



**City of Port St. Lucie**  
**Planning and Zoning Department**  
**A City for All Ages**

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**TO:** CITY COUNCIL - MEETING OF OCTOBER 14, 2019

**FROM:** HOLLY F. PRICE, AICP, PRINCIPAL PLANNER

**RE:** GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
LANDSCAPE MODIFICATION APPLICATION  
PROJECT NO. P19-115

**DATE:** OCTOBER 2, 2019

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**REQUEST:** The applicant is requesting to be exempt from the requirement to have an architectural wall located within the perimeter landscape buffers per Section 154.12 of the City of Port St. Lucie Landscape and Land Clearing Code.

An architectural wall is required within the landscape buffers along the north and south sides of the subject property since Grace Lutheran Church has an Institutional land use and it abuts open space and residential land uses. However, the applicant is requesting approval for a Landscape Modification that allows the substitution of landscaping for an architectural wall.

**APPLICANT / OWNER:** Grace Lutheran Church of PSL

**LOCATION:** The property is located in St. Lucie West: east of SW Cashmere Boulevard, south of St. Lucie West Boulevard, and north of SW Heatherwood Boulevard.

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** The property is legally described as St. Lucie West Plat #28, Parcel 3, Tract A-1, Being Tract A-1 and St. Lucie West Plat #36 Part of Parcel 3-B MPDAF.

**SIZE:** Approximately 6.02 acres (262,231 sq. ft.)

**FUTURE LAND USE:** Institutional (I)

**EXISTING ZONING:** Institutional (I)

**EXISTING USE:** Church

**SURROUNDING USES:**

Direction	Future Land Use	Zoning	Existing Use
N	RM/OSR/I	PUD	Stormwater
S	RM/OSR/I	PUD	Single-Family Residential
E	I	I	Vacant
W	RL	RS-2/GU	Single-Family Residential

RM (Medium Density Residential), OSR (Open Space Recreational), I (Institutional), RL (Low Density Residential), PUD (Planned Unit Development), RS-2 (Single-Family Residential), GU (General Use)

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**IMPACTS AND FINDINGS:** The applicant is proposing to construct a new Alzheimer's day care / office building on the site, in addition to the existing Grace Lutheran Church.

**NORTH PERIMETER:** The north perimeter of the property has many existing trees and shrubs that provide a visual barrier to the abutting property. Approximately 25% of the north perimeter would need additional shrubs to provide the required landscaping for the buffer. The applicant is adding landscaping to these areas to meet the requirement. The proposed shrubs include saw-palmetto and cocoplum. This vegetation is appropriate for a native upland preserve area. The proposed 10-foot wide landscape buffer includes at least one shrub for every 2 feet and at least one tree for every 30 feet of the perimeter, as typically required by code for a landscape buffer.

**SOUTH PERIMETER:** The south perimeter of the property is more sparsely vegetated than the north perimeter. Approximately 40% of the south perimeter would need additional trees and shrubs to provide the required landscaping for the buffer. The applicant is meeting the requirement with the proposed landscaping to these areas. Proposed shrubs include saw-palmetto, cocoplum, and wax myrtle shrubs and proposed trees include slash pine and live oak. This vegetation is appropriate for a native upland preserve area. The proposed 20-foot wide landscape buffer includes at least one shrub for every 2 feet and at least one tree for every 30 feet of the perimeter, as typically required by code for a landscape buffer, if not more.

**OTHER:** Section 154.12 of the Zoning Code states that the request to substitute landscaping for an architectural wall that is a required feature of a landscape buffer strip or request to be exempt from installing the landscape buffer strip requirement shall be reviewed by the City Council and requires public hearing and notification.

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning and Zoning Department staff recommends approval of the Landscape Modification for Grace Lutheran Church with a condition: The 20-foot wide landscape buffers shall have at least one Type A tree for every 30 linear feet, with tree spacing not to exceed a distance of 50 feet. Shrubs in the landscape buffers shall be planted in such a manner as to create a visual barrier that is at least 6 feet in height as the vegetation matures. Trees and shrubs located in the upland preserve area shall consist of native landscaping. Prior to obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy (CO), an updated Landscape Plan shall be provided if any field changes are made to the Landscape Plan.