areas
- Trail network will be privately owned and maintained
- Trail network will be open to public access
- Future commercial development required to have internal pedestrian network (per Special Exception condition)

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Project Benefits



Provides Interpretive Kiosk

- An interpretive kiosk will be provided to educate the public on the natural area
- Signage will complement the City's existing water quality enhancement project at Mill Creek

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Special Exception – Approval Criteria



City LDR Section 2.4.4(D)

(D) *Special exception standards.* A special exception permit shall be approved only upon a finding the applicant demonstrates all the **following standards are met:**

- (1) *Complies with use specific regulations.*
- (2) *Compatibility.*
- (3) *Design minimizes adverse impact.*
- (4) *Design minimizes environmental impact.*
- (5) *Roads and other public facilities.*
- (6) *Not injure neighboring land or property values.*
- (7) *Drawings.*
- (8) *Complies with all other relevant laws and ordinances.*

Consistency:

- **Application demonstrates compliance with these standards.**
- **City staff finding is that application is compliant with these standards.**

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Consistency with Land Development Regulations Special Exception Review Criteria



(1) *Complies with use specific regulations.*

Consistency:

Sec. 4.3. Use specific standards.

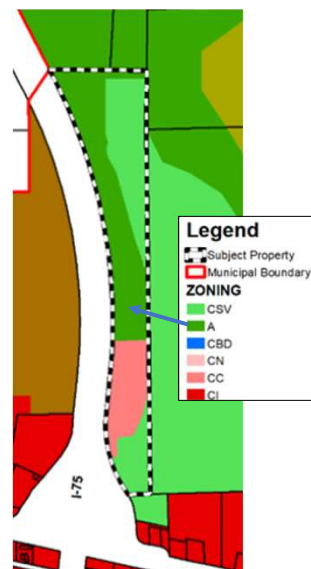
4.3.2 Public and institutional use.

(4) *Utility, minor.* A **minor utility use** shall comply with the following standards:

(a) *Location.* Be **located within reasonable proximity of the area to be served.** Stormwater detention and retention facilities may be permitted by special exception permit on properties with less intense zoning district designations under common ownership, subject to the following requirements:

(i) The **zoning** designation of the location of the stormwater detention and retention facility **allows minor utilities**; and,

Consistency: The stormwater facility is located within the Agriculture zoning designation, which is a permitted use in the City LDR, Table 4.1-1.



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Consistency with Land Development Regulations Special Exception Review Criteria



(1) Complies with use specific regulations

4.3.2 Public and institutional use.

(4) Utility, minor. A minor utility use shall comply with the following standards:

(a) Location. Be located within reasonable proximity of the area to be served...

(ii) The stormwater detention and retention facility meets the compatibility requirements as set forth in Subsection 4.3.2(l)(4)(b); and

Consistency: Proposed stormwater infrastructure is compatible with surrounding area (response provided under Sec. 2.4.4(D)(2))

(iii) The stormwater detention and retention facility provides an enhanced natural (e.g., increased topographic relief, vegetative diversity, etc.) or recreational (e.g., perimeter trail, boardwalk, interpretive kiosk, etc.) functional use.

Consistency:

- Stormwater area is designed to utilize the existing topographic conditions providing a sound transition from the FDOT Interstate to the west to the environmentally sensitive areas to the east.
- Basins and the amenities/improvements provide a functional recreational use by installing an interconnected perimeter trail network linking several public and private uses. Trail system is over one mile long.
- Provide an interpretive kiosk the City's Mill Creek water quality improvement project area.
- Prohibits intensive commercial uses
- Will expedite and make financially feasible the FDOT stormwater quality improvements as indicated in Policy 1.3.h.

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Consistency with Land Development Regulations Special Exception Review Criteria



(2) Compatibility.

Consistency: Proposed stormwater infrastructure is compatible with surrounding area (response provided under Sec. 2.4.4(D)(2))

(c) Exemptions. The provisions of this subsection shall not be applicable when the differing zoning designations are both classified as residential districts or are both classified as business districts, as categorized in Table 3.1-1, Establishment of Base Zone Districts. Stormwater detention and retention facilities serving residential districts shall be permitted in business districts without special exception if included as part of a master stormwater permit or common development plan.

Consistency: The regulation is not applicable to this Special Exception request.

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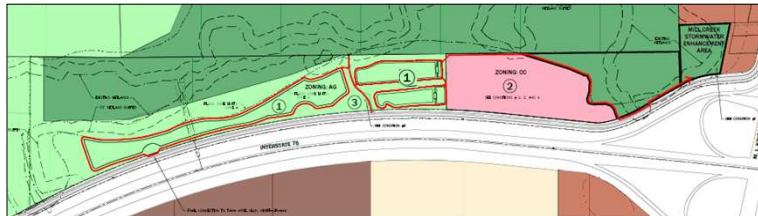
Consistency with Land Development Regulations Special Exception Review Criteria



(2) *Compatibility. The proposed special exception is appropriate for its location and compatible with the character of surrounding lands and the uses permitted in the zone district.*

Consistency:

- The proposed minor utility (stormwater facility) is compatible with surrounding land uses.
- Minor utility (stormwater facility) is compatible with the overall surrounding land use designations, zoning districts and the existing development pattern in the area.
- Stormwater basins are, by nature, compatible with most any kind of adjacent use, including commercial zoning to the south, an existing commercial campground to the north, Interstate 75/April Blvd. to the west and conservation areas to the east (where all adjacent wetlands, buffers and flood zone areas are undisturbed).
- Implementation of additional Special Exception conditions will further increase the compatibility of the proposed use with surrounding properties.



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Consistency with Land Development Regulations Special Exception Review Criteria



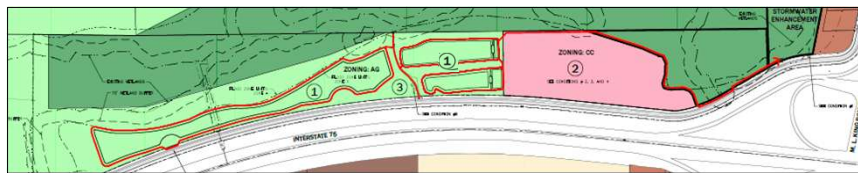
(3) *Design minimizes adverse impact.*

Consistency: A stormwater facility by nature of its use and function will not create a negative visual, auditory, or other impact on adjacent properties.

(4) *Design minimizes environmental impact.*

Consistency:

- Stormwater facility will not cause deterioration of light, water, or air resources.
- Located next to conservation area (stormwater is a compatible and transitional use)
- Will not have a negative impact on the nearby environmental resources.
- Stormwater avoids all wetlands, wetland buffers and FEMA flood zone areas based on mapping per Verde Environmental Report (July 2020).
- Stormwater design reviewed and permitted by SRWMD – ERP issued stating ‘no impacts to wetlands or surface waters are proposed or anticipated.’
- Stormwater design consistent with LDC Sec. 6.9.3



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Consistency with Land Development Regulations Special Exception Review Criteria



(5) Roads and other public facilities.

Consistency: The proposed use (stormwater facility / minor utility) will not have an impact / demand on City public facilities (roads, utilities, etc.).

(6) Not injure neighboring land or property values.

Consistency:

- The proposed stormwater basin will not injure neighboring land or property values.
- Does not generate any increased demand on road, utilities or any other public infrastructure
- Does not generate any increased noise, odor or any other potential nuisances, which can affect land values.
- Proposed stormwater quality treatment for adjacent FDOT runoff before it enters Mill Creek, which is an environmental benefit with a positive impact on surrounding properties.

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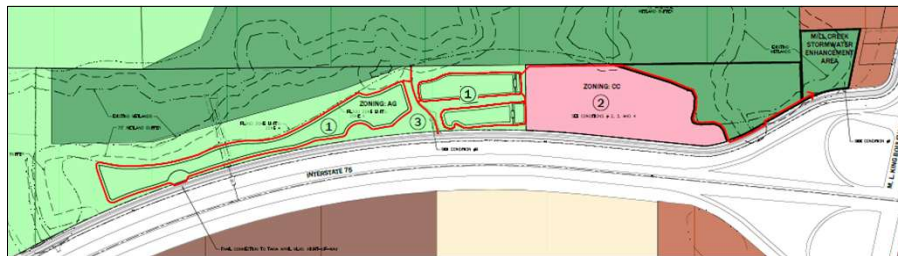
Consistency with Land Development Regulations Special Exception Review Criteria



(7) Drawings.

Consistency:

- A Special Exception Master Plan demonstrates compliance and illustrates all proposed improvements, including the location of the stormwater areas, trail network, interpretive kiosk and proposed conditions that limit the future uses on the commercially zoned property.
- **City Staff Report:** "Per Section 2.4.9(C), minor utilities as defined under Section 10.2 are exempt. A special exception master plan has been submitted and reviewed as part of this special exception permit application. The special exception master plan demonstrates that the proposed use complies with the applicable requirements of the LDRs."



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Consistency with Land Development Regulations Special Exception Review Criteria



(8) Complies with all other relevant laws and ordinances.

Consistency:

- The application is consistent with and complies with all other relevant laws and ordinances, including the City of Alachua LDRs.
- Stormwater design reviewed and permitted by SRWMD – ERP issued stating ‘no impacts to wetlands or surface waters are proposed or anticipated.’

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Comprehensive Plan Consistency

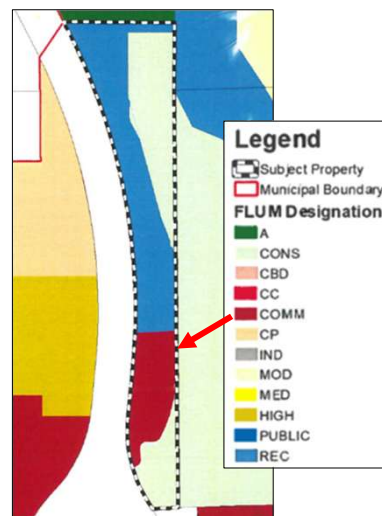


Future Land Use Element

Objective 1.3: Commercial & Mixed-Use

The City shall establish three commercial and mixed-use land use categories: Community Commercial, Commercial, and Central Business District. These land use categories shall provide a broad range of commercial uses, including retail sales and services, personal services, offices, and tourist-oriented uses, and the potential for mixed-use developments in order to provide for the availability of goods and services, both to the citizens and visitors of Alachua and to the citizens of the North Central Florida region while diversifying the housing stock.

- The adopted Future Land Use Map includes Commercial designation.
- To protect the environmental resources in proximity to the property, more intensive uses potentially harmful to water quality and potential generators of hazardous wastes are excluded in the Special Exception.



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Comprehensive Plan Consistency Policy 1.3.i (Site Specific)

Future Land Use Element

Policy 1.3.i: The following sub-policies shall be applicable to Tax Parcel 03020-000-000 or any subset of the parcel.

1. In order to enhance stormwater treatment conditions and to provide stormwater water quality improvements, the owner/developer of Tax Parcel 03020-000-000 will **provide on-site stormwater quality treatment for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) stormwater runoff** as set forth below:
 - a. Consistent with or prior to any commercial development on Parcel 03020-000-000 (or subset of the parcel), the owner/developer **shall provide on-site stormwater water quality treatment volume of 0.5 inches of runoff of the I-75 drainage adjacent to the parcel** that is associated with FDOT culverts 2/3 & 4/5 as indicated on the FDOT Drainage Map titled "FDOT Map I-75 Alachua County – US 441 To Columbia County Line 26260-3427." The treatment shall occur on the portion of Parcel 03020-000-000 with a Recreation land use designation.
 - b. The owner/developer shall **coordinate the stormwater quality improvements** with the FDOT and the City of Alachua. Improvements will be in the form of a stormwater basin(s) providing volume treatment to infiltrate through the natural ground. The stormwater basin(s) shall be **privately owned and maintained**.
 - c. Construction of the **stormwater water quality improvements** may include partnership on the project with, but not limited to, FDOT, Suwannee River Water Management District, or another governmental agency.
 - d. **Consistent with the Recreation future land use category on the property**, the stormwater water quality treatment area shall be **designed to encourage passive recreation use in the form of pervious pathways or nature trails**. This passive recreation area shall be **privately owned and maintained**.

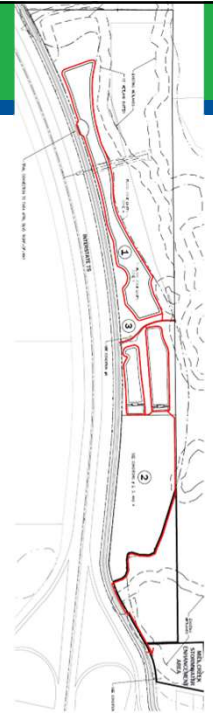


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Comprehensive Plan Consistency Policy 1.3.i (Site Specific)

Policy 1.3.i - Provide on-site stormwater quality treatment for FDOT runoff

- **Special Exception complies** with all Policy requirements
- Voluntary / Property Owner initiated water quality improvements not otherwise required of owner
- **Improves existing conditions** related to FDOT runoff to Mill Creek
- **Integrates usable recreation uses** via trail system and enhancement to City's Mill Creek Stormwater Enhancement Project
- Limits zoning to **lower intensity commercial**
- The Tara April Infrastructure Plan, presented under different application, **will comply** with the provisions of Policy 1.3.i.1.a-d.



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Comprehensive Plan Consistency



Future Land Use Element

Objective 1.7: Recreation

The City of Alachua shall designate a Recreation land use category for all publicly or privately owned recreational lands.

Consistency: Special Exception proposes the stormwater water quality treatment area be designed to encourage passive nature trail recreational use, which is consistent with Recreation FLU.

Future Land Use Element Goal 5

Development Standards: The City shall include provisions through its comprehensive plan amendment process, development review process and in its land development regulations for development standards that address natural features and availability of facilities and services. These development standards will strive to protect natural resources and public facility resources while allowing for innovative and flexible development patterns.

Consistency: Special Exception is an innovative approach:

- Allows for treatment of existing untreated stormwater runoff from I-75 that may degrade overall water quality.
- Limited to less intensive commercial uses that are more appropriate for the environmental conditions in the vicinity of the site.

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Comprehensive Plan Consistency



Conservation and Open Space Element

Policy 1.1.a: *The City shall establish a conservation land use category for publicly or privately owned lands on which certain identifiable features, such as flowing surface water bodies, wetlands, flood plains, wellfield protection areas, unique geologic characteristics, and listed plant and wildlife habitat that require enhanced oversight and regulatory protection. Land use regulations for designated conservation areas will consider the vulnerability of susceptible features and vary accordingly.*

Consistency:

- Special Exception approach is consistent
- Owner previously placed all lands containing on-site wetlands into Conservation
- Special Exception stormwater area avoids all wetlands, wetland buffers and FEMA flood zone areas
- Stormwater design reviewed and permitted by SRWMD – ERP issued stating ‘no impacts to wetlands or surface waters are proposed or anticipated.’



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Comprehensive Plan Consistency



Conservation and Open Space Element Objective 1.12: Water Resources

The City shall protect and conserve the quantity and quality of water resources, not only for the benefit of residents of the City, but for all in North Florida who depend on the Floridan Aquifer for drinking water, and for the benefit of all connected springs, streams, and rivers which may be impacted by the City's land use and development practices.

Consistency:

- Special Exception is the mechanism for enhanced stormwater quality treatment.
- Unique opportunity to improve water quality related to the existing FDOT stormwater runoff from I-75.
- The associated Infrastructure Plan will provide additional stormwater treatment of currently untreated stormwater draining from I-75 into the Mill Creek Basin and ultimately into Mill Creek Sink.
- Limitations of intensive commercial uses will also help protect water quality.

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Comprehensive Plan Consistency



Recreation Element

Objective 1.3: New Development Recreation Requirements

The City shall consider providing incentives for new development in order to enhance the City's recreation lands and facilities.

Policy 1.4.e

The City shall seek out and promote public/private partnerships that benefit the City's parks and recreation system.

Consistency:

- Proposed privately created recreational trail system will connect to trails in adjacent developments and the City's Mill Creek Stormwater Enhancement project (with Interpretive Kiosk).
- Approval of the Special Exception as proposed is an incentive to the applicant for the provision of an enhanced recreational feature/trail network and treatment of I-75 runoff.

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Comprehensive Plan Consistency



Community Facilities and Natural Groundwater Aquifer Recharge Element

Goal 3: Stormwater

Develop and maintain a stormwater management system that minimizes flooding, protects, preserves and enhances desirable water quality conditions, and, where possible, preserves and utilizes existing natural features.

Consistency: The Special Exception offers a unique opportunity for a private entity to enhance water quality conditions related to untreated stormwater runoff from I-75 (existing conditions). Proposed stormwater water quality treatment area will be privately owned and maintained.

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Permitting Summary



Previous Applications

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Comprehensive Plan Amendment Text Change | Approved by City (2021) |
| • Comprehensive Plan Amendment FLU Map Change | Approved by City (2021) |
| • Zoning Map Change (Rezoning) | Approved by City (2021) |
| • Suwannee River Water Management District Stormwater Permit | Approved by SRWMD (2022) |

Present Application

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| • Special Exception | Submitted to City (2022) |
| | Under Review |

Next Application

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Infrastructure Plan (technical engineering plans) | Submitted to City (2022) |
| | Review Pending |

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Relevant Data & Expert Reports

- ERC Environmental Assessment, July 2008
- Wood Report prepared for City: Hydrologic Model Analysis for the Mill Creek Sink Water Quality Improvement Project (January 2020, August 2020)
 - Butt, P. et al. 2006. Mill Creek and Lee Sinks Dye Trace – Alachua County, Florida – July-December, 2005. Prepared for Alachua County and referenced in Wood Mill Creek Sink WQIP Report.
 - NRCS Hydrologic Soil Data (USDA 1986)
 - Upper Aquifer Data (USGS 2010)
- Verde Environmental Assessment and Listed Species Survey, July 2020, and responses to City comments September 2020
- Wood Technical Review Report: Independent Review of Tara April Rezoning Application – Environmental Assessment & Listed Species Survey (September 2020), and responses to Verde and eda comments, October 2020
- eda Tara April Comp Plan Amendments & Rezoning Environmental Review – 9/29/2020
- CHW Report: Tara April Review, dated October 19, 2020

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Record Data Includes:

- eda Drainage Design Report, December 2022
 - The proposed stormwater conveyance system ... will provide water quality treatment, recovery, and attenuation as required by the Suwannee River Water Management District and the City of Alachua, Florida.
- GSE Summary Report of Geotechnical Site Exploration of Tara April, July 2021
 - 27 Auger Borings
 - Soil Lab Tests
 - Review of Published Data
- Verde Environmental Assessment and Listed Species Survey, July 2020
- SRWMD Environmental Resource Permit, December 2022
- SRWMD Technical Staff Report, December 2022
 - The project is located in a stream-to-sink basin. The proposed stormwater management system will provide water quality treatment for the runoff from the first two inches of rainfall ...
- Infrastructure Plans, December 2022
- Advanced Archaeology Phase 1 Cultural Resource Assessment Survey April 2022

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City Consultant Prior Relevant Findings

- Wood Technical Review Report: Independent Review of Tara April Rezoning Application – Environmental Assessment & Listed Species Survey (September 2020)
 - Purpose: “The City has requested Wood review these applications because the subject parcel is west of and upgradient from Mill Creek and Mill Creek Sink. The City is concerned with how changes to the zoning and FLUM s could affect development adjacent to Mill Creek and Mill Creek Sink and potential for water quality impacts from future adjacent land uses.”
 - Wood recognized the need to apply SRWMD Sensitive Karst Criteria – which were applied
 - Wood Email to City October 7, 2020, “we were tasked to consider if any of the allowable uses within the proposed Future Land Use Map would present potential adverse impacts to nearby and adjacent environmental features. We do not dispute the water quality benefits based on amendments to the comprehensive plan that would require treatment of the I-75 runoff ...[T]he updates are consistent with our review and we have no comments.”
- CHW Report: Tara April Review, dated October 19, 2020:
 - “Providing additional water quality treatment for the I-75 stormwater runoff will only benefit the City and the general public. Currently, the I-75 stormwater runoff discharges through the property and continues to a ground water sink with little to no treatment provided.”
- December 8, 2020 Staff Report of Approval recognizes the importance of Tara April stormwater basin to protect Mill Creek Sink

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Request Justification / Summary

Special Exception Application is:

- ✓ Consistent with Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Complies with all LDR review criteria for Special Exceptions, including Sec. 2.4.4(D) and Section 4.3.2(I)(4) (Minor Utility Use Specific Standards)
- ✓ **Overall Benefits:**
 1. Limits More Intensive Commercial Uses
 2. Installation of Interconnected Trail Network
 3. Treatment of I-75 Runoff Currently Untreated into Mill Creek
 4. Installation of Interpretive Kiosk for Educational Benefit
- ✓ **STAFF RECOMMENDATION – APPROVAL**

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