

DESIGN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

The subject property is an 82.81 +/- acre assemblage located north of Laurel Road and west of Twin Laurel Boulevard. A concurrent Preliminary Plat Amendment Application has been submitted to amend the approved Preliminary Plat which was recently amended via Order. No. 24-45PP. Pursuant to Sec. 4.1.D, the applicant is requesting approval of a Design Alternative to the requirements of *Sec. 4.2 and 4.3. Perimeter Buffer Types* for the commercial subdivision.

The subject property is currently zoned Commercial General (CG) and is designated *Mixed Use Corridor* within the Laurel Road Neighborhood of the Comprehensive Plan.

A Design Alternative (No. 23-60DA) was previously approved to establish a Type 1 buffer for the entire perimeter of the property with the exception of areas where a wetland or stormwater pond is located in which case no buffer would be required.

However, as a result of the elimination of the previously identified future multi-family development area and other changes in market conditions, the concurrently proposed Preliminary Plat Amendment includes changes to lot dimensions and stormwater pond locations along the northern boundary. To ensure compatibility with the property to the north (Cassata Lakes) associated with the Preliminary Plat Amendment, the applicant proposes a revision to the previously approved Design Alternative along the northern boundary of the property.

The subject property is uniquely situated with respect to the buffering requirements of Sec. 4.D for various reasons including:

1. Substantial portions of the boundary of the property are adjacent to lands within Sarasota County, some of which are also in the process of developing, including proposed changes of use. However, Sec. 4.2 and 4.3 does not have any specific buffering requirements for buffering adjacent to lands within Sarasota County.
2. The subject property maintains Commercial General (CG) zoning but there are no specific requirements within Sec 4.2 and 4.3 for properties zoned CG, though there are requirements for properties with similar CM zoning.
3. In the lone location where the subdivision abuts single-family residential (Cassata Lakes to the North) there is an existing 6-foot-high fence along the entire perimeter of the property.
4. The property to the west, though zoned OUE in the County, is a Verizon Wireless Utility building which does not necessitate substantial buffering from the proposed commercial subdivision.
5. The properties to the south are separated from the proposed commercial subdivision by 140 feet or more of Laurel Road right-of-way and have a mix of uses within both the City and Sarasota County, thereby making establishment of a code consistent uniform buffer along the Laurel Road right-of way impossible.
6. All established Sec 4.2 Buffer Types, with the exception of Buffer Type 1, require a wall, which is inappropriate for a commercial subdivision located along Laurel Road.

Therefore, to address the unique issues referenced above while providing appropriate buffers to all of

the adjacent properties, the applicant proposes to maintain a Type 1 buffer along the south, east and west boundaries of the subdivision, with the exception of areas where a wetland is located on the perimeter in which case no buffer would be required, consistent with the approved Design Alternative No. 23-60DA.

For the north boundary adjacent to Cassata Lakes the applicant proposes a 25' wide buffer with larger and more mature Canopy and Understory trees installed at the time of planting, twice the caliper required by the code (Canopy Trees 5" Caliper and 18-20' Height, Understory Trees 3" Caliper and 12' Height minimum), in lieu of a redundant 6 foot high wall and shrubs which would not be visible to Cassata Lakes residents beyond the existing 6 foot high fence, while maintaining the standard of no required buffer in areas where a wetland is located on the perimeter.