



**PLANNING COMMISSION
ZEPHYRHILLS, FLORIDA**

**Tuesday, May 20, 2025
6:00 PM**

Meeting Location Zephyrhills-Library

Call to Order-Mayor Monson

Roll Call-Carlos Maldonado

Invocation-Beth Aker

1. CONSENT ITEMS

1.1 Planning Commission Meeting 4/15/25 Minutes Approval.

1. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes 4-15-25

2. BUSINESS ITEMS

2.1 **ANX/RZ/FLU 21-23** Parcel #18-26-22-0010-09300-0000—40315 Chancey Road—roughly 13.72 acres (MOL). Property annexing into the city, rezoning from county AC to City LI (Light Industrial), and change in Future Land Use from county I1 to City IN (Industrial).

1. Planning Commission Attachments

2.2 Conservation Element

1. Conservation Element Draft

3. OTHER ITEMS

ADJOURN

*** PLEASE NOTE: This is a Public Meeting. Should any interested party seek to appeal any decision made by the Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record**

includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. F.S. 286.0105. If you are a person with a disability which requires reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk at 813/780-0000 at least 48 hours prior to the public hearing. A.D.A. and F.S. 286.26.



**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
April 15th, 2025, at 6:00 PM**

I. Call to Order-Mayor Monson

A regular Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Mayor Monson at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall 5335 8th Street, Zephyrhills FL 33542.

II. Roll Call-Carlos Maldonado

Commission members present: Mayor Monson, Dr. Randy Stovall, David Armstrong, Thomas Vanater (Absent), Tracy Sullivan, Beth Aker (Absent), Dr. Christa Remington, Ellen Taylor, Clyde Bracknell.

III. Invocation-Dr. Christa Remington

IV. Pledge of Allegiance

1.Consent Items

1.1 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes March 18th, 2025

The minutes were motioned for approval by all board members.

2.Business Items

No business items were on the agenda

3. Other Items

3.1 Landscape/Tree Ordinance LDC Section 7.06.00; Discussion for updating the City's Land Development Code.

The discussion was led by Todd Vandenberg; the topic was regarding updating the city's landscape code section 7.06.00. Currently the city's Storage Facility Land Development Code has been updated and approved through the city council this year. This code under review is being updated in certain sections only. The city staff were asked to look into an assessment for the tree code which led staff to perform due diligence identifying sections that required a change and further review for better clarification. Safety Harbors landscape/tree land development code was reviewed and used as an example for the possible changes. The city's consultant recommended using Safety Harbor as an example, a copy of their code was included in the packet for the board members to review. Some of the main items that were looked at are: tree/removal/quantities, enforcement, water conservation tree



mitigation/replanting. Possible amendments could be proposed to certain sections that require updating. This discussion was only for the board's input and suggestions for possible improvements. A few questions for sections 7.06.01 and 7.06.02 were brought up and will require better clarification on topics such as protected trees classification and size issues and suggestions on defining what the exempt trees are. Tree Removal Permitting was reviewed, main questions and updates for tree removal permitting included residential possibly requiring a tree permit in the future, tree permit applications possibly needing to be approved by the city manager, Including a fee for non-commercial properties such as a residential tree permit charging \$25 for the application fee. Protected trees were discussed and changes to the protected tree section was recommended. This section is listing cypress trees being protected, however their is numerous categories of cypress trees so this will need to have the wording changed for better clarification. A more thorough review for new residential developments will need to be included for tree mitigation/removal and having the applicants provide an arborist report including a tree condition rating for all trees and a justification statement for proposed removals. Suggestions of having the staff conduct an on-site inspection along with being able to withhold the tree removal permit until a site plan approval is granted. Section in question 7.06.04 Tree Removal Guidelines was a topic of discussion the section discusses percentage and sizes of trees that are allowed to be removed, this needs better clarification and improvement and approval through council will be required to make the change to the section of the code. A couple of projects were mentioned that had certain tree removal guideline issues as an example. Going forward via the pre-application process the tree removal/mitigation will need to be looked at more thoroughly along with their landscape engineer and conduct a site visit. Suggest having tree removal permits that are issued expiring within 3 months of the issue date. A new permit application will be required for any removal after the expiration date. Invasive species was brought up by a board member and having this section updated as well and including a reason why they are listed in the code. The change could benefit properties that have lots of invasive trees being able to clear them from the property without being penalized so a change to this category could be reviewed more thoroughly. Turf was mentioned, Bahia grass was discussed as an option for turfs that could preserve water better and should be included in the new code. Board members also made comments on the updates complying with the water star program and having input from the Water Management District to make sure there is compliance for water preservation. New developments also need to have implementation of certain landscaping being proposed to help with the updated code and avoid issues once the subdivisions implement HOA's. Also



trying to have HOA's implement certain turf requirements into their agreement, however certain laws with HOA's won't need to comply with city regulations. Suggestions to have new subdivisions put in lines for reclaim water usage were mentioned in the discussion. Safety Harbor Section 154.05 Screening was discussed and important factors that could be implemented for the city's code were discussed certain examples mentioned were; must provide screening between potentially incompatible uses in accordance with the requirements herein, screening shall have 1 or more: minimum 8ft wide buffer strips , protected trees every 25 ft and continuous screen maintained, buffer sizes along with types of plants that are permitted within the buffer. Another section from Safety Harbor was 154.06 mentioning drainage and open spaces to prevent erosion sand infiltration into the public drainage system, and to permit water to permeate into the ground. Techniques for tree preservation were mentioned such as installation of drain tiles, dry well construction, terracing, retaining walls, a reduction in grade change. Section (D) of the code mentioned natural areas shall be protected during construction by silt barriers, solid or ribboned barricades. Possible changes for the cities code could reflect Safety Harbors. Tree/Landscape section will need to be reviewed further by the city staff. Most of the board members agreed with using Safety Harbors Tree ordinance code as an example for future updates to the city's land development code. Invasion trees will need to be changed with better clarification to identify them better. The landscape buffer section was discussed; plans being submitted with trees and buffers will need a minimum 3' inch caliper trunk. Larger developments usually require smaller caliper trees and could be accepted. Palm Trees require (3) trees to be planted if they're proposed on the development. Height is a concern for Palm trees species consider some grow really tall and are hard to maintain. Industrial properties landscaping was discussed briefly, and they require landscape/buffering if neighboring residential areas. Topics on updating tree violations were mentioned, and an example was given if Grand trees measuring in 24' is removed without following proper procedures or permitted a \$5,000 fine could be given and violator will be taken to court by Code Enforcement. The average number of trees per acreage was mentioned and it starts at 6" trees required to be planted. Safety Harbors is 4" per acreage requirements and this is not for exempt trees. Developers are usually notified prior to any new development and given the number of trees that are allowed to be removed based on their proposed acreage. The number of trees allowed to be removed mentioned in the table will be a point of discussion for future meetings. A power point was presented towards the end and touched base on the sections mentioned earlier. This item was mainly to get the Planning Commissions input and will



need to be brought back to get the final amendments approved by the city council. No additional comments were made.

Adjourn.



Staff Report

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission and Honorable Mayor
From: Tommy-Lee Hunt, GIS/Community Planner
RE: ANX 21-23 CCC Property Holdings LLC Annexation, Land Use Map Amendment, and Rezoning
Date: May 20th, 2025

I. BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

A. History | Application Summary

This Annexation, Future Land Use Map Amendment (FLUMA), and Rezoning Petition was presented to the City by Mark Bentley, Land Use Attorney, on behalf of the property owner, CCC Property Holdings, LLC. The subject site is 13.72 acres More or Less (MOL) and located on the west side of Chancey Road, north of the Correia Drive. See Figure 1 — Aerial Map and Figure 2 — Location Map.¹



Figure 1 — Aerial Map

¹ 'Figures' contained herein are attached in original format.

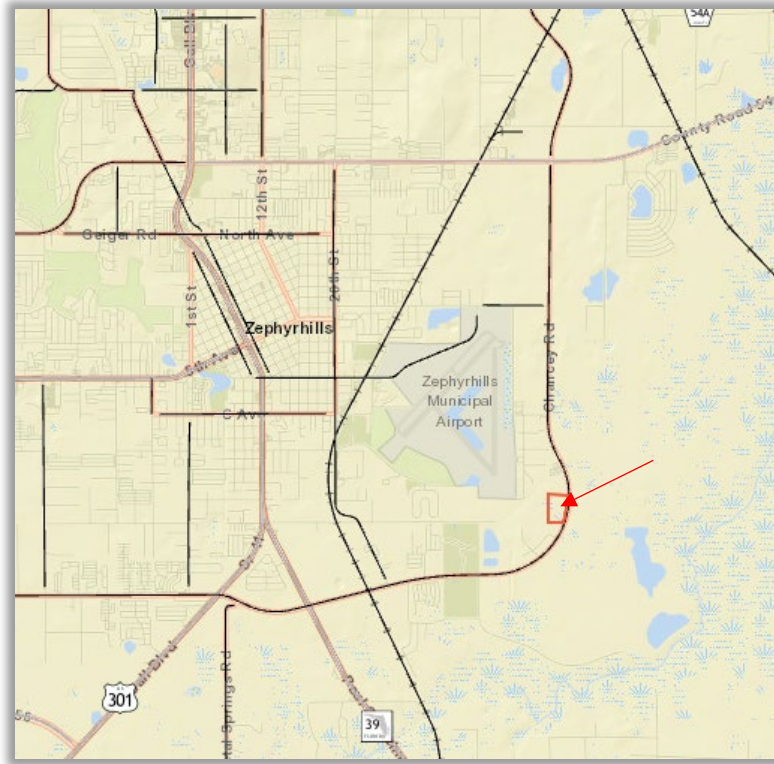


Figure 2 — Location Map

B. Site Information

<u>Applicant Owner:</u>	CCC Property Holdings LLC
<u>Location:</u>	Southeast area of the city, West side of Chancey Road, Southeast of the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport
<u>Parcel ID Number(s):</u>	18-26-22-0010-09300-0000
<u>Acreage:</u>	13.72 acres MOL
<u>Existing Land Use:</u>	Vacant Industrial
<u>Existing Future Land Use:</u>	Pasco County Industrial-Light
<u>Proposed Future Land Use:</u>	IN (Industrial)
<u>Existing Zoning:</u>	Pasco County AC
<u>Proposed Zoning:</u>	LI (Light Industrial)

II. DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property is generally located in the southeast region of the City of Zephyrhills, on the west side of Chancey Road, just southeast of the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport. The subject of this three-part application under review includes approximately 13.72 acres that is currently vacant but zoned AC-Agricultural. The subject property is generally rectangular in shape and is bordered to the north by the site of a proposed marble manufacturer and warehouse; to the west by wetlands from the airport; to the south by other industrial manufacturing and warehouse uses; and east by Chancey Road—a Pasco County maintained road- and a construction facility.

This application identifies Parcel ID Numbers 18-26-22-0010-09300-0000 which includes three individual lots (109, 116, and 125) within its boundary. The site address is 40315 Chancey Road.

The Zephyrhills future land use map indicates the subject area to the north and south of the subject property as Industrial. The City Zoning Map assigns the Light Industrial zoning district to the surrounding areas of the subject property. The applicant proposes to annex this parcel from unincorporated Pasco County into the City of Zephyrhills.

The general area of southeastern Zephyrhills contains a blend of Industrial, Airport, and Airport-related uses. The County jurisdiction of this parcel stretches approximately 645 feet MOL in depth from the west side of the subject property before reaching the right-of-way boundary of Chancey Road. The properties in this area contain Future Land Use Map Plan categories of Industrial, Public/Semi-Public, and Conservation/Wetlands within the Zephyrhills city boundary. The unincorporated county lands that abut the east side of the subject property are currently used for construction services, with the land laying to the northeast having a conservation and recreational use in perpetuity.

III. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant plans on a warehouse/office building in the form of an L shape. The building will be approximately 54,280 square feet. Employee parking will be on the east side of the building along Chancey Road. On the west side of the building there will be a large loading/unloading area. There will be two stormwater ponds, one to the south and one to the northwest. The applicant proposed two accesses to the parking lot via Chancey Road, however, the northernmost access will be a shared entrance/exit with the industrial user of the parcel to the north. The southernmost access will be an exit only for this site. In addition to the parking lots, the west side of the property will have a wetland buffer and the east side along Chancey Road will have a landscape buffer.

IV. DATA & ANALYSIS REVIEW

A. Character Analysis

East – Chancey Road, owned by Pasco County

West – Zephyrhills Municipal Airport

North – Vacant industrial parcel

South – Wetlands and industrial uses.

B. Compatibility Analysis/Annexation

Annexation: The proposed annexation portion of the three-pronged petition meets the following criteria set forth under State Statutes, and compiles with the Joint Planning Area agreement between the County of Pasco and City of Zephyrhills.

State Statutes Chapter 171.043 Character of the area to be annexed. A municipal governing body may propose to annex an area only if it meets the general standards of subsection (1) and the requirements of either subsection (2) or subsection (3).

1. The total area to be annexed must be contiguous to the municipality's boundaries at the time the annexation proceeding is begun and reasonably compact, and no part of the area shall be included within the boundary of another incorporated municipality.
2. Part or all of the area to be annexed must be developed for urban purposes. An area developed for urban purposes is defined as any area which meets any of the following standards:
 - a) It has a total resident population equal to at least two persons for each acre of land included within its boundaries;
 - b) It has a total resident population equal to at least one person for each acre of land included within its boundaries and is subdivided into lots and tracts so that at least 60 percent of the total number of lots and tracts are 1 acre or less in size; or
 - c) It is so developed that at least 60 percent of the total number of lots and tracts in the area at the time of annexation are used for urban purposes, and it is subdivided into lots and tracts so that at least 60 percent of the total acreage, not counting the acreage used at the time of annexation for nonresidential urban purposes, consists of lots and tracts 5 acres or less in size.
3. In addition to the area developed for urban purposes, a municipal governing body may include in the area to be annexed any area which does not meet the requirements of subsection (2) if such area either:
 - a) Lies between the municipal boundary and an area developed for urban purposes, so that the area developed for urban purposes is either not adjacent to the municipal boundary or cannot be served by the municipality without extending services or water or sewer lines through sparsely developed area; or
 - b) Is adjacent, on at least 60 percent of its external boundary, to any combination of the municipal boundary and the boundary of an area developed for urban purposes as defined in subsection (2).

Currently the subject property is surrounded on three sides (north, south and west) by city and plant properties that are already located within the city limits. Staff feels that an annexation at this location is reasonable and meets the legal requirements for inclusion into the City boundary. Furthermore, the proposal meets the guidelines as prescribed above.

Compatibility: The immediate area of southeast Zephyrhills includes lands that are publicly owned tracts owned by both the city and county. The Pasco County owned land is on the south sides of Tucker Road which provides mixed uses until the pavement terminates near Samuel W Pasco Recreation Park.

The general area of this portion of the city includes existing industrial facilities and general businesses. To the west is the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport that abuts to the western boundary of this subject site to be annexed into the City.

1. Future Land Use Map (FLUMA) Amendment

- a) The subject property (13.72 acres) qualifies as a small-scale plan amendment;
- b) The request is to change the subject property's future land use designation from County IL to Industrial and is consistent with the abutting properties, which are:
 - i. Industrial to the north
 - ii. Industrial Light to the east (County)
 - iii. Industrial to the south
 - iv. Public/Semi-Public to the west
- c) The proposed change is consistent with the City of Zephyrhills Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies;
- d) As verified by Planning Staff and the Utilities Director, John Bostic, utility capacity is available for the proposed petition—unless a more intense industrial use requiring more than 5000 gallons of water per day is anticipated.
- e) Transportation:
 1. Subject property abuts Chancey Road, and a County ROW use permit will be required at the time of site plan review; With the eventual development of this site and the property directly to the north, a shared access via Chancey Road will be established straddling the shared property line between the two parcels. A secondary exit only access via Chancey Road is also proposed for this site.
 2. The industrial warehouse and office facility on this parcel is projected to have 286 daily trips with 42 of those being during AM Peak Hour and 45 trips being during PM Peak Hour according to the traffic impact statement submitted by the applicant. Per the City of Zephyrhills and Pasco County access management guidelines, left and right turns are warranted for the shared access onto Chancey Road.

The proposed future land use map amendment (FLUMA) is consistent with Chapter 163, Part II, FS, the City of Zephyrhills Comprehensive Plan, and the City's Land Development. It is also consistent and compatible with the land use/development trends of the area as it provides an essential industrial element. See Figure 3 — Proposed FLU Map.

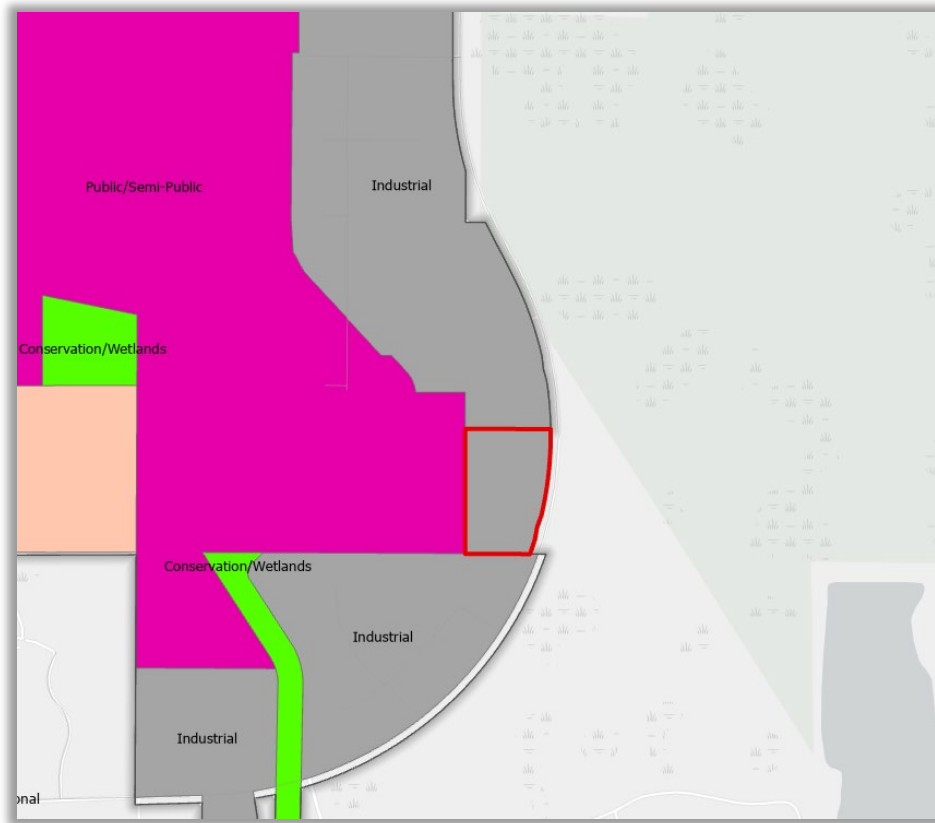


Figure 3 – Proposed FLU Map

2. Rezoning

- a) The request is to change the subject property's zoning classification from County AC to LI;
- b) The requested zoning designation is consistent with the development patterns and zoning designations of the area and surrounding properties. The surrounding properties are:
 - i. LI to the north
 - ii. I1 to the east (County)
 - iii. LI to the south
 - iv. AP1 to the west;
- c) The subject petition and subsequent development will not exhibit premature development based on the development patterns in the general vicinity and utility infrastructure availability.

The proposed zoning is consistent with the City of Zephyrhills Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code, and City codes and ordinances. It is also compatible/consistent with the growth and development trends of the area. As the City grows, the need for industrially zoned properties becomes greater. The rezoning and FLUMA furthers these goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan while remaining consistent with the adjacent zoning, while providing

for employment opportunities and increased tax base. See Figure 4 — Proposed Zoning Map.

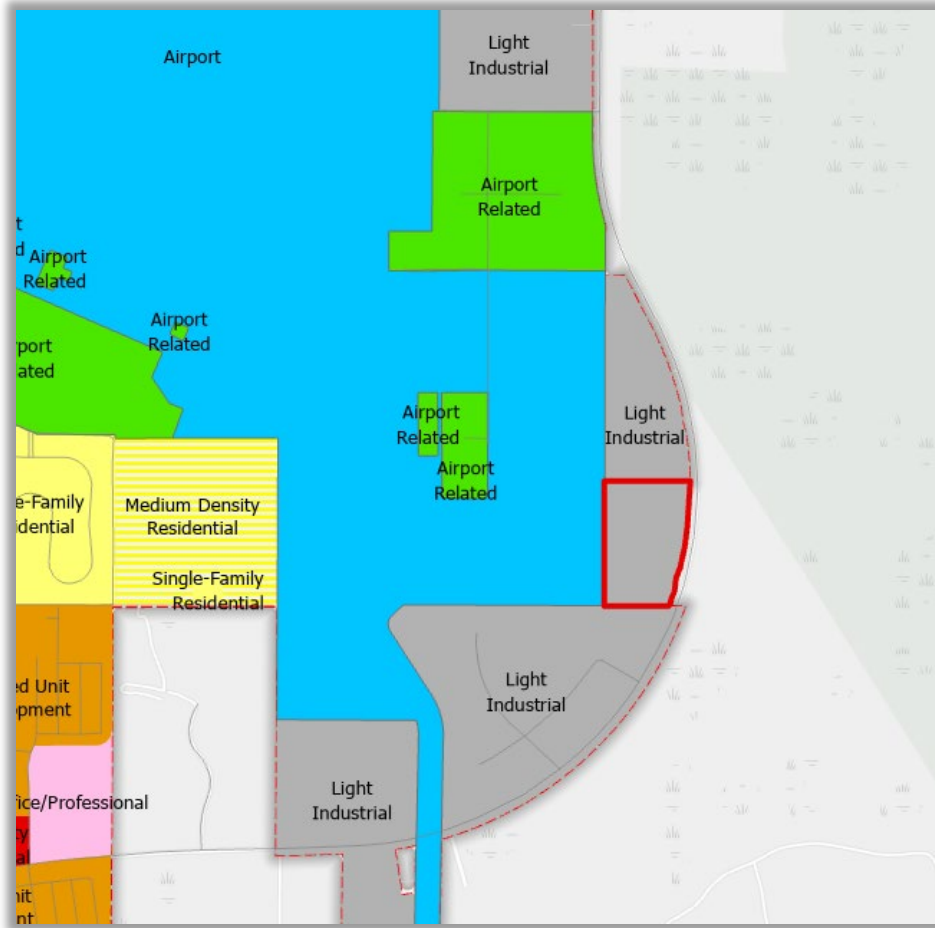


Figure 4 — Proposed Zoning Map

C. Natural & Historic Resources Analysis

The following site characteristics are provided (An Ecological Resources Assessment Report produced by PACSCON GeoEnvironmental, Inc. (PACSCON) dated December 2024 has been submitted by the applicant and is available upon request):

1. Soil Types – Poorly drained soil (Pomona Fine Sand); Somewhat poorly drained soil (Sparr Fine Sand); Very poorly drained soil (Sellers Mucky Loamy Fine Sand) See M&A report.
2. Flood Plain – A great portion of the subject property is located in Flood Zone “AE” which is within the 100-year flood zone. There is apparent flood related threat.
3. Wetlands | Water Bodies – Per the PACSCON report, there is a forested wetland on the subject annexation property. This wetland spans approximately 50% of the western/southwestern portion of the site.
4. Historic | Archaeological Resources – The subject property is located outside of the Zephyrhills Historic District and is not projected to impact any identified historic resources. If archaeological resources are found onsite during development, notification should be made to the Florida Department of Historical Resources.
5. Natural resources – There appears to be several potential qualifying habitat areas including but not limited to gopher tortoises. Proper permits shall be obtained prior

to construction activities, as well as a full report and mitigation and/or relocation plan shall be submitted to the City if such activities are found on site.

D. Public Services Analysis | Impact

POLICE	Projected general police service demand is within the City’s existing service capabilities.
FIRE	It is anticipated that the projected general fire service demand is within the County’s existing service capabilities. The city is currently coordinating with the County.
WATER	ACCORDING TO THE APPLICANT AND THE UTILITIES DEPARTMENT, IT IS TOO EARLY TO PROJECT THE ANTICIPATED IMPACT ON THE CITY’S WATER SUPPLY. THE UTILITIES DEPARTMENT HAS AGREED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE THE POTENTIAL IMPACT BASED ON THE PROPOSED USES OF THE FUTURE INDUSTRIAL FACILITY. JOHN BOSTIC, THE UTILITIES DIRECTOR, CONFIRMED THAT THE CURRENT WATER USE PERMIT HAS CAPACITY TO SUPPORT NEW INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AS LONG AS THE USE DOES NOT REQUIRE INTENSIVE DAILY WATER USE.
SEWER	Anticipated minimal impact according to the Utilities Department.
SANITATION	Future development will be required to utilize City Sanitation services. The city partners with Pasco County for the use of their landfill site. Anticipated impact is minimal.
TRANSPORTATION	The proposed project is expected to generate fewer than 100 PM Peak Hour trips and was not required to conduct a Major Traffic Study. Access to the site will be via a shared driveway with the northern adjacent property. The northern adjacent property is currently going through the site plan process for an industrial warehouse and flex space development. There may be an exit-only driveway for this subject site. A 405ft long right turn lane and a 455ft long left turn lane are required to be constructed for the shared access on Chancey Road.
SCHOOL	Industrial impacts on the school system are typically negligible.

E. Comp Plan & LDC Analysis and Verified Applicant Response

The requested annexation, re-zoning, future land use amendment appears to be consistent with the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the City of Zephyrhills Comprehensive Plan. A review of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Plan Code has been conducted by the applicant and verified by City Staff. Relevant goals, objectives, and policies are identified below and a brief statement regarding consistency of the proposed amendment has been provided.

Implementation

Goal LU-1: To achieve an economically and diversified tax base that ensures:

- b. *Recognition of the City of Zephyrhills as a retirement community, a medical/clean industry destination, and an airport community offering recreational and industrial opportunities; ...*

The proposed CCC development shall meet this goal as it exercises/takes advantage of the emerging industrial opportunities within proximity to the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport.

LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Objective LU-1-1 To encourage efficient development in areas which will have the capacity to contribute more to the City in revenue than it will consume in services that meet the above-mentioned goals and consistent with this adopted plan.

It is Planning Staff's understanding that approval of the requests contained herein will not overburden the demand for public services, please direct specific questions regarding water usage to the Utilities Department. However, the planned improvements are expected to experience an increase in ad valorem property taxes. The proposal should, under Staff's understanding, represent no gross or net taxation on the services offered by the city. Further, this expansion will potentially serve additional residents with employment. It will not create urban sprawl as it is considered an infill light industrial project located in a community with varied development patterns.

POLICY

Objective LU-1-1: The City shall continue to enforce land development regulations to ensure orderly development, that at a minimum, contain provisions which:

- a. regulate the subdivision of land;
- b. regulate signage;
- c. provide for drainage and storm water management;
- d. provide requirements for the provision of open space, and safe and convenient on site traffic flow and parking requirements;
- e. coordinate future land uses with soil conditions, topography, and availability of facilities and services;
- f. ensure that development orders and permits are issued only when it is documented that such development is consistent with the adopted level of service standards and that facilities and services are available concurrent with the impacts of development;
- g. protect the limited amount of wetlands and other environmentally sensitive natural resources;
- h. protect the potable well fields by designating appropriate activities and land uses
- i. within well-head protection areas and environmentally sensitive land;
- j. provision of mixed land use designations...
- k. discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl.

The proposed CCC project shall comply with each of the above criteria. The owners/contractors shall submit all plans to the appropriate governmental agencies for review and comment. The proposed project shall comply with all applicable regulations and requirements as required by the reviewing agencies, departments, and adopted codes, ordinances, and regulations as required by city, county, and state regulations. Any revision or amendments necessary shall be positively acted upon to assure compliance in each instance.

URBAN SUPPORT CLASSIFICATION

Industrial (IN)

The purpose of this category to depict those areas of the city that are now developed, or appropriate to be developed, in an industrial manner; and so as to encourage the reservation and use of consolidated areas for industrial use in a manner and location consistent with surrounding use, transportation facilities, and natural resource characteristics.

Use Characteristics: Those uses appropriate to and consistent with this category include:

Primary Uses: Research/Development; Light Manufacturing/Assembly; Wholesale/Distribution; Storage/Warehouse;

Secondary Uses: Office; Retail Commercial; Personal Business Service; Commercial/Business Service; Transient Accommodations; Public/Semi-Public.

Locational Characteristics: This category is generally appropriate to locations with sufficient size to encourage an industrial park type arrangement with provisions for internal service access in locations suitable for light industrial use with minimal adverse impact on adjoining uses, and with good access to transportation and utility facilities such as the major collector, arterial roadway network, rail facilities, airports, and mass transit.

Buffering: An appropriate buffer as determined by the Zephyrhills Land Development Code and verified by Staff shall be provided in and between the IN designated lands.

Zoning Compatibility: The following zoning districts are compatible with the IN land use category: LI – Light Industrial PUD – Planned Development.

According to the City of Zephyrhills, Sec. 7.06.04.01. - Landscape buffering and screening, Types B buffers shall be installed. Type B buffer includes a 15-foot wide buffer planted with a single row of shade trees having a maximum spacing of 50 feet on center. A visual screen designed to be 80 percent opaque within one year and a minimum of six feet in height at installation shall also be provided with this buffer. The screen may include an opaque fence, wall, hedge, berm or any combination thereof. Wooden fences shall be prohibited. Walls and fences shall not exceed eight feet in height. Shrubs that are used to provide a visual screen shall be spaced a maximum of five feet on center.

According to Section 7.07.06 (C), a fence, wall or hedge of a height not exceeding eight (8) feet may be permitted provided that the clear sight triangle is maintained, and in Section 7.07.06 (D), for security purposes, fences in C3, LI, AP1, and AP2 may be topped with barbed wire of not more than three strands, provided the lowest strand is not less than six and one-half feet above grade. (Please note this section of the LDC refers to property perimeter boundaries and does not prohibit a property owner from installing said appurtenances within or inside the property).

OBJECTIVE

LU-1-2: The integrity and quality of life will continue to be maintained in existing and future residential neighborhoods.

The proposed CCC project shall be compatible with the surrounding area and shall not interfere with the integrity of the areas established neighborhoods or quality of life for current residents. Landscaping and buffering/berming shall address all necessary issues stemming from the future improvements, see response to Policy LU-1-2-3-4, below.

POLICY

LU-1-2-3-4: Land development shall take place in a manner that is compatible with the type and scale of surrounding land uses.

The proposed development of the subject property shall be in compliance with the City’s Land Development Code. All construction shall comply with current standards in order to take into consideration the company needs and those of the industrial properties surrounding.

The subject site is bordered on the north and south with an Industrial future land use category and well-established Light Industrial zoned property on two sides, to the west there is a future land use of Public/Semi-Public and Airport zoned property. Staff considers it to be compatible with the surrounding Industrial land use categories, surrounding zoning districts, and the established development pattern of the area, as well as the city’s adopted Industrial Corridor Master Plan. The applicant/developer shall provide adequate screening and buffering to adjacent properties. A landscape/buffering plan that demonstrates compliance with all applicable sections of the City’s LDC shall be presented to the City for review and approval.

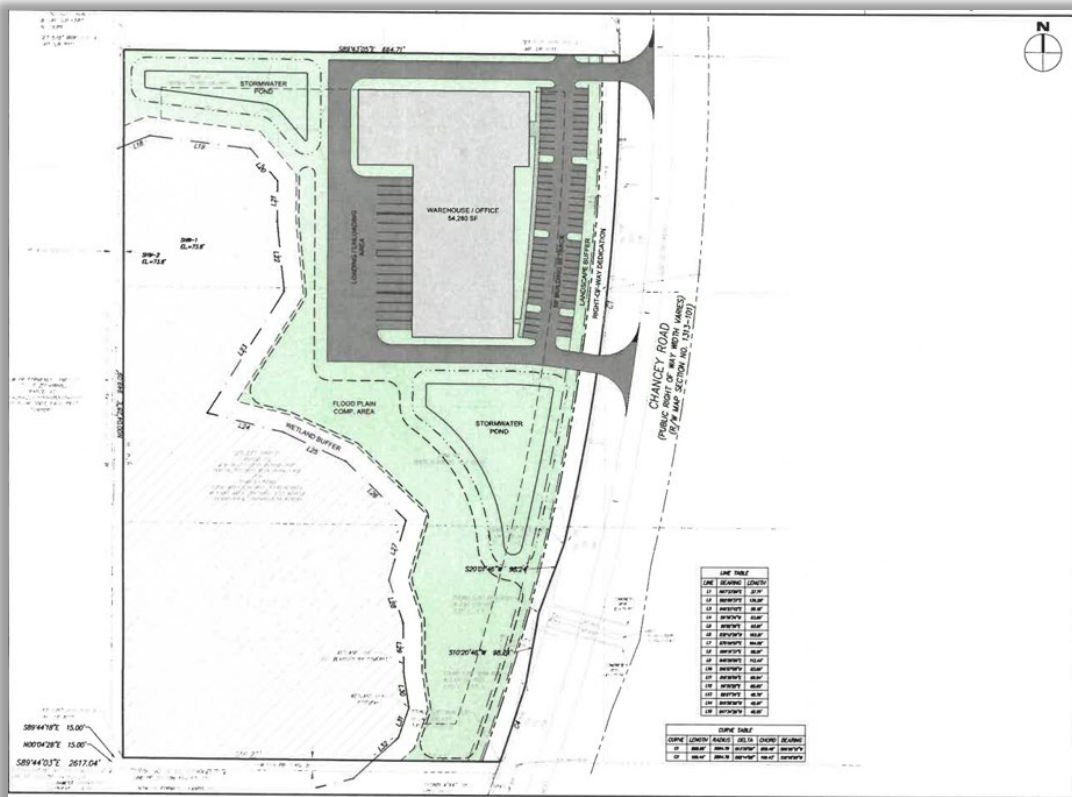


Figure 5 – Proposed Preliminary Conceptual Plan (As of January 2025) Courtesy Dewberry Engineering

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

OBJECTIVE

LU-1-4: The City will develop mechanisms to ensure the protection of archaeological and historical resources.

The subject property lies outside the historical district and there are no historical structures or archaeological areas identified within the boundaries of the subject property.



Photo 1 – Subject Property viewed from Chancey Rd.

Google Imagery December 2023

NATURAL RESOURCES

OBJECTIVE

LU-1-7: *All development activities shall ensure the protection of natural resources and potable well fields.*

LU-1-7-1: *The clearing of trees and wetland vegetation shall be prohibited unless permits are obtained from the proper governmental entities.*

LU-1-7-2: *Species of flora and fauna identified as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern, as defined by Federal Law or Florida Statutes, and found to exist in Zephyrhills by the Florida Game Fresh Water Fish Commission, shall be protected through compliance with appropriate Federal and State regulations.*

LU-1-7-3: *Consider in land use planning and regulation, the impact if land use on water quality and quantity; the availability of land, water, and other natural resources to meet demands; and the potential for flooding.*

LU-1-7-4: *The clearing of trees and wetland vegetation shall be prohibited unless permits are received from appropriate governmental entities.*

LU-1-7-5: *The developer/owner of any new development or redevelopment shall be responsible for on-site management of stormwater run-off in a manner so that post-development run-off rates, volumes and pollutant loads do not exceed existing conditions.*

The owner and its contractor shall comply with each of these provisions during the planning, design, engineering, staff review, permitting, construction, and inspection process of the CCC project. The Environmental Resource Report provided by the applicant provides details on findings such as gopher tortoises, eastern indigo snakes, and wood stork nesting sites. Further research/review and possible mitigation/relocation shall be required at the time of site plan review and approval, and prior to commencement of construction.

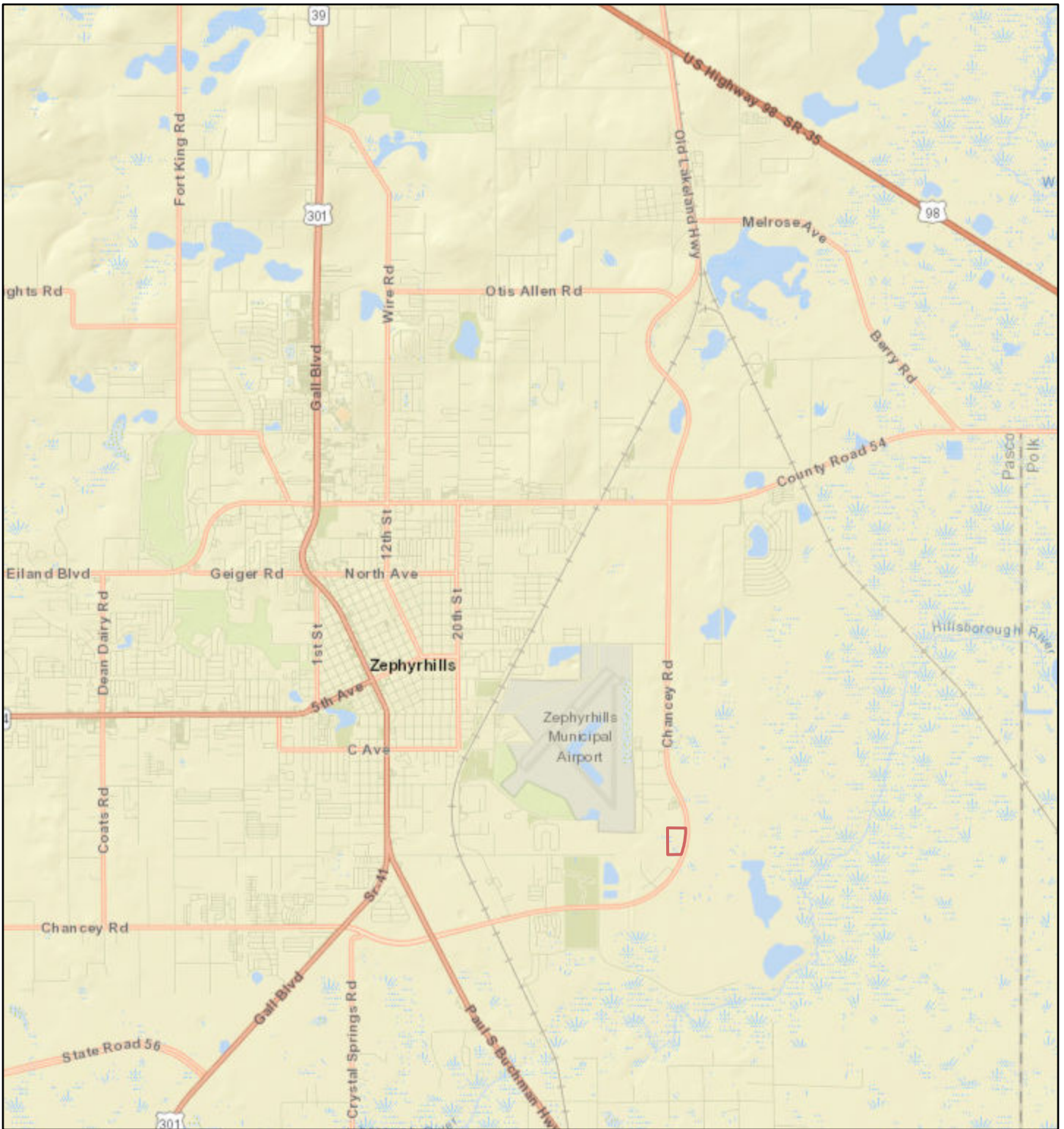
V. RECOMMENDATION

Site Plan Review Committee — The SPRC recommended approval of the annexation, rezoning, and Future Land Use Map Amendment at its regularly scheduled meeting on January 21, 2025. The SPRC moved the request forward to the Planning Commission

Planning Commission — May 20, 2025

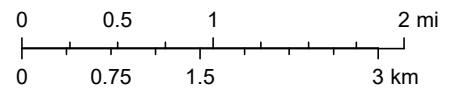
Staff — Based upon the analysis contained herein, along with supporting documentation, Staff recommends approval of this petition for annexation, rezoning (to LI (Light Industrial)) and FLUMA (to I (Industrial)).

Chancey Road Annexation

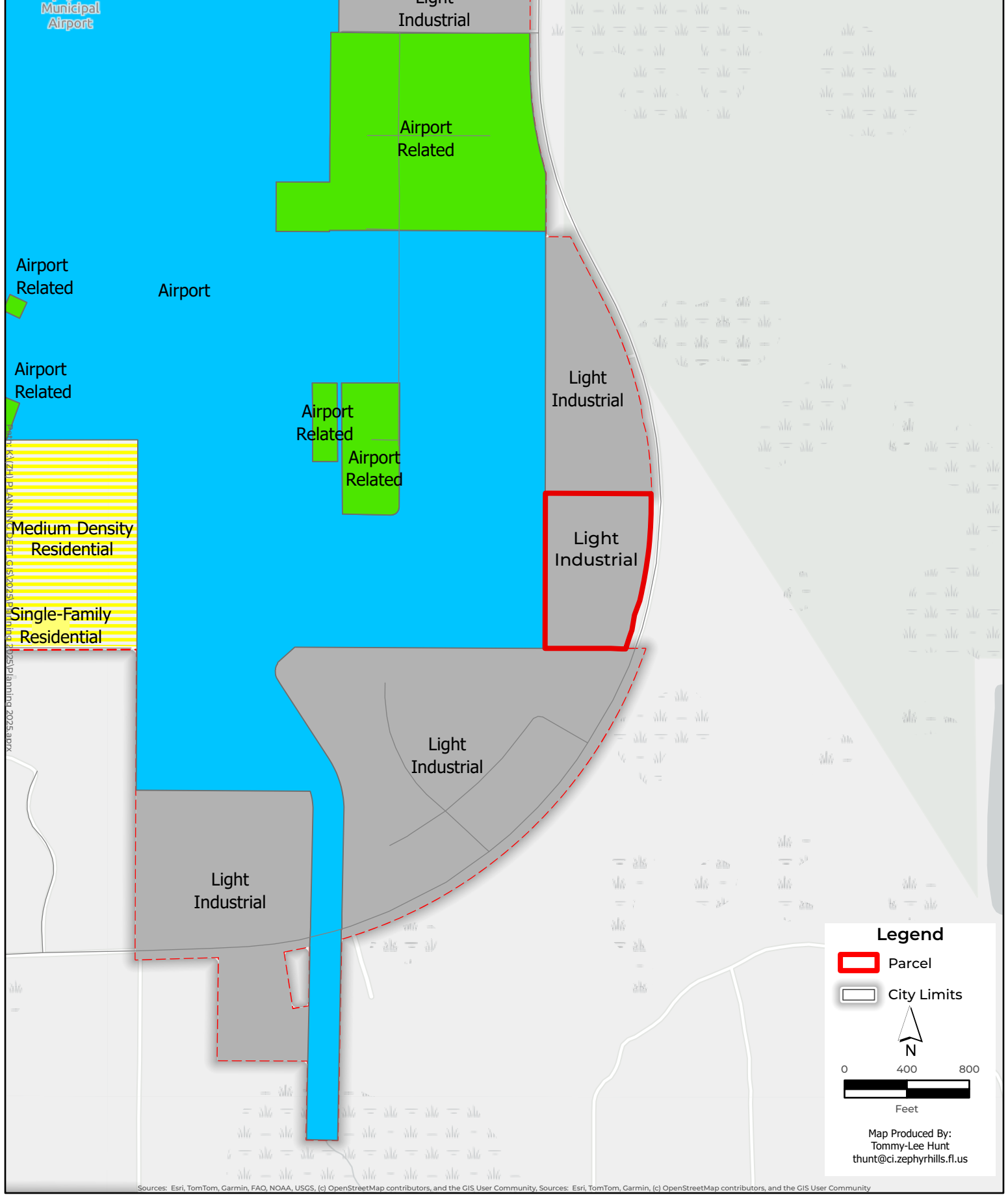


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Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, NGA, USGS, J Edwards



CITY OF ZEPHYRHILLS PLANNING DEPT GIS/2024 BOUNDARY/2025 PLANNING 2025.aprx

Legend

- Parcel
- City Limits

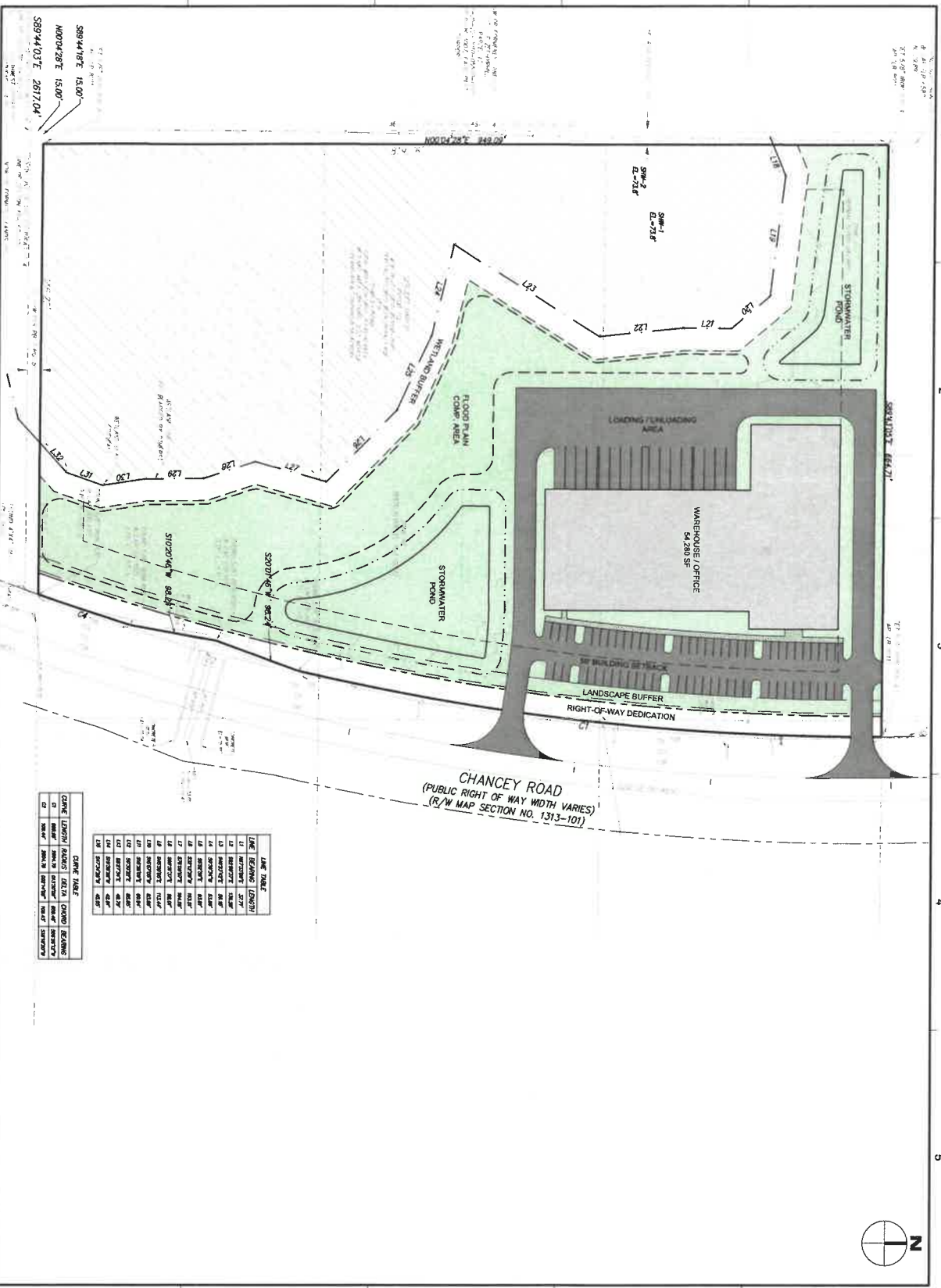
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Feet

Map Produced By:
Tommy-Lee Hunt
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Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



CHANCEY ROAD
 (PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY WIDTH VARIES)
 (R/W MAP SECTION NO. 1313-101)

LINE MARK	
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L28	BOUNDARY (NEW)



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PROJECT NO. 5011900

SHEET NO. 1 OF 1

PRELIMINARY DOCUMENTS
 NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

DATE: 8/24/18

SCALE: 1" = 20'

STAFF REPORT

To: Planning Commission
From: Planning Department / Consultant (Tammy Vrana)
RE: Conservation Element
Date: May 20, 2025

I. BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

The Planning Department is working with Planning Consultant Tammy Vrana on updating the City's Comprehensive Plan. The updated Comprehensive Plan vision looks through the year 2045 and includes Conservation as one of the elements. The purpose of the conservation element is to provide a guide for conservation, use and protection of natural resources, including air, water, water recharge areas, wetlands, water wells, soils, shores, flood plains, rivers, lakes, florists, fisheries and wildlife, minerals and other natural environmental resources within the City. The element includes a plan along with Goals, Objectives and Policies to provide a basis for policy / decision-making. New conservation issues arise as the City continues to develop.

The Conservation element is being updated to prepare an updated plan in which identifies / addresses conservation issues and how the City intends to address them.

II. DATA & ANALYSIS

See attached draft Conservation Element.

III. RECOMMENDATION

The Conservation Element draft is presented to the Planning Commission for review and comment.

DRAFT

PLANZephyrhills2045

Conservation Element

MAY 2025

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

This element contains a variety of acronyms and abbreviations used throughout the text. For clarity and ease of reference, all acronyms and abbreviations are listed below, along with their full forms.

BMP	Best Management Practices
ELAMP	Environmental Lands Acquisition and Management Program
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FISWG	Florida Invasive Species Working Group
FNAI	Florida Natural Areas Inventory
FWC	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
GIS	Geographic Information System
LDC	City of Zephyrhills Land Development Code
NWWA	National Water Well Association
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
SWFWMD	Southwest Florida Water Management District
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service Practices



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CONSERVATION ELEMENT

1. Introduction

The Conservation Element of *PlanZephyrhills 2045* sets forth the city's long-range vision for environmental stewardship. As growth continues, the element provides the foundation for policies that balance development with the protection of natural systems.

Purpose

The Conservation Element aims to protect the natural resources that support a healthy environment and community quality of life. It helps guide decisions to ensure clean air and water, thriving ecosystems, and the natural systems we all depend on—now and for future generations.

Scope

The Conservation Element establishes policies and strategies to guide the protection, conservation, and management of natural resources within the City of Zephyrhills. It also recognizes the importance of coordinating with neighboring jurisdictions and regional partners to ensure that local land use and development activities support the health of natural environments beyond the city's borders.

The element encompasses a broad range of environmental priorities that are essential to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Key areas of focus include:

- Protection of *environmentally sensitive lands*, such as wetlands, floodplains, native habitats, and aquifer recharge areas
- Conservation of *water resources*, including surface waters, groundwater supplies, and water quality

- *Air quality* management, recognizing its role in public health and environmental well-being
- Preservation of *soil integrity and native vegetation*, to reduce erosion, sustain biodiversity, and maintain ecological functions
- Conservation of *wildlife*, with special consideration for threatened and endangered species and critical habitats
- *Energy efficiency* to reduce emissions
- Sustainable *waste management*, promoting waste reduction and environmentally responsible disposal
- *Coordination with local, regional, and state entities*, ensuring consistency across jurisdictions and alignment with broader conservation efforts

Legal & Planning Framework

Conservation planning is shaped by a combination of state, regional, and local regulations, policies and plans.

Federal & State Laws & Policies

CLEAN WATER ACT

The Clean Water Act (CWA) is a cornerstone of federal environmental policy aimed at protecting the quality of the nation's water resources. Enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the CWA regulates the discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States, including rivers, lakes, and wetlands. It establishes water quality standards and supports the restoration and maintenance of the integrity of the nation's waters by controlling pollution from point sources, such as factories and wastewater treatment plants, and non-point sources, such as stormwater runoff. For development projects, compliance with the Clean Water Act may require permits related to wetland disturbance, stormwater management, and discharges into protected water bodies.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a critical piece of legislation aimed at protecting species that are at risk of extinction and conserving their habitats. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the ESA prohibits the harming, harassing, or killing of listed species and their critical habitats. It requires federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize the survival of threatened or endangered species. For development projects, adherence to the ESA may require conducting habitat assessments and implementing mitigation strategies to minimize impacts on protected species and their environments.

STATE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Florida State Comprehensive Plan, defined in Section 187.201 of the Florida Statutes, outlines long-term goals for preserving the state's natural resources. It emphasizes the protection and sustainable management of Florida's environmental assets, including water resources, wildlife habitats, and land use practices. The plan encourages policies that balance development with conservation, ensuring resources like aquifers, wetlands, and wildlife habitats are safeguarded for future generations. The policies inform local comprehensive planning and are implemented in coordination with state and regional agencies.

FLORIDA ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PERMITTING

Florida Environmental Resource Permitting (ERP) is a regulatory process designed to ensure that proposed development activities do not negatively impact the state's water resources and natural habitats. The ERP process, managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Water Management Districts, evaluates the potential environmental impacts of projects related to wetland alteration, stormwater

management, and floodplain development. The permitting process requires applicants to demonstrate that their projects will meet state standards for water quality, flood control, and ecosystem protection. This includes a thorough assessment of proposed stormwater systems, wetland mitigation, and the preservation of conservation areas. Projects that may significantly affect the environment must undergo detailed reviews and provide mitigation plans to offset any adverse impacts, ensuring that development is balanced with the protection of Florida's natural resources.

Regional Planning

STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

As adopted by the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, the Strategic Regional Policy Plan identifies regional priorities for protecting natural systems, conserving water resources, maintaining biodiversity, and enhancing resiliency. The Strategic Regional Policy Plan encourages intergovernmental coordination and local implementation of strategies that address ecosystem protection and long-term sustainability.

SWFWMD PLANS

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) is the regional water management agency responsible for overseeing water resource protection across a 16-county area, including Pasco County and the City of Zephyrhills. The District's responsibilities include aquifer recharge protection, floodplain and watershed management, surface water regulation, and coordination on long-term water supply.

The SWFWMD Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP), updated every five years, identifies future water demands, assesses available water resources, and outlines strategies to meet projected needs while protecting natural systems. The RWSP is an important planning tool that helps local governments align land

use and infrastructure decisions with sustainable water management.

SWFWMD policies and permitting requirements work in coordination with state and federal laws—such as the *Florida Water Resources Act* and the federal *Clean Water Act*—ensuring that conservation and development practices are consistent with broader environmental protections.

Local Ordinances & Regulations

WETLANDS PROTECTION

Part 4.1.00 of the *City of Zephyrhills Land Development Code (LDC)* highlights the essential role wetlands play in supporting biodiversity, ecosystem services, and public health. The code underscores the importance of preserving and restoring wetland ecological functions while respecting property rights. Wetlands are assessed based on soils, vegetation, hydrology, and indicator species to determine their environmental value. Wetlands are classified in the code as Class I, II, or III, with each classification corresponding to the level of protection and review required during development. These regulations seek to strike a balance between development needs and environmental stewardship, ensuring wetlands remain resilient and functional despite urbanization.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Chapter 54 of the LDC establishes the City's regulatory authority to manage stormwater discharges and protect surface water quality. It fulfills federal mandates under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) by addressing pollutant contributions from municipal storm sewer systems (MS4s), industrial discharges, and illicit connections or dumping. The chapter affirms the City's responsibility to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the quality of stormwater runoff entering local water bodies.

Section 54.65 of the LDC enables the City Council to designate specific drainage basins or sub-basins as *Drainage Basins of Special Concern* when they exhibit inadequate conveyance capacity, flooding risks from elevated seasonal water tables, or sensitive natural drainage features. This designation authorizing the application of basin-specific design standards that exceed citywide baseline requirements.

TREE PROTECTION REGULATIONS

Part 7.06.00 of the LDC aims to protect trees, native vegetation, wetlands, and natural resources. These rules guide site clearing, tree removal, planting, and irrigation practices. The code encourages the use of native species, discourages invasive exotics, and is currently undergoing updates to strengthen tree protection standards. The City is actively reviewing and updating its tree protection regulations to strengthen canopy preservation, enhance mitigation and replacement standards, and better align with contemporary urban forestry practices.

Local Plans

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Each element of PlanZephyrhills 2045 contributes to the Conservation Element goal by guiding growth and shaping development in a manner that protects natural resources and promotes long-term sustainability. The comprehensive plan elements work together to ensure that urban development and supporting infrastructure aligns with the community's ecological priorities.

The *Future Land Use Element* guides where development should occur and where it should be limited. By directing higher-density growth to already-developed areas and protecting wetlands, forests, and other natural lands, it helps conserve open space and water resources

The *Public Facilities Element* plans infrastructure to serve growth in an efficient, sustainable way. For example, it can require new municipal projects to include water-saving features and drought-tolerant landscaping, ensuring that expansion of utilities conserves water and protects quality of natural systems

The *Transportation and Mobility Element* promotes a safe, efficient multimodal network that supports walkability and reduces car dependence. Aligning transportation investments with land use helps lower vehicle miles traveled and emissions, improving air quality and supporting broader environmental goals.

The *Housing Element* encourages a diverse mix of housing types, including mixed-use development, to meet community needs while limiting sprawl pattern development. By focusing new housing within existing neighborhoods and near urban services, Housing Element policies reduce pressure on forests, wetlands, wildlife habitat, rural lands, and aquifer recharge areas.

The *Recreation and Open Space Element* designates parks, trails, greenways and preserves that conserve natural areas. Setting aside open space for recreation also safeguards wildlife corridors, wetlands, and tree canopy, thereby protecting water quality and ecosystem functions while enhancing community quality of life.

The *Intergovernmental Coordination Element* promotes collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions, state and regional agencies, and other partners to align land use and natural resource planning. Through coordinated policies and interlocal agreements, these policies extend the impact of environmental protections and supports regional conservation efforts.

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Sustainable Zephyrhills outlines strategic actions to strengthen environmental stewardship and improve resource efficiency. It complements the Conservation Element by advancing initiatives in water conservation, emissions reduction, waste management, ecological health, climate resilience, sustainable land use, and community involvement.

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The City's Parks and Recreational Master Plan emphasizes sustainability, natural resource protection, and passive recreation as key components of the City's long-term vision for parks and open space.

Public participation demonstrated strong community support for conservation and nature-based recreation, with nearly one-third of participants prioritizing enhancements to passive recreation and one in seven participants identifying conservation as a funding priority.

The plan recommends several initiatives to support the Conservation Element's goals, including partnering with environmental groups, organizing community conservation projects, and promoting sustainability. It advocates for green infrastructure, preserving native vegetation, expanding tree canopies, and managing wildlife habitats. It also emphasizes environmental education, public engagement, and aligning infrastructure improvements with conservation objectives to enhance ecological health and resilience.

2. Resource Inventory

Natural Features and Systems

Topography and Soils

Understanding the topography and soil characteristics of Zephyrhills is essential for effective land use planning, environmental conservation, and sustainable development.

TOPOGRAPHY

The City of Zephyrhills is situated on the western edge of the Lake Wales Ridge, a prominent geological feature in Central Florida known for its ancient sandhill ecosystems and distinctive upland habitats.

The area's topography is characterized by gently rolling terrain, with elevations generally ranging from approximately 90 to 130 feet above sea level. This elevation provides a degree of natural drainage and contributes to the area's suitability for certain types of vegetation and development patterns.

SOILS

Understanding the spatial distribution of soil types is fundamental to guiding land use decisions. The dominant soil types found in the Zephyrhills area include Candler, Tavares, and Myakka series.

Candler soils are excessively drained, sandy soils found on higher elevations. They have low water-holding capacity and are prone to drought conditions, making them suitable for certain types of vegetation that are adapted to dry environments.

Tavares soils are moderately well-drained sandy soils located on lower slopes of hills and ridges. They have rapid to very rapid permeability, which facilitates quick drainage but also requires careful management to prevent nutrient leaching.

Myakka soils are very poorly to poorly drained sandy soils commonly found in flatwoods and depressional areas. They have slow internal drainage and are often saturated, making them important for wetland ecosystems but challenging for development without proper drainage solutions. While advantageous for aquifer recharge, these soil types are also highly susceptible to erosion, particularly on steeper slopes or where vegetation has been removed. Their permeability poses challenges for stormwater management and necessitates

careful consideration in land development, particularly with respect to maintaining water quality and preventing sedimentation.

Figure CON-1 on page 11 provides a mapped overview of the predominant soil drainage characteristics in the Zephyrhills planning area. These classifications, derived from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Soils Survey, are critical for understanding how water moves through local soils, which directly impacts flood risk, stormwater management, and the suitability of land for development.

Watersheds and Surface Waters

Understanding the city's surface hydrology is vital to guiding sustainable development, protecting regional water quality, and ensuring long-term flood resilience. Refer to **Figure CON-2** on page 11.

MAJOR DRAINAGE BASINS

The City is situated within two primary hydrologic basins: the Hillsborough River Basin and the Withlacoochee River Basin—both critical to Florida's water resource management framework and administered by the SWFWMD.

Hillsborough River Basin: Encompassing the central and southern portions of the City, this basin drains into the Hillsborough River, a designated Class I surface water and a major potable water supply for the Tampa Bay region. This basin includes significant municipal surface water features and is subject to SWFWMD planning rules and permitting under the state's Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) program.

Withlacoochee River Basin: Covering the northern and eastern extents of Zephyrhills, this basin drains northward into the Withlacoochee River, ultimately discharging into the Gulf of Mexico. While less urbanized, this area includes valuable headwater systems and wetlands that influence flood dynamics and ecological connectivity.

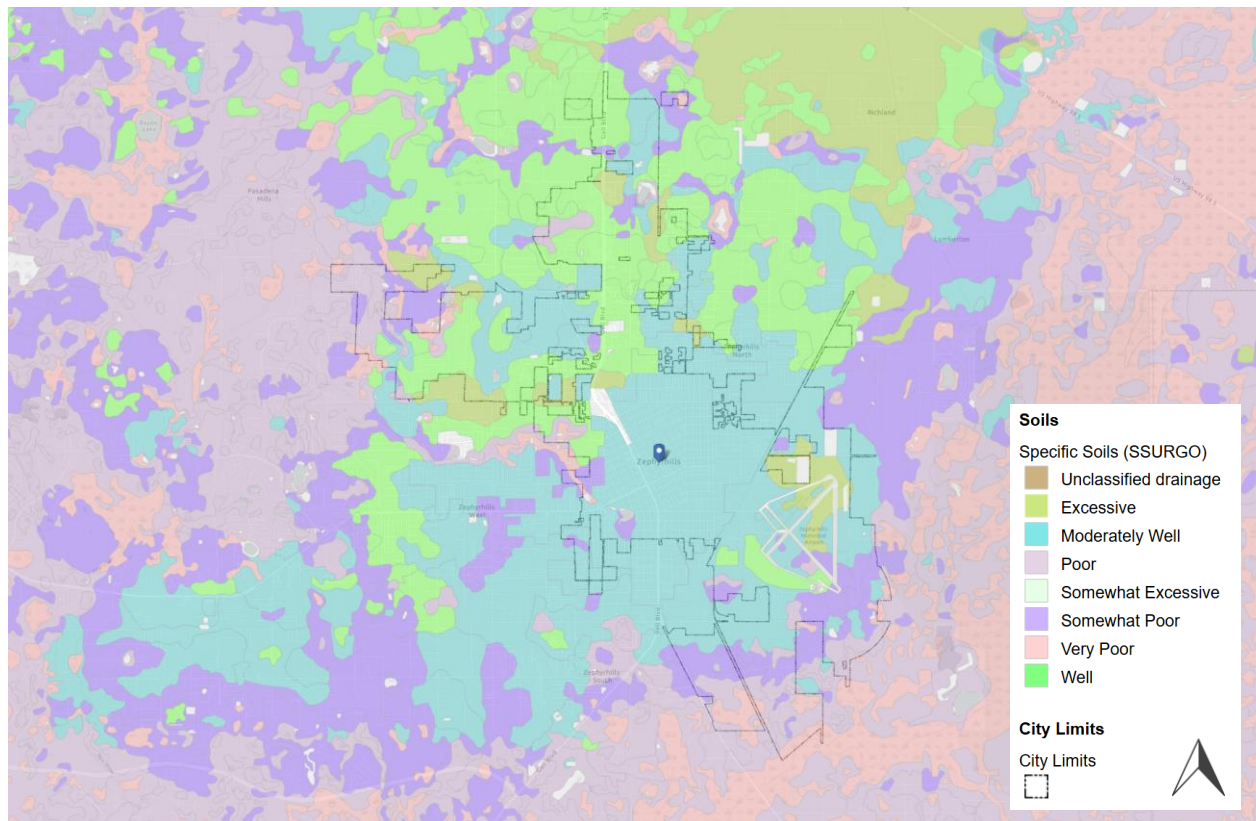


Figure CON-1 Soils Survey Drainage Classifications. Source: SSURGO, National Cooperative Soil Survey (2023).

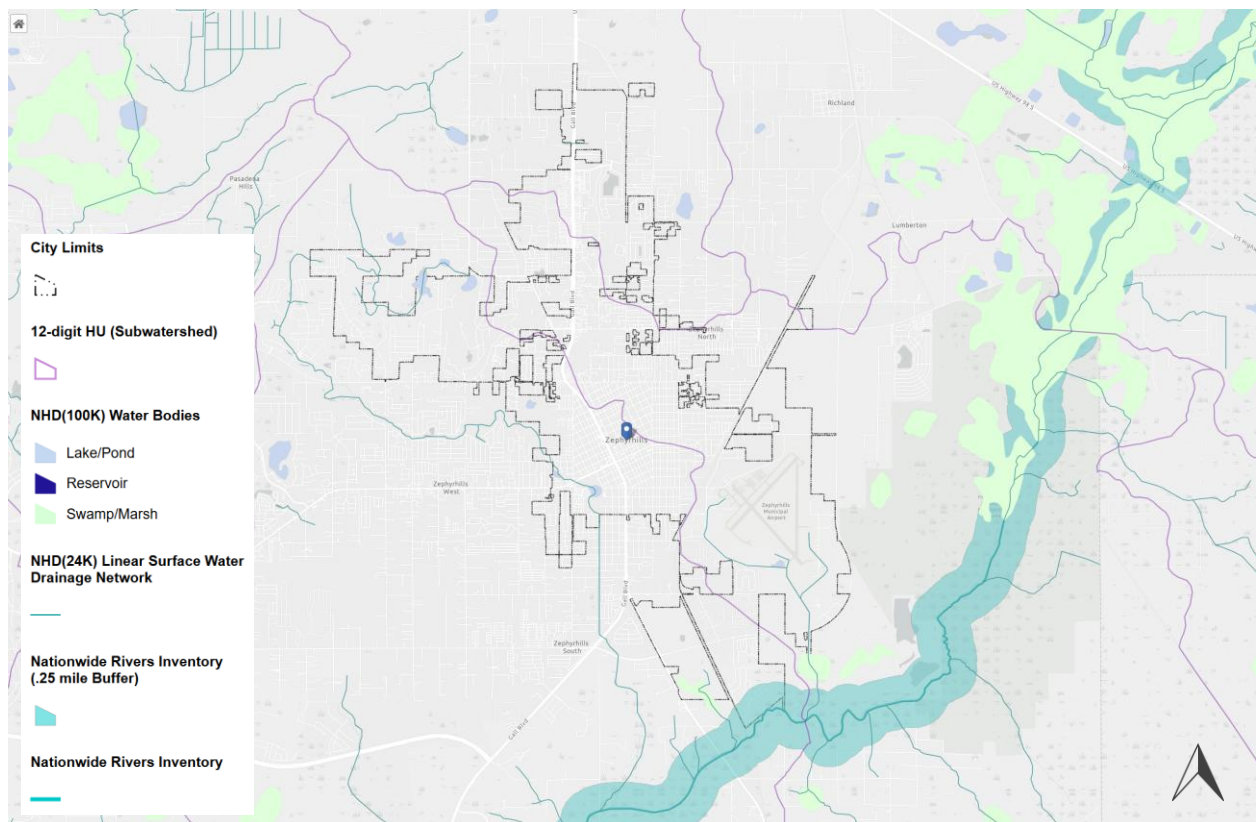


Figure CON-2 Watersheds and Surface Waters. Source: U.S. Geological Survey (2017).

KEY SURFACE WATERS AND DRAINAGE FEATURES

Lake Zephyr is a reconfigured natural lake located within Zephyr Park. Lake Zephyr has a surface area of approximately six acres and functions as a central feature of the Upper Lake Zephyr Drainage Basin. This basin extends roughly one mile east of Handcart Road and 0.5 miles north of Geiger Road. Water from the lake flows via a constructed channel westward to US 301 near Chancey Road and then across open land toward the Hillsborough River. Lake Zephyr plays a key role in stormwater attenuation, urban aesthetics, and limited aquatic habitat. Ongoing efforts are needed to maintain a stabilized water elevation and improve shoreline vegetation with native littoral plantings to enhance nutrient uptake, improve water clarity, and support wildlife.

Little Lake Austin is an approximately 40-acre natural lake within the Upper Lake Zephyr Basin. It contributes to the local stormwater regime and provides limited wetland and open-water habitat.

Zephyr Creek: A natural stream flowing through parts of the City, Zephyr Creek supports both drainage and urban ecological functions. Its protection through riparian buffers and low-impact development practices can help maintain water quality and mitigate urban runoff impacts.

East Zephyrhills Drainage Canal: This constructed waterway conveys stormwater through developed areas and serves a key role in reducing localized flooding. Periodic maintenance and retrofitting can improve conveyance capacity and pollutant removal efficiency.

Small Lakes and Stormwater Management Features: Numerous small lakes, stormwater ponds, and retention/detention basins are integrated within residential, commercial, and industrial developments. These systems are

essential to stormwater management, designed to provide volume control, peak flow attenuation, and treatment of first-flush runoff.

Floodplains

Floodplains play a critical role in ecological conservation by providing natural flood storage, improving water quality through sediment and nutrient filtration, supporting wetland and riparian habitats, and facilitating groundwater recharge. In Zephyrhills, two primary floodplain systems—the *Hillsborough River Basin* and the *Withlacoochee River Basin*—define much of the city's hydrologic and ecological character. These floodplains are shaped by the region's stream corridors, low-lying topography, and seasonal rainfall patterns, and are increasingly influenced by urban development and climate variability.

The Hillsborough River floodplain, affecting the southern and central portions of the city, drains toward a critical regional potable water source and is managed for both water quality protection and flood mitigation.

The Withlacoochee River floodplain, influencing the northern and eastern extents of Zephyrhills, retains more natural hydrologic functions and supports broader ecological connectivity.

Key characteristics of floodplains in Zephyrhills include:

100-Year Flood Zones. Areas identified as AE (Special Flood Hazard Area with Base Flood Elevation) and X Shaded (Moderate Flood Hazard Area) are located along stream corridors and other low-lying regions within the city (Refer to **Figure CON-3** on page 14). These flood zones are susceptible to inundation during a 100-year storm event, which has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year.

Stream Corridors. Major drainage channels, such as Zephyr Creek and the East Zephyrhills

Drainage Canal, contribute to localized flood risks, especially during heavy rainfall and storm events. These areas are typically characterized by low elevations and higher susceptibility to flooding.

Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity.

Floodplains are vital habitats that support a wide range of plant and animal species, particularly those adapted to wetland and riparian ecosystems. These areas provide critical breeding, feeding, and migration habitats for wildlife, including numerous bird species and aquatic life.

Water Quality and Groundwater Recharge.

Floodplains act as natural filters for water, helping to improve water quality by trapping sediments, nutrients, and pollutants during flood events. This process contributes to the health of downstream aquatic ecosystems. Additionally, floodplains play an important role in groundwater recharge, ensuring the availability of clean water sources for both human use and ecological needs.

Flood Mitigation and Natural Flood Control.

Healthy floodplains act as buffers to floodwaters, absorbing and storing excess water during heavy rains or storm events. This reduces the risk of downstream flooding and helps mitigate the impact of flood events on surrounding communities and infrastructure.

Soil and Nutrient Retention. The natural processes in floodplains, such as sediment deposition during flooding, help maintain soil fertility. These rich, nutrient-dense soils support the growth of native vegetation and contribute to the overall health of ecosystems.

Climate Resilience. Floodplains play an important role in increasing climate resilience by absorbing carbon and supporting climate-adaptive vegetation.

Conserving and restoring the ecological integrity of these floodplains is essential for

maintaining long-term environmental resilience and reducing flood risk across the community.

Invasive Species Management. Floodplains are vulnerable to the spread of invasive plant species that can alter the natural composition of ecosystems. Invasive species can displace native vegetation, reducing biodiversity and the natural floodplain functions.

Wetlands

Wetlands contribute to flood attenuation, groundwater recharge, water quality enhancement, and habitat provision for a diverse array of plant and animal species, including several state and federally listed wildlife species.

As shown in **Figure CON-4** on page 14, relatively few wetlands exist within the city limits. Where they do occur, including Lake Zephyr and the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport, they serve critical hydrological and ecological functions. Over time, the open-ditch drainage system at the airport has evolved to support a variety of aquatic species and functions much like a natural stream, contributing to ecological connectivity in the area.

The City's LDC defines three classifications of wetlands to guide protection, development, and mitigation requirements. These wetland types are generally described as follows:

Class I Wetlands have the highest ecological value. These are typically large, hydrologically connected systems that support high levels of biodiversity and essential ecological processes. Development impacts are prohibited, and full preservation is required.

Class II Wetlands are of moderate ecological value and may accommodate limited disturbance. Impacts must be minimized, and mitigation is required to offset any permitted loss of function.

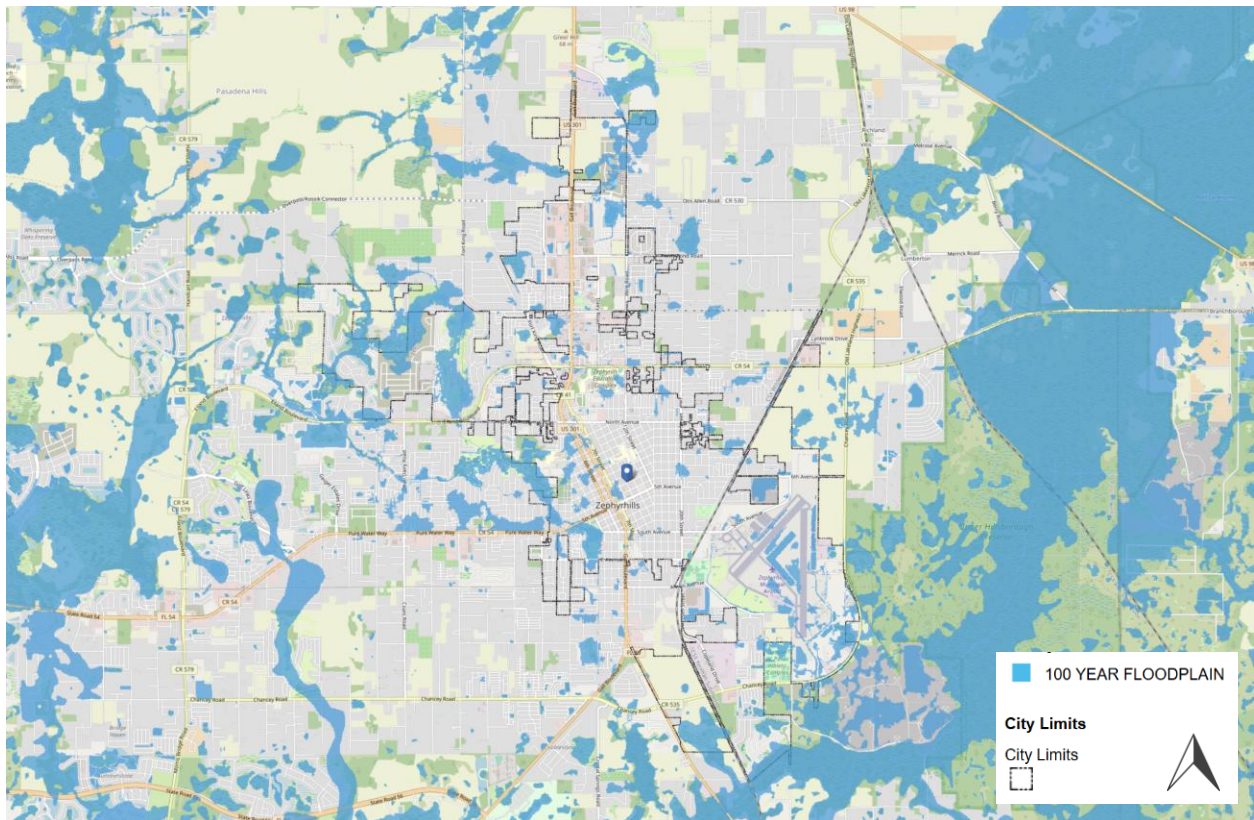


Figure CON-3 100-Year Floodplain. Source: Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) Database (2025).

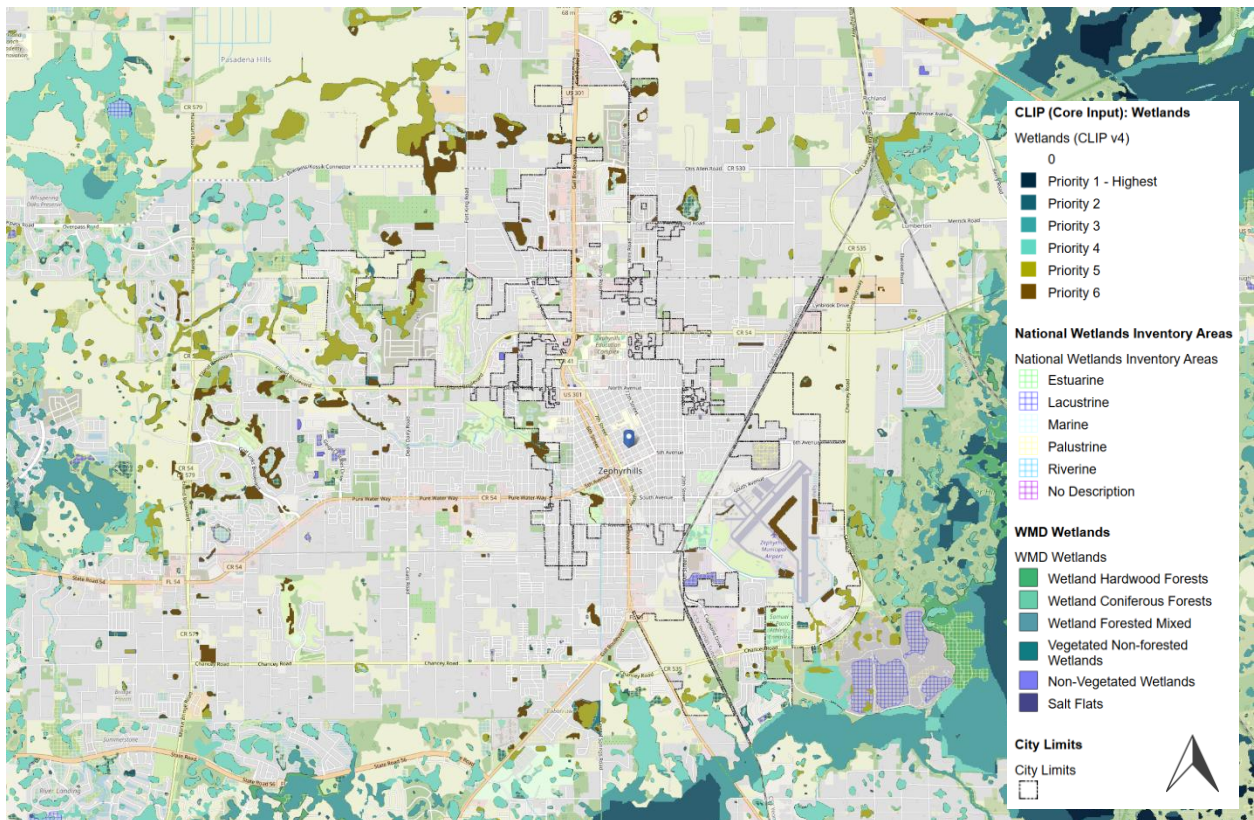


Figure CON-4 Wetlands. Sources: FNAI (2016), SWFWMD and FDEP (2023), and USFWS (2024).

Class III Wetlands are of lower ecological value and may be more flexibly managed. Impacts are allowed with appropriate mitigation measures, provided overall environmental goals are maintained.

The City adheres to a no net loss of wetlands standard. Development proposals that affect wetlands must demonstrate avoidance and minimization of impacts to the greatest extent feasible. Where impacts cannot be avoided, mitigation is required in accordance with the LDC and in coordination with SWFWMD and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as appropriate.

Aquifer Recharge Areas

Zephyrhills is located within a primary recharge area of the Floridan Aquifer, one of the most productive groundwater systems in the world and the principal source of potable water for Central Florida. The sustainability of this critical water supply depends directly on the health of local recharge areas, which allow rainfall and surface water to percolate into the subsurface and replenish the aquifer.

Recharge occurs most effectively in areas with permeable, sandy soils, minimal impervious surfaces, and limited human disturbance. In the Zephyrhills area, these conditions are primarily found in upland conservation lands and undeveloped tracts, many of which contain native vegetation and serve dual ecological functions as habitat and hydrologic buffers. These recharge zones are integral to the regional water supply and long-term environmental resilience.

SWFWMD has identified key groundwater features and established Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) to protect aquifer-dependent ecosystems and water users. Zephyrhills lies within the Northern Tampa Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management Area and currently meets established MFL standards. Continued growth, however, poses risks to groundwater quality and recharge potential.

Figure CON-5 on page 16 illustrates areas within and around Zephyrhills that exhibit high potential for recharge to the Floridan Aquifer, which supplies the region's potable water. The highest priority areas represent locations where recharge supports springs or public water supply wells. The recharge model, developed by Advanced Geospatial, Inc. and refined by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), incorporates key variables such as soil hydraulic conductivity, proximity to karst features, depth to groundwater, and overburden thickness. Discharge zones are excluded to emphasize true recharge capacity. The model was further prioritized using spatial overlaps with Springs Protection Areas and public wellfield buffers to support land acquisition and conservation planning under the Florida Forever program.

Figure CON-6 on page 16 presents DRASTIC data for the Floridan Aquifer System that illustrates the varying degrees of vulnerability to groundwater contamination across the landscape. DRASTIC is a standardized methodology jointly developed by the USEPA and the National Water Well Association (NWWA) to assess the potential for pollutants to reach an aquifer from surface sources. The model uses a range of hydrogeologic factors, including depth to water, net recharge, aquifer media, soil media, topography, impact of the vadose zone, and hydraulic conductivity, to produce a composite vulnerability index. The resulting map provides a color-coded depiction of areas that are more or less sensitive to surface contamination and land use changes, allowing for informed planning decisions to protect groundwater resources.

In Zephyrhills and the surrounding region, areas of higher vulnerability are often associated with shallow water tables and permeable soils, highlighting the importance of responsible land use and stormwater management practices to preserve aquifer integrity.

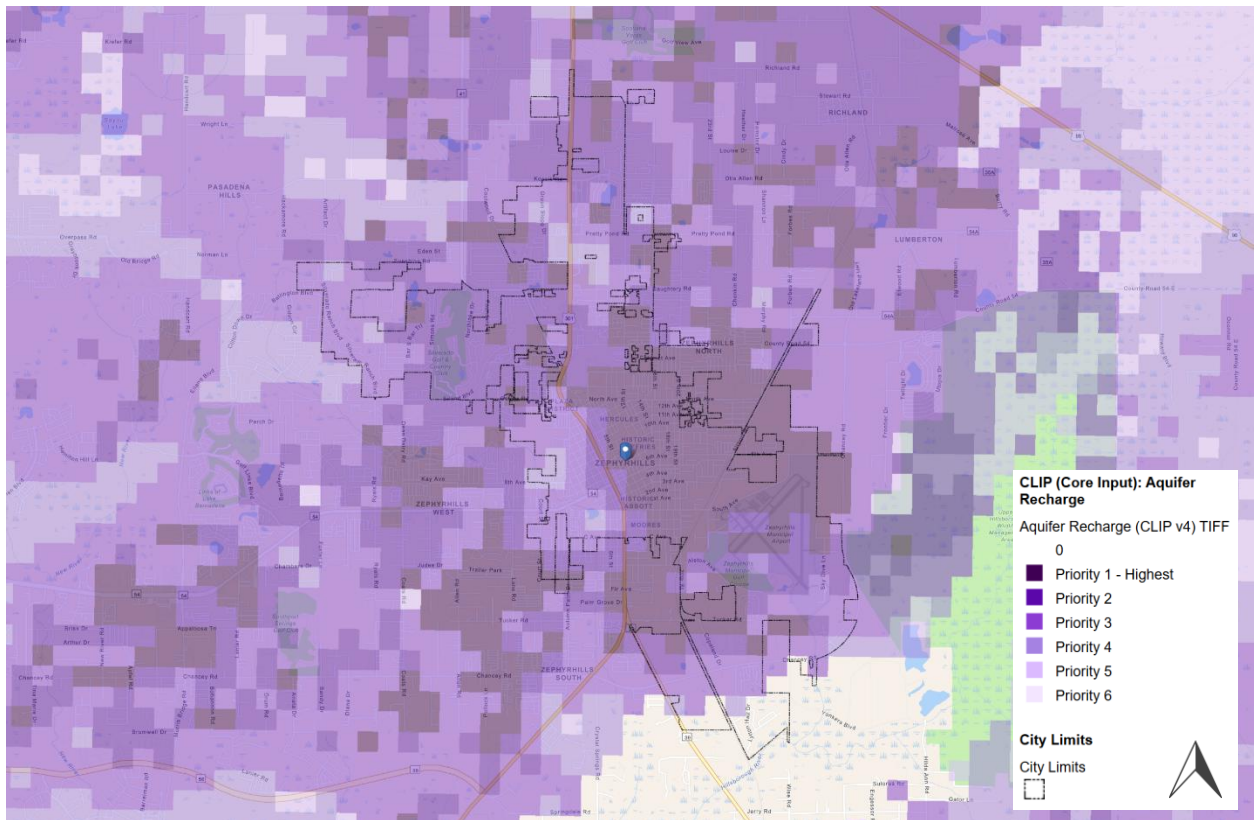


Figure CON-5 Aquifer Recharge. Source: Core Input Layers\Aquifer Recharge (CLIP v4) (2016).

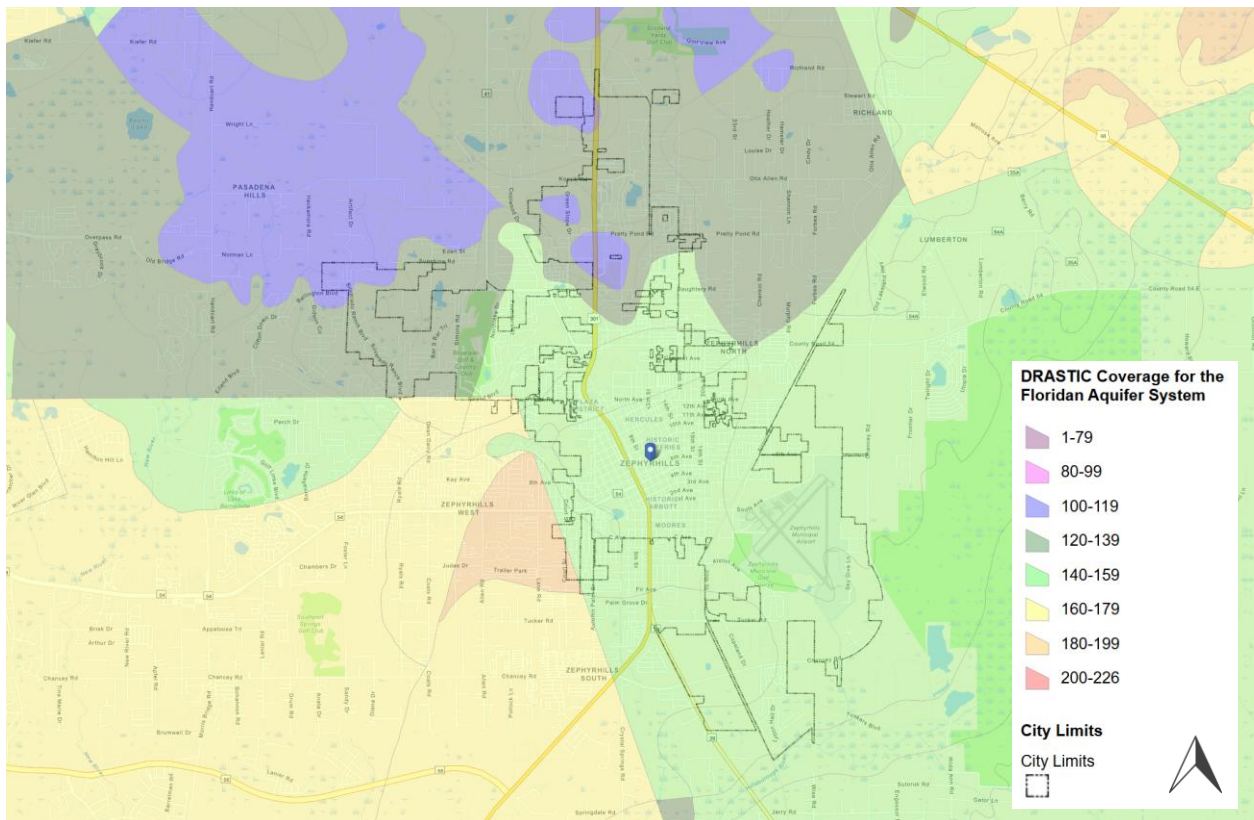


Figure CON-6 DRASTIC Vulnerability Areas of the Floridan Aquifer System. Source: FDEP (1998).

Biological Resources

Native Vegetation and Habitat

The Zephyrhills area historically supported a diverse mosaic of native plant communities representative of Central Florida's uplands and wetlands. Although extensive urban development has transformed much of the landscape, several remnant ecosystems persist within and surrounding the city. These remaining natural areas provide critical ecological functions, including habitat and connectivity for native and imperiled species, groundwater recharge, flood attenuation, and the preservation of regional biodiversity.

Native plant communities present in the Zephyrhills area today include:

SANDHILL

A fire-dependent upland ecosystem dominated by longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*), and wiregrass (*Aristida beyrichiana*). Sandhill habitats support a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including gopher tortoises and other species of conservation concern.

PINE FLATWOODS

Characterized by slash pine (*Pinus elliottii*), saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), and a variety of shrubs and herbaceous plants. These systems occur on poorly drained soils and are among the most widespread native communities in Central Florida.

FRESHWATER MARSH

Found in low-lying areas, these wetlands are dominated by emergent vegetation such as maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*) and pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*). They provide critical hydrologic functions, including stormwater retention, water filtration, and wildlife nursery habitat.

CYPRESS SWAMP

Forested wetlands dominated by bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), typically found along

floodplains and depressional basins. These swamps play a vital role in flood control and water quality and support amphibians, reptiles, and wading birds.

Two key datasets offer valuable insights into the distribution, extent, and condition of native vegetation in the Zephyrhills region. **Figure CON-7** on page 18 presents 2023 Cooperative Land Cover data, compiled from over 37 sources and reviewed by ecologists using high-resolution aerial imagery. This dataset reflects the most current understanding of land cover, incorporating both localized knowledge and standardized classifications.

Figure CON-8 on page 19 displays the 2004 Florida GAP (GFC) Habitat and Land Cover dataset, developed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). This earlier dataset includes 43 distinct vegetation and land cover types, spanning natural, semi-natural, and disturbed lands, as well as a single water class. Together, these figures allow for comparative analysis of habitat distribution, loss, and fragmentation over nearly two decades.

Wildlife Species

Zephyrhills lies within a biologically diverse region that supports a variety of native wildlife, including numerous species listed as imperiled under state and federal conservation frameworks. These species are an integral part of the area's ecological fabric and are primarily dependent on the region's remaining upland, scrub, and wetland habitats.

This section outlines the occurrence, regulatory status, and conservation needs of both state- and federally listed species that may be present within or adjacent to the city, and describes the policies, programs, and review procedures that guide the protection of these species during planning and development activities.

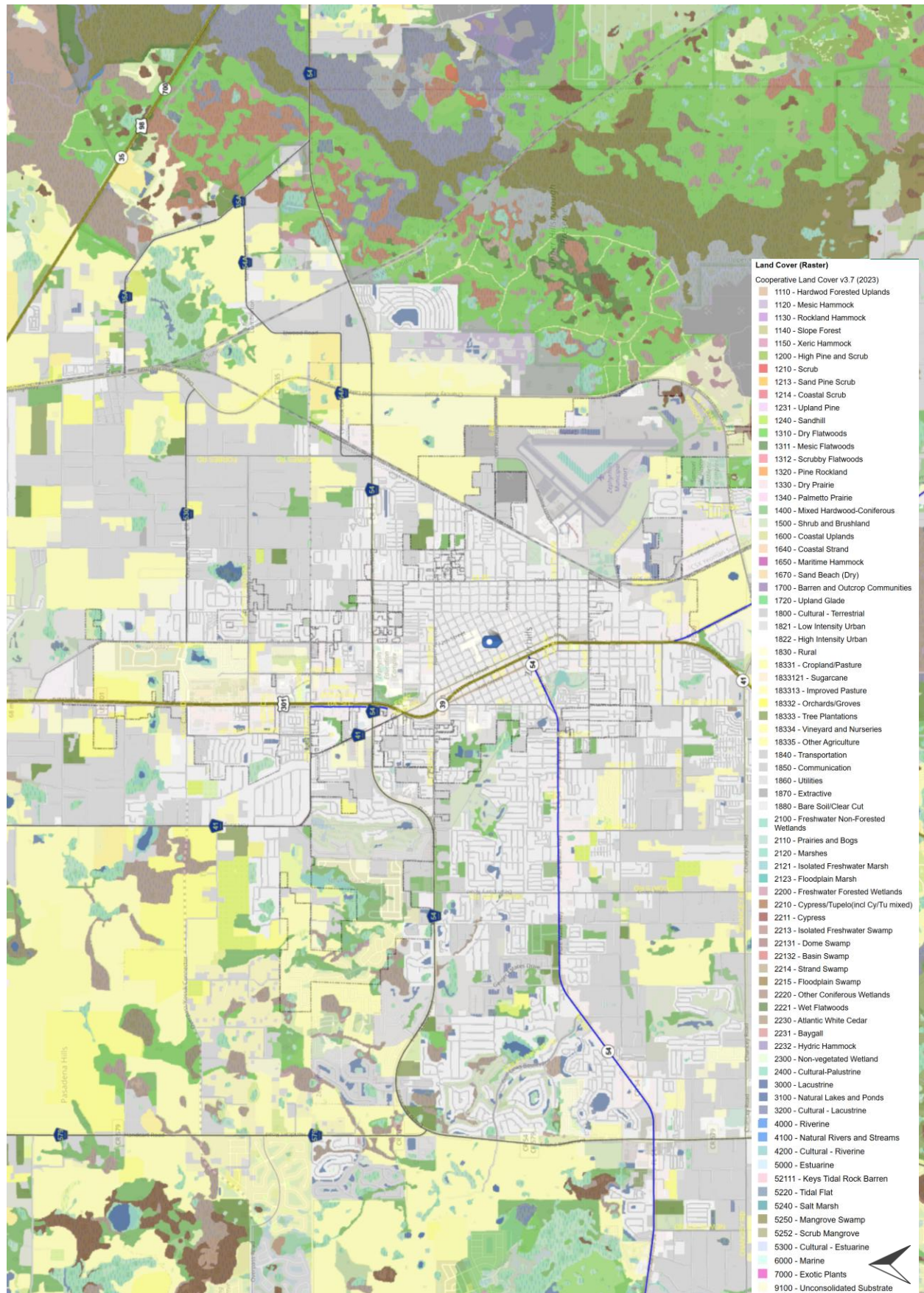


Figure CON-7 Cooperative Land Cover. Source: FDEP and SWFWMD (2023).

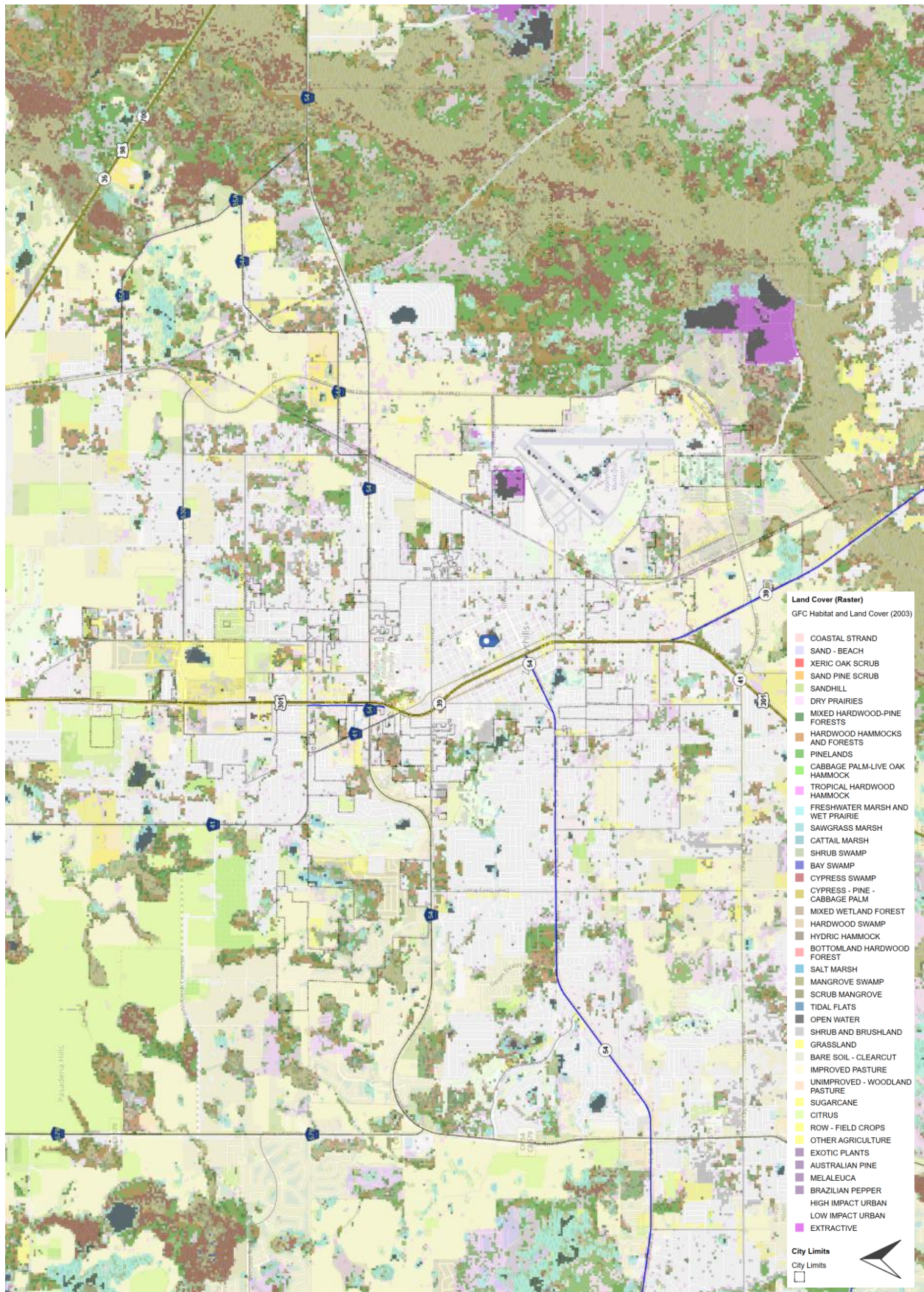


Figure CON-8 GFC Habitat and Land Cover. Source: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (2004).

STATE LISTED SPECIES

Areas within Zephyrhills provide important habitat for a variety of state-listed imperiled species, reflecting the region's ecological diversity and significance within Florida's broader conservation framework. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), imperiled species found in and around Zephyrhills align with the official state list of endangered and threatened species, as outlined in the Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP) and Species Action Plans (SAPs), originally adopted in 2013 and updated in December 2022.

State-designated threatened species documented in the area include the Florida Pine Snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*), Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), and Short-Tailed Snake (*Lampropeltis extenuata*), each of which depends on upland and scrub habitats characteristic of the region.

Avian species with threatened status observed locally include the Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia floridana*), Florida Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis pratensis*), Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum*), Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*), Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*), Southeastern American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*), and Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*).

The Sherman's Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger shermani*) is recognized by the FWC as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need, primarily due to habitat loss and fragmentation in longleaf pine and sandhill ecosystems. Portions of southeastern Pasco County, including areas near Zephyrhills, offer suitable habitat and warrant conservation attention to maintain viable populations.

In accordance with FWC regulations, all proposed development on vacant or previously undeveloped lands within potential habitat must undergo an environmental

inventory to identify the presence of listed species or their habitats. When gopher tortoises are discovered on development sites, relocation to FWC-permitted recipient sites is required prior to construction activities. Similarly, the Burrowing Owl, which has been historically documented at the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport, requires careful coordination to ensure continued compatibility with aviation use, including preservation of open grasslands where feasible.

The City also recognizes the functional role of engineered stormwater facilities, such as detention basins, in unintentionally supporting wildlife, including the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*), which—although no longer listed as a species of special concern—is protected due to similarity of appearance to the American crocodile.

Conservation planning and site design reviews incorporate updated GIS-based habitat models, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), and guidance from FWC and other relevant agencies to avoid and minimize impacts on imperiled species during the development review process.

FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES

In addition to state-designated imperiled species, the Zephyrhills area lies within the potential range of several federally listed species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Key federally listed species potentially present in the area include the Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), a federally threatened species associated with sandhill and upland pine habitats, and the Florida Bonneted Bat (*Eumops floridanus*), an endangered species dependent on specialized roosting sites such as tree cavities, buildings, and bat houses in semi-urbanized landscapes.

Other federally listed species that may utilize habitats within the broader Pasco County region include the Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*), a federally threatened wading bird that relies on wetlands for foraging and nesting, and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Leuconotopicus borealis*), a federally endangered species that inhabits mature pine forests.

While direct occurrence data within the developed core of Zephyrhills may be limited, the city's proximity to regional conservation lands and remnant native habitat increases the likelihood of seasonal or peripheral use by listed species. All federally funded or permitted projects within the City of Zephyrhills that may impact federally listed species or their habitat are subject to federal consultation under Section 7 or Section 10 of the ESA.

Through coordinated review with USFWS, FWC, and local agencies, and by adhering to conservation best practices, the City of Zephyrhills supports species recovery objectives while accommodating future development in a manner that preserves the region's ecological integrity.

Conservation Lands

There are currently no publicly owned conservation preserves within the City of Zephyrhills. However, adjacent lands offer significant ecological and recreational value that support regional conservation goals and benefit environmental health in the city (refer to **Figure CON-9** on page 22).

UPPER HILLSBOROUGH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

The *Upper Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area (WMA)* encompasses approximately 9,961 acres in southeastern Pasco and northwestern Polk Counties, immediately adjacent to the Zephyrhills city boundary. This conservation area is owned and managed by SWFWMD in cooperation with the Florida Fish

and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The Upper Hillsborough WMA plays a critical role in protecting the headwaters of the Hillsborough River, one of the region's most important water sources, and contributes to the ecological integrity of the broader Green Swamp ecosystem.

The Upper Hillsborough WMA includes a diverse array of native habitats, such as mesic pine flatwoods, hydric hammocks, floodplain swamps, and scrubby flatwoods. These ecosystems provide essential habitat for native wildlife, including state-listed species such as the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), as well as wild turkey, white-tailed deer, and numerous wading and upland bird species. The area's location within the *Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern* underscores its role in safeguarding the headwaters of five major rivers: the Hillsborough, Withlacoochee, Peace, Ocklawaha, and Kissimmee.

The floodplain and wetlands within the Upper Hillsborough WMA provide vital ecosystem services, including natural flood attenuation, aquifer recharge, and water filtration, thereby contributing to regional water quality and supply. The WMA also forms part of the *Hillsborough River Greenway*, supporting landscape connectivity and facilitating wildlife movement across otherwise fragmented habitats.

In addition to its ecological significance, the Upper Hillsborough WMA supports public access and recreation. Approximately 14 miles of multiuse trails are available for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. The area also permits seasonal hunting, freshwater fishing, wildlife viewing, and primitive camping. Permits or reservations are required for certain uses, with hunting activities regulated by FWC and other recreation managed through SWFWMD guidelines.

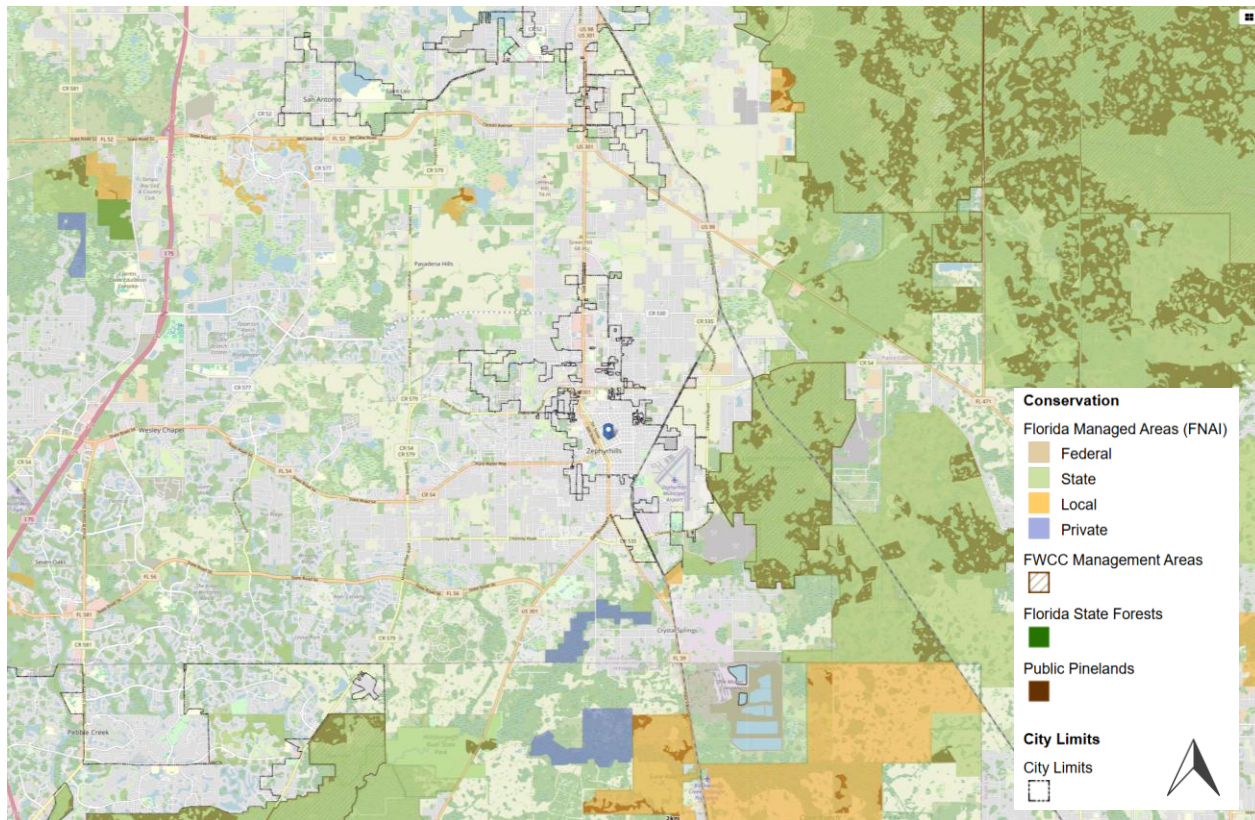


Figure CON-9 Conservation Areas. Source: FNAI and FWC (2024), Florida Forestry Service (2024), SWFWMD (2021).

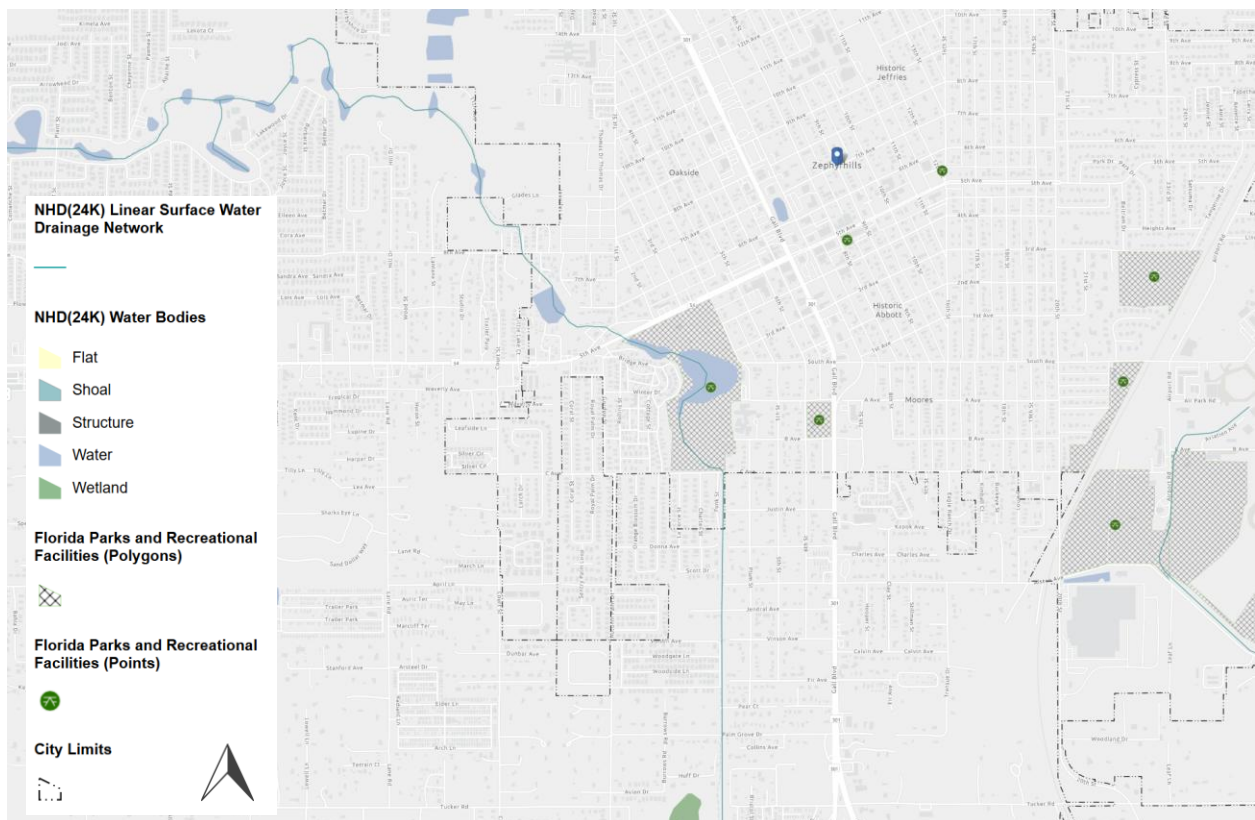


Figure CON-10 Zephyr Creek Corridor. Source: National Hydrography Dataset (2018).

Air and Energy Resources

Air Quality

Air quality in Zephyrhills is generally considered good to moderate, with occasional fluctuations influenced by weather patterns and regional pollution sources.

As of May 10, 2025, the Air Quality Index (AQI) for Zephyrhills is reported at 55, classified as "Moderate." This means air quality is generally acceptable; however, some pollutants may pose a concern for a limited number of sensitive individuals.

The primary pollutant is fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), measured at 11.6 µg/m³—approximately 2.3 times higher than the World Health Organization's recommended annual guideline. PM_{2.5} consists of microscopic particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and bloodstream, contributing to respiratory and cardiovascular issues over time.

While this level of air quality does not pose an immediate health risk for the general public, individuals with respiratory conditions, young children, and older adults may experience mild to moderate symptoms with prolonged exposure. Ongoing monitoring and mitigation strategies are important to protect public health, especially as the city grows and regional emissions sources evolve.

FDEP operates air quality monitoring stations in Pasco County, including sites in San Antonio and Holiday. These stations primarily monitor ozone (O₃) levels.

Energy Resources

Zephyrhills relies primarily on grid-supplied electrical power generated from a combination of natural gas, solar, and other sources distributed by utility providers such as Duke Energy and Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative. While the region does not contain significant fossil fuel extraction or

large-scale renewable energy generation facilities, the area's growing development pattern presents opportunities to enhance energy efficiency and expand the use of clean energy technologies.

Residential and commercial development in Zephyrhills increasingly incorporates energy-efficient building design, low-impact lighting, and HVAC systems that meet or exceed Florida Building Code energy standards. Solar energy is an emerging resource, with incentives from utilities and the federal government supporting adoption of rooftop photovoltaic systems, especially in new construction. Public facilities, including schools and municipal buildings, offer potential for pilot renewable energy installations or energy conservation retrofits.

On a regional scale, southeast Pasco County benefits from its location within the Tampa Electric (TECO) and Duke Energy Florida service areas, both of which are expanding renewable portfolios and investing in smart grid technologies.

3. Issues and Needs

Watershed Protection and Flood Resilience

More frequent and intense storm events combined with the growing extent of impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff heightens flood risk. These conditions contribute to inland flooding, especially in low-lying areas. In addition, surface waters within the Lake Zephyr basin and the airport drainage system have exhibited persistent water quality issues. If left unaddressed, these environmental stressors are likely to intensify with continued urban development and increasing climate variability. The resulting impacts pose threats to private property, public infrastructure, public safety, and the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Water Supply Sustainability

The City is approaching a critical threshold in its long-term potable water supply. According to the City of Zephyrhills 2022–2040 Water Supply Facilities Work Plan, the City’s current Water Use Permit (WUP No. 6040 issued by SWFWMD) authorizes an annual average withdrawal of 3.3084 million gallons per day (MGD) from the Upper Floridan aquifer. These permitted quantities are based on a reduced per-capita water use rate of 87 gallons per capita daily (GPCD), down from the previously reported rate of 103 GPCD. Despite this improved efficiency, projections indicate that potable water demand from existing, approved unbuilt, and proposed development under review may exceed the City’s permitted withdrawal by 2025–2030.

The forecasted deficit highlights the urgency of water supply sustainability. The City’s reliance on the Upper Floridan aquifer, already subject to regional stress and regulatory constraints, places additional pressure on local resource management. Compounding this issue is the vulnerability of critical aquifer recharge areas, which are predominantly sandy, highly permeable soils susceptible to development impacts such as impervious surfaces, soil compaction, and pollution (point and nonpoint sources).

Ecosystem Fragmentation

Despite proximity to the Upper Hillsborough WMA and the Lower Hillsborough Wilderness Preserve, both significant environmental resources, Zephyrhills lacks a coordinated green infrastructure network to support contiguous wildlife habitat and ecological functions. As the City’s remaining greenfield areas and adjacent potential annexation lands are developed, habitat fragmentation increasingly threatens native biodiversity and regional ecological connectivity. Native vegetation is often replaced by impervious surfaces, resulting in reduced tree canopy,

degraded habitat quality, and impaired stormwater infiltration and water quality. The absence of mapped environmental corridors further limits the City’s capacity to guide growth in an ecologically sensitive and sustainable manner.

4. Plan to Meet Needs

This section is in progress, pending PC input.

The strategies outlined in this section reflect the community’s highest priorities for ensuring that its natural systems and conservation resources are protected, enhanced, and managed in ways that respond to current environmental needs while remaining adaptable to future growth and climate challenges. These strategies and the goals, objectives, and policies presented in Section 5 provide a foundation for informed decision-making and long-term stewardship.

Watershed Protection and Flood Resilience Strategies

As greenfield areas in the City, including future annexation areas, continue to develop and extreme weather events becomes more frequent, coordinated actions are needed to reduce flood risk and improve watershed health. Strategies should enhance the natural capacity of landscapes to store and treat stormwater while guiding development away from vulnerable areas.

Sensitive Lands Overlays

Establish or expand overlay zones to regulate development in areas containing groundwater recharge zones, flood-prone conditions, and critical habitats.

These overlays should limit development intensity, require the clustering of development away from sensitive features, and mandate conservation easements, preferably contiguous with existing preserves and other protected conservation lands. The goal is to safeguard ecological resources,

reduce flood risk, and guide growth toward more resilient areas, thereby enhancing watershed function and long-term habitat conservation.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Low-Impact Site Design

Establish development standards for low-impact development (LID) techniques.

By requiring or encouraging the inclusion of features such as bioretention areas, permeable pavement, rain gardens, and green roofs, this strategy seeks to manage stormwater at its source, minimize impervious surfaces, and improve water quality. LID techniques replicate natural hydrological processes, promoting environmental sustainability and reducing the burden on existing infrastructure.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Floodplain and Riparian Area Restoration

Prioritize restoration of degraded floodplains, wetlands, and riparian buffers to enhance natural flood storage, reduce erosion, and improve water quality.

This strategy focuses on improving areas that have been changed by human activity to help prevent flooding, reduce soil erosion, and improve water quality. It works to restore these areas to their natural state by bringing back native plants, fixing water flows, and removing harmful species or barriers. These actions help stabilize riverbanks, filter polluted water, provide homes for wildlife, and make the area more resilient to flooding and climate change. The work can range from planting small areas along streams to creating larger wetlands and reconnecting floodplains. Regular monitoring and maintenance ensure

that these restored areas continue to function well over time and adapt as needed.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Floodplain Management Partnerships

Collaborate with SWFWMD and Pasco County to align flood control infrastructure, hydrological modeling, and upstream/downstream mitigation strategies.

By aligning infrastructure planning, watershed-based modeling, and flood risk mapping, this strategy enhances public safety, increases community resilience to flooding, and protects property and natural systems. Collaborative efforts facilitate development and implementation of cross-jurisdictional solutions, such as roadway drainage improvements, flood storage retrofits, and stream restoration, that account for upstream and downstream impacts. This regional approach could support efforts to restore degraded floodplains, relocate vulnerable properties, and reduce long-term public liabilities associated with repetitive flood losses.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Water Supply Sustainability Strategies

Zephyrhills faces a critical water supply challenge. Demand is projected to exceed permitted withdrawals by 2025-2030. Long-term sustainability depends on managing demand, protecting groundwater recharge areas, diversifying supply, and reducing pollution risks.

Recharge Area Protection

Identify and preserve critical aquifer recharge zones through zoning overlays,

conservation easements, and voluntary land acquisition.

Encourage clustering and compact development to minimize soil compaction and impervious surfaces in these zones....

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Groundwater Pollution Prevention

Implement strict best management practices (BMPs) for fertilizer, pesticide, and stormwater management in recharge-sensitive areas. Consider enhanced regulations in industrial and agricultural zones.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Demand Management and Conservation Incentives

Promote Florida Water Star certification, tiered utility rates, and conservation rebates for high-efficiency fixtures. Launch public education campaigns on water conservation and irrigation best practices.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Regional Water Supply Coordination

Actively engage in regional water supply planning efforts to diversify supply sources and reduce overdependence on the Upper Floridan Aquifer.

This strategy includes collaboration with SWFWMD, neighboring utility districts, and other stakeholders to develop and implement integrated water resource strategies. Efforts could focus on supporting and advancing the development of alternative water supplies, such as reclaimed water reuse and stormwater capture. By coordinating alternative supply projects within a broader regional framework,

the plan promotes resource sharing, cost-effectiveness, and system reliability.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Ecosystem Linkages Strategies

The city must proactively protect high-value ecosystems, especially those near annexation areas and environmental preserves, through improved data, land use policies, and strategic investment.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Green Infrastructure Plan

Develop a citywide green infrastructure plan to preserve and connect ecological assets. The plan could include urban canopy protection, greenway development, stormwater green infrastructure, and habitat corridors.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Environmental Land Acquisition & Partnerships

Coordinate with the Pasco County Environmental Lands Acquisition And Management Program (ELAMP) and regional land trusts to identify and prioritize land for voluntary conservation or acquisition, including within the Joint Planning Area.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Land Conservation Mechanisms

Expand use of tools such as transfer of development rights (TDR), conservation easements, and incentive zoning to protect sensitive lands from development while supporting property rights.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Environmental Impact Reviews for Annexations

Require hydrological, ecological, and cumulative impact assessments for all proposed annexations and major development approvals within or adjacent to sensitive habitats.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Regional Habitat Coordination

Partner with SWFWMD, Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation, and other agencies to identify and protect wildlife corridors and integrate habitat connectivity goals into transportation and land use planning.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON 1.X.X. Title
CON 1.X.X. Title

Open Space Requirements

Update development regulations to require open space that supports aquifer recharge, passive recreation, stormwater management, and habitat preservation. Tailor standards by zoning district and encourage open space connectivity. commercial, multifamily, and civic developments. Provide incentives for developments that exceed minimum standards.

POLICY REFERENCE

CON Policy 1.11: Open Space Requirements
CON Policy 1.6: Green Infrastructure Plan

5. Goal, Objectives, and Policies

The Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Conservation Element establish a framework for the long-term protection and enhancement of valued natural resources in the City of Zephyrhills. This element is designed to guide responsible environmental stewardship, support sustainable growth, and ensure the continued availability of clean air, water, and open space for the health, safety, and welfare of current and future generations.

Unless otherwise stated, all Goals, Objectives, and Policies apply to the City of Zephyrhills and its incorporated area.

Note: Images included in this section are for illustrative purposes only and do not constitute official City policy.

GOAL CON 1. CONSERVATION

Protect, conserve, and enhance natural resources in Zephyrhills—including high-quality groundwater recharge areas, native upland ecosystems, and habitats within the Hillsborough River watershed—to support long-term environmental quality, public health, and community resilience.

Objective CON 1.1. Air Quality

Achieve and maintain air quality levels that meet or exceed federal and state standards.

POLICIES

It shall be the City's policy to:

CON 1.1.1. Air Quality Monitoring and Compliance

Coordinate with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other relevant agencies to monitor local air quality and ensure compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards as established in the Florida Administrative Code.

CON 1.1.2. Transportation Emission Reduction

Manage transportation-related emissions by prioritizing compact, mixed-use development and transportation solutions that reduce vehicle miles traveled, promoting low-emission travel modes like walking, bicycling, and public transit, optimizing traffic flow through network connectivity, and coordinating with Go Pasco to expand public transportation options.

CON 1.1.3. Protection of Sensitive Uses

Incorporate air quality considerations into land use planning and development review processes, with emphasis on minimizing exposure near sensitive land uses such as schools, healthcare facilities, and residential neighborhoods.

CON 1.1.4. Urban Forestry and Tree Canopy Enhancement

Promote the expansion of the urban tree canopy through street tree programs, tree preservation ordinances, and incentives for planting native and climate-adapted species that improve air quality, reduce heat island effects, and increase carbon sequestration.

CON 1.1.5. Construction Dust and Particulate Matter Control

Require the use of best management practices to reduce dust, fugitive particulates, and equipment emissions during construction and site development activities.

CON 1.1.6. Stationary Source Impact Review

Review proposed land development activities that involve stationary air pollution sources for potential impacts to adjacent land uses, public health, and environmental resources, and ensure coordination with state permitting requirements.

Objective CON 1.2. Wetlands and Surface Waters

Protect and conserve wetland and surface water resources to sustain their ecological functions, support water quality, mitigate flooding, and enhance the community's natural character.

POLICIES

It shall be the City's policy to:

CON 1.2.1. Regulatory Consistency and Local Standards

Adopt and enforce local wetland and surface water protection standards that are consistent with or exceed applicable state and regional regulations, including coordination with the SWFWMD and FDEP.

CON 1.2.2. Identification and Evaluation

Require the identification, delineation, and functional assessment of wetlands and surface waters as part of all annexation, land use amendment, rezoning, and site development applications. Evaluations must include location, boundary, size, classification, ecological function, water quality value, and existing or potential incompatible land uses.

CON 1.2.3. Wetland and Surface Water Buffers

Establish minimum buffers between development and delineated wetlands or surface waters, including a 50-foot setback from rivers, tributaries, and Outstanding Florida Waters, and a 30-foot buffer from wetlands over 40,000 square feet. Buffers may be used for setback and landscaping requirements but not for impervious surfaces.

CON 1.2.4. Impact Avoidance and Minimization

Direct incompatible land uses away from wetlands and surface waters, especially Category I wetlands. Land development activities shall be located and designed to

avoid and minimize direct and indirect impacts, including hydrological disruption, pollution, and habitat fragmentation.

CON 2.1.5. No Net Loss of Wetlands

Ensure the long-term protection of wetland resources by maintaining a no net loss goal for wetland area, ecological value, and function. Where impacts are unavoidable, require mitigation consistent with state and federal regulations that achieves equal or greater ecological function. All mitigation must include enforceable provisions for long-term stewardship, monitoring, and maintenance to ensure lasting environmental benefit.

CON 1.2.6. Conservation-Oriented Site Design

Promote the use of conservation subdivisions and cluster development techniques on properties with significant wetland resources to minimize environmental impact and preserve the integrity of wetland systems. Encourage site designs that concentrate development away from sensitive areas and protect wetlands in perpetuity through conservation easements or similar legal mechanisms. Consider providing density or intensity bonuses for developments that prioritize long-term ecological preservation, connectivity of natural systems, and integration of open space into the community fabric.

CON 1.1.7. Industrial Development Siting

Discourage industrial development adjacent to wetlands, with particular emphasis on protecting Category I wetlands. Permit such development only when it can be demonstrated that it will not result in significant adverse impacts to the ecological integrity or function of these sensitive resources.

CON 1.2.8. Infrastructure Planning

Locate and design public infrastructure projects to minimize impacts to wetlands and surface waters, with special attention to preserving Category I wetlands and protecting water quality.

CON 1.2.9. Hydrologic Connectivity and Water Quality Protection

Ensure that all development activities within the contributing areas of wetlands and surface waters protect hydrologic connections and maintain surface and groundwater quality. Alterations to drainage patterns shall be minimized and evaluated for cumulative impacts on wetland health and habitat.

CON 1.2.10. Stream Corridor Enhancement Initiative

Identify and implement opportunities to enhance the ecological function, water quality, flood resilience, and aesthetic character of Indian Creek, a tributary to Lake Zephyr and the Hillsborough River, to support regional biodiversity, protect downstream water quality, and strengthen the overall resilience of the watershed.

Objective CON 1.3. Groundwater Resources and Potable Water Sustainability

Protect and sustain groundwater resources, including the Floridan Aquifer, as the primary source of potable water through coordinated land use planning, best management practices, conservation strategies, and interagency collaboration to ensure long-term water supply quality and availability.

POLICIES

It shall be the City's policy to:

CON 1.3.1. Groundwater Quality Protection

Prohibit hazardous waste disposal and regulate land uses that may pose

contamination risks to groundwater resources, with special protection afforded to wellhead protection zones, high recharge areas, and vulnerable soils.

CON 1.3.2. Aquifer and Wellfield Protection

Maintain and enforce wellfield protection regulations that limit pollutant-generating uses in the vicinity of potable water supply wells, and protect the underlying aquifer from contamination, to ensure the long-term viability of existing and future potable water sources for the City.

CON 1.3.3. Groundwater Recharge and Low Impact Development

Encourage and require site design practices that enhance natural groundwater recharge and minimize runoff through the use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques. These may include preserving native vegetation, limiting impervious surfaces, depaving underutilized impervious paved areas, and incorporating features such as pervious pavement, infiltration-based stormwater systems, bioswales, rain gardens, and infiltration trenches in new development and redevelopment.

CON 1.3.4. Water-Efficient Landscaping and Maintenance

Require certification under the Florida Water StarSM program, as applicable, to ensure environmentally responsible landscaping and irrigation practices in new construction. Encourage the use of Florida-Friendly LandscapingTM principles and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries to further reduce outdoor potable water use.

CON 1.3.5. Water Conservation Programs

Support and expand public education, incentive programs, and conservation rate structures to reduce per capita potable water use.

CON 1.3.7. Alternative Water Sources for Non-Potable Use

Promote the use of the lowest quality water reasonably available, such as reclaimed water or stormwater, for non-potable purposes such as irrigation, cooling, and construction.

CON 1.3.8. Coordination for Regional Water Supply

Coordinate with SWFWMD, neighboring jurisdictions, and regional water suppliers for long-range water supply planning, including participation in updates to the City's 10-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan.

CON 1.3.9. Groundwater Protection and Land Use Compatibility

Ensure future land use decisions consider groundwater vulnerability, particularly in high aquifer recharge areas, through appropriate zoning and design standards and development review processes.

CON 1.3.10. Water Supply Resiliency in Drought Conditions

Implement drought contingency measures and water conservation practices pursuant to applicable Florida Administrative Code provisions and integrate them into utility and emergency planning protocols.

CON 1.3.11. Monitoring and Enforcement

Monitor compliance with water quality protection standards, including development conditions related to water use and discharges, and take corrective action as necessary in collaboration with appropriate regulatory agencies.

CON 1.3.12. Collaboration for Water Resource Protection

Coordinate with SWFWMD, FDEP, and other relevant agencies to implement shared objectives related to groundwater protection, surface water quality, and potable water sustainability.

Objective CON 1.4. Soils and Vegetation

Conserve and enhance the natural functions of native soils and vegetative communities through development practices that minimize erosion, protect upland habitats and wildlife, and sustain ecological integrity across jurisdictions.

POLICIES

It shall be the City's policy to:

CON 1.4.1. Soil Protection and Erosion Control

Require development to implement best management practices to minimize soil disturbance and erosion, including the use of erosion and sediment control measures during construction.

CON 1.4.2. Native Vegetation Preservation

Require the identification and preservation of native vegetative communities, including significant upland habitats and mature native trees, in all development proposals, to the maximum extent feasible.

CON 1.4.3. Natural Resource Assessments

Require site-specific natural resource assessments to identify soil types, vegetative communities, and wildlife habitat prior to site plan approval, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas.

CON 1.4.4. Coordination for Habitat Conservation

Annually coordinate with neighboring local governments and relevant agencies (e.g., Pasco County, SWFWMD, and FWC) to conserve and manage vegetative communities and habitat systems that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

CON 1.4.5. Natural Areas Inventory

Maintain and regularly update an inventory of significant natural areas and habitats to guide planning, development review, and conservation initiatives.

CON 1.4.6. Enforcement of Water Conservation Orders

Support ecosystem resilience by enforcing emergency water conservation orders issued by the SWFWMD and promoting long-term water-wise landscaping practices.

Objective CON 1.5. Wildlife and Habitat

Protect listed species and their habitats, maintain ecological connectivity between natural areas within and beyond the city boundary, and ensure the long-term viability of native plant and wildlife populations through appropriate land use, development review, mitigation strategies, and stewardship of natural systems.

POLICIES

It shall be the City's policy to:

CON 1.5.1. Species and Habitat Review

Evaluate development proposals for potential impacts to listed species and native habitats. Require biological surveys, use state and federal data sources for species and habitat identification, and apply mitigation measures consistent with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) guidance.

CON 1.5.2. Interagency Coordination

Coordinate with the FDEP, SWFWMD, FWC, USFWS, and other appropriate agencies to support conservation planning, regulatory compliance, and long-term habitat stewardship.

CON 1.5.3. Ecological Connectivity

Incorporate ecological corridors and wildlife passage considerations into land use and infrastructure planning. Prioritize ecological connections to regional conservation areas, including the Florida Wildlife Corridor, Upper Hillsborough Wildlife Management Area, and the Hillsborough River Corridor, to maintain and enhance habitat connectivity and support biodiversity.

CON 1.5.4. Habitat Avoidance and Mitigation

Direct development away from sensitive natural communities and habitat for listed species. Where impacts are unavoidable, require mitigation that achieves no net loss of ecological function, including in-kind habitat restoration, conservation easements, and long-term management plans with monitoring requirements.

CON 1.5.5. Native Landscaping and Invasive Species Control

Promote the use of native species in all landscaping plans to support food webs, maintain biodiversity, and provide essential habitat for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. Prohibit the use of invasive species and coordinate with regional and state agencies on invasive species eradication programs.

CON 1.5.6. Protection of Conservation Lands

Ensure adjacent development does not degrade existing conservation lands by requiring appropriate setbacks, buffers, and design measures to prevent encroachment,

wildlife barriers, and degradation of habitat quality.

CON 1.5.7. Public Education and Stewardship

Promote awareness of wildlife protection efforts through public education campaigns that emphasize the value of native habitats, proper land management practices, and opportunities for community involvement in conservation.

CON 1.5.8. Environmental Management Planning

Require Environmental Management Plans for developments adjacent to or within areas of high ecological value. These plans shall identify strategies for habitat conservation, stormwater infiltration, fire management, and long-term invasive species control.

Objective CON 1.6. Hazardous Materials Management

Ensure the safe handling, storage, collection, and disposal of hazardous materials to protect groundwater, surface waters, and environmentally sensitive areas, and safeguard public health in coordination with county, regional, state, and federal partners.

POLICIES

It shall be the City’s policy to:

CON 1.6.1. Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Prohibit the storage, treatment, or disposal of hazardous waste in areas identified as high aquifer recharge zones, wetlands, floodplains, or wellhead protection areas.

CON 1.6.2. Hazardous Waste Management Plan

Implement the Pasco County Hazardous Waste Management Plan in coordination with FDEP to ensure local consistency with regional and state strategies for hazardous waste control.

CON 1.6.3. Facility Standards and Spill Prevention

Require facilities that use or store hazardous substances to follow best management practices (BMPs), including spill containment, leak detection, secondary containment, and emergency response protocols.

CON 1.6.4. Household Hazardous Waste Disposal

Partner with Pasco County to provide residents with education, outreach, and convenient opportunities for the safe disposal of household hazardous waste through coordinated collection events and drop-off services.

CON 1.6.5. Interagency Coordination

Coordinate with FDEP, EPA, and other appropriate agencies to ensure compliance with hazardous waste regulations and to support monitoring, enforcement, and remediation efforts within the city.

Objective CON 1.7 Mineral Resources Management

Support the efficient and responsible extraction of mineral resources in a manner that protects natural systems, preserves water quality, and ensures the safe and beneficial reuse of mined lands.

POLICIES

It shall be the City’s policy to:

CON 1.7.1 Site Compatibility and Environmental Protection and

Require that new or expanded mineral extraction activities minimize adverse environmental and community impacts through compliance with applicable land development regulations and environmental performance standards.

CON 1.7.2. Protection of Water Resources

Oppose mining activities that present a significant risk to groundwater quality, aquifer recharge areas, or wetland systems, including those that may contribute to saltwater intrusion or long-term hydrologic changes.

CON 1.7.3. Post-Mining Reclamation Planning

Coordinate with Pasco County and applicable regulatory agencies to ensure that approved reclamation plans for mineral extraction sites located within or near the city:

- a. Avoid conflicts with the operation and future expansion of the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport;
- b. Protect the viability of the Zephyrhills Industrial Corridor manufacturing and employment center; and
- c. Promote land use compatibility and appropriate transitions between post-reclamation land uses and adjacent public conservation lands and sensitive natural ecosystems.

