



Position Statement
Greenway Trojan Horse

Horse Farms Forever® **opposes** the applications by 1415 Brothers Holdings LLC for a 15-acre parcel adjacent to the Cross Florida Greenway on the two-lane Highway 484. The location of this proposed 500-vehicle parking lot is adjacent to the Cross Florida Greenway, a treasured public resource. The parcel is in a FEMA flood zone and in the Secondary Springs Protection Zone. This parcel is outside the Urban Growth Boundary, with a Rural Land use and Agricultural zoning.

There are three applications to: 1) change the land use from Rural Land to Commercial, 2) change the zoning from Agricultural to Business, and 3) issue a Special Use Permit for outdoor storage of vehicles. The second and third applications are contingent upon approval of the first application for the land use change.

The Special Use Permit to allow a 500-vehicle parking lot on the parcel seems like a Trojan Horse for the land use and zoning changes. If the land use on this parcel is changed to Commercial, and the zoning changed to Business, it would set a precedent for all future applications on adjoining parcels to change from Rural Land use to Commercial. Why is this a concern?

On Top of the World (OTOW) recently bought parcels adjacent to this subject parcel, the 122-acre pasture on the north side of Highway 484 under the name of Sage Amicus LLC, and the 12-acre horse farm next door to the subject parcel on the south side of Highway 484 under the name of Horsing Around Ocala LLC.

Could this application for a land use change be the precursor for OTOW applying to change the land use on their parcels from Rural to Commercial? OTOW already owns the 5,454-acres of land to the north and west with a flag-access to Highway 484. This massive parcel is part of a legacy Development of Regional Impact approval (“DRI”) with vested development rights.

The recently acquired 122-acre Sage Amicus parcel, which allows OTOW to have a much larger footprint on Highway 484, has a Rural Land use and Agricultural zoning. It is not part of the legacy DRI. The 12-acre horse farm, which adjoins the Cross Florida Greenway, also has a Rural Land use and Agricultural zoning. Both are outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Is this application to change the land use on the 15-acre Brothers Holdings parcel from Rural Land to Commercial part of a Trojan Horse strategy?

Is it OTOW’s strategy to build a whole new entrance on Highway 484 for the next phase of their westward expansion?



The professionals at Marion County Growth Services Staff have reviewed the applications and recommended denial as they are not compatible with the surrounding properties, inconsistent with 9 provisions of the comprehensive plan, and adverse to the public interest. In addition, the Marion County Planning & Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend denial.

Horse Farms Forever agrees with the recommendations from Growth Services and the Planning & Zoning Commission that these **applications should be denied** and asks our County Commissioners to stop the Trojan Horse.

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.