

BLACK PRONG EQUESTRIAN VILLAGE

**Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Amendment – Justification Report**
14 February 2025

Prepared for:
Levy County Board of County Commissioners

Prepared on behalf of:
Black Prong Equestrian Village

Prepared by:
NV5, Inc.

PN# 24-00121
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Table of Contents

Section	Page No.
1. Executive Summary.....	1
2. Statement of Proposed Change.....	2
3. Impact Analysis	7

List of Tables

Table 1: Surrounding Future Land Use and Zoning Designations	5
Table 2: Existing and Proposed Maximum Gross Development Potential	9

List of Figures

Figure 1: Context Map.....	2
Figure 2 Site Aerial with Property Appraiser's Parcel Map Data	3
Figure 3: Existing Future Land Use Map	4
Figure 4: Existing Zoning Map.....	5
Figure 5: Topography, Wetlands, and FEMA Floodplain Map	7

1. Executive Summary

To: Tara Howell, Director, Planning and Zoning Department
From: Gerry Dedenbach, AICP + LEED AP, Executive Vice President, NV5, Inc.
Date: February 14, 2025
Re: Black Prong Equestrian Village – Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment Application

<u>Jurisdiction:</u> Levy County, FL	<u>Development Intent:</u> Amend adopted Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinance 2022-8 to allow: clarification of uses; flexibility in site location & allocation of uses; and authorize the Land Development Administrator to approve adjustments within the site's boundaries.		
<u>Location Description/Address:</u> 450 SE Co. Rd. 337, Bronson, FL 32621			
<u>Parcel Number:</u> 0368400100		<u>Site Acreage:</u> ±90.23 acres (Source: Survey)	
<u>Existing Future Land Use:</u> From Levy County's Comprehensive Plan <i>Forestry / Rural Residential (FRR)</i> This category provides for areas predominately used for commercial forestry, accessory and supportive uses to the forestry industry, <u>resource based and/ or non-spectator based recreational uses</u> , conservation uses, and <u>very low density rural development, spatially separated from forestry uses</u> . The maximum residential density is one (1) unit per twenty (20) acres except as otherwise provided by Policy 3.4. The minimum parcel size is twenty (20) acres, or parcel of record as of December 31, 1989. Public schools are permitted within this category. Policy 3.4 ...As an incentive to conserve the use of land for silviculture and/or open space, any development proposed as a Planned Unit Development and/or with a cluster development design pursuant to the Levy County Land Development Code, shall receive a density bonus of one (1) dwelling unit per ten (10) acres from the undeveloped portion of the same common ownership to be utilized for silviculture and/or open space use, excluding wetlands.			
<u>Existing Zoning District:</u> Planned Unit Development (PUD) From Ordinance 2022-08 Pursuant to Sections 50-661 and 50-902 of the Levy County Land Development Code, the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district is an overlay zoning district that is intended to provide parcel specific zoning for <u>planned developments that have unique conditions, require design flexibility, and/or contain diverse and integrated uses and structures, that are consistent with the comprehensive plan, but which other zoning districts do not readily accommodate</u>			<u>Proposed Zoning District:</u> AMENDED Planned Unit Development (PUD)
<u>Existing Maximum Density/Intensity</u> Density: 88 transient lodging units allowed Intensity: ±90.23 ac with ±5.65% Impervious Surface Ratio for Equestrian/Agricultural uses in the overall resort setting.		<u>Proposed Maximum Density/Intensity</u> Density: No changes are proposed in PUD Amendment Intensity: No changes are proposed in PUD Amendment	
<u>Net Change</u> Approval of this Amendment application will result in no change in Residential Units nor Non-Residential Square footage beyond the existing approved PUD.			

2. STATEMENT OF PROPOSED CHANGE

This Planned Unit Development (PUD) Rezoning Amendment application requests to amend the adopted Black Prong Equestrian Village (BPEV) PUD, which was unanimously approved by the Levy County Board of County Commissioners' Ordinance 2022-8. The proposed PUD Amendment does not request increases in project size nor density/intensity of uses; but does seek:

- *clarification of uses [primary and accessory to the equestrian/agricultural activities];*
- *flexibility in site location & allocation of uses within the overall property; and*
- *the Board of County Commissioners authorizing the Land Development Administrator to approve future spatial adjustments and allocations within the site's boundaries.*

BPEV is located at 450 SE Co. Rd. 337, Bronson, FL 32621. **Figure 1** below is a Context Map showing BPEV's location and surrounding uses, which are the Goethe State Forest on the south, west, and north sides. The east boundary is Co. Rd. 337. BPEV functions are rural equestrian / agricultural-based and its expressed purpose is to provide guests with a world-class equestrian experience in harmony with the surrounding Goethe State Forest's natural beauty and serenity.

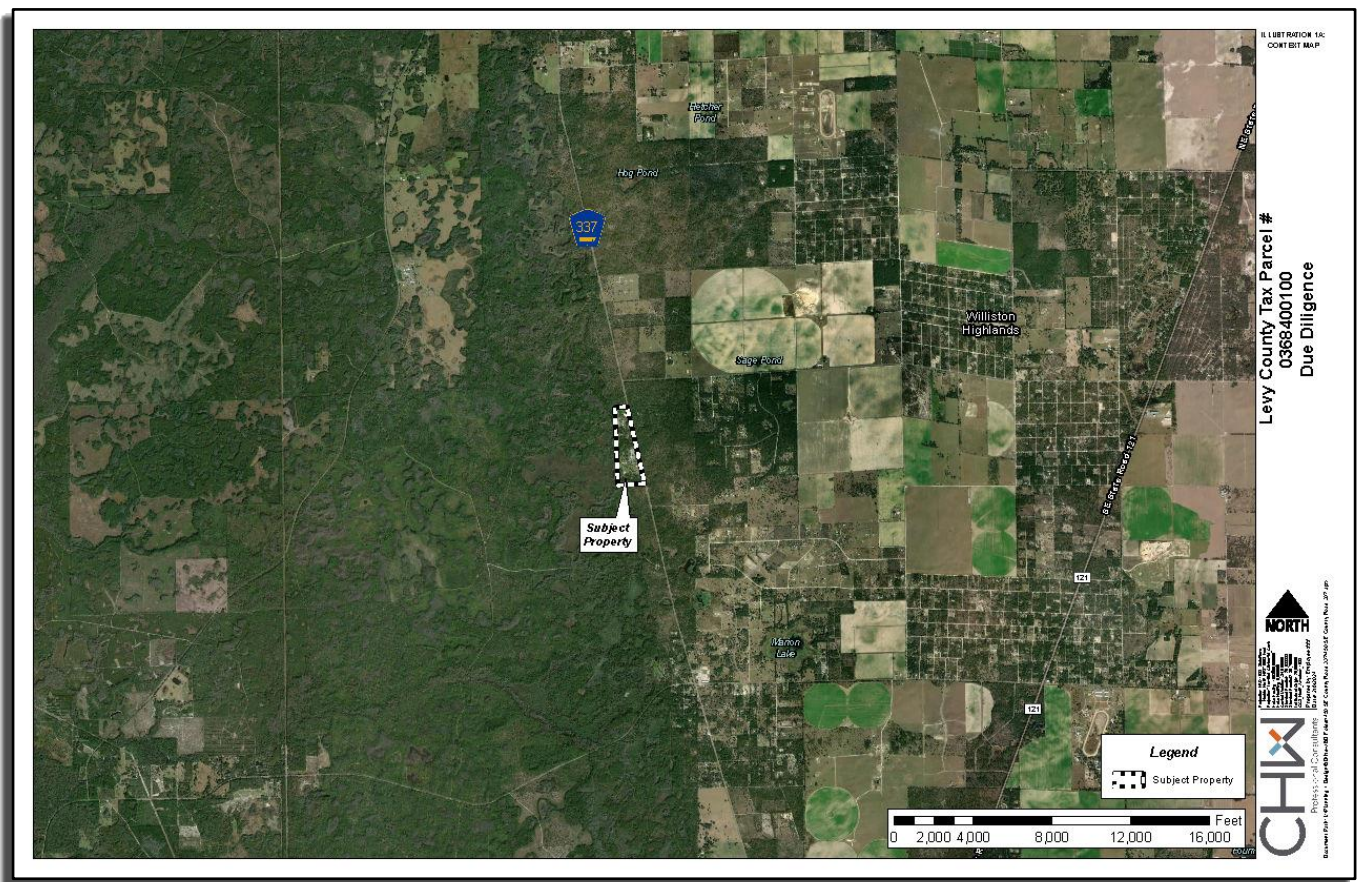


Figure 1: Context Map

The equestrian / agricultural nature and character contained within BPEV is similar in nature to surrounding context-area properties and in keeping with the overall character of Levy County. BPEV's nearly 4,000 linear feet of frontage along Cr. Rd. 337 is adorned with substantial tree canopy, including hardwoods such as Oaks, Magnolias, and Sweetgums; Pine stands exist in the site's southern areas. Throughout the entire frontage, the site's equestrian / agricultural areas, in the form of pastures and paddocks, barns and farm fencing, are the norm and clearly visible from the abutting 55-mph rural roadway. BPEV will address noise from high-speed traffic by buffering.

The Pavilion, which is the core hospitality area, is clearly visible based on the gated entrance, driveway's pavers, and enhanced landscaping, as seen in **Figure 2** below, which contains Property Appraiser's Aerial Photograph with Parcel Overlay. The PUD Amendment proposes no changes to BPEV's aesthetic nor the character established. Through continued extensive enhancement and investment in the site, greater interest in Levy County and the north central Florida region will occur.

The BPEV site has experienced significant enhancement and investment since it was acquired by the current owners. Most recently, NV5 and Wood+Partners professional consultants conducted an onsite design charrette for the expressed purpose of investigating, conceptualizing, and developing a pathway for continued site enhancement and investment. These elements clearly underscore the owner's desire to enhance the existing site and further integrate its approved uses harmoniously with the Goethe State Forest surrounding the property, as can be seen in Figure 2 below.

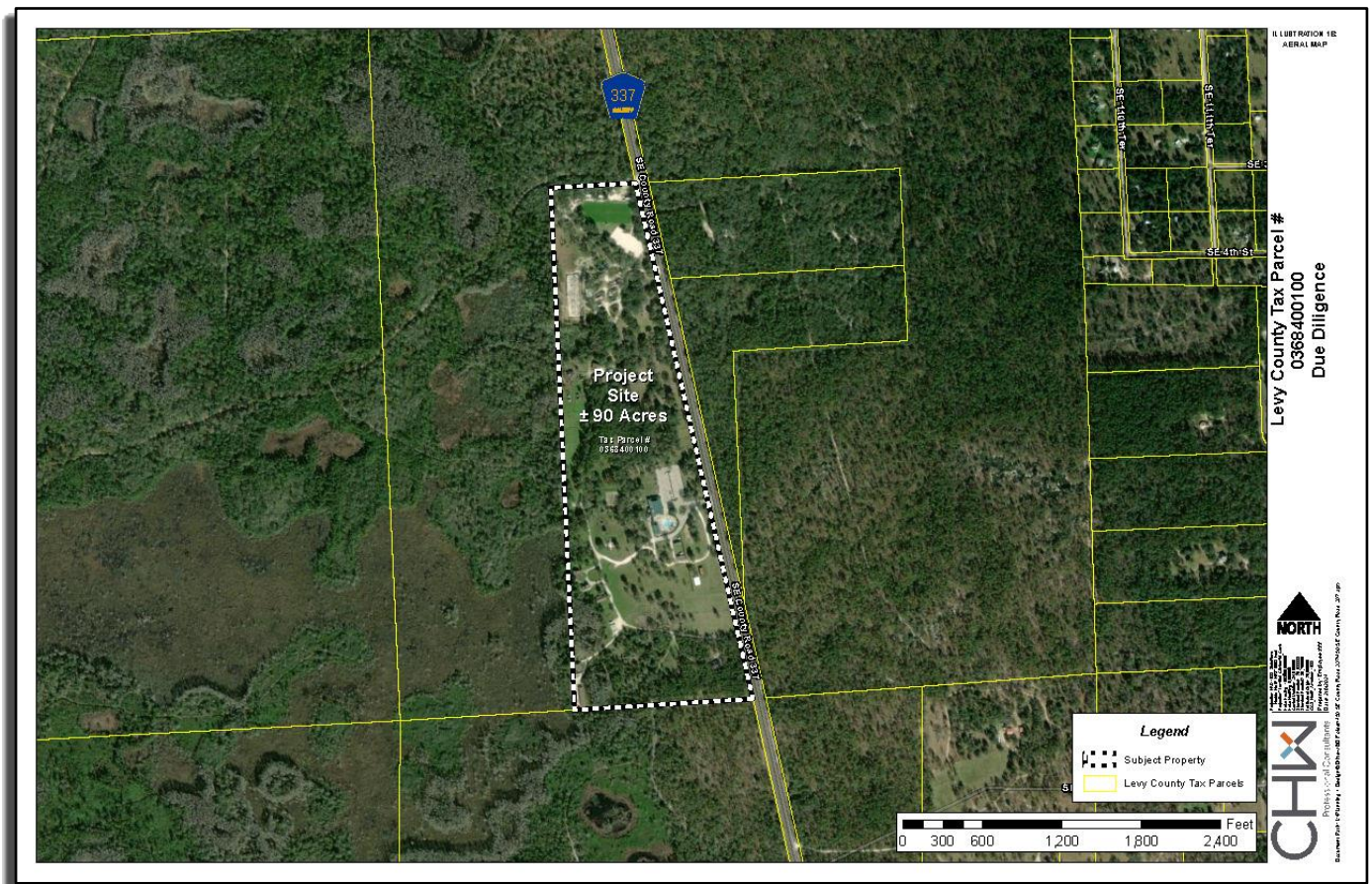


Figure 2: Site Aerial, with Property Appraiser's Parcel Map Data

The Applicant, through continued enhancement and investment in BPEV, represents a locally-owned and managed business, and their desired PUD Amendment further refines their vision and BPEV offerings to both local residents and the travelling and touring equestrian community. The enhancements will promote the equestrian / agricultural lifestyle and enhance the intrinsic value and serenity both Levy County and the Goethe State Forest bring to the community and visitors to North Central Florida.

Connecting local residents and visitors to our region, through the site's complementary recreational activities and connection to the Goethe State Forest, is the primary focus and driving ethic behind BPEV. The entitlements granted in the original PUD are not proposed to be removed, but rather

logically grouped to preserve open space, create complementary adjacencies, and better function in concert with the sites equestrian / agricultural character and theme.

The accompanying PUD Amendment request, which proposes to allow activity grouping, will foster resultant redevelopment in a manner that best and continues to serve a public purpose through the provision of active recreation. The rearrangement of previously approved recreation activity will create a more harmonious site and better utilize portions of the already developed site. The PUD amendment will allow a more organic response to changes in guests' preferences and reduce vehicular uses within the site.

As discussed in a pre-application meeting with Levy County staff, Department Directors, and Administrators, it is the owners' desire to reduce and restrict vehicular operations within the site's core areas. By providing walking paths and trails for walking, jogging, and bicycles, a more serene environment can be achieved. By providing electric bicycles and branded carts, gasoline and diesel vehicle use can be limited to entry and parking areas and necessary maintenance functions. In summary, capturing cars and trucks at the site's perimeter promotes both staff and guest's experience in a natural environment complementary to the surrounding Goethe State Forest.

Figures 3 and 4 plus Table 1 below show the current FLUM and zoning designations adjacent to the subject site, within 300' (three hundred) feet of the subject property's boundary, which are the Goethe State Forest (Recreation) and two (2) Residential properties to the east as mapped.

The Applicant requests the PUD amendment be reviewed and considered concurrently with the proposed Draft Ordinance, prepared and submitted as a courtesy to assist in the application review and approval process through staff, the Planning & Zoning Board, and ultimately the Board of County Commissioners.



Figure 3: Existing Future Land Use Map



Figure 4: Existing Zoning Map

Table 1: Surrounding Future Land Use and Zoning Designations

Direction	Future Land Use Designation	Zoning Designation
North	Natural Reservation (GSF)	Conservation Natural – Residential (GSF)
East	Agricultural / Natural Reservation (GSF)	Agricultural Rural Residential (ARR)
South	Natural Reservation (GSF)	Conservation Natural – Residential (GSF)
West	Natural Reservation (GSF)	Conservation Natural – Residential (GSF)

PLEASE NOTE ABOVE: GSF= Goethe State Forest

Of note, the site is surrounded by the Goethe State Forest, with the exception of two (2), privately-owned parcels to the immediate east, of which one (1) has a residential mobile home, according to the Levy County Property Appraiser's database.

The adopted PUD includes a one-hundred-foot (100') building setback, on the site's south, west, and north sides; abutting the Goethe State Forest. Only a few pre-existing buildings are on the site's north and southwest corner within the building setback. No future buildings are or will be proposed in this ±12.11-acre area surrounding the site's abutting boundary in common with the Goethe State Forest.

In addition, the site has a fifty-foot (50') building setback on the site's eastern side, abutting Co. Rd. 337. No future buildings are or will be proposed in this ±4.56-acre area. Moreover, only landscaping enhancements, which will both beautify BPEV from an aesthetic and vegetative landscape perspective, are and will be proposed within this area; consistent with the approved PUD.

Overall, the site is comprised of approximately 75% equestrian / agricultural open space, including the building setbacks, where connections to the Goethe State Forest exist; allowing staff and guests to lead equestrian-based activities such as guided trail rides into the Forest. In addition, the nearly seventeen (17) acres surrounding the perimeter provide numerous opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking, observing nature, and relaxation within the serenity of a forest setting.

Given the site does not abut residential development, with only one (1) adjacent parcel of land containing a residential structure across Co. Rd. 337, BPEV is uniquely positioned away from other development and not in an area where future development will build against or towards its boundaries. Similarly, BPEV's activities are essentially self-contained and there is no reliance on public services nor are there municipal services in the context area beyond the public roadway and electric utilities serving the area.

The requested PUD Amendment, which merely proposes to group complementary uses in a manner more conducive to the site's natural environment, both from a vegetative and topographic perspective, does not propose any spatial changes within the approved entitlements that could or may cause an offsite impact. Furthermore, the proposed PUD Amendment provides through clearly articulated conditions and a proposed Ordinance, the hierarchy of equestrian / agricultural uses being the site's Primary and Principle use with Hospitality and Lodging, on a limited temporary basis, and all other activities, such as pastures, paddocks, barns, and other non-habitable structures being accessory and ancillary to the primary use.

The impetus for the proposed PUD Amendment arose from the desire to move a recreation feature, specifically the Pickle Ball court, which was specified in the site's southwest corner, rather than proximate to the site's core hospitality area, which contains a pool and small gym. Although the requested move would have no consequence in a holistic view, based on the previous approval's site-specific outlines for approved elements, a PUD Amendment was deemed necessary.

Therefore, we request the ability for Levy County staff to allow flexibility in placement of approved elements in the Master Plan to better accommodate the site's natural features. This is in direct response to visitors' and guests' logical use of facilities in a manner conducive to the site's equestrian / agricultural nature and the continued equine operations and management.

In addition, based on the site's approved entitlements as an equestrian / agricultural resort, it is necessary to routinely move or rotate stables, paddocks, and equestrian activities; as is common on any agricultural property. The rotation of grazing areas and associated supportive accessory uses for the equine population upon the site should not be a regulatory zoning matter, but a property land management. Similarly, the division of larger arenas or pastures or assemblage of area is not a matter of zoning and should be in accordance with rural/equestrian land management practices.

The removal and reduction of vehicles within the site, as an operational policy, along with continued land management will create a more resilient landscape and enhanced environment for both guests, visitors, and the equine population onsite. During the previously discussed design charrette, many of the ideas above came forward as elements for the site's continued success. These enhanced operational goals are in concert with the owner's vision for creating an exceptional world class facility in the heart of Levy County.

3. IMPACT ANALYSIS

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

As shown in **Figure 5** below, the subject property is relatively flat, with elevation ranging from ± 50 feet to ± 80 feet above mean sea level, with gently sloping open and treed areas consistent with the general context area's topography. Public domain Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data depicts two (2) portions of a larger off-site wetland system upon the subject site.

The site contains lands within three (3) distinct watersheds, which have been recently delineated by professional biologists, environmental scientists, and professional engineers. Members of the BPEV professional consulting team have recently obtained the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) permit necessary for construction of onsite Stormwater Management Facilities (SMFs). These facilities will soon be constructed in accordance with the approved permit, in concert with BPEV's continued investment in site enhancements.

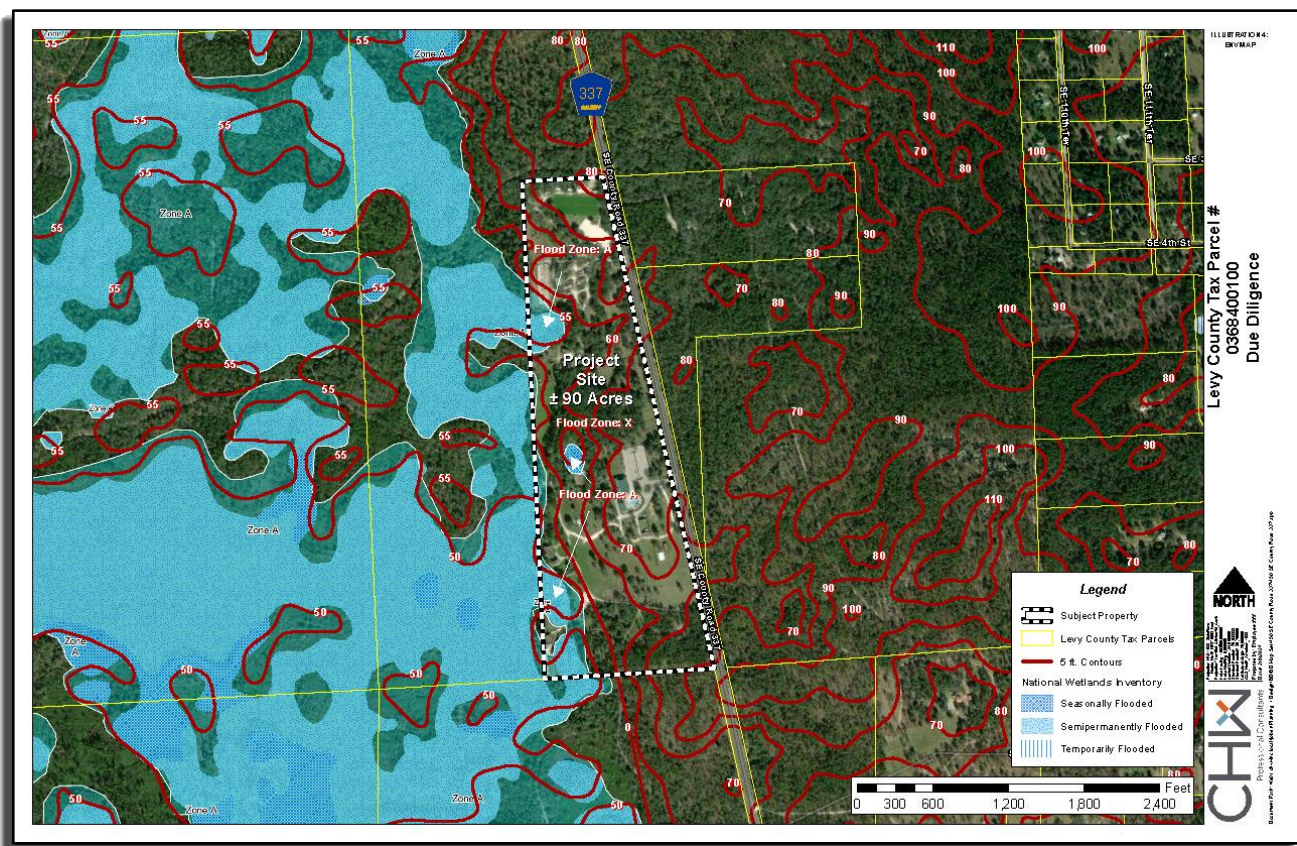


Figure 5: Topography, Wetlands, and FEMA Floodplain Map

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Approval of this requested PUD Amendment application supports the retention, expansion, and massive reinvestment in an existing Levy County business. Redevelopment, continued investment, and adaptive reuse upon the site, made possible by this PUD Amendment, will contribute to the provision of a significantly unique and innovative active & passive recreation area abutting the County's largest and most highly utilized State Forest.

The Applicant, a locally-owned and managed business, desires to continue investment in the subject site for adaptive recreation and hospitality uses. The uses are focused on the core equestrian / agriculture theme and providing both active and passive recreation to local, regional, state, national, and international guests. Resulting redevelopment, based on the existing approval, will include both indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities such as Pickle Ball, outdoor fitness trails, and other related activities.

Continued investment and development of the subject site also completes enhancement of a key location within both Levy County and the north-central Florida Region. BPEV is connected to a vast array of existing trails within the Goethe State Forest, presenting many recreation opportunities. Since the subject site directly accesses the Goethe State Forest, continued investment and development will create a greater appreciation and stewardship of utilized trail systems and our shared rural environment.

Black Prong Equestrian Village employs a variety of skilled employees, equestrian specialists and trainers, and a highly effective operations and management staff. Continued success creates additional employment opportunities in Levy County in concert with the County's and region's existing population and furthers environmental stewardship and appreciation for our shared north central Florida and the unique offerings that make our region so unique.

LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) – PLANNING ANALYSIS

This PUD Amendment application is being submitted requesting the ability to move approved entitlements within the site's boundaries. Approval of this PUD Amendment application **will not** change the site's allowed density nor intensity.

Table 2: Existing and Proposed Maximum Gross Development Potential

Existing FLU / Zoning	Proposed FLU / Zoning
FRR (±90.235 ac) / PUD	No Changes are proposed in category
<i>Existing Maximum Density / Intensity</i>	<i>Proposed Maximum Density / Intensity</i>
Density: 88 transient lodging units allowed Intensity: ±90.23 ac with ±5.65% Impervious Surface Ratio for Equestrian/Agricultural uses in the overall resort setting.	No Changes are proposed in <i>Maximum Density / Intensity</i>
Net Change	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is no change proposed to allowed density nor intensity approved by Ordinance 22-08	

Roadways / Transportation

STATEMENT: The proposed PUD Amendment does not modify the site's approved development entitlements. Projected trip generation has already been factored into adopted LOS standards.

Potable Water

STATEMENT: The proposed PUD Amendment does not modify the site's approved development entitlements. The projected potable water demand from on-site wells will not negatively impact the County's adopted LOS.

Sanitary Sewer

STATEMENT: The proposed PUD Amendment does not modify the site's approved development entitlements. The projected sanitary sewer demand is addressed through on-site septic systems and will not negatively impact the County's adopted LOS.

Solid Waste

STATEMENT: The proposed PUD Amendment does not modify the site's approved development entitlements. The projected solid waste collections are addressed through private providers and will not negatively impact the County's adopted LOS.

Education Facilities

STATEMENT: The proposed PUD Amendment does not modify the site's approved development entitlements. Since the site does not have permanent residents, there is no creation of need for seats within the Levy County Public School System.

Recreation Facilities

STATEMENT: The proposed PUD Amendment does not modify the site's approved development entitlements. Since the site is an equestrian / agricultural ecotourism facility, providing a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities, there is no impact to Levy County recreation facilities.