

Lady Slipper / Alfalfa / Lorri Circle Area Proposed Zoning Changes

Q: What is the purpose of the proposed rezoning for the Lady Slipper / Alfalfa / Lorri Circle area south of I-75 and west of Sumter?

A: There are two primary reasons for the proposed rezoning of this area.

First, this area is highly susceptible to flooding due to its location along Myakkahatchee Creek and low-lying topography, as experienced during Hurricane Ian as seen in the photos below.

Lady Slipper Flooding



Lorri Circle Flooding



About half of this area is designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a high-risk Special Flood Hazard Area (see Flood Map, left).

Lady Slipper / Alfalfa Flood Map

This area was platted decades ago into single-family lots without adequate planning for stormwater and flood control. In contrast, when development occurs in a non-residential zoning district (or in a master-planned residential community) a master stormwater plan (MSP) is required. An MSP requires design and construction of a system that not only manages the stormwater runoff created by the development but can also improve drainage and flooding in the surrounding area. An MSP could be designed for the entire Lady Slipper / Alfalfa / Lorri area to create stormwater ponds and other improvements that would prevent stormwater from spreading throughout the area as it currently does, while also helping to improve the quality of water that eventually filters to the Myakkahatchee.

Second, this area is adjacent to an existing Activity Center where the most intensive development in the City is expected to be built. That future high-intensity development would make the adjacent area more suitable for a transitional use such as Mixed-Use, rather than single-family homes, and would serve as a good buffer between the high-intensity Activity Center and neighborhoods further to the south. This, combined with the opportunity to develop a comprehensive stormwater system adjacent to the Myakkahatchee Creek, makes this area suitable for rezoning.

Q: Wouldn't more development in this area just create more flooding?

A: The potential for increased flooding depends on the type of development. If the zoning remains single-family, the City cannot prevent homes from being built on those pre-platted lots. There would be no requirements for stormwater mitigation and flooding would continue to get worse as more single-family homes are built. However, if the area is rezoned now—when only 15 percent of the lots have been developed and before 447 more homes can be built—then any new development would have to comply with a master stormwater plan requiring stormwater ponds and other improvements to prevent flooding.

Q: Since this area already floods, why can't the City just stop allowing more homes to be built?

A: There are Florida laws that prohibit local cities and counties from enacting moratoriums on building. Most recently, the Florida State Legislature passed a law specifically prohibiting any city or county that was impacted by Hurricane Ian from adopting a building moratorium until October 2026. There are other state laws, such as the "Bert J. Harris, Jr., Private Property Rights Protection Act," that also restrict a local government's ability to prohibit development.

Q: If this area is rezoned to Corridor (COR), doesn't that mean a commercial use could be built right next door to me?

A: Any future development would require a significant amount of land to comply with regulations for stormwater retention, open space, buffers, parking, and other requirements, so a commercial use developing on a small, quarter-acre lot would not be possible. This type of transition in an area typically occurs when large numbers of lots are purchased and assembled to create one parcel large enough to accommodate the new development. Developers will often buy existing houses and redesign/relocate streets in order to amass the land area they need, meaning the area would eventually have fewer, if any, single-family houses remaining.

Q: If I already have a home in this area, what happens to my home if the area is rezoned?

A: Any existing single-family homes could continue to be lived in, sold for single-family use or another allowed use, or be rebuilt in the event of a fire or other disaster. Rezoning does not affect insurance, but may make the land more valuable.