

Colonial Traditions Ph. 3A Subdivision – Preliminary Plat

Staff Report: Andy Bauer
Application #:ZA25-000062

Planning Commission Meeting Date: February 24, 2026
Applicant: Dewberry
Engineers
Property Location: Colonial Traditions PUD

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The applicant seeks Preliminary Subdivision Plat approval for a 43-lot single family subdivision on a portion of Lot 7 of Colonial Traditions Subdivision. The property is in the middle of Traditions Way and is zoned General Business with a PUD Overlay. This phase is named Phase 3A.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The property is currently vacant wooded. Traditions Way street was constructed in 2006 when the original subdivision was approved. Traditions Way has not been accepted by the City Council for maintenance. The surrounding zoning districts and land uses are as follows:

- North – General Business –PUD Overlay / Vacant land part of Colonial Traditions PUD
- South – General Business –PUD Overlay / Colonial Traditions Clubhouse & Amenities
- East – General Business – PUD Overlay / Townhouses (under construction) & Vacant Land
- West – General Business –PUD Overlay / Vacant Land

BACKGROUND

Development Timeline

- **2006** – The Planning Commission granted Preliminary and Final Subdivision Plat approval to subdivide 188 acres into eight lots.
- **2007** – Lots 3-8 of Colonial Traditions Subdivision were rezoned from BG-General Business to BG/Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay, and a PUD Master Plan was approved. The Master Plan for the 121-acre development identified a mixture of single-family and multi-family residential uses and building types, with a maximum of 1,208 units. The PUD overlay reduced density from 20 units per acre allowed by the BG Zoning District to 10 units per acre.
- **2008** – The PUD was amended to include lots 1 & 2 of Colonial Traditions Subdivision. Lots 1 & 2 are two commercial lots with frontage along Alabama State Highway 59.
- **2016** – The City Council re-activated the Colonial Traditions PUD.
- **2020 to 2021** - The Planning Commission granted Preliminary and Final Subdivision Plat approval for a 20-lot single-family subdivision on Lot 6 of the Colonial Traditions PUD (Phase 1).
- **2021 to 2022** – The Planning Commission granted Preliminary and Final Subdivision Plat approval for a 50-lot single-family subdivision on a portion of Lot 3 of Colonial Traditions PUD (Phase 2).
- **March 10, 2025** - The City Council approved a Major Planned Unit Development (PUD) Amendment on Lot 7 of Colonial Traditions PUD for 106, single-family attached and detached units on 18.40 acres.
- **November 6, 2025** – City staff, in accordance with Article 15-6., H. *Amendments*, of the Zoning Ordinance approved a Minor PUD Amendment affecting Lot 7 of Colonial Traditions PUD. The amendment will allow Lot 7 to consist of 87 single-family attached and detached units (38 townhomes and 49 single family homes) on 18.40 acres and authorize the project to be completed and platted in two phases.
- **January 27, 2026** – The subject application for Preliminary Subdivision Plat was postponed by the Planning Commission at the request of the applicant.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

This application was advertised as required by Section 4-2 of the Subdivision Regulations. As of the date of the writing of the staff report, staff have received correspondence from numerous citizens about the

development. The citizens have questions and concerns about the state of the infrastructure, emergency access, and utilities.

ZONING

Colonial Traditions PUD Master Plan indicates Lot 7 is designated for single family uses. The adopted Land Development Handbook allows Lot 7 to be developed with townhomes, courtyard lots, and cottage lots. The Land Development Handbook includes building types, setbacks, layout, and typical street section provisions for each lot type. The overall development is not allowed to exceed 10 units per acre with each phase not exceeding 20 units per acre. The Land Development Handbook includes building types, setbacks, layout, and typical street section provisions for each lot type.

PROPOSED SUBDIVISION PLAN

The 43-lot subdivision is located on a portion of Lot 7. Specifics of the subdivision are as follows:

- Acreage – 10.63 ac
- Use –Single Family Detached Houses
- Number of Lots – 43
- Dwelling Units per Acre – 4
- Rear Loaded Lots - All 43 lots are accessed from the rear of the property by private alleys;
- Lot Sizes - Largest Lot = 8,220sf / Smallest Lot = 5,202sf;
- Setbacks: Front-15ft, Rear-5ft, Side Yards-5.5ft, and Street Side Yard-15ft;
- Lot Width – 46ft typical
- Open Space – 2.33 acres (22%)
- Amenities – Existing Clubhouse, Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts

ANALYSIS

Plan Review

Zoning - The proposed single-family detached housing use, lot layout and density proposed in Phase 3A complies with the approved PUD Master Plan and Land Development Handbook. The proposed lots are to be developed with single-family houses all accessed from rear alley ways.

Prior to Final Subdivision Plat approval, the applicant shall submit proposed housing styles and layouts so that city staff can confirm compliance with the housing styles established by the approved Land Development Handbook.

Roadway Design/Access – Two new public streets, Cornelia Avenue and Winthrop Street are proposed within this phase of Colonial Traditions. All lots within Phase 3A of Colonial Traditions Subdivision are accessed from the rear of the properties from private 20ft and 30ft wide alley ways. The private alleys are connected to Traditions Way, Cornelia Avenue or Winthrop Street and no access is allowed to Traditions Way from the individual lots. The private alley ways are consistent with the PUD Master Plan and are allowed in planned unit developments. The proposed street names have been approved by the Baldwin County E-911 Addressing Department.

As referenced in the staff report and approval letter for Colonial Traditions Preliminary Subdivision Plat dated March 10, 2006, and letter addressed to Colonial Property Services, Inc. (applicant) on March 13, 2006, the developer was required to participate in a third access connecting Colonial Traditions to State Highway 59. Additionally, a condition of Ordinance 2155, Colonial Traditions PUD Amendment, approved by the City Council March 10, 2025, was for Colonial Traditions to comply with the current Fire Code prior to the issuance of Building Permits. The Fire Code requires a third emergency access entrance to Colonial Traditions. The applicant proposes a 50-foot access easement along the existing Settlers Way connecting to State Highway 59. The emergency access road will be constructed of crushed aggregate in accordance with the standards within the adopted Fire Codes and will be for the purpose of emergency vehicles and construction traffic only. No future

phases beyond 3A (including 3B, 4, 5, etc.) shall be approved without additional, approved access being constructed. This access is required to meet life safety standards, water service needs, and construction access (compliance with Section 6-3 of the Subdivision Regulations and Chapter 5 of the 2024 IFC, among others).

Common/Open Space – The Open Space complies with the Subdivision Regulations. 2.33 (22%) acres of Phase 3A is composed of common open space. The Subdivision Regulations require 10% of a subdivision to be common space. The primary open space is located around the storm water pond and is accessed by a sidewalk that circles the pond. Open space areas beyond the pond are to be sodded for active and passive recreational purposes.

Directly south of Phase 3A is the existing pool, clubhouse, tennis courts and parking area that serve as the primary common area and amenities for Colonial Traditions. These facilities were rehabbed and re-opened to serve as amenities for the residents of Phase I and Phase 2. The future residents of Phase 3A will also have the right to use the existing amenities. A home owners association will maintain the common areas.

Sidewalks – Four-foot-wide sidewalks were constructed within the Traditions Way rights-of-way when the street was originally built in 2006. Portions of this sidewalk are in disrepair and must be brought into compliance with the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prior to Final Subdivision Plat approval. New five-foot-wide sidewalks are proposed within the rights-of-way of Cornelia Avenue and Winthrop Street. Additionally, a new five-foot-wide sidewalk is proposed around the storm water pond. The new sidewalks are connected to the existing sidewalks, common open spaces, and existing clubhouse and amenities.

Subdivision Drainage – A Stormwater Drainage Plan and report were submitted, reviewed, and approved the City Engineering Department. The project proposes to use a single wet detention pond.

Landscape Plans – Street trees were planted every ± 25 ft on center within the right-of-way of Traditions Way when the original subdivision was approved. These Live Oak trees are now between 6-10 inches in diameter. A seven-foot landscape planting strip is planned within the rights-of-way of Cornelia Avenue and Winthrop Street. This landscape strip will be planted with Southern Live Oaks and Tulip trees (or a street tree as recommended by the City Arborist) every 100ft in an alternating pattern. As required by the landscape standards within the Subdivision Regulations, three trees every 100ft are proposed around the storm water pond. Additionally, the landscape plans show trees on the rears of some of the lots and shrubs are provided around the stormwater pond. The Landscape Plans comply with the Subdivision Regulations.

Tree Preservation – The applicant submitted a tree survey showing the location of existing trees. The property is completely wooded with the predominant species being small to medium size Pine trees. According to the applicant's tree survey, there is a cluster of six protected Oak trees (13–17-inch DBH) located on proposed lots 23 and 24. Section 6-1, B. *Preservation of Natural Features and Amenities*, states existing features which would add value to residential development, such as trees, should be carefully considered in the design of subdivisions. Section 6-6, *Open Space, Landscape, and Buffering*, requires the design of subdivisions to preserve Protected Trees and integrate them into the design of the subdivision. The proposed subdivision does not comply with these requirements of the Subdivision Regulations. A condition has been included requiring the submittal of revised Landscape Plans preserving these Protected Trees.

Lighting Plan – Acorn style lighting was installed within Traditions Way right-of-way when Colonial Traditions Subdivision was originally constructed. New light poles with Traditionaire style fixtures are proposed within the rights-of-way of streets and along the private alleyways. The Lighting Plan complies with the standards within the Subdivision Regulations.

Engineering Department – The City Engineering Department performed a preliminary inspection of

the existing infrastructure at Colonial Traditions subdivision and noted numerous issues. These issues have an impact on the availability and capacity of these facilities to serve the existing and future residents of Colonial Traditions but do not represent life safety issues. The inspection comments will have to be addressed prior to Final Subdivision Plat approval and/or acceptance of the public infrastructure by the City. These issues include but are not limited to:

1. Sink holes in Traditions Way,
2. Poor pavement conditions on Traditions Way and Colonial Parkway,
3. The storm sewer will need to be cleaned, and videoed in its entirety,
4. Storm water maintenance, and
5. Sidewalks must meet ADA standards and dilapidated/broken sidewalks replaced.

Fire Marshal – The Fire Marshal has reviewed and approved the plans contingent on the emergency/construction access being provided as outlined above and as stated in the below conditions of approval.

Utilities

Gulf Shores Utilities - A service availability letter has been provided by Gulf Shores Utilities indicating water and sewer service are available for Phase 3A. Any future phase of development will require approval and a service availability letter from Gulf Shores Utilities. Gulf Shores Utilities has accepted the water and sewer infrastructure within the existing development with the exception for Phase 1 (20 lot single-family subdivision).

Baldwin EMC – An electrical conduit plan was provided from Baldwin EMC. Baldwin EMC has also issued a service availability letter indicating the 43-lot subdivision can be serviced with electricity.

Republic Service – Republic Services indicates residential garbage service is available to Colonial Traditions Phase 3A.

Riviera Utilities (Gas) - Riviera Utilities is willing and able to provide gas services to Phase 3A of Colonial Traditions. Riviera Utilities requires a 10' easement along all side property lines and a 15' easement along all front and rear property lines.

RECOMMENDATION – Staff recommend approval of the Preliminary Subdivision Plat application with the following conditions:

1. As a condition of the issuance of a Land Disturbance Permit for Phase 3A, the applicant shall provide an access easement for a dedicated construction/emergency entrance along and including Settlers Way and extending to State Highway 59. The easement language shall be reviewed and approved by City staff and recorded before a Land Disturbance Permit is issued.
 - The construction/emergency entrance shall be engineered and built to the current adopted Fire Code and Fire Marshal's requirements. Details of the entrance shall be provided on revised civil plans.
 - The construction/emergency easement shall be a minimum 50 feet wide.
 - Traditions Parkway, Colonial Parkway, and Colony Circle south of Settlers Way shall be signed "No Construction Access" once the access is constructed and all construction traffic shall be directed to use the new access.
 - The construction/emergency entrance shall be completed before issuance of any Building Permits.
 - The construction/emergency entrance shall be maintained in good condition—if the conditions of the drive fall below Fire Code standards, no further building permits or certificates of occupancy will be issued until the drive is brought into compliance with required standards.

Prior to any approvals beyond Phase 3A, the construction/emergency entrance shall become a city street, constructed and dedicated to the City:

- Settlers Way shall be built to collector street standards as stipulated by the Subdivision Regulations and include all necessary utility infrastructure.
 - The construction/emergency entrance shall always remain open during construction and shall not be blocked to hinder emergency access to the development.
 - Future construction traffic is required to utilize the new entrance and shall refrain from using any streets accepted by the City.
2. Prior to issuance of Certificates of Occupancy for any structure in Phase 3A, streets/infrastructure south of the new construction entrance shall be repaired and submitted for acceptance by the City.
 3. Prior to Final Subdivision Plat approval, the applicant shall submit proposed housing styles and layouts so that city staff can confirm compliance with the housing styles established by the approved Land Development Handbook.
 4. In accordance with Section 6-1, B. *Preservation of Natural Features and Amenities*, and Section 6-6, *Open Space, Landscape, and Buffering*, of the Subdivision Regulations and prior to the issuance of any future city permits Phase 3A shall be redesigned take into consideration the six Protected Oak Trees on lots 23 and 24 and show this area as open space as required by the Subdivision Regulations.
 5. Per the condition of the 2016 PUD Re-activation approval, roadway infrastructure improvements/upgrades recommended in the traffic study shall be completed or a fee-in-lieu of construction shall be paid at the time the traffic impact of 150 single-family lots occurs. Required improvements are:
 - a. Construct southbound right turn lane on Hwy 59 to County Road 6 West. Minimal queue length will be 300', and final design to be approved by ALDOT & City.
 - b. Construct additional westbound lane on CR6 West from Hwy 59 to Colonial Parkway.
 - c. Construct additional eastbound lane on CR6 West from Colonial Parkway to Hwy 59.

Attachments: Location Maps, Draft Resolution, Plans

RESOLUTION ZA25-000062
COLONIAL TRADITIONS PHASE 3A
PRELIMINARY SUBDIVISION PLAT

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GULF SHORES, ALABAMA, WHILE IN REGULAR SESSION ON FEBRUARY 24, 2026, as follows:

By a vote of 0-0, the Gulf Shores Planning Commission approves Colonial Traditions Phase 3A Preliminary Subdivision Plat subject to the following conditions:

1. As a condition of the issuance of a Land Disturbance Permit for Phase 3A, the applicant shall provide an access easement for a dedicated construction/emergency entrance along and including Settlers Way and extending to State Highway 59. The easement language shall be reviewed and approved by City staff and recorded before a Land Disturbance Permit is issued.
 - The construction/emergency entrance shall be engineered and built to the current adopted Fire Code and Fire Marshal's requirements. Details of the entrance shall be provided on revised civil plans.
 - The construction/emergency easement shall be a minimum 50 feet wide.
 - Traditions Parkway, Colonial Parkway, and Colony Circle south of Settlers Way shall be signed "No Construction Access" once the access is constructed and all construction traffic shall be directed to use the new access.
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 - b. Construct additional westbound lane on CR6 West from Hwy 59 to Colonial Parkway.
 - c. Construct additional eastbound lane on CR6 West from Colonial Parkway to Hwy 59.

This Resolution shall become effective upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this 24th day of February 2026.

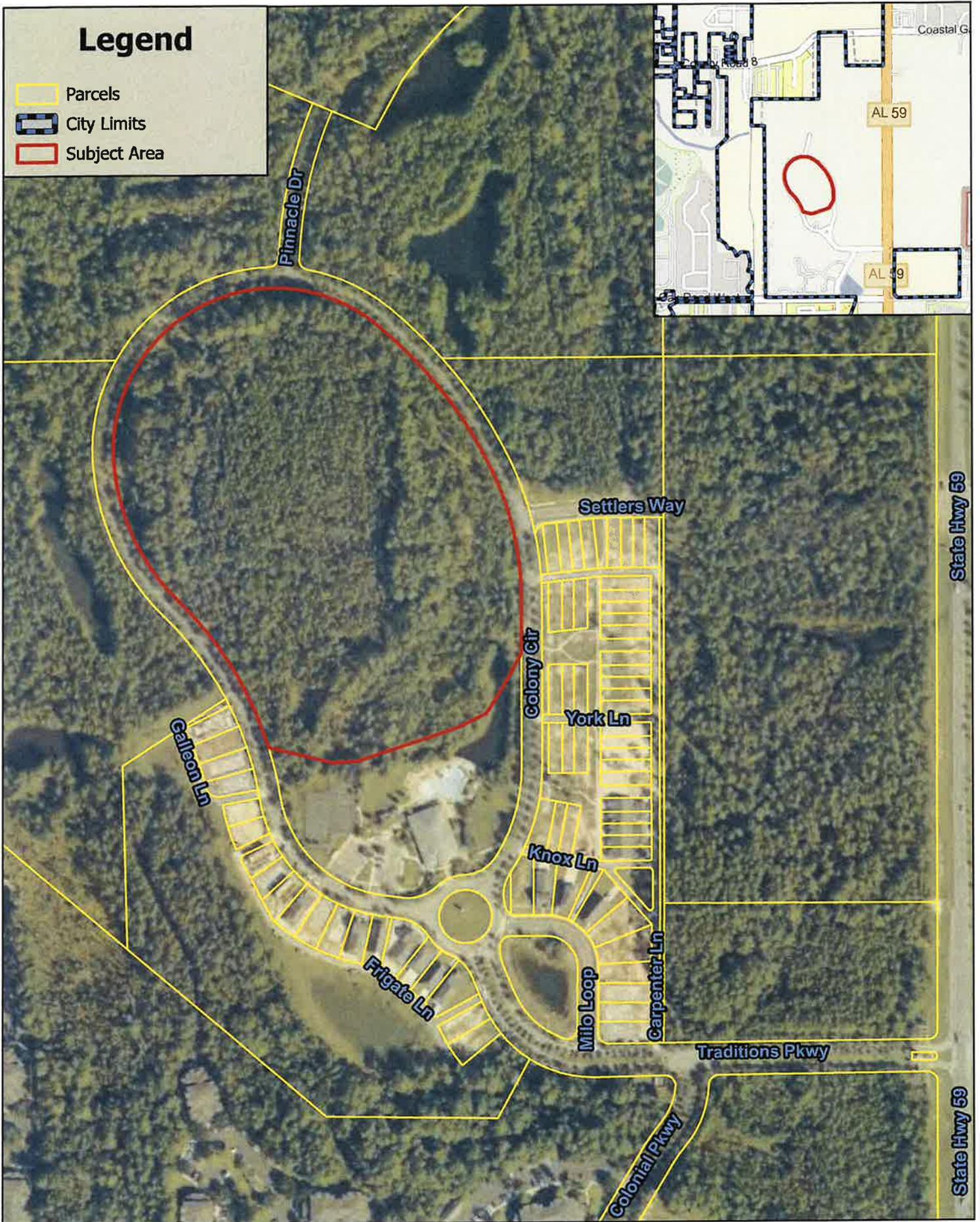
Pete Vakakes
Chairman, Planning Commission

Attest:

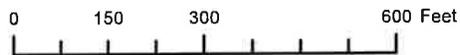
Mell Davis, Secretary, Planning Commission

Legend

- Parcels
- City Limits
- Subject Area

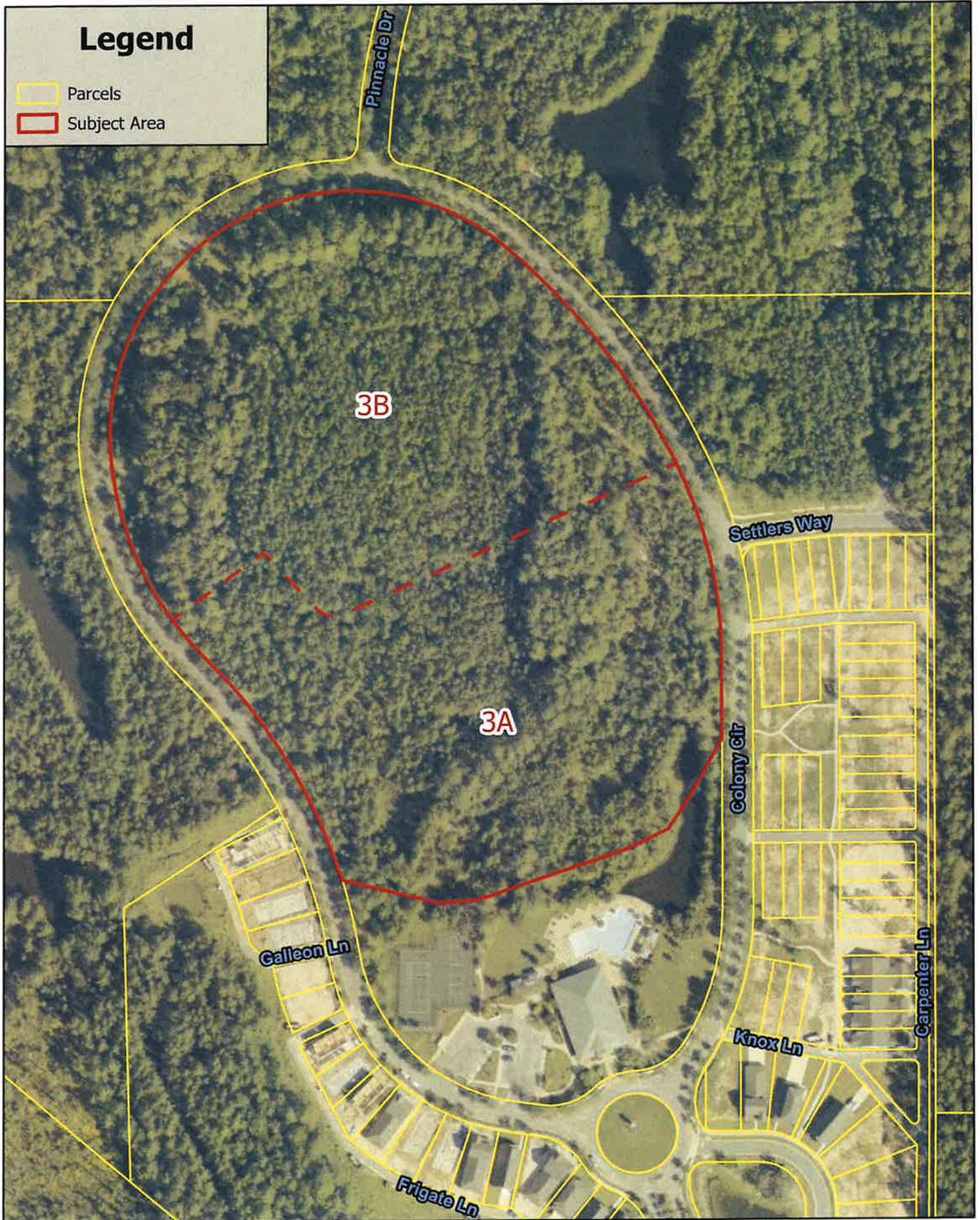


Colonial Traditions Ph 3A Preliminary Plat
Overview Map
ZA25-000062 - January 27, 2026

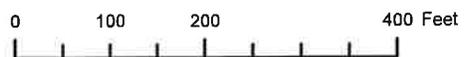


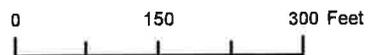
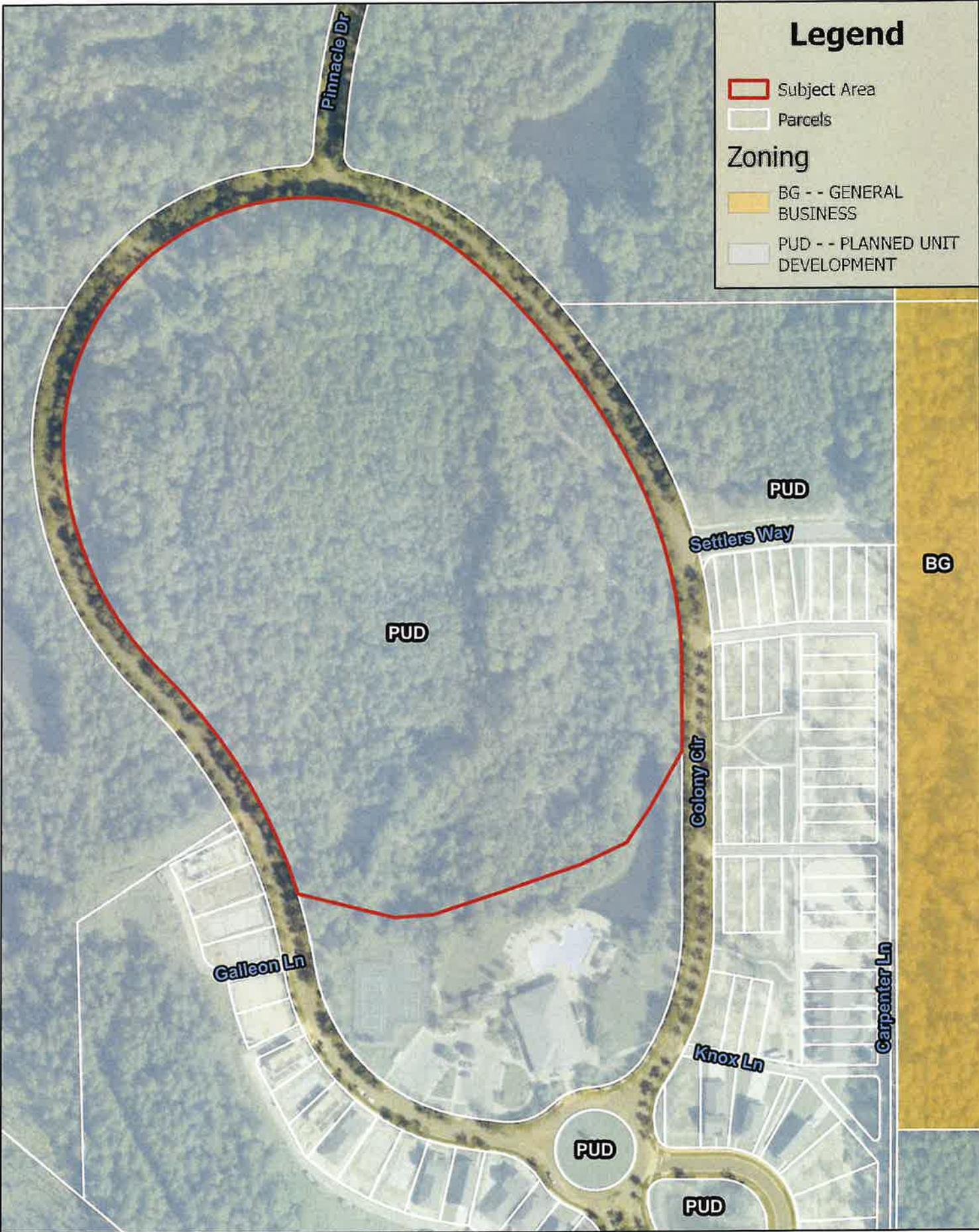
Legend

- Parcels
- Subject Area



Colonial Tradtions Ph 3A Preliminary Plat
Location Map - 2025 Aerials
ZA25-0000062 - January 27, 2026





Formal Request to Be Placed on February 24 Planning & Zoning Agenda and Included in Public Record – Colonial Traditions Development

Planning and Zoning Commission
City of Gulf Shores
205 Clubhouse Drive Suite B, Gulf Shores, AL 36542

Dear Planning and Zoning Commissioners,

I am writing to formally request to be placed on the agenda for the February 24 Planning and Zoning meeting to address serious and ongoing concerns regarding the Colonial Traditions development, including its approval history, Planned Unit Development (PUD) status, infrastructure and utility compliance, fire protection, issuance of Certificates of Occupancy, and the City's ongoing oversight and enforcement practices.

I am also formally requesting that this letter be **included in the February 24 agenda packet and entered into the public record.**

I am a homeowner within this development. Since moving into this neighborhood, I have become aware of numerous issues that were not disclosed at the time of purchase and that directly affect health, safety, and habitability. I have raised these concerns repeatedly with City staff and other departments, yet many remain unresolved. Homeowners continue to experience significant impacts, and there has been little transparency regarding how or why this development has been allowed to proceed under current conditions.

For clarity, I am also in the process of sending a certified letter to Mayor Robert Craft outlining these same concerns in detail and requesting an independent review of the approval and compliance history of Colonial Traditions.

I am respectfully requesting the opportunity at the February 24 meeting to ask questions directly, speak about what is happening to me and my family as residents of this neighborhood, and present the factual issues we are experiencing so these matters may be discussed in a public and transparent forum.

At a minimum, I am requesting the opportunity to address the following topics:

- Why Colonial Traditions continues to operate under a Planned Unit Development (PUD) framework when baseline infrastructure, safety, and utility standards are not being met
- Whether construction activity occurred prior to required Planning and Zoning approvals, utility provider reports, and issuance of Land Disturbance Permits
- The current status of sewer infrastructure, including the fact that the system is privately maintained, aging, and has documented operational issues
- Developer admission in writing that sewage issues exist, contrasted with statements that no issues exist in inhabited areas

- Stormwater management and retention pond maintenance failures, including standing water throughout the neighborhood
- Streets that remain unaccepted by the City and what must occur before acceptance can happen
- Sidewalks and accessibility routes that are broken, uneven, and appear noncompliant
- Fire hydrant service, fire flow, and whether adequate fire protection infrastructure was included in utility approvals
- Reports that the neighborhood was operating under an expired approval letter from Gulf Shores Utilities, and that residents have been told a new approval exists — but without any confirmation of when that new approval was issued or what conditions it contains
- Fire Marshal inspections, recommendations, and whether those recommendations are mandatory
- Issuance of Certificates of Occupancy while infrastructure and safety issues remain unresolved
- Operation of the community pool prior to a final Health Department inspection
- Reports that a **representative of Valor removed City-installed signage**
- Lack of basic services during initial occupancy, including extended absence of mail service and lack of street lighting until residents escalated the issue
- The pattern of silence, delay, and dismissal experienced by homeowners who raise concerns

Homeowners did not purchase homes expecting to become infrastructure investigators simply to live safely in their neighborhood. We relied on the City's approval, inspection, and enforcement processes to protect families before homes are sold and occupied.

Please confirm in writing that I will be placed on the February 24 Planning and Zoning agenda, that this letter will be included in the agenda packet and public record, and advise of any procedural requirements, time limits, or materials needed in advance.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Madison Massingill

6130 Frigate Lane Gulf Shores, AL 36542

madisonlmassingill@gmail.com

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