

PLANNING COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

Department of Growth Management



MEETING DATE:	May 28, 2025
PROJECT:	Parcel 11A Preliminary Development Plan
APPLICANT:	Jake Reed, University Investments, LLC
PROJECT NUMBER:	DP-02-25-019603
PROJECT MANAGER:	Dan Frazier Planning Manager Department of Growth Management

REQUEST: The Applicant and Property Owner, Jake Reed of University Investments, LLC is requesting approval of a Preliminary Development Plan application. The project proposes the construction of two single-story commercial buildings with associated access, parking, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure (Attachment 1).

INTRODUCTION: The property is zoned Buckwalter Planned Unit Development (PUD) and consists of approximately 8.88 acres identified by tax map number R610 030 000 0116 0000 located east of Buckwalter Parkway south of Buckwalter Towne Boulevard (Attachment 2).

BACKGROUND: This application is for a Preliminary Development Plan located within the Buckwalter PUD and as such is subject to the standards set forth in the Buckwalter PUD Development Agreement and Concept Plan, the Buckwalter Commons Phase 1 Master Plan, and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Sections 5.3 and 5.10.

As reflected in the revised site plan, the proposed development includes two single-story commercial buildings, totaling approximately +/- 31,400 SF combined, with associated parking, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure. The site will be accessible from Buckwalter Parkway with secondary access from extending Carolina Bluff Drive (Attachments 3 and 4).

The Applicant proposes a mix of office, retail, and flex service uses to be accommodated by 158 parking spaces. The minimum requirement for retail business use is 5 spaces per 1,000 SF parking spaces, which amounts to 157 spaces. The parking spaces provided would not allow for a restaurant use of any size within the development.

The current Buckwalter PUD Concept Plan Master Plan illustrates a future alignment of Bluffton Parkway that traverses the subject property. This future alignment is not reflected on the proposed site plan (Attachment 5). The Applicant states in their Response to Development Review Committee Comments that they "support the connection thru the parcel but are limited to show any detail as there is currently no right-of-way agreement

or design of the roadway” (Attachment 7). The Applicant further states that they have left a considerable area on the site plan for the possibility of a future connection.

Staff comments on the Preliminary Development Plan were reviewed at the March 26, 2025, Development Review Committee meeting (Attachment 6). The Applicant provided a response to comments and revised site plans on March 31, 2025 (Attachment 7 and 3).

REVIEW CRITERIA & ANALYSIS: The Planning Commission shall consider the criteria set forth in Section 3.10.3.A of the Unified Development Ordinance in assessing an application for a Preliminary Development Plan. The applicable criteria are provided below followed by Staff Finding(s) based upon review of the application submittals to date.

1. Section 3.10.3.A.1. Conformance with the applicable provisions provided in Article 5, Design Standards.

Finding. The subject property is located within the Buckwalter Planned Unit Development (PUD) and therefore is subject to the standards set forth in the Buckwalter PUD Development Agreement and Concept Plan and the Town’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Sections 5.3 and 5.10. These sections pertain to tree conservation and stormwater regulations. The proposed development will undergo further review as part of the Stormwater Permitting process.

2. Section 3.10.3.A.2. The proposed development shall be in conformance with any approved Development Agreement, PUD Concept Plan, PUD Master Plan, Subdivision Plan, or any other agreements or plans that are applicable.

Finding. As indicated in the Development Review Committee (DRC) staff comments from March 28, 2025, the proposed development is not in conformance with the Buckwalter PUD Concept Master Plan as it does not reflect the future alignment of Bluffton Parkway. While the Applicant supports a future roadway connection through this parcel, the absence of a right-of-way agreement or an established roadway design limits the ability to provide detailed site plans at this time. It is noted that a substantial area has been reserved on the site plan to accommodate a potential future connection.

3. Section 3.10.3.A.3. If the proposed development is associated with a previously approved Master Plan, then the traffic and access plans shall adhere to the previously approved traffic impact analysis or assessment, where applicable. If an application is not associated with a previously approved PUD Master Plan, then a traffic impact analysis shall be required at final development plan submittal.

Finding. The proposed site plan does not conform to the Buckwalter PUD Concept Master Plan, as it does not reflect the future alignment of Buckwalter Parkway, which traverses the subject property. While the Applicant supports a future roadway connection through this parcel, the absence of a right-of-way agreement or an established roadway design limits the ability to provide

detailed site plans at this time. It is noted that a substantial area has been reserved on the site plan to accommodate a potential future connection.

4. **Section 3.10.3.A.4. The proposed development must be able to be served by adequate public services, including, but not limited to, water, sanitary sewer, roads, police, fire, and school services. For developments that have the potential for significant impact on infrastructure and services, the applicant shall be required to provide an analysis and mitigation of the impact on transportation, utilities, and community services.**

Finding. The proposed development will utilize existing water main located on Carolina Bluff Drive. Sewer will be provided by connecting new sewer main to an existing sewer manhole. The Applicant will coordinate with BJWSA and Bluffton Township Fire District to ensure adequate water and sanitary sewer services in support of the project.

Finding. Letters from the agencies providing public services will be required at time of Final Development Plan submittal per the Applications Manual.

5. **Section 3.10.3.A.5. The phasing plan, if applicable, is logical and is designed in a manner that allows each phase to fully function independently regarding services, utilities, circulation, facilities, and open space, irrespective of the completion of other proposed phases.**

Finding. The project is proposed to be completed in one phase. Should a phasing plan be proposed in the future, a Development Plan Amendment shall be required.

6. **Section 3.10.3.A.6. The application must comply with the applicable requirements in the Applications Manual.**

Finding. The application has been reviewed by the Town Staff and has been determined to be complete.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS: The Planning Commission has the authority to take the following actions with respect to the application as authorized by Section 2.2.6.C.5 of the UDO:

1. Approve the application as submitted;
2. Approve the application with conditions; or
3. Deny the application as submitted.

RECOMMENDATION: Should the Planning Commission choose to approve the application with conditions, Town Staff finds that the following conditions should be met prior to final development plan approval to be in conformance with UDO Section 3.10.3.A:

1. Provide an exhibit at time of final development plan submittal that illustrates how a future alignment of Bluffton Parkway (80-ft right-of-way) could be built on the subject property with the currently proposed Parcel 11A site plan layout.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Application and Project Narrative
2. Vicinity Map
3. Civil Plan Set
4. Carolina Bluff Access Easement (PB 147 PG 20)
5. Buckwalter PUD Concept Master Plan
6. DRC Comments and Original Civil Plan Set 03/26/2025
7. Response to DRC Comments 03/31/2025