



**CITY OF WAUCHULA
ZONING AMENDMENT
STAFF REPORT & PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

TO: City of Wauchula City Commission

PREPARED BY: Central Florida Regional Planning Council

AGENDA DATE: July 13, 2026

REQUESTED ACTION: **AN APPLICANT-INITIATED ZONING MAP AMENDMENT – East of US Highway 17, west of Heard Bridge Road, north of Bell Street, and south of Tropicana Street (parcel numbers 33-33-25-0000-09780-0000 and 33-33-25-0000-08410-0000).**

Ordinance 2026-10: An applicant-initiated request to amend the **Zoning Map** from 17.3 acres County General Commercial (C-2) and 17.4 acres County Agriculture (A-1) to 11.7 acres Planned Unit Development (PUD) and 23.0 acres Agriculture (AG) on approximately 35.18 acres located East of US Highway 17, west of Heard Bridge Road, north of Bell Street, and south of Tropicana Street (parcel numbers 33-33-25-0000-09780-0000 and 33-33-25-0000-08410-0000).

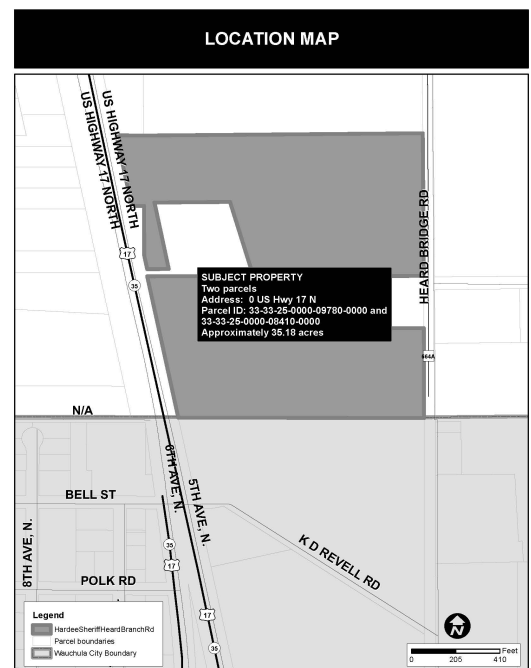
PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MOTION:

At the June 15, 2026 meeting, the Planning and Zoning Board voted to recommend approval of the proposed rezoning.

MOTION OPTIONS:

Rezoning Amendment Motion Options:

1. I move **approval of Ordinance 2026-10** on second reading.
2. I move **approval of Ordinance 2026-10 with changes** on second reading.
3. I move **continuation to a date and time certain.**



BACKGROUND:

The Hardee County Board of County Commissioners (applicant) is requesting the assignment of a City of Wauchula Zoning designation on a 35.18-acre property (two parcels) that was recently annexed into the City. They are requesting a Zoning District of Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Agriculture (AG) to facilitate the development of a new Hardee County Sheriff's Office Administration building and jail.

ZONING REQUEST

The applicant is requesting a Zoning Map amendment from 17.3 acres of County General Commercial (C-2) and 17.4 acres of County Agriculture (A-1) to 11.7 acres City Planned Unit Development (PUD) and 23.0 acres Agriculture (AG).

EXISTING ZONING

Hardee County Land Development Code, Section 3.04.01 – Agriculture (A-1):

The primary purpose of this zoning district is to provide areas in Hardee County for the primary practice of unlimited agriculture, very low density residential, low intensity commercial services, industrial, public and community services, and recreation and open space land uses. Recreation uses are consistent and compatible with the Agriculture (A-1) district, when the primary function is public or private, not-for-profit recreation.

Hardee County Land Development Code, Section 3.04.10 – General Commercial (C-2):

The primary purpose of this zoning district is to provide areas in Hardee County for the establishment of major commercial centers serving the needs of the community and the region. Other land uses encouraged in the district include: professional offices, limited medium density residential, light industrial, public and community services and recreation facilities land uses.

PROPOSED ZONING

City of Sebring Code of Ordinances, Sec 26-144 – Planned Unit Development:

The planned development ("PD") district is designed to allow an applicant to submit a developmental proposal for consideration, and to allow the city council to approve any proposal which it determines to be in the best interest of the public, along with any conditions, requirements or limitations thereon which the council deems advisable. PD districts are intended to:(1)Promote more efficient and economic uses of land;(2)Provide opportunities for design innovations by individual planned developments which are not provided for or allowed in other zoning districts;(3)Encourage flexibility in design and permit planned integration of multiple uses and structures;(4)Encourage uses of land which reduce transportation impacts;(5)Provide for more usable and suitably located recreational facilities, open spaces and scenic areas, either commonly owned or publicly owned, than would otherwise be provided under conventional land

development procedures;(6)Lower development and building costs by permitting smaller lots, networks of utilities, and streets and the use of more economical building types and shared facilities; and(7)Accomplish more desirable living and working environments than would be possible through the strict application of the minimum requirements of the city's other zoning and subdivision regulations..

PROPERTY INFORMATION

The request includes two parcels totaling approximately 35.18 acres. The property has a Future Land Use designation of County Town Center and zoning designations of County General Commercial (C-2) and County Agriculture (A-1). The property owner is requesting the City assign a Zoning District of Planned Unit Development (PUD) on 11.7 acres and Agriculture (AG) on 23.0 acres to facilitate the development of a new Hardee County Sheriff's Office Administration building and jail in the PUD portion of the property.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPATIBILITY AND ZONING COMPATIBILITY:

Table 1 includes the density/intensity for the amendment to the Future Land Use Map request.

Table 1:
Analysis of Impacts from Proposed Zoning Map Amendment

	Existing Zoning: Hardee C-2 (17.3 acres) and Hardee A-1 (11.7 acres)	Proposed FLU: City PUD (11.7 acres) and City AG (23.0 acres)
Density/Intensity	Hardee C-2: 2.0 FAR Hardee A-1*: 1.0 DU/5ac	City PUD: 0.24 FAR City AG*: 1.0 DU/2 ac
Density Potential	1,507,176 sf non-	122,316 sf non-residential

	residential and 2 DU	and 11 DU
Difference	Decrease of 1,384,860 sf non-residential and increase of 9 dwelling units	

*Calculations for Agriculture do not include all uses allowed under Agricultural zoning

The proposed Zoning is consistent with the Future Land Use. The proposed zoning provides consistency with the surrounding area based on the Future Land Uses and zoning on nearby properties, setbacks, and buffering. More information is available in the Land Use Analysis located below.

Land Use Analysis:

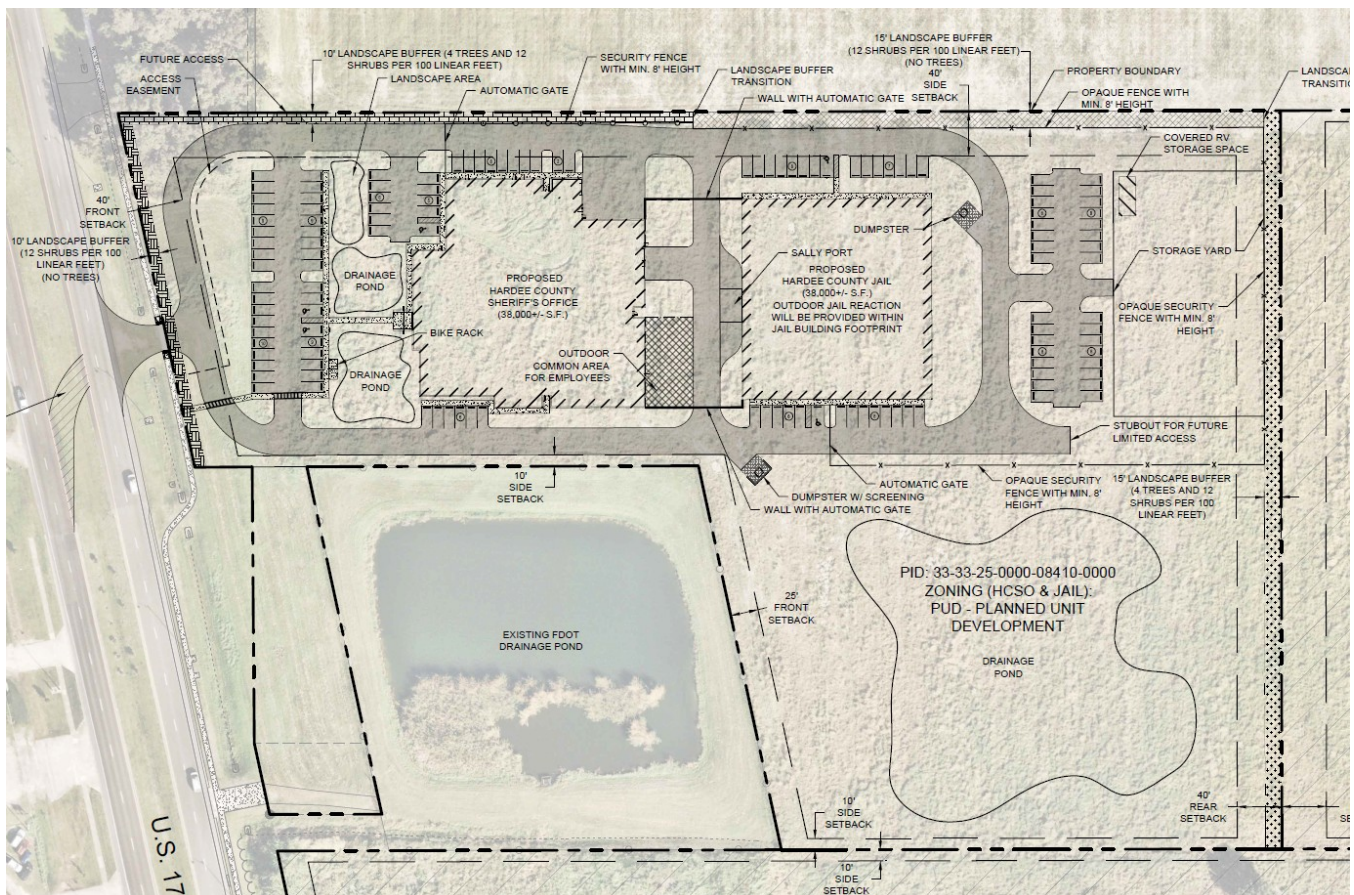
The Land Use Matrix below outlines the existing and proposed Future Land Use and zoning of the subject portion of the property, the existing Future Land Use and zoning of adjacent properties, and the existing land use of the subject and adjacent properties. The property to the south is in Wauchula and the property to the north, east, and west are in unincorporated Hardee County.

Land Use Matrix

Northwest	North	Northeast
FLU: County TC ZONING: County C-2 EXISTING USE: Commercial	FLU: County TC ZONING: County C-2 and County A-1 EXISTING USE: Agriculture	FLU: County TC ZONING: County A1 EXISTING USE: Agriculture
West	Subject Property	East
FLU: County TC ZONING: County C-2 EXISTING USE: Commercial	EXISTING FLU: PSP ZONING: County C-2 and County A-1 PROPOSED ZONING: PUD and AG EXISTING USE: Agriculture	FLU: County TC ZONING: County A-1 EXISTING USE: Residential and Agriculture
Southwest	South	Southeast
FLU: COM ZONING: C-1 EXISTING USE: Commercial	FLU: PSP ZONING: PSP EXISTING USE: Public	FLU: LDR ZONING: R-3 EXISTING USE: Residential

Zoning Amendment – PUD Residential

This Planned unit Development would permit the development of the Hardee County Sheriff's Office and jail facility. The PUD area would include the structures as shown on the Master Development Plan. To accommodate the potential future expansion of the Sheriff's Office (as shown on the Master Development Plan) and future needs of the site for accessory structures, the floor area ratio is set at 0.24. The internal road network would be private. As shown on the Master Development Plan, the site includes fencing and buffering. The proposed conditions provide requirements for lighting and other measures to provide compatibility with adjacent properties.



PROPOSED PUD DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS

The Hardee County Resiliency Hub PUD will meet the following conditions.

1. The Planned Unit Development shall meet the following requirements as established in the Master Development Plan (Exhibit "C") and as shown below.

<u>BUILDING SETBACKS (MINIMUM)</u>	
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT	
FRONT:	40'
SIDE (S):	10'
SIDE (N):	40'
REAR:	40'
AG - AGRICULTURE	
FRONT:	25'
SIDE:	10' (12.5' FOR TWO STORIES)
REAR:	40'
<u>BUILDING MAXIMUM HEIGHT</u>	
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT	
TWO STORIES (MAX. HEIGHT = 40')	
AG - AGRICULTURE	
40'	
<u>LANDSCAPE BUFFERS (MINIMUM)</u>	
	10' LANDSCAPE BUFFER (4 TREES AND 12 SHRUBS PER 100 LINEAR FEET)
	15' LANDSCAPE BUFFER (12 SHRUBS PER 100 LINEAR FEET) (NO TREES)
	15' LANDSCAPE BUFFER (4 TREES AND 12 SHRUBS PER 100 LINEAR FEET)
	10' LANDSCAPE BUFFER (12 SHRUBS PER 100 LINEAR FEET) (NO TREES)
<u>PARKING</u>	
GENERAL REQUIRED PARKING (1 PER 400 SF GFA)	95 SPACES
TOTAL PROPOSED PARKING	125 SPACES
ADA PARKING REQUIRED	5 SPACES
ADA PARKING PROPOSED	5 SPACES
<u>BIKE PARKING</u>	
BIKE PARKING REQUIRED (1 PER 10 AUTOMOBILE PARKING. SPACES PER SECTION 3.03.03)	10 SPACE
BIKE PARKING PROPOSED	10 SPACE
<u>FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)</u>	
MAX FLOOR AREA RATION (FAR) PROPOSED:	0.24
<u>LOT COVERAGE PERCENTAGE</u>	
MAX LOT COVERAGE PERCENTAGE PROPOSED:	17.9%
<u>OPEN SPACE</u>	
REQUIRED OPEN SPACE:	30%
PROPOSED OPEN SPACE:	50.4%

2. The maximum building height of 40 feet shall not apply to accessory vertical elements, including but not limited to observation decks and similar structures.
3. The +/-3,438 sf area depicted on the Master Development Plan as the employee outdoor common area may be utilized for future expansion of the Hardee County Sheriff's Office, provided such development remains within the designated common area. Future expansion within this area shall be permitted without a PUD amendment, subject to compliance with all applicable development standards as noted on the site plan.

4. The 50 percent common recreational space requirement per Section 2.02.02.15(F)(4) shall not be provided, as such space is not compatible with or necessary for the correctional facility use.
5. If connected to the area in the PUD, the future driveway connection in the Agricultural Zoned area adjacent to Heard Bridge Road shall be limited to emergency access only. In the event the drive aisle is extended to connect the PUD to Heard Bridge Road, such modification shall constitute a PUD amendment and shall require formal review and approval in accordance with the applicable procedures.
6. Landscaping and Buffering. The following conditions are illustrated on the Master Development Plan.
 - a. US 17 Boundary: In consideration of the operational characteristics of the government and correctional facility use and the internal landscaping and drainage pond features, the PUD conditions amend the landscaping requirements along the property boundary fronting U.S. 17, pursuant to Sections 2.02.02.15(I) and 3.07.07.05(A), are to preserve visibility. The boundary fronting U.S. 17 shall provide a 10-foot landscape buffer and 12 shrubs per 100 linear feet.
 - b. Northern Property Boundary: From the western property boundary to Landscape Buffer Transition (prior to the gate for the Sally Port), a 10-foot wide landscape buffer with 4 trees and 12 shrubs per 100 linear feet shall be provided. From the Landscape Transition Buffer (prior to the gate for the Sally Port) to the eastern boundary of the property, a 15-foot wide landscape buffer opaque fence and 12 shrubs per 100 feet and no trees shall be provided. Trees are not provided in this buffer for security reasons related to the jail.
 - c. Eastern PUD Boundary. The eastern PUD boundary shall include a 30-foot-wide landscape buffer centered on the PUD boundary line, extending 15 feet on either side, with an opaque fence and a minimum of 4 trees and 12 shrubs per 100 linear feet.
7. A 12-foot to 20-foot tall (including razor wire related to the jail) opaque fence shall be provided as illustrated on the Master Development Plan. When placed with landscape buffers, the fence shall be located inside all landscape buffers. The design, location, and configuration of the automatic security fence is subject to modification and shall be finalized at the time of site and development.
8. Internal traffic circulation located behind the automatic security fence may be modified and shall be finalized at the time of site and development, subject to review by the Sheriff and the Development Director. Modifications to internal circulation within the secured area shall not be considered a PUD amendment, as such adjustments do not alter external traffic patterns or trip generation.
9. The location of the dumpster, situated behind the automatic security fence, shall be configured in accordance with the final internal circulation layout.

10. Prior to site and development, the Applicant shall coordinate with the City to ensure the proposed Hardee County Sheriff's Office and Hardee County Jail building designs are consistent, to the extent practicable, with the intent and applicable provisions of Section 2.06.00. Alternative façade materials and design standards may be considered recognizing the operational requirements and security limitations associated with the correctional facility use.
11. A formal analysis of traffic impacts will be required prior to development, with a methodology to be agreed upon between the applicant, City, and other applicable review agencies.
12. Lighting will be minimized to the greatest extent possible to limit impacts on surround properties.

Public Facilities and Services Analysis:

Potable Water

The City will provide potable water to the site. Water lines are located adjacent to the property. The owner/developer will be responsible for the cost of any improvements related to the development of the subject property.

Sanitary Sewer

The City will provide sanitary sewer for the site. Sanitary sewer lines are located adjacent to the property. The owner/developer will be responsible for the cost of any improvements related to the development of the subject property.

Transportation/Traffic:

The site is bordered by US 17 on the west and Heard Branch Road on the east. US 17 is a state-maintained road and Heard Branch Road adjacent to the property is county-maintained. As the project moves forward to rezoning and site plan review, the applicant would have to coordinate with the FDOT and the County regarding access permits and impacts to the system.

A traffic study that considers all proposed land uses was submitted as part of the proposed amendment. A preliminary review indicates that there is sufficient capacity on the surrounding road network to accommodate the development.

A formal analysis of traffic impacts will be required prior to development, with a methodology to be agreed upon between the applicant, City, and other applicable review agencies. Such an analysis will provide specific roadway and operational improvements required for the development to be built, as well as the applicant's contribution toward such improvements.

Emergency Services

Emergency services facilities are all in close proximity to the subject property. Police, fire, and Hospital are located within a 5-mile radius.

Schools

The proposed Planned Unit Development does not include any residential development. The proposed Agricultural Zoning would permit residential development. Any proposed residential development would have to demonstrate compliance with school capacity requirements.

Recreation/Open Space:

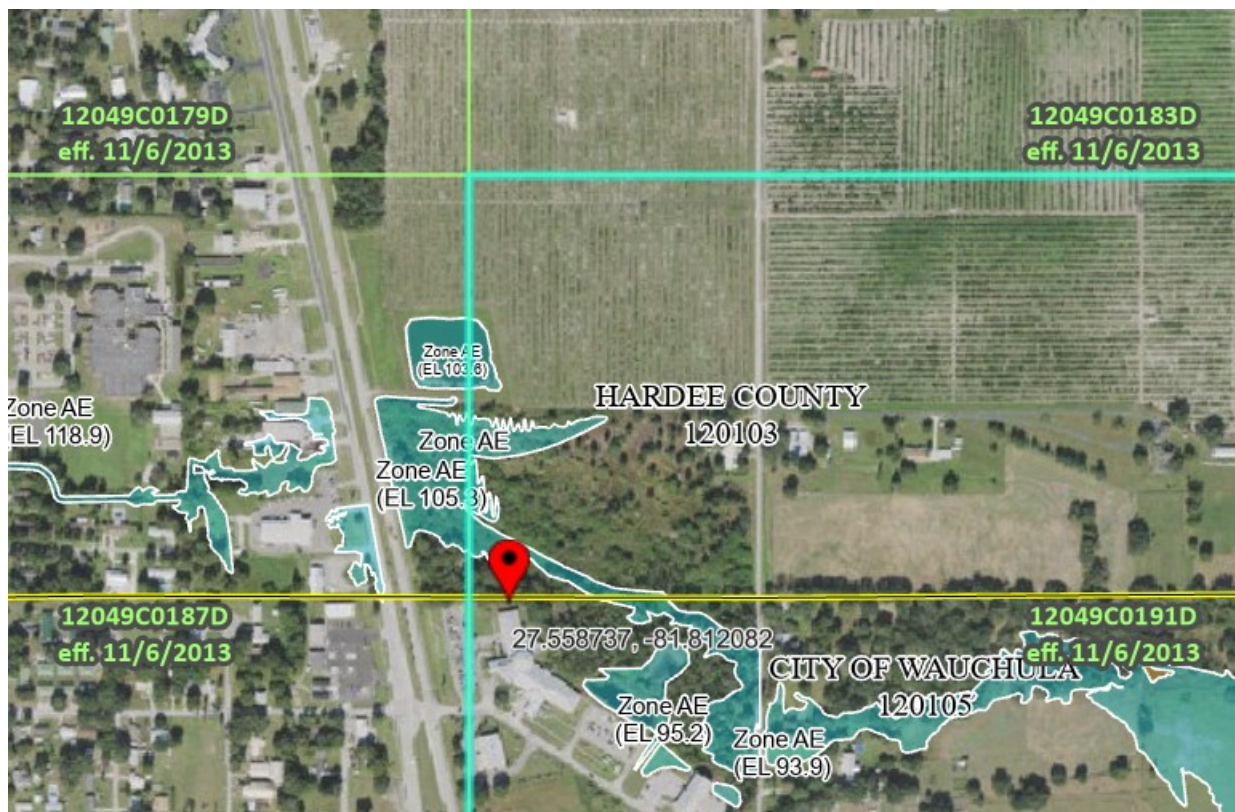
Consistent with the Land Development Code, the proposed Planned Unit Development is required to provide a minimum of 30 percent recreation and open space, 50 percent of which should be common recreational space. The Master Development Plan includes the required open space. The applicant is requesting a condition for the PUD related to the common recreational space due to the use of the property as a jail and sheriff's office.

The 50 percent common recreational space requirement per Section 2.02.02.15(F)(4) shall not be provided, as such space is not compatible with or necessary for the correctional facility use.

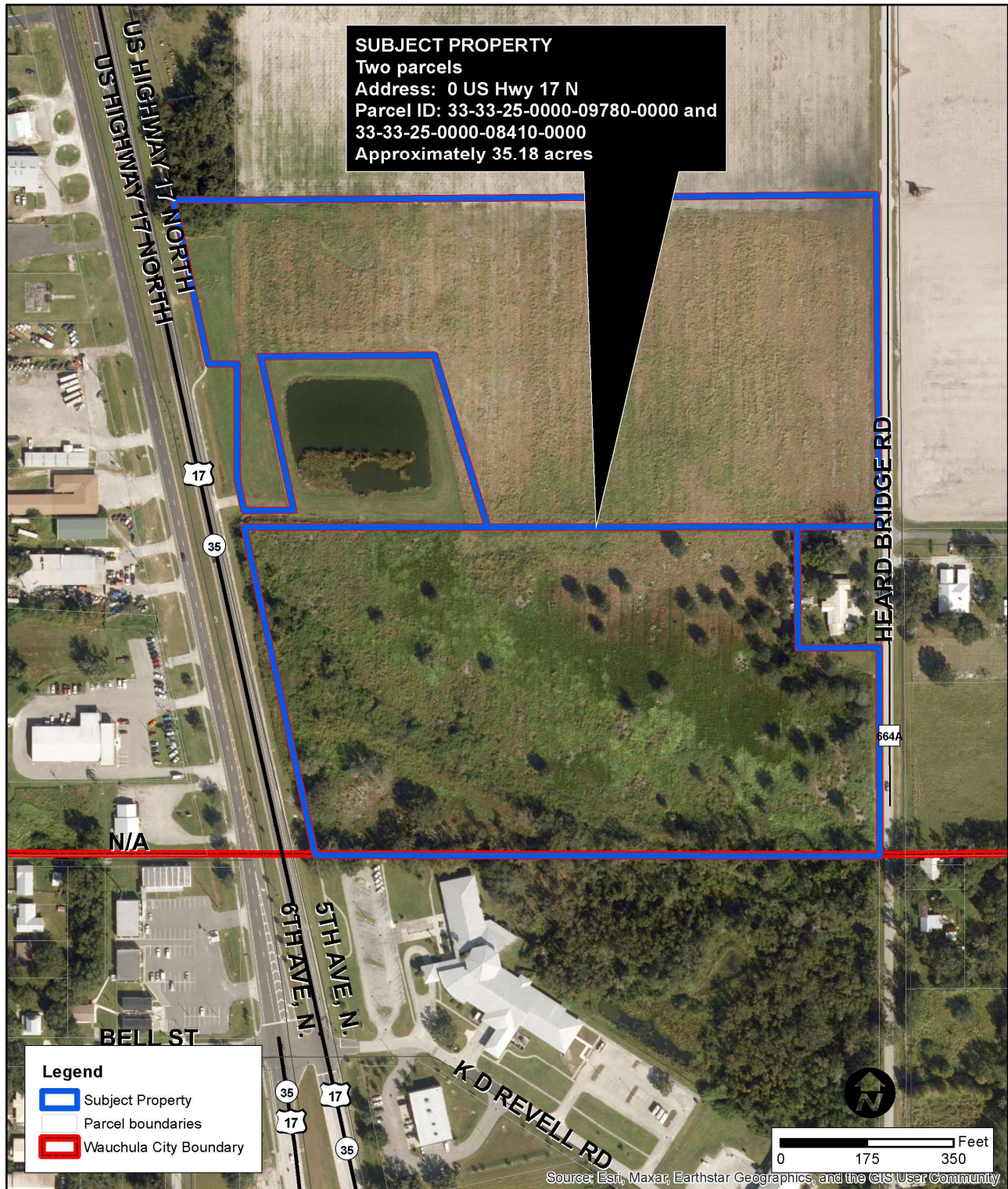
The portion of the property to be zoned Agriculture would have to meet recreation and open spaces at time of development.

Environmental

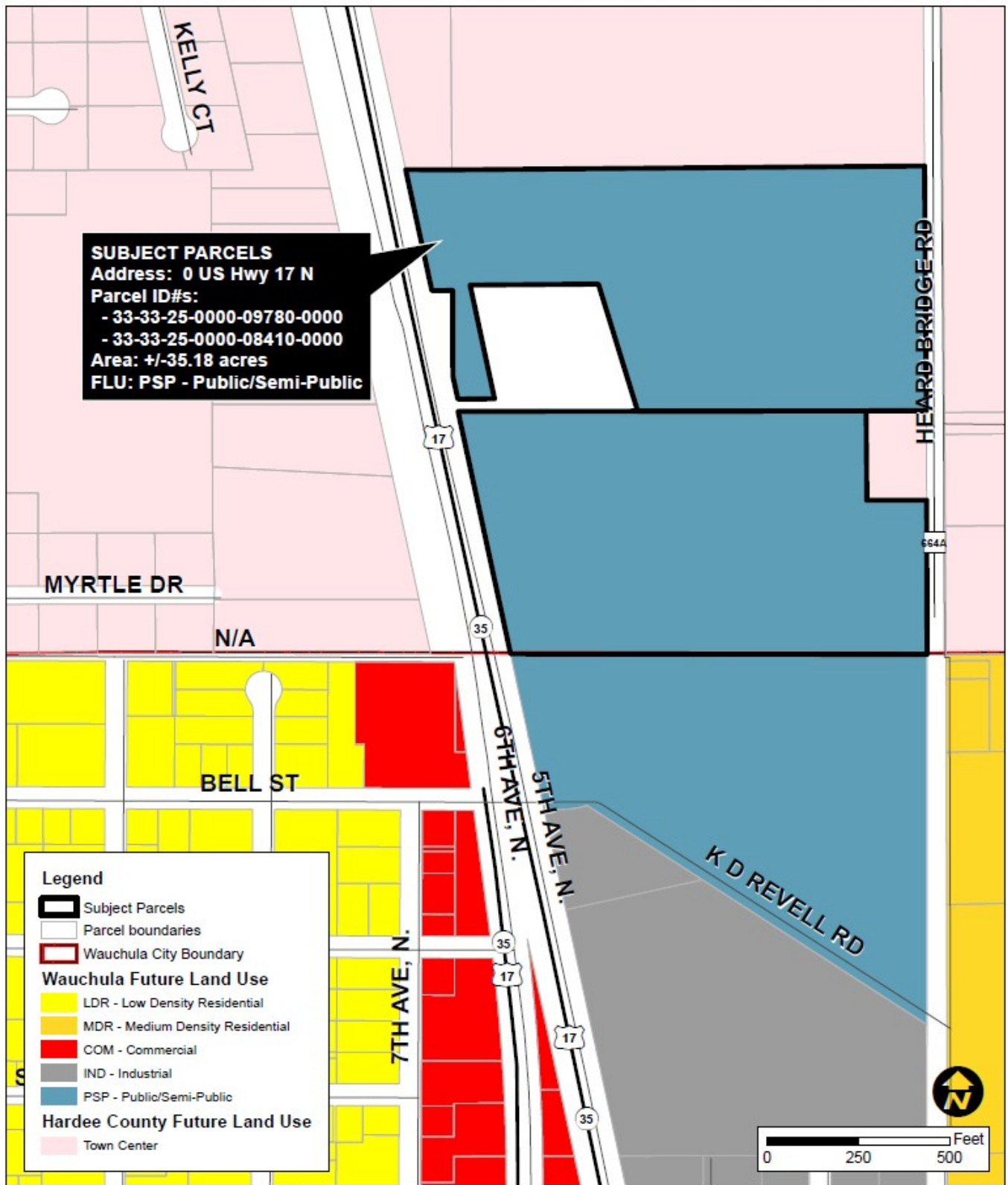
According to the FEMA FIRM maps (see snipit below), portions of the site are located in a FEMA Flood Zone AE. Development of the site will have to meet the requirements of Section 5.01.00 of the Land Development Code.



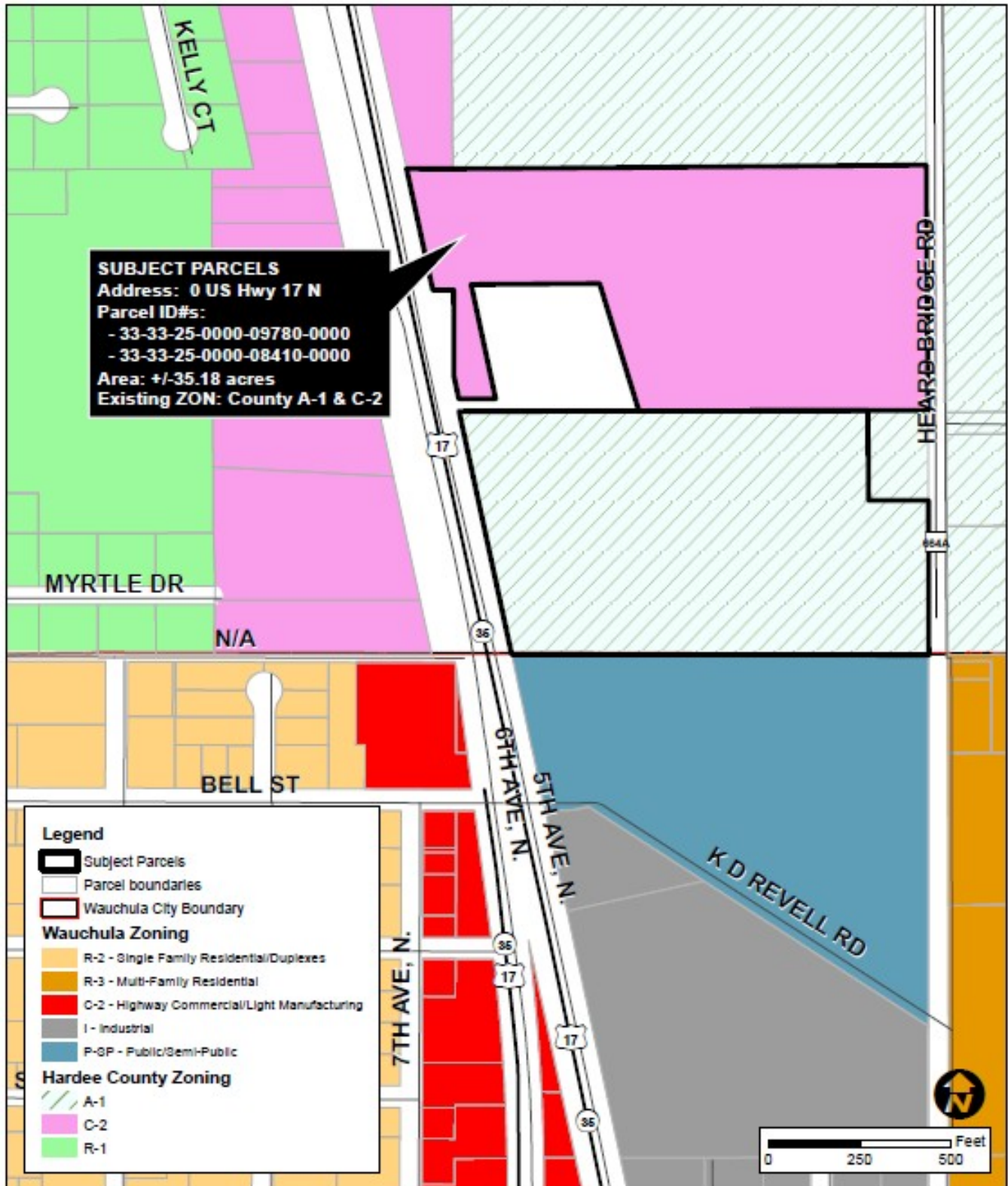
AERIAL MAP EXISTING



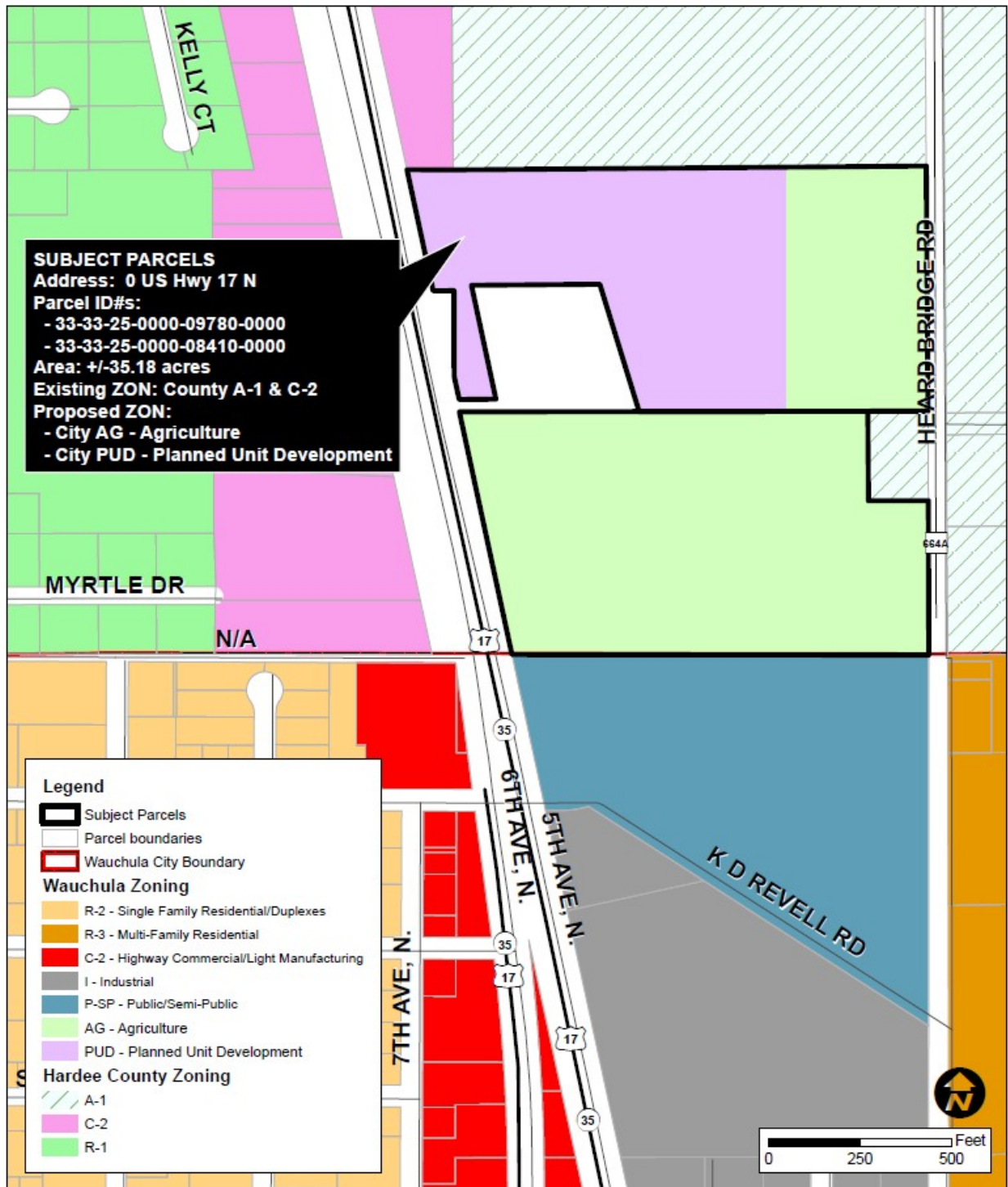
FUTURE LAND USE MAP



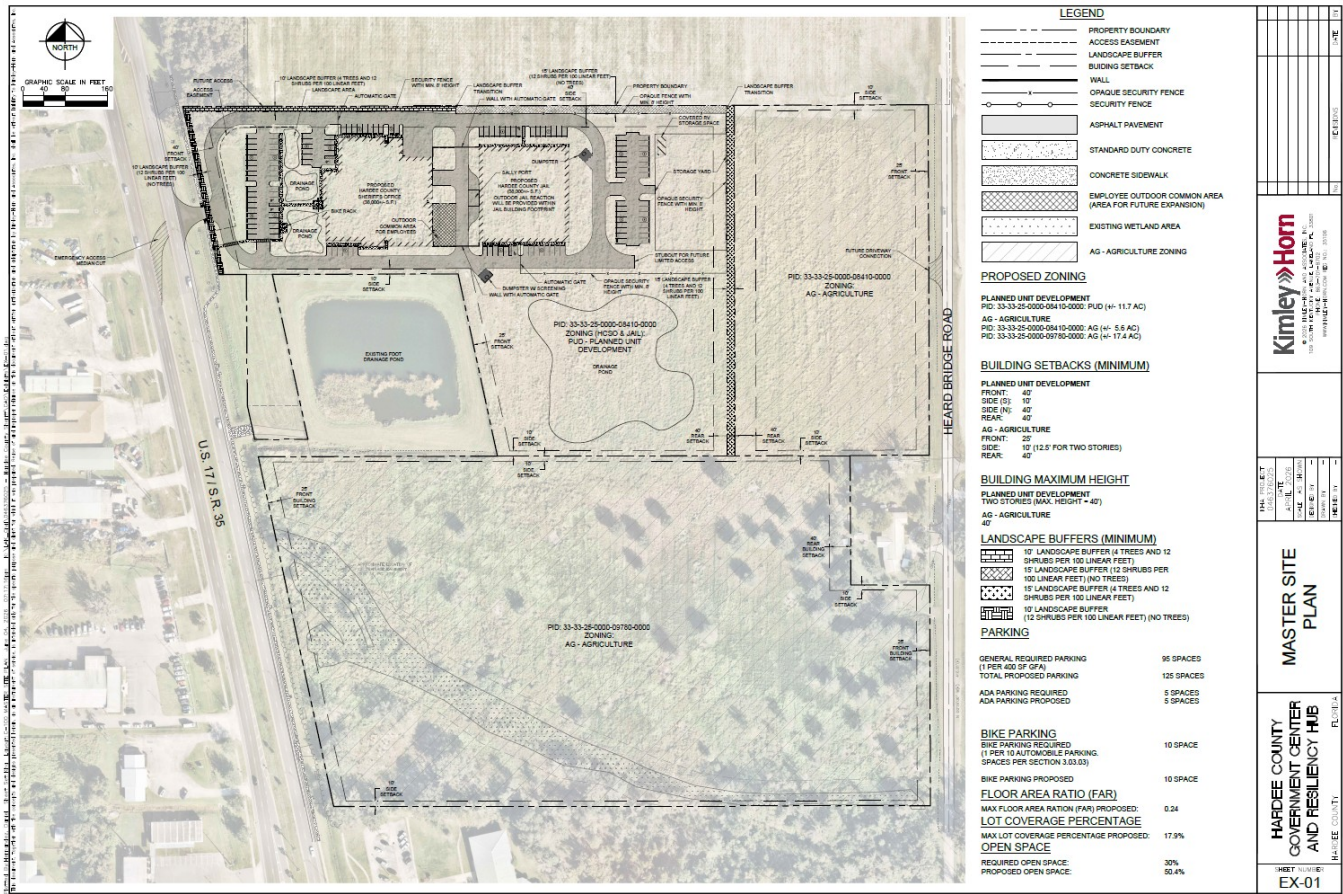
EXISTING ZONING MAP



PROPOSED ZONING MAP



PROPOSED MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN



PROPOSED MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN – ZOOM

