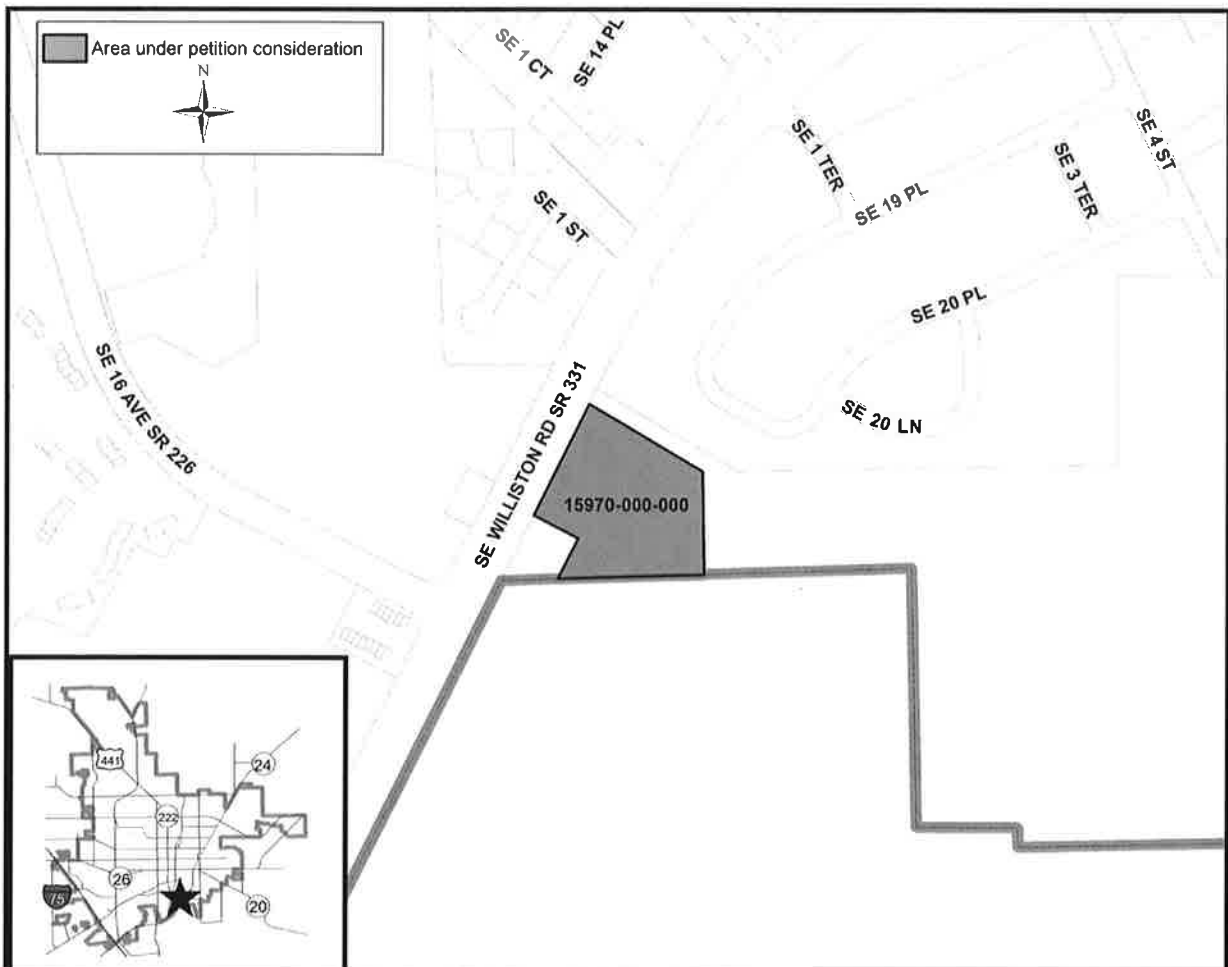


TO: City Plan Board**Item Number: 4****FROM: Planning & Development Services Department
Staff****DATE: October 23,
2014**

SUBJECT: Petition PB-14-121 ZON. Alachua County Growth Management Department, agent for Alachua County Board of County Commissioners. Rezone property from RMF-6: 8-15 units/acre multiple-family residential district to Conservation. Located approximately 320 feet north of the intersection of Williston Road & SE 16th Avenue, east side. Related to PB-14-120 LUC.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of Petition PB-14-121 ZON.



Description

This petition requests a rezoning from RMF-6: 8-15 units/acre multiple-family residential district to Conservation for an approximately 4.4 acre vacant parcel owned by Alachua County. The parcel is located approximately 320 feet north of the intersection of Williston Road and SE 16th Avenue, on the east side of Williston Road. The current land use designation for the property is Residential Medium-Density (8-30 units per acre). No development for this parcel is proposed for the near future. The property is part of the Paynes Prairie Sweetwater Preserve, and is owned and managed by Alachua County. The approximately 113.5 acre preserve was purchased as part of the Alachua County Forever (ACF) land acquisition program in 2006, which included the 4.4 acre piece within the city limits of the City Of Gainesville.

The subject property is part of a nature preserve, which is intended to conserve, protect, and enhance the natural resources on the land and to provide for public outdoor recreation that is compatible with the conservation, protection and enhancement of the site. The preserve is generally located north of Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, south of the Evergreen Cemetery, west of Boulware Springs Park, and east of Williston Road. The 4.4 acre portion of the property that is within city limits is the northernmost piece of the preserve property.

The reason for the proposed rezoning (and the associated land use petition PB-14-120 LUC) is to apply the most appropriate designation on this County-owned property, and to match as closely as possible the Alachua County land use and zoning designations that have been applied to the bulk of the parcel that lies in an unincorporated area of the county adjacent to the city. The Alachua County zoning designation for the preserve is Preservation, with a Preservation land use designation. The City Of Gainesville is proposing Conservation zoning because this designation is intended to protect, restore and preserve natural features and open space so that present and future residents of the city shall be able to enjoy the benefits of the natural environment of the city.

Please see the map on page 1 for the general location of the subject property, and Appendix C for the full map series.

Key Issues

- The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, as discussed below in “1. Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.”
- The property is managed public land and is part of the Paynes Prairie Sweetwater Preserve.
- The Conservation zoning designation was chosen because it is the most compatible City Of Gainesville zoning category with the existing Alachua County Preservation zoning, which is designated on the portion of the preserve that is within unincorporated Alachua County.
- This rezoning and the associated land use amendment will place the appropriate designations on the property, in line with the management plan of Alachua County.

Basis for Recommendation

The staff recommendation is based on the five following factors, which are discussed below: Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan; Conformance with the Land Development Code; Changed Conditions; Compatibility; and Impacts on Affordable Housing.

1. Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan

The proposed Conservation zoning is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and implements the Conservation land use category change proposed in Petition PB-14-120 LUC. The following objective and policies are the most pertinent to this petition. Objective 4.2 and Policy 4.2.1 can be adequately met by this petition because the intent of the Conservation designation on this property is to protect and preserve the unique natural and cultural resources found on the property and provide a quality passive recreational experience. Land development regulations shall determine the appropriate scale of activities, structures and infrastructure that will be allowed.

Future Land Use Element

Objective 4.1 The City shall establish land use designations that allow sufficient acreage for residential, commercial, mixed use, office, industrial, education, agricultural, recreation, conservation, public facility, and institutional uses at appropriate locations to meet the needs of the projected population and that allow flexibility for the City to consider unique, innovative, and carefully construed proposals that are in keeping with the surrounding character and environmental conditions of specific sites.

Policy 4.1.1 Land Use Categories on the Future Land Use Map shall be defined as follows:

Conservation

This category identifies areas environmentally unsuited to urban development, permanent buffers between land uses, areas used for passive recreation and nature parks. Privately held properties within this category shall be allowed to develop at single-family densities of 1 unit per 5 acres. Land development regulations shall determine the appropriate scale of activities, structures and infrastructure that will be allowed.

This proposal is consistent with the land use objectives of the City to provide sufficient acreage for various uses at appropriate locations, as listed in Objective 4.1 of the Future Land Use Element (see Appendix A).

The petition site is located within Zone A of the City's Transportation Mobility Program Area (TMPA), where any development or redevelopment must meet certain transportation mobility criteria based on the development's trip generation. Because the Conservation zoning

designation is intended to protect and preserve the natural features on the site with possible passive recreational opportunities, no transportation mobility criteria should need to be met.

2. Conformance with the Land Development Code

The proposed rezoning is consistent with the Land Development Code. One of the objectives of the Conservation zoning district is to conserve parks, recreational areas, open space, floodplains and unique natural features. Please see the Conservation zoning district purpose and objectives in Appendix B.

This proposed zoning change would restrict the development of lands upon which a more intensive development would cause adverse environmental impact. This parcel is part of the larger Paynes Prairie Sweetwater Preserve, which among other things is a buffer between medium density multiple-family development and Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. This is consistent with the Conservation zoning objective of conserving, restoring and protecting environmentally significant lands within the City and providing the assurance of natural buffering between incompatible land uses.

3. Changed Conditions

Alachua County owns this parcel as part of the larger 113.5 acre preserve area to the south. The county zoning designation for the property within the unincorporated area is Preservation, with a Preservation land use. The subject parcel within the city limits needs to match as closely as possible the County designations so that they are consistent with the existing use of the property as a public conservation preserve.

4. Compatibility

The proposed zoning designation is compatible with the existing surrounding uses. To the north and east of the subject property is land with the Residential Medium-Density land use and RMF-6 zoning, which is connected to the Evergreen Cemetery. To the north of this strip of land is the Woodland Park housing development, also with Residential Medium-Density land use and RMF-6 zoning. To the west across Williston Road is vacant land designated Residential Medium-Density land use, with RMF-7: 8-21 units/acre multiple-family residential district zoning. Also on the west side of Williston Road is a city-owned parcel with Public and institutional facilities land use and Public services and operations district (PS) zoning, which includes a lift station. To the south in the unincorporated area of the county is the bulk of the Paynes Prairie Sweetwater Preserve, with Alachua County Preservation land use and Preservation zoning. Two electric power line poles are located on the other property just to the south of the subject property. This is a city-owned parcel with RMF-6 zoning and Residential Medium-Density land use. In general the character of the area to the east of the subject parcel is public institutional for the cemetery, while the area to the west is largely vacant. Residential use lies to the north and further south, along the west side of Williston Road, south of SE 16th Avenue.

5. Impacts on affordable housing

This rezoning petition does involve land designated for residential use; however, because of the environmental nature of the property it is unlikely that any residential project would have ever been developed. The impact on affordable housing is negligible.

Transportation

The property is located within Zone A of the City's Transportation Mobility Program Area (TMPA), and is not expected to create significant additional traffic impacts because the subject property is just a small part of the larger approximately 113.5 acre Paynes Prairie Sweetwater Preserve, which is managed as a natural area with a nature-based recreation component.

Environmental Impacts and Constraints

As indicated earlier, the subject property is part of the Paynes Prairie Sweetwater Preserve, and is owned and managed by Alachua County. The approximately 113.5 acre preserve was purchased as part of the Alachua County Forever (ACF) land acquisition program in 2006, which included the 4.4 acre piece within the city limits of the City Of Gainesville. John Hendrix, the City's Environmental Coordinator, visited the site and provided the following information.

The parcel is situated on the north side of Sweetwater Branch. The creek enters the property through culverts under Williston Road, flowing in its southerly course from urban headwaters in eastern and downtown Gainesville toward Payne's Prairie. The heavily wooded parcel is characterized by a distinct seepage slope which climbs northerly from the stream and floodplain to an upland crest at the boundary with Evergreen Cemetery. Sweetwater Branch and any wetlands which may occur on its associated riparian fringe and floodplain, as well as any seepage wetlands which may be present on the slope to the north, are regulated surface waters/wetlands, and any development activity proposed within the regulatory boundaries of these areas would be required to comply with Section 30-300 *Regulated Surface Waters and Wetlands*.

Based on information available from prior inventory by Alachua County, several regulated natural and archaeological resources or resource areas are known to be present on the larger preserve property, although not necessarily on the subject 4.4 acre area. Listed plant and animal species are present on the larger preserve area, as well as significant natural communities, and possibly significant archaeological resource areas. An excellent seepage slope forest covers much of the slope rising to the north from Sweetwater Branch through the subject parcel. Pursuant to Section 30-310 *Regulated Natural and Archaeological Resources*, any land use and development activity proposed on the subject parcel must provide assessment, protection, and management of the regulated natural and archaeological resources which are present. As the acquisition purpose of this project was the establishment of a nature preserve, and management of the property has been formalized through an approved plan, it is expected that any specific development plans for this part of the Preserve will generally comply with 30-310 regulations. However, specific development activities proposed within this part of the Preserve must be coordinated with the City Environmental Coordinator for a specific determination of compliance.

The proposed land use and zoning would be optimal in providing for maintenance and potential enhancement of surface water quality in the watershed, and for protection of the variety of significant natural and archaeological resources on and adjacent to the parcel. Conservation uses of this parcel will support and expand the natural resource base and recreational assets associated with the extensive parklands and nature preserves existing in this area of Gainesville and Alachua County, and ensure the best option for maintenance and enhancement of the resource values intended for protection under the City's comprehensive plan and land development regulations for protection of surface waters and wetlands, and natural and archaeological resources.

Respectfully submitted,



Onelia Lazzari
Principal Planner

Prepared by:



Jason Simmons

Table 1

Adjacent Existing Uses

North	Multiple-family residential
South	Conservation
East	Evergreen Cemetery
West	Lift station, vacant residential

Adjacent Zoning and Land Use

	Land Use Category	Zoning Category
North	RM	RMF-6
South	RM, Alachua County Preservation	RMF-6, Alachua County Preservation
East	RM	RMF-6
West	RM, PF	RMF-7, PS

List of Appendices

Appendix A Comprehensive Plan GOPs

- Exhibit A-1 Future Land Use Element
- Exhibit A-2 Conservation Element

Appendix B Land Development Code

- Exhibit B-1 Conservation district purpose, objectives, and permitted uses

Appendix C Supplemental Documents

- Exhibit C-1 Existing Zoning Map
- Exhibit C-2 Proposed Zoning Map
- Exhibit C-3 Aerial Map
- Exhibit C-4 Interoffice Communication from John Hendrix, Environmental Coordinator

Appendix D Application and Neighborhood Workshop information

- Exhibit D-1 Application and Neighborhood Workshop Notes and information