



City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

Board of Adjustment
324 East Pine Street
Tarpon Spring, Florida 34689
(727) 938-3711

<http://www.ctsfl.us/agenda.htm>

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AGENDA WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026 6:30 PM - CITY HALL AUDITORIUM

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- a. Election of Chair and Vice-Chairperson

4. QUASI-JUDICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND SWEARING IN OF SPEAKERS

5. APPLICATION(S)

- a. **#25-100 - The Shops at Meres**
Variance to allow the front building setbacks to exceed the maximum setback allowed for the purpose of constructing new multi-tenant retail buildings.
Location: 1098 S. Pinellas Avenue

6. BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS

7. ADJOURNMENT

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the Board of Adjustment with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. You are invited to attend the meeting to express your views or to present facts in regard to the case. Written comments may be addressed to the Planning & Zoning Department, P.O. Box 5004, Tarpon Springs, Florida, 34688-5004, and will become part of the records. All documents submitted with the applications are on file and available for inspection in the Planning & Zoning Department, City Hall. Further information may be obtained from the Planning & Zoning Department, (727) 942-5611 or by email to pmcneese@ctsfl.us. Said hearing may be continued from time-to-time pending adjournment. Any person with a disability requiring reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should call (727) 942-5611 or email a written request to akeen@ctsfl.us.



CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
[FEBRUARY 25, 2026]

STAFF REPORT

Application No. / Project Title: #25-100 (The Shops at Meres)
Staff: Allie Keen, AICP, Principal Planner
Agent / Owner: J.D. Alsabbagh / Juniper Development, LLC
Property Size: +/- 1.83 acres (Total)
+/- 0.63 acres (Uplands)
+/- 1.20 acres (Wetlands/Submerged Land)
Current Zoning: T5a (South Pinellas Ave) Transect Zone
Current Character District: South Gateway
Location / Parcel ID: 1098 S. Pinellas Ave / 13-27-15-89946-007-0010

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

The applicant is requesting variance approval to allow the front setbacks to exceed the maximum setback allowed for the purpose of constructing a new multi-tenant retail building. The applicant is requesting a primary frontage (Pinellas Ave) setback of 88 feet, 78 feet greater than the maximum setback, and a secondary frontage (Meres Blvd) setback of 77 feet, 62 feet greater than the maximum setback.

Additional background information and site history is provided in the Planning Considerations section of this report.

PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the information available at the time this report was prepared, staff recommends *denial* of the variance request.

Although there are site limitations that affect development, it is of staff's opinion that those constraints do not warrant the increased setback. The layout could be redesigned to better meet the intent of the SmartCode and, the layout options are not hindered from meeting that intent because of the property's configuration or site conditions. As redevelopment occurs in this area over time there will be a shift in the development pattern to be more pedestrian-oriented with a higher focus on the overall relationship to the street, rather than the current suburban style site layouts. This property not only serves as a gateway into the downtown, but it also represents the first new development under the SmartCode regulations in the South Gateway character district. Therefore, acknowledging the strict intent of the code as much as possible is essential.

LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE CONSIDERATIONS:

Character District Intent: The South Gateway character district consists of some large acreage redevelopment sites. The intent of the character district development standards is to encourage mixed use development with ground floor retail and residential or offices on upper floors.



Development Standards: Per Table 5B(v) of the SmartCode, the maximum setback for the primary frontage is 10 feet and 15 feet for the secondary frontage in the T5a transect zone.

CURRENT PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Use of Property:	Vacant
Site Features:	Disturbed uplands, mangrove wetlands and submerged land.
Vehicle Access:	This property gains access from Apricot Court. The site plan also shows access from Meres Blvd., however, that additional access will require variance approval from Pinellas County.

SURROUNDING ZONING & LAND USE:

	Zoning:	Character District/Land Use:
North:	T5a (South Pinellas Ave)	South Gateway (Vacant)
South:	RO (Residential Office)	O (Office) (Vacant)
East:	SDa (South Gateway Special District)	South Gateway (Shopping Center)
West:	T4c (Residential High)	South Gateway (Vacant)

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

When considering this application, the following general site conditions, planning concepts, and other facts should be noted:

1. The applicant is proposing to build two multi-tenant retail buildings totaling 14,093 square feet on the subject property.
2. This site is located in the Special Area Plan and is governed by the Transect-Based Infill Code for the Sponge Docks and CRA (SmartCode). The SmartCode’s form-based standards are focused on the overall form (scale and massing) of buildings on a site and their relationship to the street in order to create a more pedestrian-oriented and vibrant area. Typically, buildings are situated closer to the street and parking is located to the rear of the property. To achieve this, the transect zones typically have maximum building setbacks rather than traditional minimum setbacks.
3. A maximum setback requires the building to be located somewhere between the property lines and the maximum setback distance. The T5a transect zone establishes a maximum setback of 10 feet for the primary frontage (Pinellas Ave) and 15 feet for the secondary frontage (Meres Blvd). The applicant is proposing to place the building further back from the intersection and is requesting a setback of 88 feet from the Pinellas Ave frontage and 77 feet from the Meres Blvd frontage. The proposed setbacks allow for parking in the front/sides of the building and a drive-through lane running behind the building.
4. The following history is of relevance to the proposed variance request:
 - a. Two resolutions for development of this property have been approved in the past by the Board of Commissioners (BOC):
 - i. Resolution 2010-33: A site plan (App. #10-20) to allow a multi-tenant commercial establishment was approved on July 6, 2010. The subject property is approximately 1.83 acres in size, with approximately 1.20 acres being comprised of wetlands and submerged lands. To allow for the proposed development, the applicant proposed to mitigate wetland impacts by constructing a wetland mitigation project at the City’s North Anclote River Nature Park, which was completed in February 2015.



However, the approved commercial project was never built. The wetland mitigation is now in its 10th year and has been reported as successful in the latest (August 2025) monitoring report.

- ii. Resolution 2020-08: A site plan (App. #18-128) to allow a medical and general office building was approved on May 12, 2020. This project was also never built.
 - b. In December 2023, the applicant submitted a new site plan application (#23-154) seeking approval of the same site plan that was approved in 2020. This would again allow the construction of a medical/office building. This application was denied by the Board of Commissioners (BOC) on December 9, 2025. The BOC expressed concerns about the proposed method of dry floodproofing, visibility at the intersection, wetland impacts, roadway access configuration, and overall compatibility with the surrounding existing development.
 - c. The applicant amended their proposal back to a multi-tenant commercial establishment similar to the original 2010 proposal, which predated the adoption of the SmartCode. The amended site plan resulted in the building being pushed back significantly from the intersection. In January 2026, the current variance application was submitted to allow the larger front setbacks.
5. The applicant has indicated the property's environmental, utility infrastructure, and access constraints necessitate the increased setback to allow for a functional building area and proper site circulation.
 6. The existing development within the South Gateway character district predates the SmartCode standards and reflects a more suburban style of development. The proposed project will be the first new building within the South Gateway character district developed under the SmartCode regulations.
 7. The proposed project requires a minimum of 42 parking spaces. According to the provided site plan, there are 59 parking spaces proposed. During the review of this application, it was asked if removing some parking along the frontage was possible to allow the building to be set closer to the street. The applicant indicated removing parking along the frontage would significantly reduce the amount necessary to support the retail uses. Further, the applicant stated that removing a portion of the parking along the frontage and/or narrowing the drive aisles would impact site circulation and affect the drive-through operations. To mitigate the impacts of parking, the applicant is proposing outdoor sitting areas along the front of the building and at the southeast corner of the site, pedestrian connections from the public sidewalk to the building, and pervious pavement for a row of parking. A more detailed narrative addressing parking can be found in the "Applicant Response to Comments" attachment (see Planning and Zoning Comment #0003).
 8. If the variance is approved, the applicant will be required to submit for site plan and conditional use (to allow the drive-through) approval. These new applications will be evaluated for compliance with the City's 2045 Comprehensive Plan, which includes specific policies regarding wetland impacts and protection buffers. These policies will likely have a significant impact on the proposed project. The prior site plans were reviewed under the previous Comprehensive Plan which did not include these wetland policies.

REVIEW STANDARDS / PROVISIONAL FINDINGS OF FACT:

Section 215.02(B) of the Land Development Code provides that the Board of Adjustment shall grant no variance unless certain standards are met and proven by competent substantial evidence. These standards, along with planning staff's provisional findings of fact are provided below:

- 1. The need for the requested variance arises out of the physical surroundings, shape, topographical conditions, or other physical or environmental conditions that are unique to the specific property involved, and which do not apply generally to property located in the same zoning district.**



Provisional Findings: The property presents some limitations for development primarily due to the presence of wetlands/submerged lands. However, a majority of the site is comprised of wetlands and there would be impacts regardless of the building's placement on the property. Further, the site is relatively large at 1.83 acres and is not oddly shaped. Therefore, the physical constraints do not warrant the increased setbacks. *Based upon evidence available when this report was prepared, staff is of the opinion that this standard **has not** been met.*

- 2. The conditions or special circumstances peculiar to the property have not been self-created or have resulted from an action by the applicant or with prior knowledge or approval of the applicant.**

Provisional Findings: The SmartCode standards went into effect while the property was under the ownership of the applicant. Further, the previous site plans were submitted after the SmartCode went into effect and complied with the maximum setbacks. Although the most recent site plan application was denied by the BOC, modifications to the proposed site layout could mitigate some of the concerns raised by the Board members without resulting in the large setback. Additionally, the proposed project includes a drive-through use which necessitates parking to be located along the street frontages to avoid circulation conflicts. *Based upon evidence available when this report was prepared, staff is of the opinion that this standard **has not** been met.*

- 3. Literal enforcement of the requirements of the City of Tarpon Springs' Comprehensive Land Development Code would have the effect of denying the applicant of reasonable use of the property, or legally conforming buildings or other structures, and the requested variance is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the property.**

Provisional Findings: Literal enforcement of the SmartCode would necessitate the site being redesigned to reduce the front setbacks. The applicant has provided site plans for the property in the past that comply with the setback standards. The property constraints can be acknowledged while still allowing for a multi-tenant retail building. *Based upon evidence available when this report was prepared, staff is of the opinion that this standard **has not** been met.*

- 4. Granting the variance will not confer any special privilege that is not allowed for other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district; no variance will be granted that extends to the applicant a use of property that is not commonly enjoyed by other persons in similar circumstances.**

Provisional Findings: As redevelopment occurs in this area over time there will be a shift in the development pattern to be more focused on the building form and to promote a pedestrian-oriented environment, rather than the current suburban style site layouts. Approval of the proposed variance could result in granting special privilege because the maximum setbacks apply to any new development or the redevelopment of properties within the same transect and character district. This property represents the first new development under the SmartCode regulations in the South Gateway character district and serves as a gateway into the downtown. Although there are some constraints on the site, the layout and proposed inclusion of a drive-through use could be modified to meet the standards and overall goals of the SmartCode, as seen on previous site plan submittals. *Based upon evidence available when this report was prepared, staff is of the opinion that this standard **has not** been met.*

- 5. Granting the variance will not substantially diminish property values in the surrounding area, substantially interfere with, or injure the rights of others whose property would be affected by approval of the variance, alter the essential character of the neighborhood, or create a nuisance.**



Provisional Findings: Approval of the variance is not expected to substantially diminish property values of the surrounding area, which is comprised of primarily retail, restaurant, personal service uses and undeveloped properties. Although the current standards are aimed at achieving a more pedestrian-oriented environment as redevelopment occurs, the existing development pattern is consistent with the proposed plans. *Based upon evidence available when this report was prepared, staff is of the opinion that this standard has been met.*

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE:

Notices were sent to property owners within 500 feet of the subject property; a legal notice was published in the Tampa Bay Times; and the property was posted. *Staff has not received any responses to these notices.*

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Staff Presentation
2. Variance Addendum
3. Site Plan
4. Applicant Response to Comments
5. Process Advisory Letter to Applicant & Applicant Response

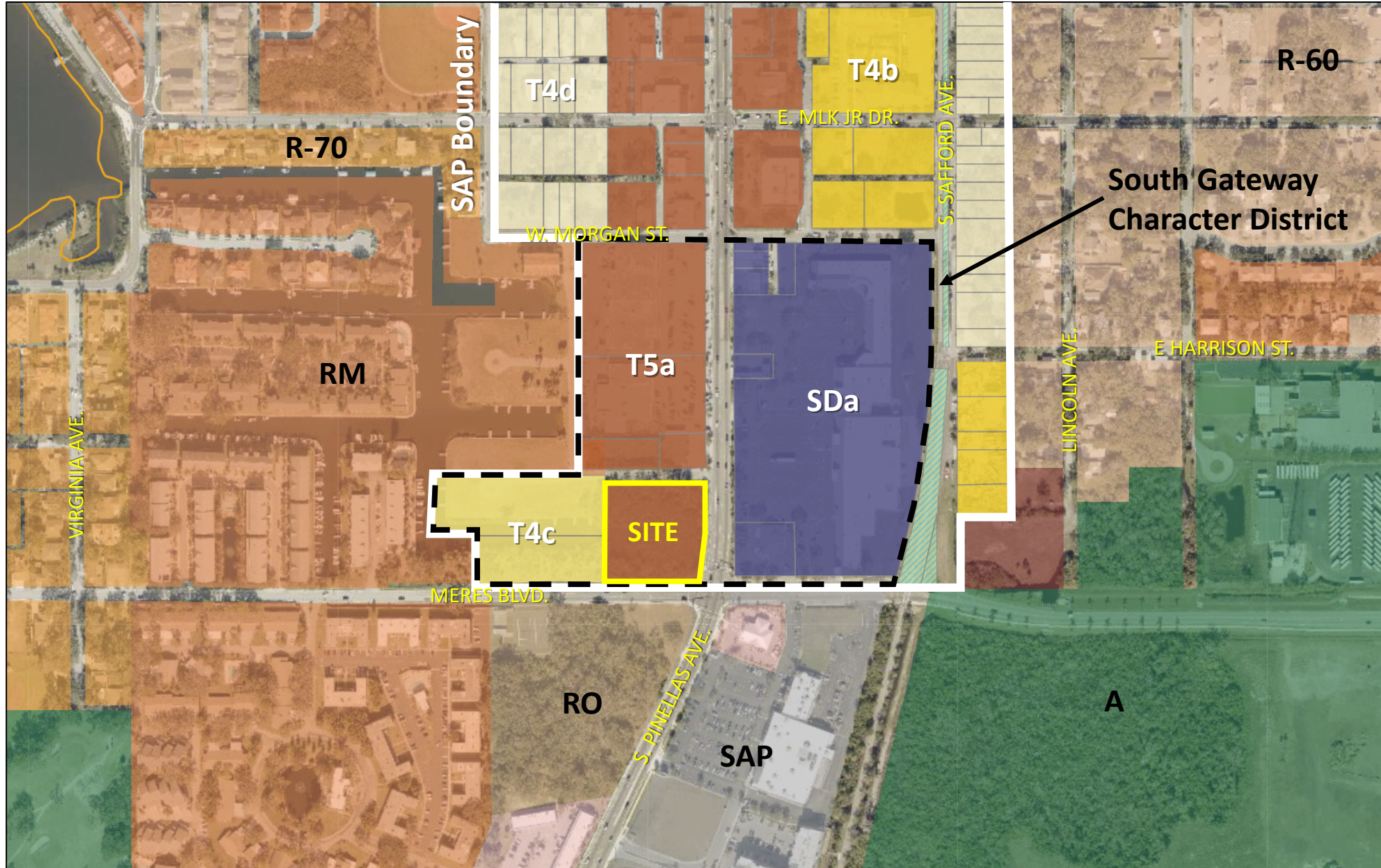
THE SHOPS AT MERES

#25-100

Board of Adjustment – February 25, 2026



LOCATION & CONTEXT



REQUEST

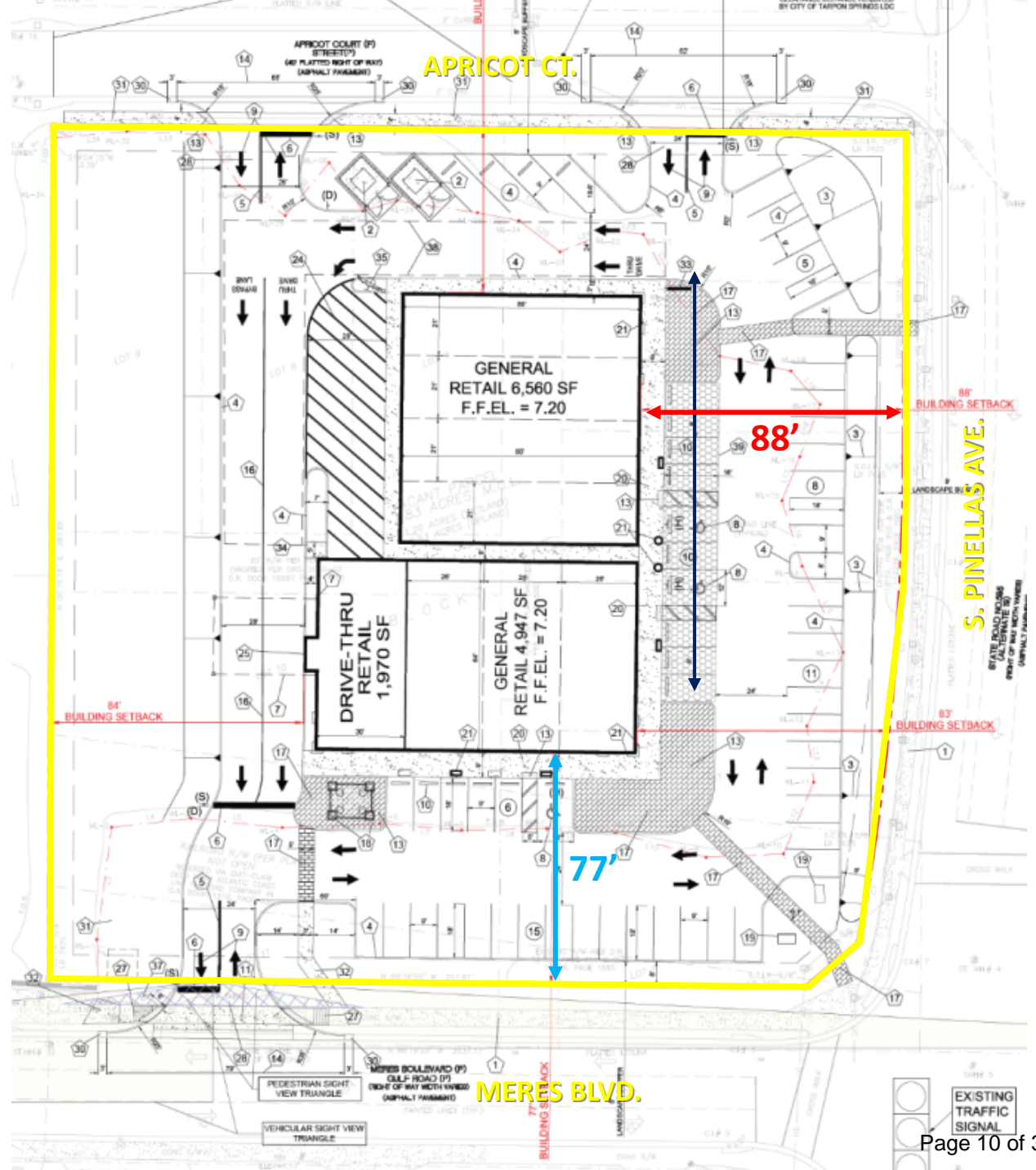
- **#25-100 – Frontage Setbacks**
 - Primary Frontage (Pinellas Ave)
 - Allowed = 10 ft. Maximum
 - Proposed = 88 ft.
 - Secondary Frontage (Meres Blvd)
 - Allowed = 15 ft. Maximum
 - Proposed = 77 ft.
- **Agent/Owner:** J.D. Alsabbagh/ Juniper Development, LLC
- *Variance request to allow front setbacks that exceed the maximum setback for the purpose of constructing a new multi-tenant commercial building.*





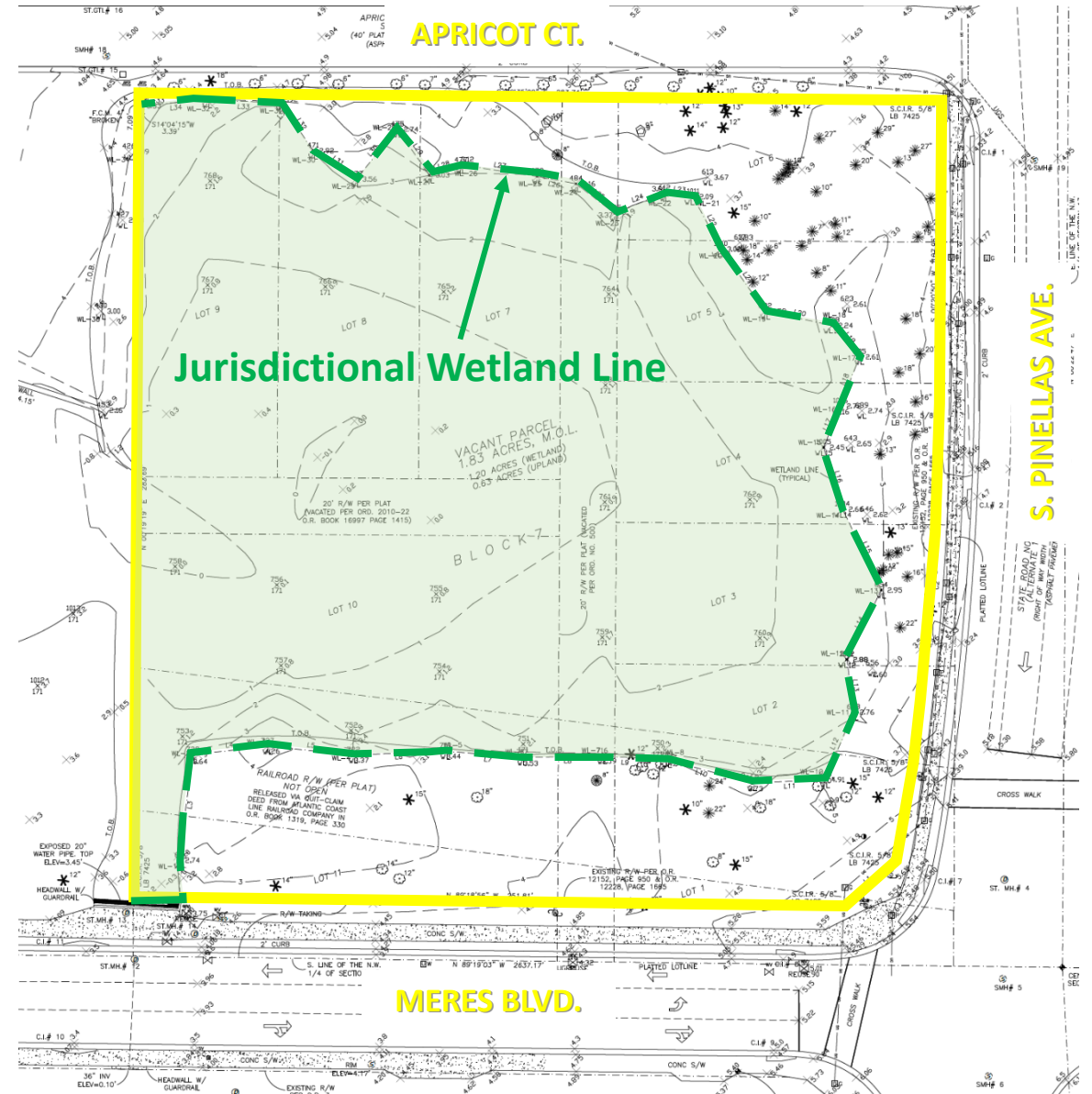
SITE PLAN

- **T5a Transect Frontage Setbacks:**
 - Primary Frontage (Pinellas Ave)
 - Maximum Allowed = 10 ft.
 - Proposed = **88 ft.**
 - Secondary Frontage (Meres Blvd)
 - Maximum Allowed = 15 ft
 - Proposed = **77 ft**



SITE CONDITIONS

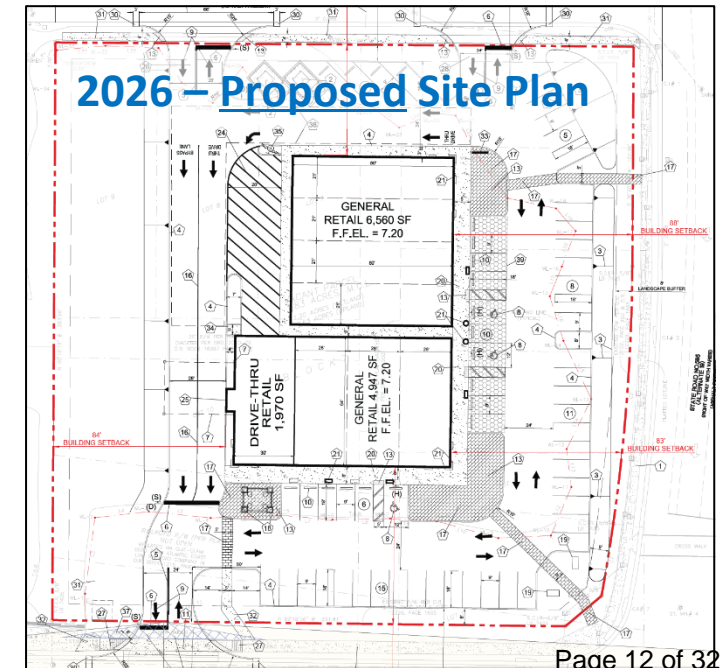
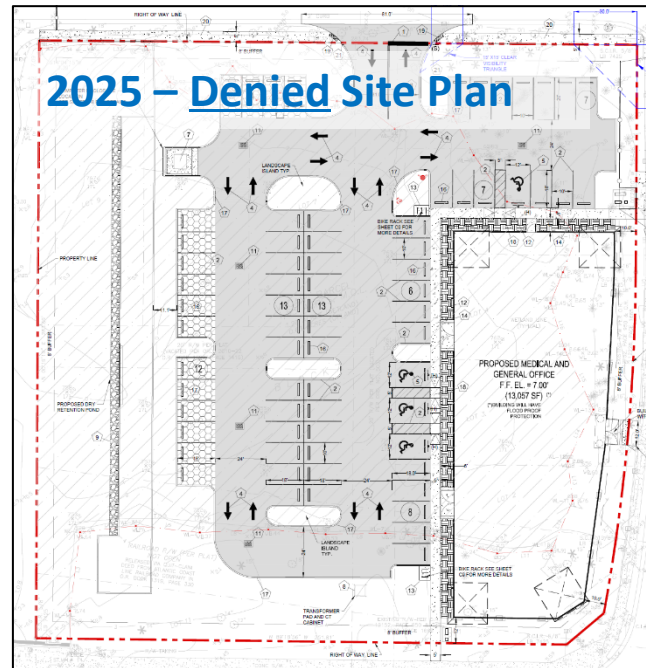
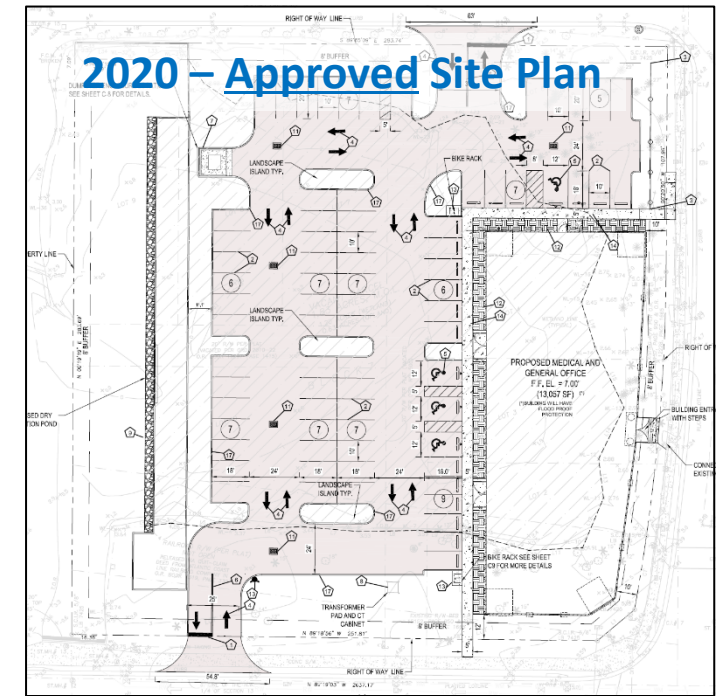
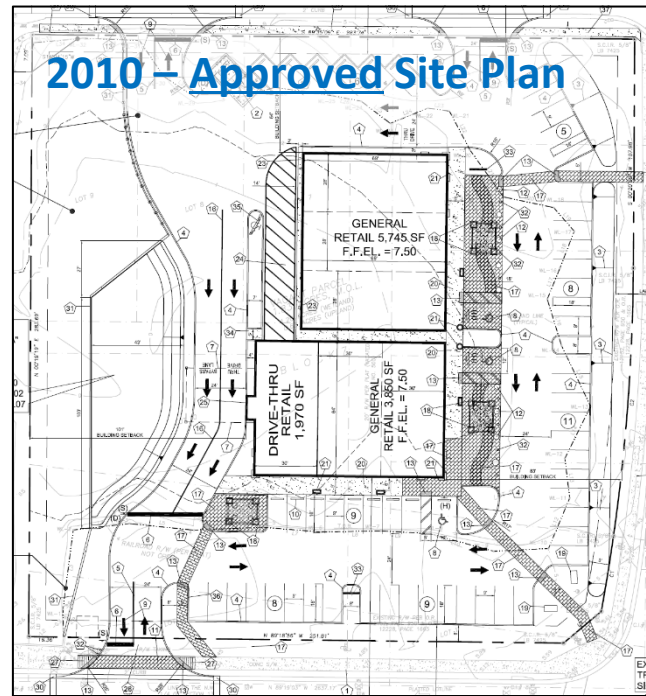
- **Total Site Area = +/- 1.83 acres**
 - Uplands = +/- 0.63 acres
 - Wetlands = +/- 1.20 acres
- **Access**
 - Pinellas Ave. – FDOT Road (No Access)
 - Meres Blvd. – County Road (Requires Variance Approval)
 - Apricot Ct. – City Road
- **Utility Infrastructure**
 - Existing location of utility lines/poles near intersection will need to be surveyed to ensure no impacts from proposed development.





SITE HISTORY

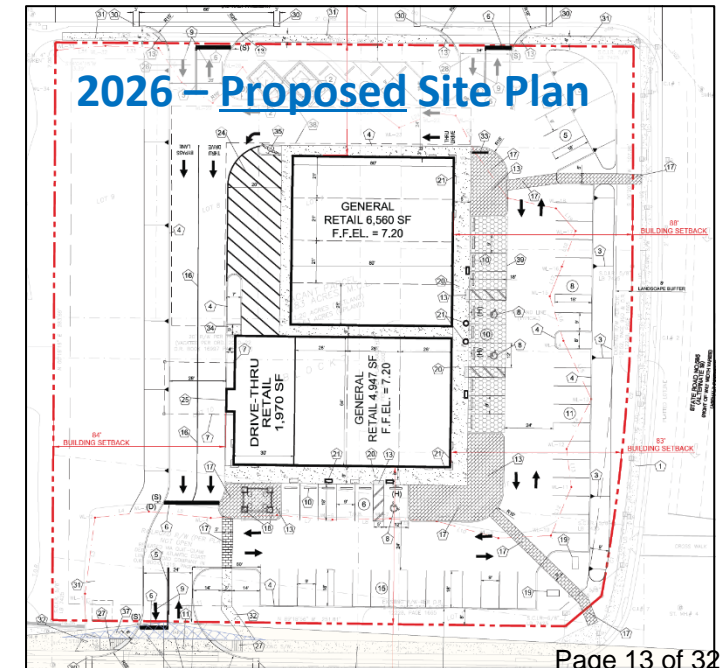
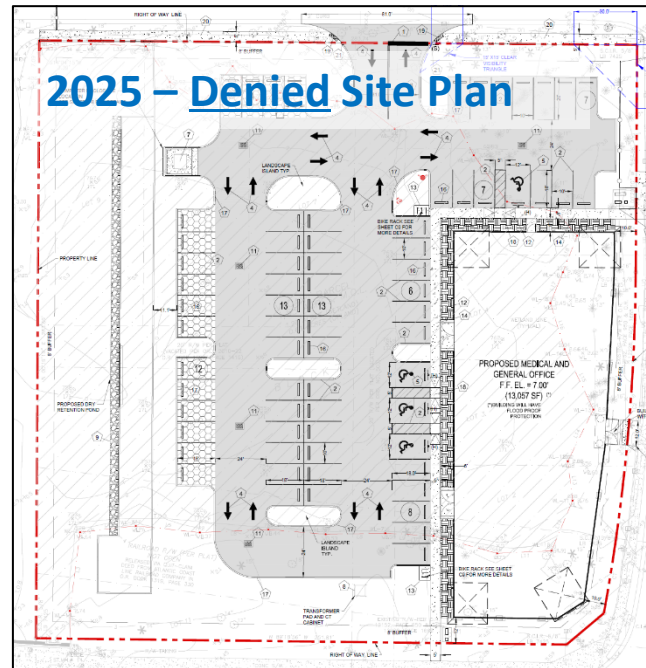
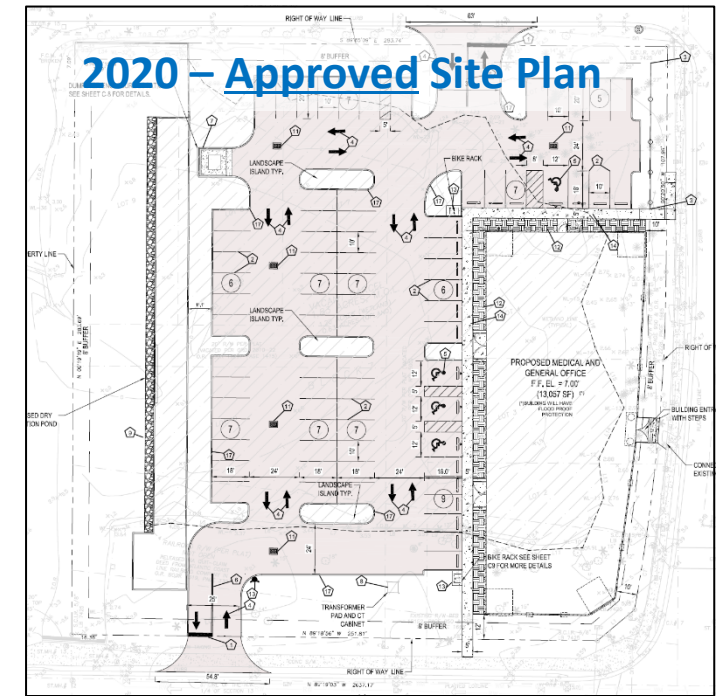
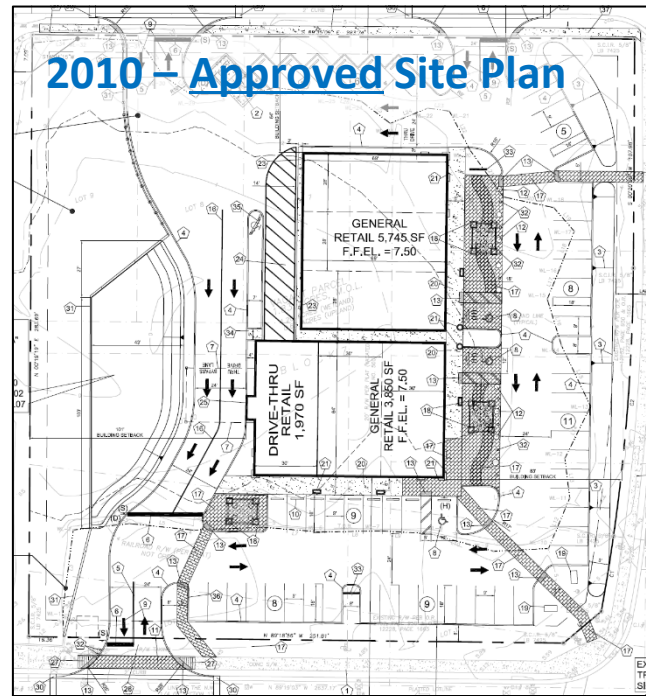
- **July 2010** – BOC approved site plan to construct a multi-tenant commercial establishment.
 - Constructed a wetland mitigation project at North Anclote River Nature Park to mitigate wetland impacts from the development.
 - Mitigation project completed in Feb. 2015, but commercial project was never built.
- **2011** – Special Area Plan & SmartCode adopted.
- **May 2020** – BOC approved a site plan for a medical/office building but was never built.





SITE HISTORY

- **Dec. 2023-2025** – A site plan was submitted (identical to the 2020 plan) and was denied by the BOC in December 2025.
 - Concerns about method of dry floodproofing, visibility at the intersection, wetland impacts, roadway access configuration, and overall compatibility with surrounding existing development.
- **Jan. 2026** – Applicant amended proposal back to a multi-tenant commercial establishment similar to original 2010 proposal, which predated SmartCode adoption. Variance application submitted to allow the larger front setbacks.



WETLAND MITIGATION PROJECT



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- **South Gateway Character District**
 - Existing development predates SmartCode & reflects suburban style of development.
 - As redevelopment occurs, the area will shift to be more focused on the building form, it's relationship to the street, and be more pedestrian-oriented.
- **SmartCode Form-Based Standards**
 - Buildings situated closer to the street with parking in the rear.
 - Maximum setbacks rather than traditional minimums help to achieve this development pattern.
 - Proposed project represents the first new building in South Gateway developed under these regulations.



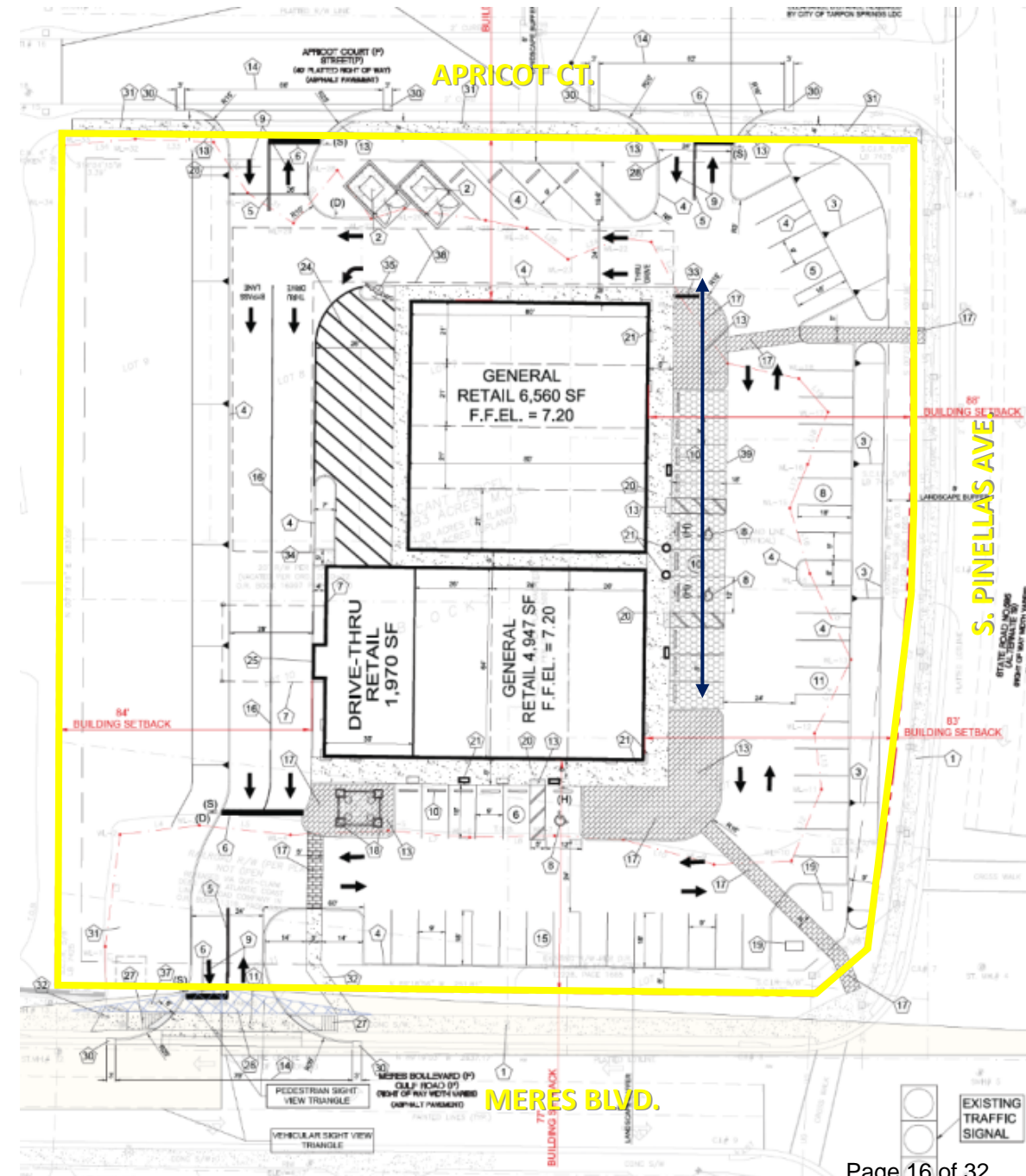
Rendering of South Gateway Character District from Special Area Plan



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Parking

- Requires = 42 spaces
- Proposed = 59 spaces
- According to applicant the removal/relocation of excess parking would impact onsite circulation, create potential conflicts with the drive-through lane, and could result in an insufficient amount of parking needed to support retail uses.
- Proposed outdoor sitting areas in front of buildings and at SE corner of site, pedestrian connections to public sidewalks, and pervious pavement for a row of parking to mitigate the impacts of parking along frontage.



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Process

- If variance is approved, applicant will need to seek site plan and conditional use approval (to allow the drive-through).
- New applications will be evaluated for compliance with the current 2045 Comprehensive Plan, which includes specific policies regarding wetland impacts and protection buffers, potentially impacting the proposed project.
- Previous site plans were reviewed under previous Comprehensive Plan which did not include these wetland policies.

REVIEW STANDARDS - VARIANCE

- 1) The need for the requested variance arises out of the physical surroundings, shape, topographical conditions, or other physical or environmental conditions that are unique to the specific property involved, and which do not apply generally to property located in the same zoning district.
- 2) The conditions or special circumstances peculiar to the property have not been self-created or have resulted from an action by the applicant or with prior knowledge or approval of the applicant.
- 3) Literal enforcement of the requirements of the City of Tarpon Springs' Comprehensive Land Development Code would have the effect of denying the applicant or reasonable use of the property, or legally conforming buildings or other structures, and the requested variance is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the property.
- 4) Granting the variance will not confer any special privilege that is not allowed for other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district; no variance will be granted that extends to the applicant a use of a property that is not commonly enjoyed by other persons in similar circumstances.
- 5) Granting the variance will not substantially diminish property values in the surrounding area, substantially interfere with, or injure the rights of others whose property would be affected by approval of the variance, alter the essential character of the neighborhood, or create a nuisance.

Variance Application Form



CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS
PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
 324 E. Pine Street, Tarpon Springs, FL 34689
 (727) 942-5611 / planning@ctsfl.us

INSTRUCTIONS

Please complete this form fully and **DOWNLOAD (print button)** to submit with the associated development application. Applications must be submitted **DIGITALLY** through the [Planning and Zoning goPost portal](#).

Project Name*	Project Location*
SHOPS AT MERES	1098 SOUTH PINELLAS AVENUE, TARPON SPRINGS, FL 33689

Variance Requested*	Summary of Request*
APPENDIX B	WE ARE APPLYING FOR REQUIRED BUILDING SETBACK
Provide the Land Development Code (LDC) Section(s) reference that the variance is being requested from.	Please describe the project and how it varies from the LDC. <i>(e.g., A side setback variance reduction from the required 10 feet to 7 feet for the purpose of constructing an addition onto an existing home)</i>

Board of Adjustment (BOA) Review Standards

Per LDC [Section 215.02\(B\)](#), the Board of Adjustment may only grant a variance when the following standards are determined to be met and proven by competent substantial evidence.

Please review each standard (numbered 1 through 5) on the following pages and provide a justification on how your request meets each standard.

Standard:

The need for the requested variance arises out of the physical surroundings, shape, topographical conditions, or other physical or environmental conditions that are unique to the specific property involved, and which do not apply generally to property located in the same zoning district. *(What are the physical hardships on the property that prevent you from meeting the requirements of the code?)*

- a. Preservation of a protected or native tree(s), but not an invasive(s), as defined in Sections [133](#) and [134](#) of the LDC, may be considered as a relevant environmental condition. *(If there are protected trees or native trees on the property, they could be considered a physical hardship if their preservation results in the need for the variance.)*
- b. Location of the property in the Historic District may be considered as a unique physical condition. However, any variance applied for within the Historic District shall be found to be compatible with the character of the properties within the Historic District before any variance may be granted. *(If the need for the variance is in response to the property being in the Historic District, it could be considered a physical hardship.)*

Justification:*

These physical constraints are further compounded by the site's limited frontage and access points, existing utility and drainage infrastructure, and required environmental protection buffers, all of which reduce the developable area of the property. Unlike other properties within the same zoning district that are more regularly shaped or have fewer environmental limitations, the subject site cannot reasonably accommodate the code-required standards without eliminating functional building area or circulation necessary for safe access and operation.

As a result, strict compliance with the zoning requirements would impose a practical difficulty on the property by preventing reasonable development in a manner consistent with surrounding uses. The requested variance is therefore necessary to relieve this hardship while still preserving the intent of the code and minimizing impacts to adjacent properties.

Standard:

The conditions or special circumstances peculiar to the property have not been self-created or have resulted from an action by the applicant or with prior knowledge or approval of the applicant. *(Is the variance in response to an action or situation in which you created? e.g. You installed a pool at the minimum setbacks, which prevents you from constructing a screen enclosure.)*

Justification:*

The conditions and special circumstances giving rise to the requested variance are inherent to the property and were not created by any action of the applicant. The site constraints result from the property's original configuration, existing environmental features, and long-standing regulatory requirements that predate the applicant's involvement with the property.

The applicant has not taken any action, nor made any improvements or alterations, that created or intensified the need for the variance. Instead, the variance request is solely in response to pre-existing physical and regulatory conditions affecting the property. Therefore, the hardship is not self-imposed and did not result from any action taken with prior knowledge or approval of the applicant.

Standard:

Literal enforcement of the requirements of the Code will have the effect of denying the applicant reasonable use of the property, or legally conforming buildings or structures, and the requested variance is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the property. *(Does the variance result in reasonable use of the property and its structures?)*

Justification:*

Literal enforcement of the Code requirements would unreasonably restrict the use of the property by preventing development that is otherwise permitted and consistent with the zoning district. Due to the site's physical and environmental constraints, strict compliance would eliminate the ability to develop a functional and legally conforming building and site layout, effectively denying the applicant reasonable use of the property.

The requested variance represents the minimum relief necessary to allow reasonable use of the site. The variance has been carefully limited in scope to address only the specific constraint created by the site conditions and does not exceed what is required to permit a viable and code-compliant development. No additional deviations from the Code are requested beyond those necessary to accommodate these constraints.

Approval of the variance will allow the property to be developed in a reasonable manner consistent with surrounding uses, while maintaining the intent of the Code and ensuring that the site functions safely and effectively.

Standard:

Granting the variance will not confer any special privilege that is not allowed for other lands, buildings, or structures in the same zoning district; no variance will be granted that extends to the applicant a use of property that is not commonly enjoyed by other persons in similar circumstances. *(Would approval of the variance request result in special privilege that is not commonly enjoyed by other properties within the same district?)*

Justification:*

Approval of the requested building setback variance will not confer any special privilege that is not available to other properties within the same zoning district. The variance does not permit a use that is otherwise prohibited, nor does it increase density or intensity beyond what is allowed by the Code. It solely provides limited relief from a dimensional setback requirement due to unique site constraints.

Similar setback adjustments exist on nearby properties that are constrained by lot configuration, access, or environmental conditions. Granting the requested setback variance will allow the subject property to be developed in a manner comparable to other similarly situated properties, rather than placing it at a disadvantage.

The requested variance is limited in scope and is necessary only to accommodate the physical constraints of the site, ensuring equitable application of the Code while maintaining compatibility with surrounding development and preserving the overall character of the zoning district.

Standard:

Granting the variance will not substantially diminish property values in the surrounding area, substantially interfere with, or injure the rights of others whose property would be affected by the approval of the variance, alter the essential character of the neighborhood, or create a nuisance. *(Would approval of this request have an adverse effect on surrounding properties?)*

Justification:*

Approval of the requested building setback variance will not substantially diminish property values in the surrounding area, nor will it interfere with or injure the rights of adjacent property owners. The proposed setback reduction will not result in excessive building mass, height, or intensity, and the development will remain consistent with the scale and character of surrounding properties.

The variance will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood, as the proposed building placement is compatible with existing development patterns in the area, including buildings with similar setbacks. Adequate buffering, landscaping, and site design measures will be provided to minimize visual impacts and maintain compatibility with adjacent uses.

Additionally, the variance will not create a nuisance related to noise, traffic, light, or safety. The development will continue to comply with all other applicable Code requirements, ensuring that approval of the variance does not result in adverse effects on surrounding properties or the public welfare.

Electronic Signature Agreement*

By checking the "**I Agree**" box below, you agree and acknowledge that **1)** this form will not be signed in the sense of a traditional paper document, **2)** by signing in this alternate manner, you authorize your signature on this form to be valid and binding to the same force and effect as a handwritten signature, and **3)** the information included in and with this form is completely true and correct to the best of your knowledge.

I Agree

Electronic Signature*

Date*

JD.ALSABBAGH

12/19/2025

Steps to Download Form

1. Click the '**Print Only**' button below.
2. Your form will open in a new tab.
3. **Right click** on your mouse and **select 'Print'**.
4. Choose to print to '**PDF**'.
5. Save the form in your desired location.

Need help? Give the Planning Department a call at [727-942-5611](tel:727-942-5611).

Sycamore Engineering, Inc.

8370 W. Hillsborough Avenue, Suite 205
Tampa, Florida 33615
Tell: (813) 889-0700
Fax: (813) 889-0788
E-mail: greatteam@sycamoreeng.com

January 24, 2026

City of Tarpon Springs
324 East Pine Street
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

RE: PNZ – The Shoppes at Meres - City Project 25.100
Parcel ID # 13-27-15-89946-007-0010
NW Corner S. Pinellas Ave and Meres Blvd
SEI Project # J0308

Dear Sir/Madam,

We have received your comments letter. The following are your comments followed by our response:

Fire

[Sheet 1 | Comment 00001 | B0504 C-5 SDP_SEALED_SIGNED.pdf]

A fire extinguisher will be required to be placed on site, per Tarpon Springs Municode, 135.01.
K. Woodrich, Fire Marshal 12/29/25

CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA CODE OF ORDINANCES

135.01 Fire Hydrants

For one and two family residences hydrants shall be installed every 500 feet beginning at the subdivision entrance.

Hydrants in all other situations shall be installed every 300 feet beginning at the project entrance.

Response:

Acknowledge to design based on Fire Code and note has been added on site plan under General Notes.

Planning and Zoning

[Comment 00002]

Allie Keen

Please complete the General Planning Application and upload into GoPost.

Response:

Please see enclosed application.

[Sheet 1 | Comment 00003 | B0504 C-5 SDP_SEALED_SIGNED.pdf]

Allie Keen

Can you provide an explanation as to why it is necessary to have a full two rows of parking (with the driveway aisle) fronting both Meres Blvd. and Pinellas Ave.? Is there a possibility to reduce this down to only 1 row of parking and narrower drive lane?

Although the pedestrian connections are provided from the sidewalks to the building, the large setbacks take away from the pedestrian experience and the overall intent of the SmartCode.

UPDATE AFTER TRC MEETING: *Please provide a written narrative of the explanation provided at the TRC meeting that can be provided to the Board member.*

Response:

The reason the site is designed with two rows of parking and a drive aisle along both Meres Blvd & Pinellas Avenue is because that layout is what allows the site to function properly. The property direct across the street- the Flagship Bank and dinner (northeast corner of Pinellas Ave and Meres Blvd) uses the same parking layout, so this pattern already fits the character of the area and we were directed to design the current layout during the last City commissioners meeting.

For retail uses, parking demand works best when parking is grouped together and clearly visible and accessible from the street. That's how customers expect to use the site. We are required to provide 41 parking spaces based on the smart code for the proposed use and we are providing 59 spaces. If frontage parking rows is removed, we lose $15+19 = 34$ spaces which is major reduction and would leave the site without enough parking to support retail use. As you can see in updated plans that we did remove some parking spaces and proposed outside sitting area for the users/customers and also added one row of parking to be with pervious pavement.

On top of that, the site has a drive thru and by-pass lane, required fire and emergency access and carefully engineered internal circulation based on City, County and FDOT standards. If we remove frontage parking rows or narrow the drive aisle, the site no longer works as circulation breaks down, emergency access is compromised and the drive thru operation is disrupted.

We understand the intent of the Smart Code, and this plan balances that intent with the real world operational requirements of the site. There is no excess parking but it is minimum layout that allows the project to meet its parking requirement, operate safely and function as a viable retail development.

[Sheet 1 | Comment 00004 | B0504 C-5 SDP_SEALED_SIGNED.pdf]

Allie Keen

Please update the existing zoning information from GB (General Business) to T5a (S. Pinellas Ave Corridor) in the site data table.

Response:

Please see enclosed updated site plan.

[Sheet 1 | Comment 00005 | B0504 C-SDP_SEALED_SIGNED.pdf]

Allie Keen

Please update the site data table to include both the required and proposed setbacks to provide clarity to the Board members.

Response:

Please see enclosed updated site plan.

[Sheet 1 | Comment 00006 | B0504 C-5 SDP_SEALED_SIGNED.pdf]

Allie Keen

ADVISORY COMMENT – Please note, a drive-through facility requires conditional use approval in the T5a transect zone.

Response:

Acknowledged.

{ **Comment 00007** }

Allie Keen

ADVISORY COMMENT – Please note a full site plan review was not completed for this application.

Response:

Acknowledged.

[**Comment 00008**]

Allie Keen

ADVISORY COMMENT – These comments were generated for the January 8, 2026 TRC Meeting.

Response:

Acknowledged.

[**Comment 00009**]

Allie Keen

This application has tentatively been scheduled for the Wednesday, February 25, 2026, Board of Adjustment meeting. Please provide responses to all comments no later than **Friday, January 30th** in order to stay on this agenda.

Response:

Acknowledged.

[**Sheet 1 | Comment 00010 | B0504 C-5 SDP_SEALED_SIGNED.pdf**]

Allie Keen

NEW COMMENT AFTER TRC MEETING: This property is regulated by the SmartCode. The SmartCode requires 1 parking space per 1,000 sq.ft. For retail uses. Based on the proposed building size, only 42 parking spaces are required. Please update the site data table accordingly.

Currently, there are 65 spaces proposed. With the reduced parking, does this provide any flexibility in the site layout to move the building closer to the street?

Response:

Please see enclosed updated site plan. The required number of parking spaces is 41 spaces and we are proposing 59 spaces.

As explained earlier, we can't remove the additional parking spaces that are in frontage and we will lose 34 spaces which is not enough parking to support the retail use. As we have a drive thru user with general retail users, we had to separate those users and account for the parking spaces for each users. Also, if we move the building close to street, we will have empty space in the back of the buildings by the bypass & drive thru lanes which we can't use for anything and on top of that we won't be able to align the access as we currently have.

In response to SmartCode guidance and because additional parking is not preferred, we revised the first row of parking adjacent to the building by eliminating a few spaces to create an outdoor seating area (to be finished

with pavers or a similar material). The remaining parking stalls will use the pervious pavement which helps reduce the heat island effect.

We greatly appreciate your expeditious process of this request; meanwhile, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (813) 889-0700 or E-mail: jalsabbagh@sycamoreeng.com.

Sincerely,
Sycamore Engineering, Inc.

J D Alsabbagh

J. D. Alsabbagh, P.E.
Principal



City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
324 EAST PINE STREET
P.O. BOX 5004
TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA 34688-5004
(727) 938-3711

Renea Vincent, AICP, CPM
Director

December 31, 2025

J.D. Alsabbagh
Sycamore Engineering
8370 West Hillsborough Ave, Suite 205
Tampa, FL 33615

RE: Application 25-100, Request for Variance – The Shops At Meres
1098 South Pinellas Avenue; Parcel ID #13-27-15-89946-007-0010

Dear Mr. Alsabbagh:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of challenges associated with the variance application recently submitted for the property located at the NW corner of Meres Blvd and US Alt. 19 (Pinellas Ave.). As you know, the Board of Commissioners recently denied your site plan application for this property. We acknowledge that you have the right to submit a variance application associated with a new proposed development. However, it is our responsibility to inform you that any new site plan application will be evaluated for compliance with the City's 2045 Comprehensive Plan, which includes specific policies regarding wetland impacts and wetland protection buffers which will likely make the proposed development project infeasible. The applicable objective (CON 1.4) and policies (CON 1.4.1-1.4.5) are provided below for reference.

CON 1.4: Protect and improve the function of all wetlands and areas of significant upland habitat as defined in Future Land Use Element.

CON 1.4.1: Preserve and enhance all remaining wetlands during the development review process. On-site wetland alterations that result in a net gain of wetland habitat may be permitted.

CON 1.4.2: Continue to require a minimum 30-foot aquatic lands setback through the Land Development Code regulations.

CON 1.4.3: Require a minimum 25-foot buffer zone adjoining all wetlands in the Land Development Code.

CON 1.4.4: Revise the Land Development Code acreage thresholds to require all development and redevelopment adjacent to identified wetlands and/or areas of significant upland habitat to assess natural systems/biological/wildlife impacts and evaluate alternatives to eliminate or minimize adverse impacts.

CON 1.4.5: Wetlands that are not designated as "Preservation" or "Recreation Open Space" on the Future Land Use Map require a future land use amendment to either of

J.D. Alsabbagh
December 31, 2025

these two designations prior to issuance of any construction permits for adjacent upland development.

Considering the above information, please confirm your intention to move forward with the variance application. If you have any questions, please contact the Planning Department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P.L. McNeese".

Patricia L. McNeese, AICP
Planning Supervisor

cc: Renea Vincent, AICP, CPM, Planning and Zoning Director
Andrew J. Salzman, Esq, City Attorney

Sycamore Engineering, Inc.

8370 W. Hillsborough Avenue, Suite 205
Tampa, Florida 33615
Tell: (813) 889-0700
Fax: (813) 889-0788
E-mail: greatteam@sycamoreeng.com

January 18, 2026

City of Tarpon Springs
324 East Pine Street
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

RE: The Shops at Meres - City Project 25.100
Parcel ID # 13-27-15-89946-007-0010
1098 South Pinellas Ave
SEI Project # J0308

Dear Sir/Madam,

We have received your comments letter. The following are your comments followed by our response:

Comment:

CON 1.4: Protect and improve the function of all wetlands and areas of significant upland habitat as defined in Future Land Use Element.

Response:

We acknowledge the City's goal of protecting and enhancing wetlands and significant upland habitat. The project site has an existing wetland that has been delineated and approved by the City of Tarpon Springs and applicable federal and state agencies on at least twice in the last several years. In addition, the City's Comprehensive Plan identifies the site as being within a Major Retail Node District inside the downtown limits, making it an appropriate and important location for retail development.

Consistent with that goal, the project design prioritizes avoidance, maintains all required setbacks and buffers, and incorporates compensatory mitigation only where impacts are unavoidable and permitted. The Species and Plants Study—prepared and updated multiple times over the past fifteen years following establishment of the wetland mitigation associated with the subject site and approved by applicable federal and state agencies—concludes that the on-site wetland does not provide significant habitat value.

The proposed mitigation will maintain and enhance wetland functions and values by replacing the impacted wetland with a higher-value environmental resource within the same watershed, thereby supporting the City's Comprehensive Plan objectives.

Comment:

CON 1.4.1: Preserve and enhance all remaining wetlands during the development review process. On-site wetland alterations that result in a net gain of wetland habitat may be permitted.

Response:

We acknowledge the City's intent to preserve and enhance wetlands through the development review process. The project has been designed to avoid and minimize wetland impacts to the greatest extent practicable. Where impacts are proposed/necessary, the applicant has already provided compensatory mitigation within City limits at within North Anclote River Nature Park, which is constructed and operating under USACE SAJ-2009-02970 (SP-RGH), and SWFWMD Application/Permit No.: 893272/43035342.005. This mitigation provides a measurable ecological benefit exceed loss of value plus at the Anclote River directly which will have enhanced benefit to the water quality of the watershed as additional bonus beside supports the Comprehensive Plan objective of no net loss and functional improvement.

Comment:

CON 1.4.2: Continue to require a minimum 30-foot aquatic lands setback through the Land Development Code regulations.

Response:

The Applicant acknowledges this standard. The subject property does not abut aquatic lands but an existing channel is located adjacent and outside the site. As such, the 30-foot aquatic lands setback is not triggered on the subject parcel. The project will comply with all applicable City Land Development Code requirements, including wetland buffer standards measured from the jurisdictional wetland line and any additional setbacks that apply based on site-specific conditions.

Comment:

CON 1.4.3: Require a minimum 25-foot buffer zone adjoining all wetlands in the Land Development Code.

Response:

The requested 25-foot buffer zone purpose to protect, and reduce any possible impact to the existing preserved wetland. We are proposing impact to part of the wetland but we will definitely provide the full protection to provide full protection to the existing adjacent/protected wetland.

Comment:

CON 1.4.4: Revise the Land Development Code acreage thresholds to require all development and redevelopment adjacent to identified wetlands and/or areas of significant upland habitat to assess natural systems/biological/wildlife impacts and evaluate alternatives to eliminate or minimize adverse impacts.

Response:

Acknowledged. The Applicant has evaluated, and will continue to evaluate, the project for potential significant impacts to upland habitat and wildlife. Any required natural systems, biological, and/or wildlife assessments will be prepared and submitted in accordance with applicable City review and permitting requirements.

Comment:

CON 1.4.5: Wetlands that are not designated as "Preservation" or "Recreation Open Space" on the Future Land Use Map require a future land use amendment to either of these two designations prior to issuance of any construction permits for adjacent upland development.

Response:

The Applicant acknowledges the City's intent to ensure long-term protection of wetlands. However, given that the project includes substantial on-site wetland preservation and is subject to state and federal wetland regulations, and further given that compensatory mitigation has already been provided within the City limits at an off-site location that is constructed and operational, the Applicant respectfully requests that compliance with this policy be addressed through enforceable on-site protection measures, rather than requiring a Future Land Use Map amendment as a prerequisite to permit issuance for upland development since the project site located within a major retail node at gate of the City of Tarpon Springs downtown.

We greatly appreciate your expeditious process of this request; meanwhile, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (813) 889-0700 or E-mail: jalsabbagh@sycamoreeng.com.

Sincerely,
Sycamore Engineering, Inc.

J D Alsabbagh

J. D. Alsabbagh, P.E.
Principal