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**TO:** Members of the City of Fort Pierce Planning Board

**THROUGH:** Jennifer Hofmeister, AICP, LCAM, Planning Director 

**FROM:** Vennis Gilmore, Planner 

**RE:** **Application for Zoning Atlas Map Amendment  
Willow Lakes Planned Development**

**BOARD DATE:** August 11, 2020

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**STAFF REPORT**

**Property Owner:** Willow Lakes, LLC  
433 S. Main St., Suite 300  
West Hartford, CT 06110

**Applicant:** Dean, Mead, Minton, & Zwemer  
1901 S. 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Fort Pierce, FL 34947

**Requested Action:** Approval to Rezone one (1) parcel from AG-2.5, Agricultural, 1 du/2.5 ac (Saint Lucie County Zoning) to Planned Development, PD.

**Site Location:** At or near the northwestern interchange of West Midway Road and Interstate 95.

**Parcel IDs:** 3302-212-0001-000-4

**Existing Use:** Vacant/Agricultural

**Parcel Size:** 200.3 +/- Acres

**Current Future Land Use:** Mixed Use Development (MXD)

**Current Zoning:** AG-2.5, Agricultural, 1 du/2.5 ac (St. Lucie County Zoning)

**Proposed Zoning:** Planned Development (PD)

	North	East	South	West
<b>Surrounding FLU:</b>	Mixed Use Development (MXD)	Industrial (SLC Future Land Use)	ROI/CG/CS/SLC MXD/SLC TU (PSL Future Land Use)	Mixed Use Development (MXD)
<b>Surrounding Zoning:</b>	Planned Development (PD)	Industrial Light (SLC Zoning)	Planned Unit Development (PSL Zoning)	Planned Development (PD)

**Staff Analysis**

**Request**

The subject Zoning Atlas Map Amendment from AG-2.5, Agricultural, 1 du/2.5 ac (Saint Lucie County Zoning) to Planned Development, PD will provide for a land use that is consistent with the applicant’s proposed vision of a Mixed-Use Urban Resort Village for the subject site. The existing Mixed-Use Development (MXD) Future Land Use Category, as defined in the Future Land Use Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, is intended to promote intensification, redevelopment, and revitalization of the areas targeted for live/work environments. This area is characterized by development that promotes the creation of well-planned centers designed to integrate a variety of complementary uses. This land use designation allows a maximum density of 15 dwelling units per acre and a maximum FAR of 1.5. All MXD designated areas shall contain a minimum of three (3) of the following general land uses:

- Residential (single-family and/or multi-family)
- Commercial – General and/or Neighborhood
- Commercial – Town Center
- Hotel (minimum 100 units)
- Office Uses – Professional and/or medical
- Industrial
- Institutional

Residential uses shall comprise a minimum of 40% of the total floor area of the Mixed-Use Development future land use designation. The requested Zoning Atlas Map Amendment keeps City’s Zoning Map and Land Development Regulations consistent with the Future Land Use and accompanying land use category specifications contained in the Future Land Use Element.

Willow Lakes Resort Village and Community is envisioned as a vibrant, mixed-use urban village at the crossroads of Florida's Turnpike, Interstate 95, and the City of Fort Pierce. Situated on 200.23 acres of land lying immediately north of Midway Road and west of I-95 within the City of Fort Pierce, Willow Lakes will be an east coast destination that will bring together local residents and regional, national and international visitors in a lively, pedestrian-oriented, and healthy environment of inviting public spaces, walkable streets, and authentic neighborhoods in which to live, work, play and learn.

The vision is that of a typical beach community that celebrates outdoor activity and a healthy lifestyle. A place where residential, retail, and commercial uses will be combined to provide a critical mass of activity that will bring year-round life to the Village. This community will be one of a kind in Florida, situated not on a lone beach, but around the newest and largest world-class surf park in the country. The Wavegarden at Willow Lakes will deliver high quality waves and authentic surfing experiences year-round for new and existing surfers of all ages, experience and ability. Beyond the Wavegarden, the Village will be comprised of several distinct neighborhoods, knit together by a network of walkable, pedestrian-oriented streets, and navigable flow-ways designed for maximum environmental and recreational purposes. The result will be an inclusive environment where visitors, residents, and professionals have fun, keep fit and feel part of a community that shares their passion and respect for surfing, the ocean, others and the planet.

Neighborhoods are the traditional building blocks of villages, towns and cities. They provide an organic, localized sense of place, identity and community within the larger fabric of a town. Willow Lakes Resort Village and Community is conceived as a series of small, local places organized in a framework of larger neighborhood types or areas. The primary neighborhoods that make up Willow Lakes will include the Wavegarden surf resort village and hotels, the mixed-use main and village streets immediately surrounding it, a town center plaza, an entertainment retail zone, and two residential areas, accompanied by adjacent undeveloped open space/conservation area. Within the larger, primary areas will be the smaller commercial and residential places that create variety, scale, local identity, and texture. The concentration of this series of neighborhoods will facilitate shared pedestrian accessibility to the many activities and residential options, the creation of vibrant commercial areas, and the simultaneous introduction of a system of recreational flow-ways linking the natural spring-fed lake in the heart of the project to the neighborhoods and open space conservation areas throughout.

The street system proposed in this plan emphasizes connectivity and the importance of the streetscape as a place of value to the community. Where vehicle traffic is envisioned, parking is planned as an essential part of the project and will be encouraged on the streets, contributing to the availability of convenient parking spaces and to a sense of traffic-calming in pedestrian-oriented areas that have concentrated street-front commercial activity. Streets and parking facilities will be designed to support single-trip visits to Willow Lakes for multiple activities. While the basic accommodation of cars is essential to the life of the project, and any similar project in Florida, Willow Lakes is fundamentally a place for people. The design of all streets and

the associated public realm reflects a focus on pedestrians, accommodations for bicycles, and the enduring qualities of livable, active public spaces for human interaction.

The submitted Planned Development Site Plan is conceptual in nature. Site Plans for the proposed ten (10) phases of this Planned Development require Development Review and Design Review for conformance with Section 125-212(c)(2) shall be submitted for final approval by the City Commission.

### ***Future Land Use and Zoning Designation Comparison***

The subject property currently has a Future Land Use of Mixed-Use Development, (MXD) and Zoning designation that is AG-2.5, Agricultural, 1 du/2.5 ac (St. Lucie County Zoning). This is an inappropriate zoning designation because the vacant site abuts the major corridor of West Midway Road, intersects with Federal Interstate 95 and the applicant is proposing a Mixed-Use Development. Mixed-Use Land Uses are intended to promote intensification, redevelopment, and revitalization of the areas targeted for live/work environments. This area is characterized by development that promotes the creation of well-planned centers designed to integrate a variety of complementary uses in the City of Fort Pierce. Uses allowed within this Mixed-Use Development, (MXD) designation include residential (single-family/multi-family), commercial (general/neighborhood), commercial (town center), hotel (minimum 100 units), office uses (professional/medical), industrial, and institutional. This land use designation allows for a maximum density of 15 dwelling units per acre and a maximum FAR of 1.5. Development shall include a minimum of three (3) of the allowed general land uses.

As the development of the subject parcel is a vital component to the development pattern envisioned throughout the City of Fort Pierce, the appropriate Zoning is Planned Development, (PD) with the compatible Future Land Use classification of Mixed-Use Development (MXD).

### ***Standards for Review***

Pursuant to Article IX, City Code of Ordinances, a proposed change of district or text may be initiated by the city commission, the city planning board or by petition of one or more of the property owners or affected residents within the area proposed to be changed or affected by a change in the district map or text.

The following standards must be satisfied per Section 125-136 of the City Code prior to the approval of the requested amendment:

- (1) The amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- (2) The amendment will not have an adverse effect on the ability of the City to:
  - a. Satisfy land and water use needs; and
  - b. Meet transportation demands and provide community facilities and services.
- (3) The amendment will promote and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The proposed amendment is consistent with and furthers the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Atlas Map Amendment promotes and protects the public health, safety, and general welfare as the request as proposed is in character and similar with the surrounding area, land uses and zoning designations.

***Technical Review Committee (TRC)***

All affected City and County Departments have reviewed the proposed Future Land Use Map and Zoning Atlas Map Amendments and there were no comments from the TRC.

***Staff Recommendation Zoning Atlas Map Amendment***

The requested Application for Zoning Atlas Map Amendment meets the criteria specified in Section 125-136 of the City Code, the Comprehensive Plan, and does not adversely affect the public health, safety, convenience and general welfare. Therefore, Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the proposed Rezoning from AG-2.5, Agricultural, 1 du/2.5 ac (Saint Lucie County Zoning) to Planned Development, PD.