

TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS
MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY
OCTOBER 2022



PREPARED BY
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INTRODUCTION

In the period between 2005 and 2008, the Town approved a series of major development projects using planned unit development zoning for the most part and developing projects that conformed to the Village Mixed Use land use classification added to the Town's comprehensive plan in 2010. Many of these projects stalled during the recession beginning in 2008, and as the Florida economy moved out of the recession, there were several requests to revise the approved projects based on changes in the housing market and other factors that were applicable to the individual projects. Additionally, the very active housing market that has emerged in Florida generally and in Central Florida over the past several years has given rise to proposals for several additional large scale residential projects.

Since TMH Consulting joined the Town as its planning consultant in 2012 four projects have been completed, one other project has initiated its first phase of development, and five other projects have undergone or sought major revisions. These other projects include Lake Hills, Simpson Trust, Thompson Grove, Mission Rise and Whispering Hills. Note also that two commercial projects, a plant nursery, and a self-storage development, have been approved over the past year as well.

In June of 2020, TMH Consulting prepared a summary of the major development projects including an analysis of the project scope, project status, and presentation of the then current development layout including a subdivision plat or concept plan. This summary was updated in November 2021, and it is now time to update the summary to reflect changes that have occurred over the past year. Some of the proposed projects remain speculative in that no development approvals have been issued, but an update to the major development summary can provide a more comprehensive data base for the Town to consider as it works to address development issues, particularly utilities and transportation.

This report is intended to provide this status report. The attached map titled "Howey-in-the-Hills Major Projects October 2022" provides a location for each project. This report will provide a summary of each project and offer some information about the status of each project. The information provided addresses the comprehensive plan and zoning status of each project. The projects have been divided into two groups with the first group being projects that have some level of development approval, and the second group being projects that are more speculative in nature as no development approvals have been issued. In some cases, non-local approvals such as state permits are still required. The projects included in the review are summarized in the following tables.

Since the end of 2021 final plats have been approved for the Venezia Townhomes Project and the second phase of the Talichet development. Construction of new homes in Talichet Phase 1 continued at a rapid pace. The Venezia South single-family subdivision was largely built out by the beginning of 2021.

TABLE 1 RECENTLY COMPLETED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS OCTOBER 2022			
PROJECT	SINGLE-FAMILY	MULTI-FAMILY	TOTAL UNITS
Venezia South	172		172
Venezia Townhomes		113	113
Talichet Phase 1	92		92
Talichet Phase 2	21		21
Total	285	113	398

TABLE 2 MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PROPOSALS TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS OCTOBER 2021	
APPROVED	SPECULATIVE
Whispering Hills	Mission Rise
The Reserve/Hilltop Groves	Thompson Grove
Lake Hills	Simpson Parcel
	Westminster Parcel
	J5 Equities
	Carter Trust

PROJECT SUMMARIES

The individual projects will be reviewed in the following sections except for the Venezia South and Talichet Phase 1 development which have moved into the completed stage.

Ongoing Projects and Projects with Some Approval Status

Talichet Phase 2

Talichet Phase 2 includes 21 single-family lots along a cul-de-sac street extending south from the phase one project. One lot in the original project was removed to accommodate a street connection. This project included annexation of a ten-acre parcel along with comprehensive plan amendments and zoning assignment. The developer is currently finishing the subdivision improvements with the final plat approval expected before the end of the calendar year.

Whispering Hills (Whispering Heights)

Whispering Hills is the one large-scale project that is developing guided by standard zoning classifications rather than a planned unit development agreement. The project is designated as Medium Density Residential by the comprehensive plan and is zoned MDR-2 Medium Density Residential. The MDR-2 zoning was assigned in 2019 which allowed for the project size to increase from 107 to 156 single-family lots. In return for the increase in the number of residential lots, the Town secured an agreement for the project to develop with central sewer rather than developing under the previous approval which allowed 107 septic systems in proximity to Little Lake Harris. Since the rezoning generated a new subdivision design, the project had to go back through the full subdivision review process. The Town Council approved the final subdivision plan in November 2020 clearing the way for construction of subdivision improvements. The developer is currently working on a final subdivision plan in preparation for construction. The project still needs to secure sewage treatment capacity. (A recent advisory from the applicant noted a name change to Whispering Heights to avoid confusion with a similarly named project near Leesburg.)

Venezia Townhouses

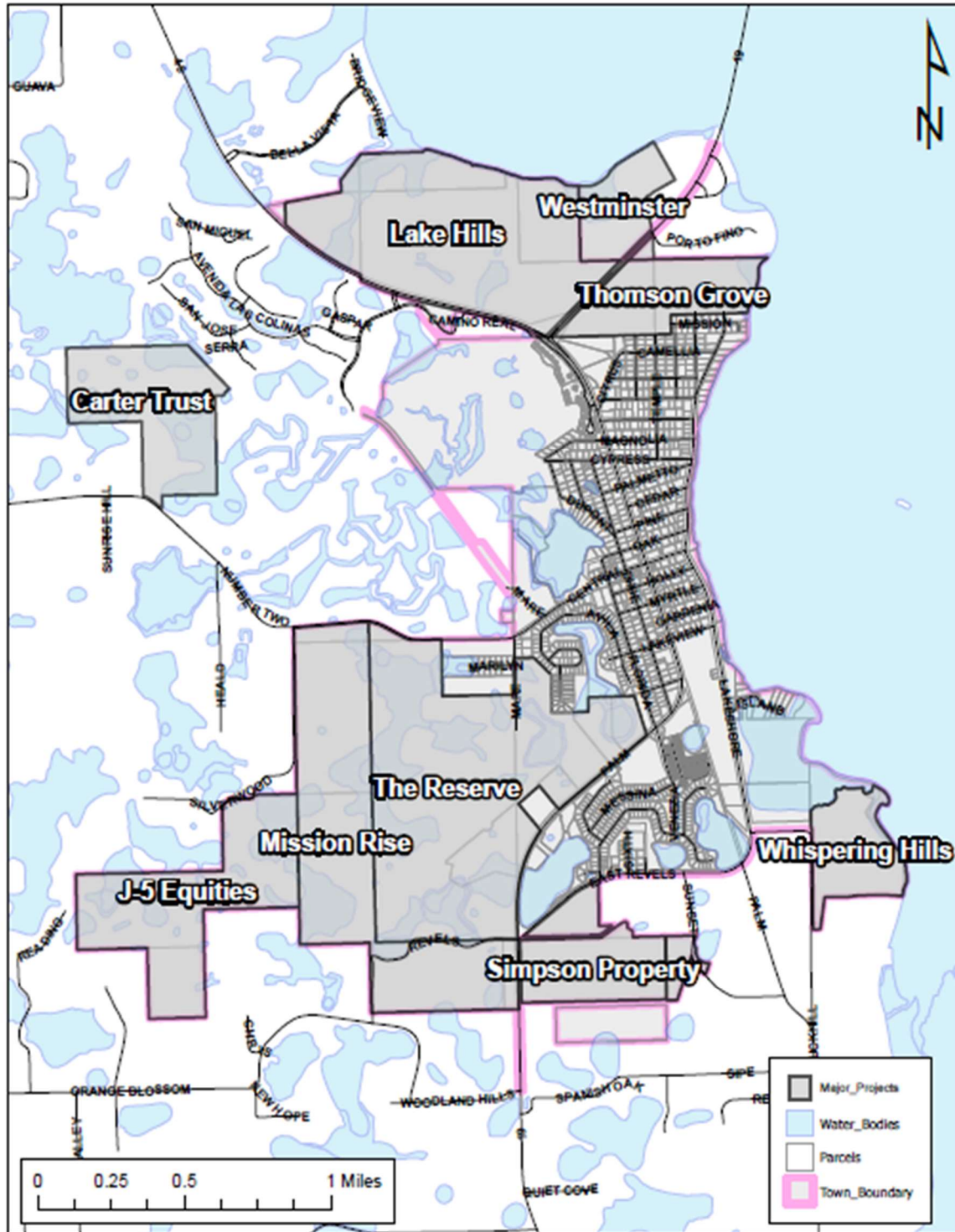
The original approval of the Venezia development included approval to construct 113 townhouse units. The project received final subdivision plan approval in February 2022 and final plat approval in July 2022. Unit construction is expected to begin in the last quarter of the current calendar year.

Lake Hills Development

The Lake Hills project is located at the intersection of CR 48 and SR 19. The current project was approved in revised development agreement completed in 2016. As designed the project allows 780 housing units divided among single-family lots in a variety of lot sizes, attached dwellings and townhouses. The project also allows 150,000 square feet of commercial use and 176,000 square feet of institutional use.

The Town had received an application for final subdivision plan approval for 650 units, many of which were to be age restricted to 55 years of age and older. This proposal has apparently been abandoned and any residential development will be delayed. The Town is still moving forward with a new water treatment plant to serve the northern half of Town on a two-acre site located within the project, and Lake County School Board is moving forward with a plan to purchase 19 acres within the Lake Hills project for a future elementary school. Initial interest in developing the commercial portion of the project is now likely to be delayed pending action on the residential development.

Howey in the Hills Major Projects Oct 2022



The Reserve

The residential portion of Reserve project was amended in November 2021 (Ordinance 2021-010) to modify the street layout and types of units permitted. The 2021 amendment included 284 single-family homes on standard lot designs, 291 single-family cluster homes and 153 townhouse units. Additionally, the plan allows a self-storage facility of up to 105,000 square feet, office, and commercial space up to 300,000 square feet and institutional use up to 100,000 square feet (likely a church site). The master plan also includes six single-family lots along South Florida Avenue that match the lot sizes of the units on the east side of South Florida Avenue. The revised plan for the residential sections of the project includes major revisions to the street layout, a completely revised park plan, and an expanded bicycle and pedestrian network. With the recent approval of the amended master development agreement, final subdivision design is expected in early 2022. The owner of the self-storage site is also actively developing a proposal for site plan approval.

In September 2022 an amendment to the November 2021 preliminary subdivision plan was submitted that refined the residential portion of the project. The unit mix was revised to include 302 single-family units, 280 cluster units and 146 townhouse units, but the major changes were to the roadways. The collector road through the residential portion of the project was reduced to two-lanes and several other road alignments were modified. The developer is moving toward approval for final subdivision plan for the first phase of residential development which includes 245 single-family and cluster units.

Speculative Projects

The projects that have been designated as speculative projects are proposed developments that have been submitted to the Town for review but have not yet attained any formal approval status. Depending on future actions, these projects may be approved as submitted, undergo modification prior to approval or fail to obtain development approvals. In addition to the following projects being considered by the Town, there is a nearby project, Drake Point, which includes 530 single-family units located north along CR 48 that is under review by Lake County but would clearly impact traffic and utilities in Howey.

Simpson Parcel

The Simpson Parcel is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Revels Road with SR-19. The project proposes 260 residential lots which is consistent with the Medium Density Residential Land Use classification. The project proposes 60-foot and 70-foot-wide single-family lots, but the current MDR-1 and MDR-2 zoning requires a minimum lot width of 100 feet and 75 feet, respectively. The property owners have applied for rezoning to Planned Unit Development (PUD) to allow for the smaller lot sizes. The project is currently under review by the Town Council.

Thompson Grove

This project is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of CR 48 with SR-19 and extends from SR 19 to the northern end of "Old Howey" east of SR 19. The proposal submitted is for 252 single family lots and a ten-acre commercial area. The proposal exceeds the maximum density of two units per acre allowed by the Low-Density Residential Land Use applied by the comprehensive plan. The property owner is seeking approval to amend the future land use designation to medium density residential (maximum four units per acre) and to approve a PUD permitting lot sizes at 60 x 110 and 50 x 110 feet. A minor annexation is also required. These applications are currently under review through the Town's development review process.

Mission Rise

The Mission Rise development is a large L-shaped parcel connecting between SR 19 and Number Two Road. In the initial report, Mission Rise was considered an approved project, but a revised plan proposed by a development group was not approved and the original development agreement expired. As originally approved the project allowed 400 single-family homes on 75-foot-wide lots. The property retains its comprehensive plan designation as Village Mixed Use and is entitled to develop under the goals, objectives, and policies in the comprehensive plan for VMU properties.

Westminster Parcel

This project is located just west of the bridge on the north side of SR-19. It abuts the eastern end of the Lake Hills property. The project proposal is for senior housing in two basic types. The project is requesting approval for 300 to 350 townhouse units for independent living and an ALF of undetermined size. Based on the parcel size, residential density will approach ten units per acre. The property is still within unincorporated Lake County and will require annexation, amendment to the comprehensive plan and application of suitable zoning. A pre-application meeting was held in November 2021 to review the development options. This project is currently on hold pending further action by the applicant.

Carter Trust Property

This project consists of approximately 161 acres located west of the Mission Inn development and north of Number Two Road. The project is in unincorporated Lake County but within the Town's utility service area. The applicants are pursuing lot sizes with 50-foot lot widths. A preliminary concept plan reviewed by Town staff shows a net density of 3.12 units per acre which would require application of the Town's medium density residential classification. To proceed the project will require annexation into the Town corporate limits, assignment of a suitable future land use classification and assignment of an appropriate zoning classification, likely PUD.

J-5 Equities Proposal

This project proposal encompasses the remaining Town area west of the Mission Rise location. The Town has held a pre-application meeting for the project area, but no formal applications have been received. The project proposed about 600 residential units which will require development under the Town's Village Mixed Use land use classification, which is the land use designation currently applied to the property. The property is currently zoned agriculture and is being used in that manner. Proposed residential lot sizes have not been determined. If the development proceeds, a rezoning to PUD is required by the comprehensive plan, and development must meet the Village Mixed Use requirements. A portion of the project area falls within the County's Yalaha-Lake Apopka Rural Protection Area. There is no information at this time on how this designation might impact the project design.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

The following tables summarize the individual projects with some level of approval to provide an overall planned development total for the Town and those projects that have been proposed but do not yet have approval status. The single-family component for Venezia South is excluded as these units are essentially part of developed portion of the Town.

TABLE 3 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PROFILES APPROVED AND PENDING PROJECTS					
Project	Single-Family	Multi-Family	Total Units	Commercial Area	Other Area
Venezia South				85,000	
Talichet Phase 2	21		21		
Whispering Hills	156		156		
Lake Hills	650		650	150,000	176,000
The Reserve	582	146	728	300,000	205,000
TOTAL	1,409	146	1,555	535,000	381,000

Notes:

1. Venezia South phases are complete. Only commercial area remains.
2. Lake Hills is the project entitlement. Unit split between single-family and multi-family are not available.
3. The Reserve data is the most recent approved amendment total.

TABLE 4 DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PROFILES PROPOSED PROJECTS WITH NO APPROVAL STATUS					
Project	Single-Family	Multi-Family	Total Units	Commercial Area	Other Area
Mission Rise	400		400		
Thompson Grove	252		252	130,000	
Simpson Parcel	260		260		
Westminster		350	350		ALF
Carter Trust	313		313		
J-5 Equities	607		607		
TOTAL	1,832	350	2,182	130,000	ALF

Notes:

1. Mission Rise total units is based on the most recent approved plan. The comprehensive plan allows for four units per acre on the total net acreage as the maximum unit total. Net acreage excludes wetlands and waterbodies.
2. Thompson Grove commercial allocation assumes 0.30 FAR for 10 acres.

Development project tracking is a dynamic process as project concepts can change rapidly and new projects are presented. Most Howey residents are aware of very active development proposals further west in the Leesburg area and Groveland to the south has been a very active development area in recent years. The Town has received inquiries about land area along the Town’s southern border, but none of these inquiries have moved to the point of preliminary discussions sufficient to identify a project scope.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

2022 is the third consecutive year that this major development summary has been produced. Over the past three years some development trends have emerged, and it seems appropriate to call out these trends as the Town reviews projects and looks to decide on the future of the developments, both entitled and prospective. The key trends and issues identified to date are as follows:

Smaller lot sizes: There is almost a universal push from the development community to build on smaller lots developed as single-family ownerships. The predominant size for requested lots is for a 50-foot-wide lot with varying lot depths from 100 feet to 120 feet. The projects approved and proposed do offer some proposals for 60-foot-wide lots, but there have also requests for lots smaller than 50-foot widths.

House sizes remain large: While lots are shrinking, house sizes are not. Few units are being constructed at the minimum dwelling unit size required by code. Having larger houses does help maintain higher property values, but the parcels have relatively high lot coverage and smaller setbacks, especially for side yards. The outcome is houses that are close together, typically 10 feet between units, and reduced space to accommodate accessory structures including sheds and swimming pools. The town has seen an increase in variance applications as a result with property owners trying to shoehorn these items, especially swimming pools, into the reduced lot area.

Single-family units dominate: While the Village Mixed Use land use category and the use of planned unit development zoning offers the opportunity to develop mixed use communities, single-family units dominate the building types. The Town has expressed a strong sentiment for owner-occupied single-family units and this desire may be directing the proposed unit mix to some extent.

Affordable housing is limited: The dominance of single-family units in the product mix and the continued larger size of housing units negatively impact the affordability of new housing stock. While unit type and unit size are far from the only factors limiting housing affordability they will have a negative effect on affordability.

Subdivisions not neighborhoods: Except where the Village Mixed Use land use category demands the inclusion of recreation opportunities and civic land uses including community centers, churches and schools, most projects are simply subdivisions with no elements that contribute to neighborhood identity and opportunities for social interaction. Venezia South and the Talichet subdivisions are clear examples of this trend. They offer no community-based assets that might promote social interaction among subdivision residents. The only common areas are stormwater retention ponds. The large Village Mixed Use projects such as The Reserve and Lake Hills do include parks, walking and cycling trails, and community facilities because they are mandated by the VMU policies. Of the non-VMU projects only the Simpson Trust project offers any facilities that would foster neighborhood interaction.

Early commercial interest: When the Lake Hills project appeared to be moving forward with its residential development, the Town saw the first interest in developing in any of the approved commercial areas. This action suggests the Town is getting close to the residential base that would support additional commercial development. With the delay of the Lake Hills residential component, the timing for development of a commercial project is uncertain. The Town will likely need to see one more of the large-scale projects move forward to trigger renewed interest in commercial development.

Public service limitations: With the volume of approved and potential development the Town is seeing its first negative impacts on the ability to

provide public services including potable water and sewage treatment. The existing north water treatment plant needs to be replaced and the potential demand for water service adds to the issue. The Town has a plan in place to replace the treatment plant, improve service to existing customers and provide for the approved but as yet undeveloped residential areas. Funding is the current limitation. The Town's sewage treatment provider has advised the Town that there is not currently capacity at the treatment facility. Approved projects such as Whispering Hills and Lake Hills may be delayed until additional capacity becomes available. The Town is currently considering options to provide sanitary sewer service, but a formal plan needs to be developed.

Traffic issues are emerging: The most recent traffic impact assessments are showing intersection issues at key locations along SR 19. As development impacts Number Two Road, this route will need some upgrade as well. It is substandard in width and right-of-way is limited for much of its length. The Town is working on a fair share program for traffic mitigation as a solution to these problems. Coordination will be required with FDOT and Lake County as the controlling agencies for the arterial and collector roads serving the Town, and quite a bit of work remains to put the fair share system in place.

New school capacity: The new residential projects are encountering concurrency issues with schools and Lake County Schools are experiencing capacity problems and elementary, middle, and high school levels. The school district has responded by moving to purchase a 19-acre school site identified within the Lake Hills development, and by entering into mitigation agreements that provide funding to assist with other school capacity projects.

Regional impacts: As the Town considers development within its borders, it is important to keep in mind that extra-jurisdictional impacts are still likely. The closest example of this is the proposed Drake Point project on CR 48 between SR 19 and Yalaha. But there are also projects in Leesburg to the west and Groveland to the south which will impact Howey, especially roads, to some degree.