



**St. Lucie Battery & Tire @ Gatlin Blvd.
Landscape Modification
Project Number: P23-094**



Project Aerial Map

SUMMARY

Applicant's Request:	To waive the requirement for an architectural buffer wall on the northwest corner of the site along SW Medlock Ave.
Applicant:	Darren Guettler
Property Owner:	SLBT Land Holdings, LLC.
Location:	North of SW Gatlin Blvd. & east of SW Edgarce St.
Application Type: (Identify if quasi-judicial)	Landscape Modification, Quasi-Judicial
Project Planner:	Bianca Lee

Project Description

The applicant is requesting a waiver to the architectural buffer wall requirement as per Section 154.12 of the Landscape and Land Clearing Code. The proposed development abuts residential property along the north side of the property, on SW Medlock Avenue. A wall is required in a landscape buffer strip where residential uses abut the property to the side or rear per Section 154.03(C)5 of the Landscape and Land Clearing Code. The subject property, approximately 1.22 acres in size, has an approved site plan (P07-366-A1) to add a tire and battery store to the existing oil change business. The property is located north of SW Gatlin Blvd. & east of SW Edgarce St. The applicant is proposing a landscape modification to substitute landscaping for a 6-foot-high masonry wall within the 10-foot-wide landscape buffer area along the northwest corner of the site.

Background

A minor site plan amendment (P07-366-A1) to add the 4,896 square foot tire and battery store to the site plan with the existing oil change business was approved by the Site Plan Review Committee on February 23, 2022. The buffer wall is existing along the majority of the northern property line, with the exception of the 12-foot-wide drainage easement that is located along the western property line. The site plan amendment and landscape plan show the architectural buffer wall extending to the western property line over the existing drainage pipe located within the 12-foot-wide drainage easement.

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.

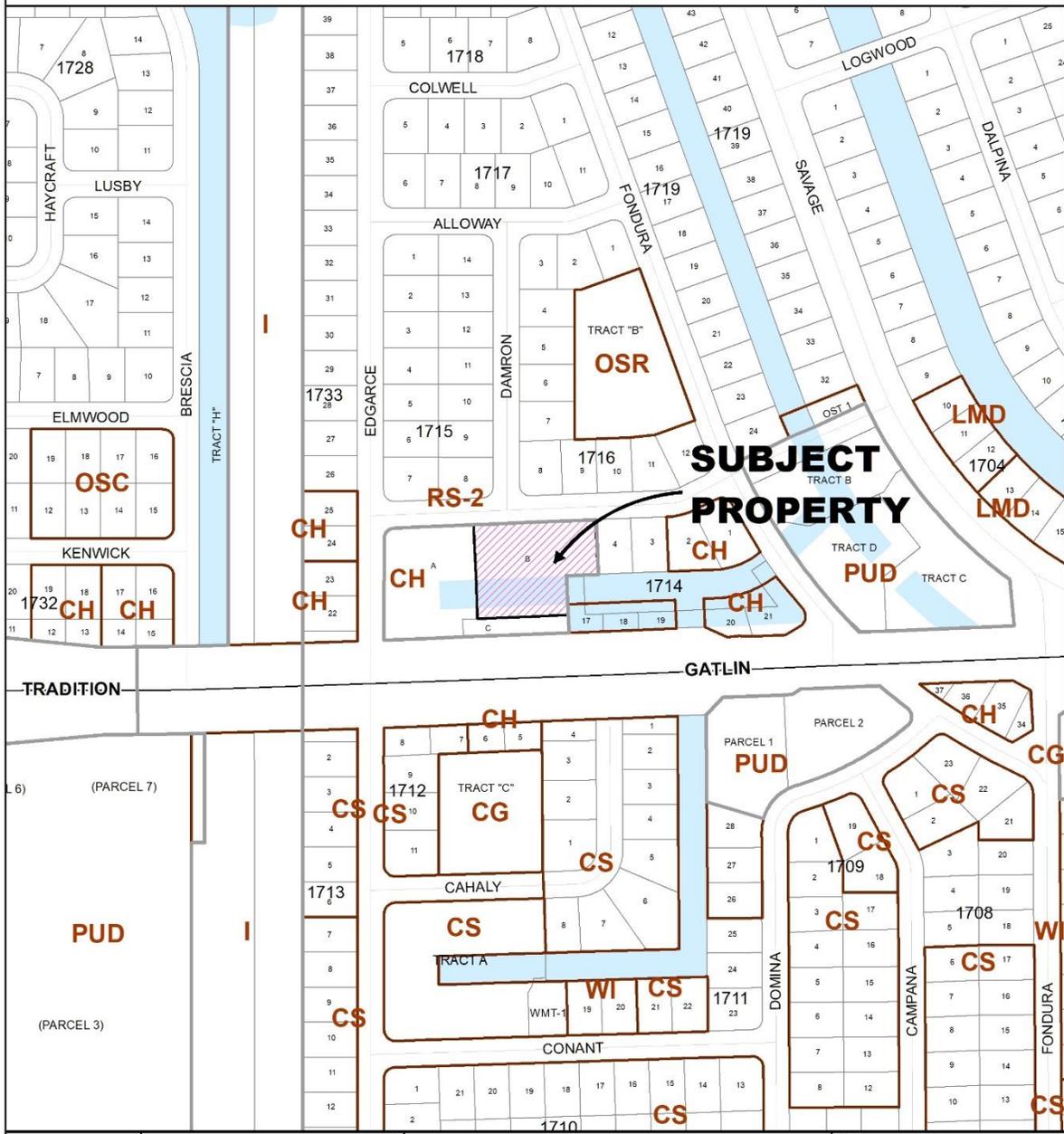
Location and Site Information

Parcel Number:	4311-701-0002-000-3
Property Size:	1.22 AC/ 53,143 SF
Legal Description:	Parcel B, Fotios Subdivision.
Address:	2155-2165 SW Gatlin Blvd
Future Land Use:	Highway Commercial (CH)
Existing Zoning:	Highway Commercial (CH)
Existing Use:	Tire & Battery Store

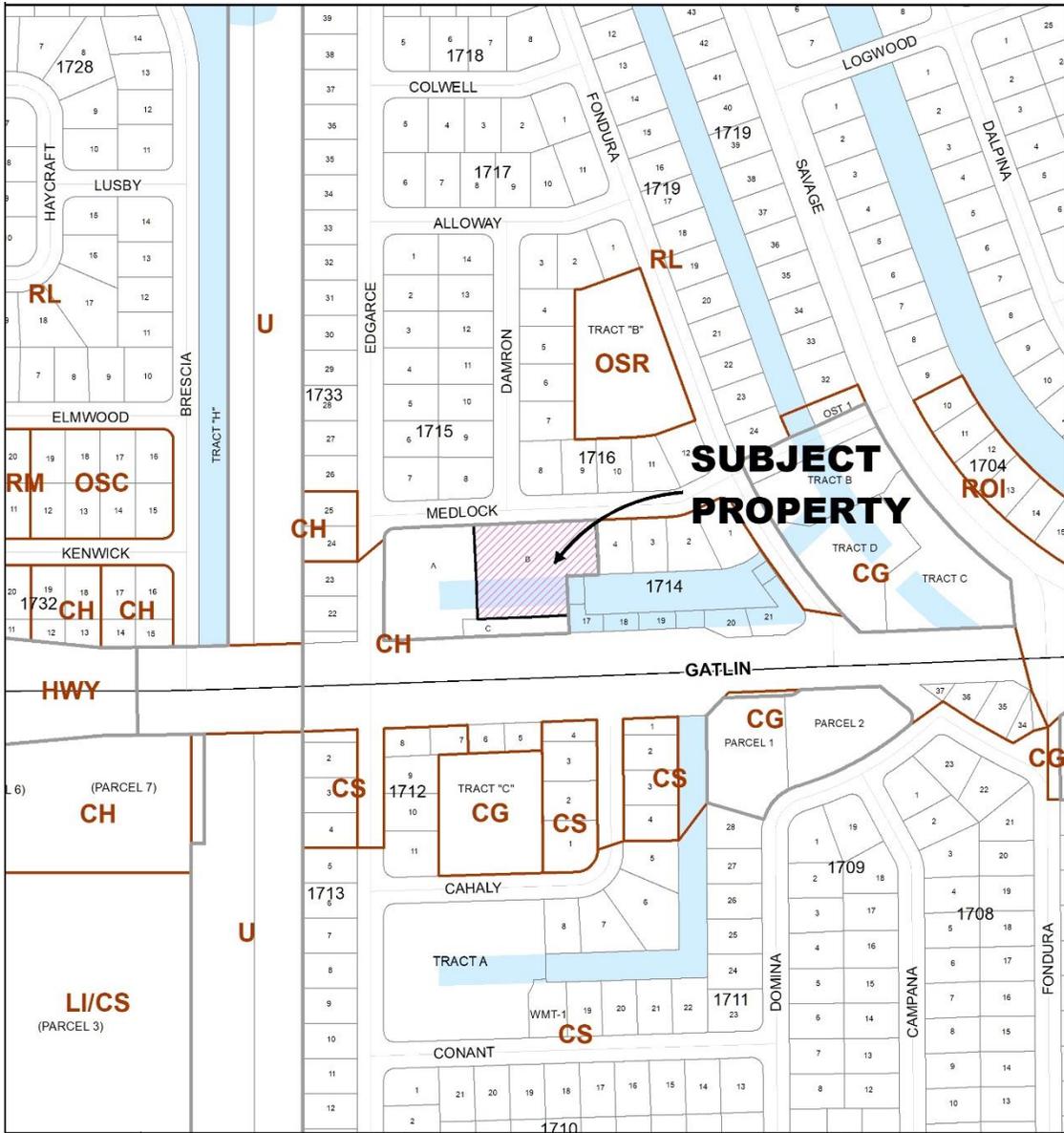
Surrounding Uses

Direction	Future Land Use	Zoning	Existing Use
North	RL	RS-2	Residential
South	CH	CH	Drainage R/W
East	CH	RS-2	Vacant
West	CH	CH	Retail/Service

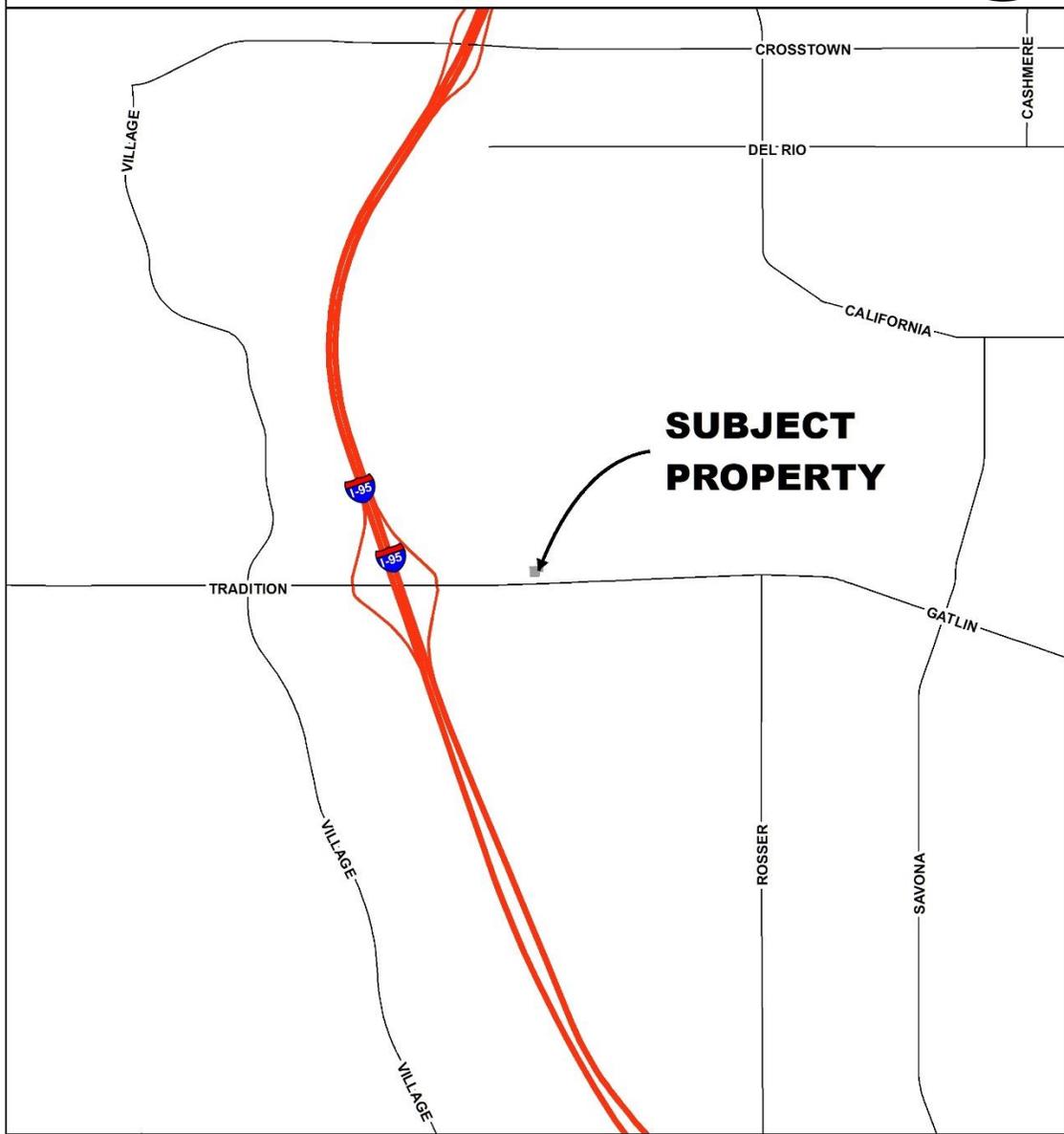
RL-Low Density Residential, RS-2- Single-Family Residential, and CH- Highway Commercial



Zoning Map



Project Land Use Map



Location 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.
 - *Applicant Response: The dedicated area to the landscape buffer wall is greater than what the code would impose without the modification. An application for Landscape Buffer Wall Modification was submitted through Fusion.*
 - *Staff Findings: The total area dedicated to a buffer will be equal to what the code requires.*
- 2) Outside activities and hours of operation for the proposed use(s).
 - *Applicant Response: The landscape buffer wall's intent is to provide a separation between commercial and residential zones, without compromising the health of the large existing oak tree and the existing mitered end section by building an architectural wall. Outside activities consist of mechanical work on vehicles and the hours of operation are Monday-Friday 8-5 P.M. and Saturday 8-12 P.M. with no hours of operation on Sunday.*
 - *Staff Findings: All auto repair and maintenance activities are required by the City Code to be conducted inside the building. The applicant specified the hours of operation in the response above.*
- 3) Natural and man-made features or uses that provide distance and separation from those existing uses to be buffered.
 - *Applicant Response: There is an existing 10' high CBS wall, a large oak tree and an existing mitered end section in the NW corner of the property where initially the continuation of an architectural wall was proposed. However, due to natural and man-made existing conditions, we are proposing a landscape buffer wall with the intent to provide privacy and separation between commercial and residential zones.*
 - *Staff Findings: Natural and manmade features that provide separation from the neighboring uses are the right-of way and the existing buffer wall and landscaping along the northern property line of the site, as per the approved site plan. The applicant is proposing landscaping between the end of the existing wall and the western property line for a distance of approximately 12 feet to accommodate the existing drainage structures. The proposed landscaping will consist of nine (9) Wax Myrtles and nine (9) Mysine hedges planted at three (3) feet high in a double row.*

4) Other factors that may be important to a decision.

- *Applicant Response: The Landscape plan has been revised to comply with the specifications of City of Port St. Lucie Planning & Zoning Department, by adding a double hedge row of Wax Myrtle and Mysine together with Silver Buttonwood trees to provide a sufficient buffer and meet the intent of the landscape used in lieu of an architectural wall.*
- *Staff Findings: Staff emphasizes the importance of maintaining the appropriate site landscaping in the buffer area to screen the project from neighboring uses. The hedges should be planted at three (3) feet high and maintained at six (6) feet in height and irrigated.*

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 with the condition that the hedges are planted at three (3) feet high and shall be maintained at a height of six (6) feet and irrigated.
- Motion to approve

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).