



Veranda Landings
Landscape Modification
Project No. P25-029



Project Location Map

SUMMARY

Applicant's Request:	The request is to provide landscaping in lieu of a wall for a 310' long segment of the overall 1,430' eastern property line that abuts Veranda Gardens per Section 154.12 of the City of Port St. Lucie Code of Ordinances.
Applicant:	Dennis Murphy, Culpepper & Terpening, Inc.
Property Owner:	Veranda Landings Homeowners Association, Inc.
Location:	The property is located southeast of SE Veranda Place and north of the Martin County line.
Application Type:	Landscape Modification, Quasi-Judicial
Project Planner:	Bethany Grubbs, AICP, Senior Planner

Project Description

The applicant is requesting to provide landscaping in lieu of a wall as per Section 154.12 of the Landscape and Land Clearing Code. A wall is required in a landscape buffer strip where multi-family development abuts property to the side which is designated with single-family zoning or PUD zoning or single-family uses per Section 154.03(C)(5) of the Landscaping Code. The request is to provide landscaping in lieu of a wall for a 310' long segment of the overall 1,430' eastern property line that abuts Veranda Gardens.

The subject property is situated on the south side of the intersection of SE Becker Road and SE Veranda Place. It is designated for Residential Golf Course (RGC) land use on the future land use map and is zoned as a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Veranda Landings (P21-176), a townhome community, occupies approximately 25 acres and includes 230 townhome lots. The eastern landscape buffer, installed and inspected in 2023, has had several years to mature as the development nears completion.

Review Criteria

An application for a landscape modification is reviewed for consistency with Article I of the Landscape and Land Clearing Code, Section 154.12. Pursuant to Section 154.12(F)1, the exemption or modification to landscape buffer wall requirement is exempted from City Council review.

Review by Planning and Zoning Board: Requests to substitute landscaping for an architectural wall that is a required feature of a landscape buffer strip shall be considered by the Planning and Zoning Board at a public hearing. The procedures outlined in section 154.12(B)-(E) shall be utilized for such hearings. Final action on the application (approval or denial) is in the form of an Order of the Planning and Zoning Board following a quasi-judicial public hearing.

Public Notice Requirements (Section 158.298 (B))

Public notice was mailed to owners within 750 feet and the file was included in the ad for the Planning & Zoning Board's agenda.

Location and Site Information

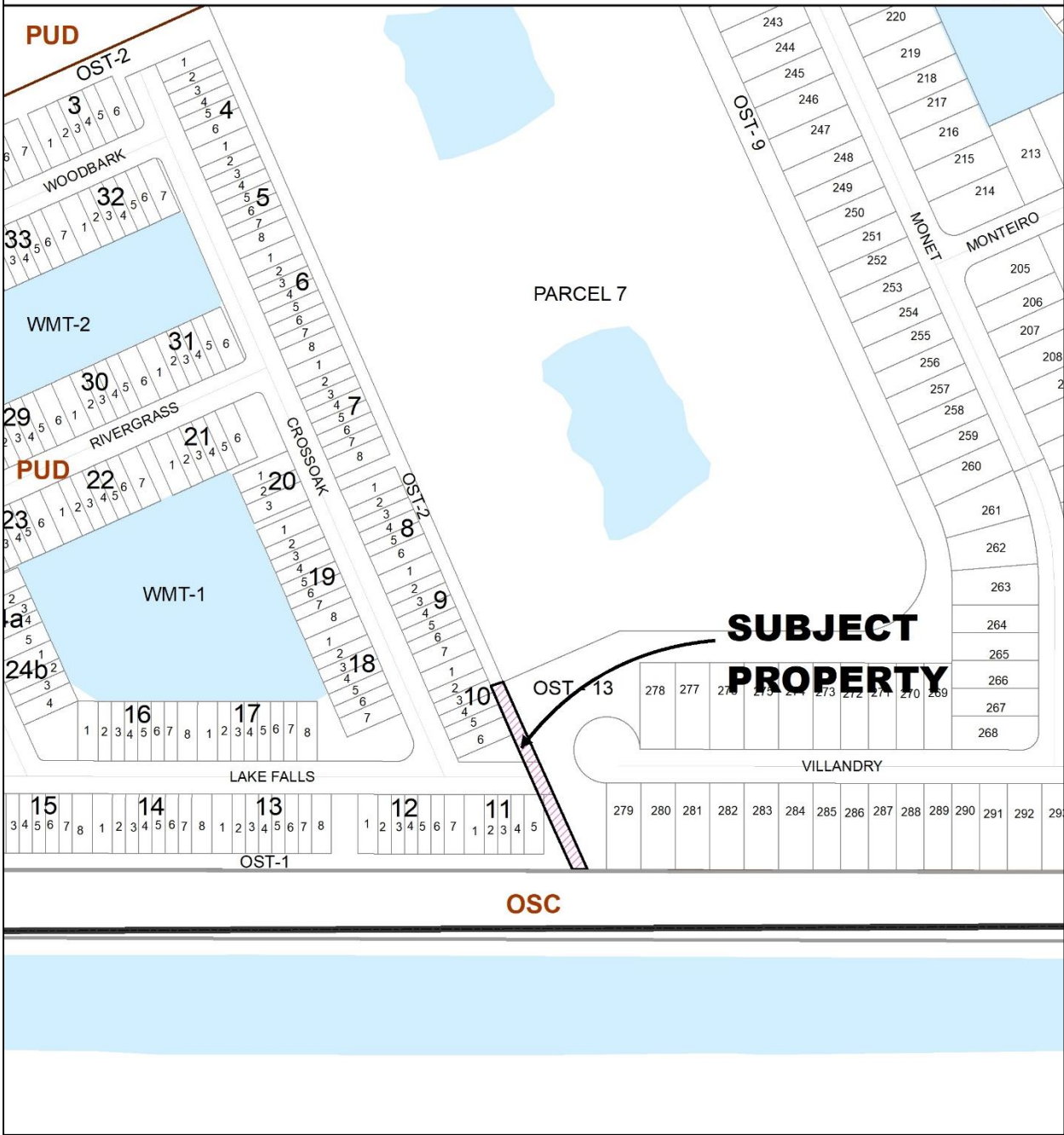
Parcel Number(s):	4434-705-0001-000-6, 4434-705-0236-000-2, 4434-705-0002-000-3
Property Size:	N/A
Legal Description:	Veranda Plat No. 9 OST-1, OS-2, and Road Right-of-Way (OR Book 110, Page 7)
Address:	267 & 271 SE Woodbark Street
Future Land Use:	RGC (Residential Golf Course)
Existing Zoning:	PUD (Planned Unit Development)
Existing Use:	Landscape Buffer

Surrounding Uses

Direction	Future Land Use	Zoning	Existing Use
North	RGC	PUD	Veranda Landings Townhomes, Volaris Apartments
South	RGC	OSC	Water Management District Canal
East	RGC	PUD	Single-Family Residences
West	RGC	PUD	Veranda Landings Townhomes

RGC – Residential Golf Course, PUD – Planned Unit Development, OSC – Open Space Conservation

EXISTING ZONING



Zoning Map



IMPACTS AND FINDINGS

Section 154.12 (B) of the Landscape and Land Clearing Code establishes the duties of the Planning and Zoning Board in authorizing a landscape modification. The Planning and Zoning Board may authorize a landscape modification from the provisions of the Landscape and Land Clearing Code. Requests for landscape exemption or modification to landscape buffer wall requirements will be based on review of detailed plans identifying the size, quantity, and location of the vegetation to be preserved and installed along the proposed site's boundaries, the use(s) proposed for the property seeking the modification or exemption, and the proposed and existing uses surrounding uses. The Planning and Zoning Board should consider the criteria listed under Section 154.12 (B) of the Landscape and Clearing Code. The applicant's response to this criterion is attached to the application. Staff's review is provided below:

Compatibility with exemption or modification to landscape buffer wall criteria Section 154.12 (B).

- 1) The total area dedicated to a buffer will be greater than what the code would impose without the modification.
 - *Staff Findings: The total area dedicated to the buffer will meet, but not exceed, the code's requirements. The proposed buffer is 20 feet wide. However, the height of the landscape buffer, consisting of mature vegetation, surpasses the minimum dimensional requirements outlined in the code. The existing vegetation along the property boundary, planted several years ago, has matured well beyond the minimum standards. It exceeds the required six-foot elevation for visual screening between the two residential developments. Preserving this buffer will maintain adequate separation between uses and ensure the landscape buffer continues to work as intended.*
- 2) Outside activities and hours of operation for the proposed use(s).
 - *Staff Findings: The proposed townhome development is residential in nature and shares similar activity patterns, which are low levels of off-site impact, especially in terms of outdoor activity and nighttime operations. However, under the City of Port St. Lucie Code, buffering is required between multi-family and single-family residential uses to ensure compatibility. Given that both uses are residential and that the existing mature vegetation already provides a dense, opaque screen, the intent and purpose of the buffer is being met without the need for a 6-foot wall.*
- 3) Natural and man-made features or uses that provide distance and separation from those existing uses to be buffered.
 - *Staff Findings: The property is sufficiently buffered from neighboring single-family residences. A 310-foot segment of the property is adjacent to the Veranda Gardens Open Space Tract 13, followed by two residential properties. The southernmost residence is approximately 30 feet from the property line, while the northernmost is around 208 feet away. Additionally, mature vegetation planted several years ago now forms an opaque barrier, effectively enhancing the separation between the properties. According to the approved landscape plan, the 20-foot buffer includes the following mature plantings: five Southern Live Oaks, four Southern Magnolias, three Highrise Live Oaks, eight Sabal Palms, and eleven Slash Pines, along with an opaque continuous hedge row of clusias that have matured to 6 feet in height.*
- 4) Other factors that may be important to a decision.

- *Staff Findings: The length of Veranda Landings' eastern property line affected by this standard is approximately 310 feet, out of a total of 1,430 feet. The remaining portion of the eastern property line abuts the Mason at Veranda Falls apartment community and is therefore not subject to the multi-family versus single-family buffer requirement.*

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD ACTION OPTIONS

The Board may choose to approve, deny or table the proposed landscape modification. If the Board finds that the application is consistent with the criteria as listed in Section 154.12 (B) of the City code (listed above), then the Board may:

- Motion to approve
- Motion to approve with conditions

If the Board does move to recommend approval of the application, staff recommends approval with the following condition of approval:

- 1. Prior to the final Planning and Zoning building inspection approval, the applicant shall submit a revised landscape plan indicating that the hedges in this location be maintained at a minimum height of six feet.**

If the Board finds that the landscape modification application is inconsistent with the criteria as listed in Section 154.12 (B) of the City code, then the Board may:

- Motion to deny

Should the Board need further clarification or information from either the applicant and/or staff, the Board may:

- Motion to table or continue the hearing or review to a future meeting

(NOTE TO APPLICANTS: Any request that is denied by the Planning and Zoning Board may be appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Appeal applications are made through the City Clerk's office and must be submitted within 15 days after the Planning and Zoning Board hearing).