



City of Eustis

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TO: EUSTIS CITY COMMISSION
FROM: TOM CARRINO, CITY MANAGER
DATE: JUNE 1, 2023
RE: RESOLUTION NUMBER 23-39: SITE PLAN WITH WAIVER TO LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DUKE ENERGY – EUSTIS SOUTH SUBSTATION

Introduction:

Resolution Number 23-39 approves a site plan with a waiver (to Eustis Land Development Regulations Section 115-9.3.2(A) Suburban Design District Standards – Suburban Landscape) for the Duke Energy – Eustis South Substation on approximately 5.22 acres located west of South Bay Street and North of Plaza Drive (Lake County Property Appraisers' Alternate Key Number 1240336).

Recommended Action:

The administration recommends approval of Resolution Number 23-39.

Background:

Pertinent Site Information:

- a. The subject property comprises about 5.22 acres, which currently contains 1,075 square feet of structures for Duke Energy utilities.
- b. The site is within the General Commercial (GC) land use district, which allows public services/utilities.
- c. The property is within the Suburban Corridor Design District.
- d. The site and surrounding properties' land use, design district designations, and existing uses are shown below:

Location	Existing Use	Future Land Use	Design District
Site	Duke Energy Substation	General Commercial (GC)	Suburban Corridor
North	Lake Hills Shopping Plaza	General Commercial (GC)	Suburban Corridor
South	Roadways and Residential	General Commercial (GC)	Suburban Corridor
East	Roadways and Residential and Commercial Mixture of Uses	General Commercial (GC)	Suburban Corridor
West	Retail – Shopping Plaza and Wildwood Antique Mall	General Commercial (GC)	Suburban Corridor

Proposed Development:

The proposed development is to expand the existing substation northeast portion of the fenced area to the east to:

- Add approximately 3,358 square feet of additional #57 granite-covered area
- 1,267 square feet of new unmanned Control Equipment Enclosure
- Demolition of approximately 1,521 square feet of concrete pavement
- Milling and resurfacing approximately 4,391 square feet of existing asphalt pavement
- Construction of a dry retention pond

Waivers:

The applicant is requesting a waiver to the landscape buffer along the public right of way, required by Land Development Regulations Section 115-9.3.2(a) Suburban Landscape, and intends to construct a wall in lieu of the landscape buffer.

Considerations/Waiver Review:

Keeping in mind the type of use of this site, which is to house infrastructure for the public service of providing electricity, the request does not seem unreasonable to install a brick wall in lieu of landscaping. Landscaping can pose safety and operational risks for electrical equipment and materials, so a wall would be more functionally fitting.

The applicant provided the following justification for the waiver request:

We are requesting a waiver from the landscape buffer requirements to allow an 8-foot tall decorative precast concrete wall and 20' column spacing to be constructed for screening in lieu of landscaping for buffering/screening, due to the presence of two transmission lines and one distribution line in the area.

Construction of a landscape buffer would pose significant safety risks to workers and the public due to the potential for electrical hazards. With a vegetative landscape buffer, there is the potential for vegetation to grow and interfere with the lines or require maintenance, which could pose a risk to public safety.

A wall, on the other hand, is a more decorative, durable, and long-lasting solution that requires minimal maintenance. The installation of a wall will provide a safe and effective alternative to meet the site's screening needs while avoiding any potential hazards. Additionally, a wall will allow better management for the maintenance and upkeep of the area. Furthermore, the wall will provide additional security to the site.

Considering these factors, the installation of a wall in lieu of a landscape buffer would provide a safe and efficient alternative for managing the site's landscaping needs while avoiding any potential hazards. The wall will provide an effective barrier to prevent damage to the transmission and distribution lines and will also serve as a visual barrier to enhance the overall aesthetics of the site. We have attached an image showing an example of the proposed decorative precast concrete wall with the brick finish for your review.

Based on these considerations, we respectfully request a waiver to allow us to construct a wall in lieu of the landscape buffer for this project.

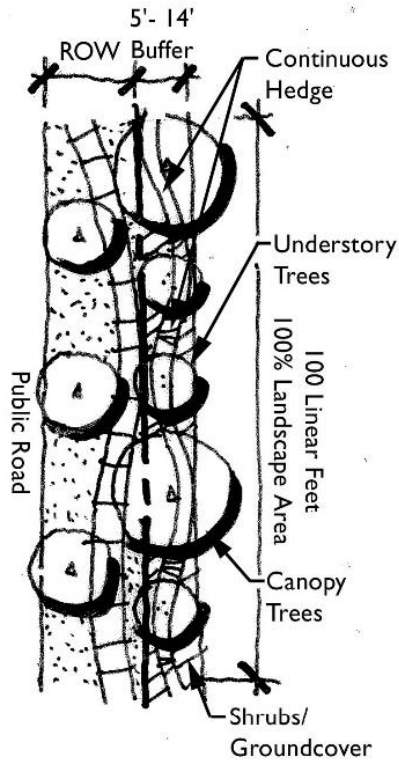
Applicable Policies and Codes:

Eustis Land Development Regulations Section 115-9.3.2(a) Suburban Landscape (2) and (3)

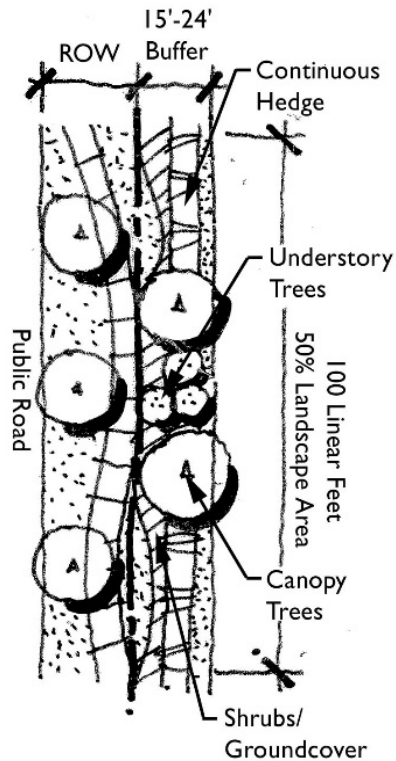
(2) Landscape buffer along public streets.

- a. A 15 to 24-foot landscape buffer shall be required along public streets with vegetation planted per the table below. Buffers smaller than 15 feet may be permitted when the building is sited with a street setback between 5 to 15 feet, or when the buffer must be reduced to meet individual site constraints. When a

building is sited with a zero street setback, they shall be exempt from any street yard buffer requirement.



Front Buffer Yard - 5'-14' Width Buffer along Public Streets requires 100% coverage with shrubs and groundcover.



Front Buffer Yard - 15'-24' buffers along public streets require 75% coverage with shrubs and groundcover.

- b. All planted shrub and groundcover areas shall achieve 100 percent coverage of their planting area within one year.

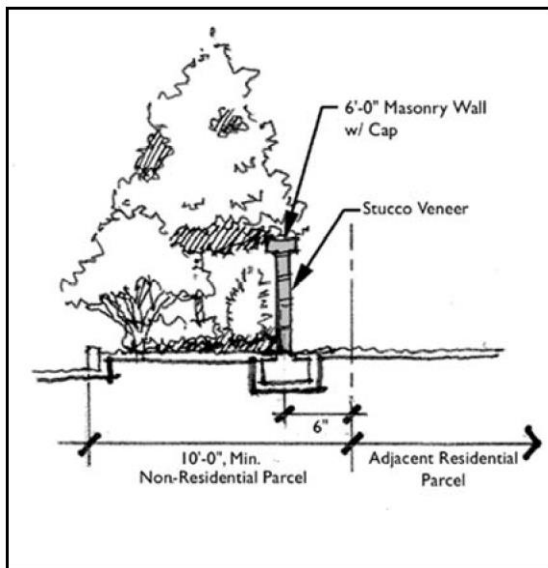
Street Buffer Planting Requirements			
Canopy trees	2 per 100 ft.	2" DBH, 12' hgt	30 gal
Understory trees	3 per 100 ft.	1.5—2" cal.; 7' hgt	15 gal
Continuous hedge		24" min.	3 gal

- c. Additional features such as maximum 24-inch knee walls and maximum 48 inch decorative "wrought iron" picket fences shall also be allowable elements. Decorative fences must have at least 50 percent of required buffer planting adjacent to right-of-way.
- d. Permitted features for front buffers - sidewalks, signs, low wall and 'wrought iron' or decorative treated wood picket fences, retention features.
- e. Prohibited features in front buffers - chain-link, untreated non-decorative wood or PVC fences, walls greater than two feet, loading, service or dumpster areas or similar items may not be placed in the front buffer or in any additional 'open space' adjacent to the street.
- (3) *Suburban adjacencies for nonresidential parcels.*
- a. Landscape buffers between parcels.
1. A minimum ten-foot landscape buffer is required between adjacent tracts (side and rear property boundaries) with vegetation planted per table 2. shrubs and groundcover shall comprise at least 30 percent of the landscaped area.
 2. On adjoining parcels of similar use, when designed as one buffer (such as adjacent commercial outparcels with automobile and pedestrian cross access), the combined buffers may be reduced to a total of ten feet if the shrub and groundcover landscape areas are increased to at least 75 percent of the total required buffer area. The combined ten-foot buffer shall require a total of two canopy trees and three understory trees per 100 linear feet. No less than five feet is required on each of the two adjoining parcels.
 3. Unless the adjacent parcel has a residential land use, the side requirement can be waived if the building is sited with a zero common lot setback.

Table 2.0 Side and Rear Buffer Requirements	
Canopy Trees (per 100 l.f.)	2 per 100 linear ft.
Tree DBH/Height	2" DBH, 12' overall height
Container Size	30 gal.
Understory Trees	3 per 100 linear fl
Tree DBH/Height	1 1/2"—2" DBH, 7' overall height
Container Size	15 gal.

Shrub screen (per 100 l.f.)	
Square Ft. of Shrubs	(33) 3 gal plants, 24" minimum at installation to create 36"—42" high by 36" wide hedge or continuous landscape screen with a 90 percent opacity within 1 year of planting;rr;
Container size	3 gal.

4. *Masonry wall:* Side or rear buffers adjoining residential land use shall also be designed with a six-foot masonry wall. The wall shall be of a decorative 'split face' concrete masonry, "Norman" brick or standard concrete masonry clad with painted stucco or other masonry veneer. The wall shall include a continuous cap and end column features. The wall shall be placed a minimum of six inches from the adjoining property line. In addition, all active 'yard and shop' spaces with open work areas or other supply areas shall be treated with a similar six-foot masonry wall.



Section of Typical Rear Buffer

- adjacent residential land use requires 6'—0" Masonry wall with cap.

(Ord. No. 16-31, 12-15-2016)

Policy Implications:

Approval or denial of this waiver request to the landscaping requirement could set a precedent for review of similar requests in the future; however, this being a site for housing electric utility equipment, it can be looked at as a unique circumstance and property use that serves needs of the public.

Alternatives:

1. Approve Resolution Number 23-39.
2. Deny Resolution Number 23-39.

Discussion of Alternatives:

Alternative 1 approves Resolution Number 23-39.

Advantages:

1. The project may move forward with upgrades and expansion to this Duke Energy substation, which is required to meet future electric energy needs.
2. The action would be consistent with the existing development patterns on the site, which has been used for some time as a Duke Energy substation.
3. The City may realize additional ad-valorem tax revenue once the site improvements are completed.
4. The action would be consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Disadvantages:

The action would approve waivers to the Land Development Regulations.

Alternative 2 denies Resolution Number 23-39.

Advantages:

1. The applicant may be able to redesign the site where waivers to the LDRs may not be necessary or the number of waivers reduced.

Disadvantages:

- a) The applicant may abandon the project due to additional costs to redesign.
- b) The City would not realize additional tax revenue from the new construction.
- c) The City may not be able to meet future electric energy needs.

Community Input:

The department has properly advertised the Resolution in the newspaper; notified surrounding properties within 500 feet, and posted the property. To date, there has been no opposition received to the proposed development, nor any feedback at all related to this.

Budget/Staff Impact:

There would be no direct cost to the City associated with the action other than providing standard City services to the development. There would be no additional staff time beyond the normal plan review process and building inspection.

Prepared By:

Heather Croney, Senior Planner

Reviewed By:

Mike Lane, AICP, Development Services Director