



Irvine/Sunny Oaks Position Paper

The Irvine/Sunny Oaks Regional Activity Center is adjacent to the Highway 318 interchange on I-75. This interchange includes a Future Land Use Element designation in the Comprehensive Plan that includes an Employment Center, a Commerce District and a Regional Activity Center. While this parcel is within the Farmland Preservation Area boundaries, these Future Land Use designations overlay and override the Farmland Preservation Area regulations and restrictions.

As a result of the above designations and classifications, the owner of this 453-acre parcel has a legal right to rezone this parcel from agriculture to an implementing zoning district for the specific Future Land Use designations. While the requested zoning change is to Planned Unit Development, there are other options that would satisfy the legal obligation of the County to rezone the property to an implementing zoning district. Nonetheless, they all allow significant retail, commercial and industrial development.

For these reasons, Horse Farms Forever is neutral on the zoning application.

The Marion County Growth Services Staff has done an excellent job in their report detailing the very complicated history and facts surrounding this parcel and the zoning change request. In addition, the Growth Services report contains recommendations of significant conditions. Most importantly, while the developer has provided a Conceptual Plan for the development, a Master Plan for the Planned Unit Development and a formal Traffic Study were not provided, which is a required critical element in establishing the scope, scale and other details of the project.

If the Commissioners approve the zoning request to PUD, then HFF will continue to closely monitor the PUD Master Plan and Traffic Study to be submitted by the developer of the parcel.

HFF expresses our trust in the judgement of the elected County Commissioners as they evaluate the effects of the development and its compatibility with the surrounding Farmland Preservation Area. The Marion County Board of Commissioners are to be complimented for their strong support of the Farmland Preservation Area and recognition of the valuable contribution made by the equestrian industry.

The mission of Horse Farms Forever is to inspire conservation of horse farms through education, awareness and idea exchange so as to preserve the character and culture that horses and the Farmland Preservation Area make unique to Marion County. We are watchful of government and others to preserve and protect horse farms and farmland for future generations, especially in the Farmland Preservation Area. We are neither anti-growth nor anti-development, rather encouraging urban growth to remain inside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Horse Farms Forever is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a charitable organization and approved as a tax-exempt 501 (C) (3) corporation by the Internal Revenue Service. Horse Farms Forever does not have a political mission. Our status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization does not allow us to participate or intervene in political activities. The organization will neither advocate on behalf of political candidates nor advocate for the passage of legislation.

February 22, 2022