



**Village Initiated Rezoning – 9000 Williams Road
Zoning Staff Report
for
Planning Zoning and Design Board**

CASE NAME:	9000 Williams Road
CASE TYPE:	Rezoning from Commercial Planned Development (CPD) and Agriculture (AG) to Estero Planned Development (EPD)
CASE NUMBER:	DCI2022-E006
PZDB DATE:	January 10, 2023

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The Village Council has initiated a rezoning of Village-owned property on the north side of Williams Road, east of Via Coconut Point and the railroad right-of-way. The property is approximately 19.3 acres. The current zoning is Commercial Planned Development (CPD) and Agriculture (AG) and the proposed rezoning would be to Estero Planned Development (EPD) with deviations. The proposed zoning is consistent with the anticipated indoor and outdoor sports-related, recreation and entertainment uses envisioned for the property.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the rezoning with conditions.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner

Village of Estero – Steve Sarkozy, Village Manager

Representative

Community Development Director, Mary Gibbs, FAICP

Location

9000 Williams Road

STRAP Numbers

34-46-25-E4-0100C.0150 and 34-46-25-E4-0100C.0160

Size of Property

20± acres

Surrounding Zoning

North Parks and Community Facilities (PCF), Estero Community Park

East AG (Agriculture) Estero Community Park, then AG and PCF, Lee County School District

South Williams Road, then Mixed Use Planned Development, The Brooks, residential community

West AG, Village property, then Railroad right-of-way, then North Point property, Mixed Use Planned Development, vacant

Public Information Meeting

A Public Information Meeting was held at the Planning, Zoning, and Design Board on December 13, 2022.

Existing Zoning

Commercial Planned Development (CPD) and Agriculture (AG). The east 9.6 acres of the property was rezoned to CPD by Lee County in Resolution Z-09-051, primarily for driving range uses.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Category

Village Center

STAFF ANALYSIS

Request

1. Rezone property from Commercial Planned Development and Agriculture to Estero Planned Development.
2. Deviation from LDC Section 3-707.F.2. for maximum building height from 70 feet to 75 feet for possible hotel use.
3. Deviation from LDC Section 5-406.B.4. Buffer Type Requirement, to omit Type C/F perimeter buffer requirements where the proposed EPD abuts the Estero Community Park.
4. Deviations from LDC intersection separation to allow a minimum separation of 200 feet on Via Coconut Point and Williams Road, in lieu of 330 feet for collector roads.

The Village of Estero acquired two parcels of property totaling approximately 19.3 acres on the north side of Williams Road, east of Via Coconut Point and the railroad right-of-way. Council expressed interest in rezoning the land to allow for recreation and sports-based entertainment-type uses. The proposed zoning district, Estero Planned Development, is specific to the Village Center land use category and is therefore a zoning category suited to the proposed uses.

Estero Planned Development zoning is required when property is rezoned or the Planned Development zoning is amended. The proposed uses for the property may include a variety of uses such as outdoor recreation, indoor recreation, possible entertainment-type uses, restaurant/bar or even a hotel.

The intent is to develop the site in a manner that is complementary to the uses in the surrounding area, which includes the Estero Community Park and the School District property. Uses could include pickleball, with possible commercial recreational entertainment. The specific uses are currently being evaluated but have not been determined at this time.

Comprehensive Plan Considerations

The property is located in the Village Center land use category. The Village Center land use category is intended to provide diverse residential and commercial uses at the heart of the Village.

A description of Village Center is below:

FLU-1.2.10 VILLAGE CENTER. The Village Center area is characterized by primarily undeveloped or underdeveloped land lying near US 41 in the heart of the Village of Estero. The Village Center is intended to improve the quality of life for Estero's residents and visitors by providing a variety of neighborhood and housing types and more diverse economic activity in the heart of Estero. The specific goals of the Village Center include creating: socially vital centers supportive of business both big and small, a central location for a hospital with full range of medical services, neighborhoods and streets that are safe and attractive for walking and bicycling, the preservation of community history, and the protection of the environment, particularly along the Estero River. Urban services are in place or readily expandable to support relatively intense commercial and residential development in the Village Center. The Village Center area has some of the larger undeveloped parcels of land left in the Village in close proximity to Village Neighborhoods, Transitional Mixed-Use areas, major attractions of the County and State parks and Estero River, and major corridors of the CSX Railway, US 41 and Corkscrew Road.

- A. Uses: Uses in the Village Center include housing, employment, hospital, shopping, office, hotel, recreation, park and civic uses. Public schools, assisted living, public and quasi-public uses are allowed in the Village Center future land use category.
- B. Development type: Future development in this category is encouraged to be interconnected neighborhoods and mixed-use of low to midrise residential, commercial and mixed use building types in an urban form and including passive and active recreation facilities.

The intention of developing this site with recreational and entertainment-based uses is consistent with the land use category.

The request is also consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Recreation and Open Space Element as well, in particular the goal and policies listed below.

GOAL:

Support Estero's quality of life through the development of a broad array of parks, public open spaces, recreational services, recreational facilities, and unique natural

environments by collaborating with Lee County, the State of Florida, private developers and other local, state, and national organizations.

POLICIES:

REC-1.1.1 Through the master planning process, assess existing park facilities and services and determine if improvements and additions are desired to better serve the residents.

REC-1.1.2 Through the master planning process develop a system to prioritize recreation and open space improvements to meet the needs of the residents.

REC-1.1.3 Through the master planning process, address the need for diversity of recreation and open space opportunities for the Village residents.

REC-1.2.2 Evaluate other areas for potential signature recreation spaces.

Master Concept Plan/Tiered Plan

A tiered Master Concept Plan is a requirement of the Estero Planned Development. There are four tiers of increasing density and height, depending on the mix of uses and public incentive offerings. The proposed project does not contain any residential component, so the density tiers are not specifically applicable; however, this proposal is most closely related to Tier 3, which accommodates mixed use neighborhoods, with potentially higher densities and higher levels of non-residential use. The project will include a mix of commercial and public uses which meets the intent of the zoning district.

The conceptual site plan shows several buildings, along with open space, parking, water management, and landscape buffers.

Access is proposed initially off Williams Road, with future access proposed to Via Coconut Point to the northwest and Bode Boulevard to the east. Traffic impacts are being evaluated by the Village and will be addressed at time of development order when the specific uses will be identified. Interconnections for walkways will be provided to allow cross-access to multiple uses.

Height

The proposed maximum height for the majority of the project is 45 feet. The Estero Planned Development allows height up to 70 feet in Tier 3. A deviation is requested for 75 feet (6 story). Most of the buildings will be two story.

Uses

The proposed uses for the site will include a variety of sports-related uses which can integrate with and complement the surrounding uses of Estero Community Park and Estero High School, creating a potential larger center of sports-related activities.

The Master Concept Plan anticipates indoor and outdoor recreational uses such as pickleball courts, outdoor squares, plaza and a pavilion, and indoor recreation uses with ancillary retail uses, restaurants, potential beer garden and a possible hotel. A hotel, if developed in a later phase, would be a maximum of 175 rooms. The height of the hotel could be 75 feet (6 story). The maximum square footage of commercial recreational uses requested would not exceed 190,000 square feet.

Estero Fire District

Estero Fire District has no comments at this time.

Flood Zone

The majority of the property is in flood zone AH except for the driving range building itself which is not in the flood zone (Zone X).

Utilities

Utilities will be provided by Lee County Utilities for water and sewer. Specifics will be provided at time of development order.

Deviations

Deviation 1. The applicant requests a deviation to exceed the height for Tier 3 which allows a maximum height up to 70 feet, to instead allow up to 75 feet for a possible hotel use, to enable a six-story building. The remaining buildings will be one or two-story, with a maximum height requested of 45 feet. Staff recommends approval of the deviation which is only a 5-foot difference.

Deviation 2. The applicant also requests a deviation to omit Type C/F buffers where the proposed EPD abuts the Estero Community Park. The deviation will allow this property to be better integrated with the existing parklands to the east and north and eliminate a buffer that would preclude efficient pedestrian movement between the properties. Type D right-of-way buffers along roadways are shown on the MCP in full compliance with the LDC.

Deviations 3 and 4. The applicant requests deviations to reduce the required intersection separation on collector roadways from 330 feet to 200 feet, for both Williams Road and Via Coconut Point. This is to provide access from multiple directions, to aid in traffic dispersion and provide interconnections as described by the Village Center land use category.

Written Findings

Under the Land Development Code, as part of the approval process with respect to an amendment in the EPD District, the Village Council shall make a written finding as to whether, and to what degree, the application is consistent with the General Criteria of the Code listed below:

Goals

The specific goals set forth in the comprehensive plan for the Village Center Area include creating socially vital centers supportive of business both big and small, neighborhoods and streets that are safe and attractive for walking and bicycling, the preservation of community history, and the protection of the environment, particularly along the Estero River.

Reasonable Standards

The provisions of this LDC implementing the EPD District are designed as reasonable standards and guidelines to foster consistent and high quality built results and public spaces by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for achieving the goals and objectives set forth in the comprehensive plan relating to the Village Center Area. Such standards designate the requirements for the required pattern books, the locations where different building form standards apply, the relationship of buildings to the public space, and public standards for such elements in the public space as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, automobile travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees, street furniture, and other

aspects of the urban built environment that may be applicable to foster interconnection, social vitality, and walkability in the Village Center Area. Such standards also permit other reasonable means that accomplish the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan in a different or complementary manner by the Village's ability to grant deviations or variances from the standards set forth herein in circumstances where the strict application of the standards will not best achieve the goals underlying such requirements.

Accessibility

The criteria implementing the EPD District for the Village Center Area are designed to make the public space accessible, both socially and physically connected, and walkable. Such guidelines (a) are based on the primacy of the human scale over the automobile, (b) are designed to balance private property interests and property rights with public goals, and (c) enjoy simple, understandable, and physically determined methods to achieve these goals.

Streets

In these criteria the street becomes the key part of the public space. All streets shall in some way become a part of a connected, continuous street network which are designed to encourage the mixing of uses in the Village Center Area. A variety of different types of streets which connect neighborhoods and destinations will serve the public interest by minimizing the traffic load and the need for increased capacity on any one street. Except as specifically set forth in this section, streets shall not end in dead ends, cul-de-sacs, hammerheads, or other forms which do not connect with other streets.

Street Design

Distances between intersections of streets should favor the goals and objectives of enhancing walkability of streets and connectivity. The design of streets shall favor their proper use by pedestrians, where the guiding principle is to calm traffic and to specifically slow traffic at intersections to allow pedestrians to cross streets quickly and safely. Landscaped medians and two-way streets help to achieve these goals and objectives by reducing the apparent width of streets and providing safer crossings. On-street parking, where appropriate and feasible, protects pedestrians from the actual and perceived danger of moving traffic.

Lots and Blocks

The proper application of the principles regarding connectivity of streets will then create a network of local streets which will result in varieties of blocks of land and differing sized lots within such blocks. Rather than specify a particular grid of lots and blocks which may differ within the tiers, variations in the size and dimensions of lots and blocks are permitted so long as the overall objectives for connectivity and walkability are achieved on a performance-based standard. However lots or blocks may be ultimately designed, the sides form a part of the public space and will be defined by the types and varieties of streets that surround them. By way of example, alleys can absorb parking and service loads, and allow the outer faces of blocks to become more intensely pedestrian in nature. These alley-loaded designs are highly desirable in the Village. Within the blocks that are created by the streets. A variety of widths and depths of individual lots will determine the range of building types and densities that will eventually establish the intended urban fabric of the Village Center Area.

The Visual Edge

The sidewalks, setbacks, building façades, and other characteristics of the visual edge of a publicly accessible street are also important features under the standards for the EPD District. The height of the buildings, setbacks, and projections define the enclosure of the street. The maximum width and height of buildings define a building's mass, while the architectural features of the building, especially the interrelationship of the design and the public space will ultimately determine the social vitality of the street. So too are the characteristics of built form and landscape design which are deemed to be mutually dependent.

Architecture

Architectural variety of buildings and unique approaches to design and structure are to be valued under the standards for the EPD District. However, equally important is the fact that adjacent buildings and public spaces that share some of the characteristics of its neighbors will generate a cohesive framework in the Village Center Area.

Quality of Buildings

Buildings are like permanent fixtures in the landscape of the Village. They should be constructed with sufficient material and of such high technical quality to allow for their continuing renovation and adaptive reuse well beyond the expiration of their initial planned use or cost recovery. Building design and construction are encouraged to be cognizant of southwest Florida's unique climate, and ecologically sensitive in their use of materials, particularly recyclables, and with respect to their energy demands.

Staff believes that the proposal, as conditioned, is consistent with the general criteria of the Estero Planned Development zoning district as follows:

- a. Goals: This property is complementary to the surrounding uses and will help create a socially vital center for the community with a mix of recreation, sports-related uses and civic space.
- b. Reasonable Standards: This request will create high quality public and civic spaces.
- c. Accessibility: The public spaces will be accessible, interconnected, and walkable.
- d. Streets: There will be connections to the existing street network and interconnection to adjacent property to provide walkability and traffic dispersion.
- e. Street Design: Pedestrian connections and linkages will be provided to improve connectivity and walkability.
- f. Lots and Blocks: The linear site does not allow for a standard grid lot and block layout but does provide interconnections.
- g. The Visual Edge: The architectural features will be designed to integrate with the public space and streetscape to create a unique destination for the Village.
- h. Architecture: The building design and colors will be consistent with the Village architectural standards.

- i. Quality of Buildings: The buildings will be high quality and sustainable.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Zoning and Land Use Maps
- B. Master Concept Plan
- C. Conditions of Approval
- D. Zoning Resolution Z-98-051 (Golf Driving Range)