

## Raley Farm Phases 3 & 4 – Preliminary Subdivision Plat

Staff Report: Jennifer Watkins      Planning Commission Meeting Date: February 22, 2022

Application #: ZA22-000003      Applicant: Engineering Design Group      Property Location: 0 Preston Way

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION:      APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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### SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The applicant requests Preliminary Subdivision Plat approval for Phases 3 and 4 of Raley Farm. The application proposes to subdivide 66.71 acres into 200 single family lots.

### ZONING

The Raley Farm development is zoned Conditional High-density Single-family Residential (R-1-5) Zoning District. The conditions of the rezoning affecting Phases 3 & 4 include:

- Development density – not exceed 3 dwelling units per acre
- Larger lot adjacent to Stonegate Estates Subdivision with minimum lot width of 70ft
- Similar Covenants and Restrictions to Stonegate Estates Subdivision
- Construction of North/South Connector Road
- Secondary access road

### SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The 162-acre Raley Farm development is located on the north side of Coastal Gateway Boulevard. Phase 1 is nearly complete with a home on each of its 90 lots. Phase 2 is currently under construction containing 108 residential lots. Phases 3 and 4 will complete the east side of the development leaving the northwest corner of Raley Farm for future development.

### PROPOSED SUBDIVISION PLAN

Raley Farm Phases 3 and 4 proposes to subdivide 66.71 acres into 200 lots. The subdivision is classified as a Major Subdivision, because the subdivision requires the installation of streets, utilities, and other public improvements. Specifics of the plan are as follows:

#### Subdivision Details

- The subdivision phases propose 200 single family residential lots
  - Phase 3 – 109 lots
  - Phase 4 – 91 lots
- Each phase proposes a density of 3 dwelling units per
- Lot sizes from 8,040sf to 12,948sf
- The lot widths proposed are 60ft and 70ft.
- Lot setback notation provided per the recent Subdivision Regulation text amendment
- The applicant proposes 20% Open Space in each phase
- Six new roads along with the continued expansion of Preston Way and a connection to the north/south connector road along the east side of the development.

### ANALYSIS

**Land Use Plan:** The property is designated Low Density Residential Use by the Future Land Use Plan with a maximum density of 1-5 dwelling unit per acre. Low Density Residential uses are typically single family detached houses and duplexes on large and medium sized lots located away from the city's core and its major arterials. The density and uses proposed comply with the Future Land Use Plan.

## **Plan Review**

**Existing Conditions** – Phases 3 and 4 have no existing structures or protected trees and are made up of cleared pastureland. Portions of the existing ponds will be platted as part of each phase.

**Subdivision Design** – The subdivision is designed in a standard block pattern with lots along minor streets. The block layout for these phases is predominately an east/west street orientation, continuing the same design layout of Phase 2.

Per the conditions of the rezoning, the larger lots have been placed adjacent to Stonegate Estates. The minimum lot width for the lots adjacent to Stonegate Estates is 70ft.

**Street Plan** – According to the Subdivision Regulations, the street plan shall provide an “efficient relationship between development and the circulation of traffic, having particular regard to the avoidance of congestion, make adequate provision for traffic through the proper location and width of streets, and promote safe convenient bicycle and pedestrian travel through a convenient and connected network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.”

**Traffic Impact Study** – A Traffic Impact Study for the Raley Farm development was submitted and accepted when the property was originally rezoned in September 2018. The applicant is requesting a waiver to the required traffic study for residential subdivisions containing more than 50 dwelling units. The same request was approved for Phase 2 of the development, and staff supports this request.

**Design Requirements** –Phases 3 and 4 are connected to Phases 1 and 2 primarily via Preston Way. The same street design from Phase 2 will be continued into Phases 3 and 4. The 6ft sidewalk will border on the front lot line allowing for a larger landscape strip along the street, therefore providing more separation between vehicles and pedestrians. The applicant has provided a written waiver request to the Subdivision Regulations Section 6-3.B.11 requiring a 2ft separation of the sidewalk from the property line. The same request was approved for Phase 2 of the development, and staff supports this request.

The 50ft right-of-way cross section indicates 10ft travel lanes with 24” mountable curb. A 7ft landscape strip separates the 6ft sidewalk from the roadway. The sidewalk abuts the front property line.

**Coastal Gateway Access via Temporary Site Access/Construction Entrance** – During the initial construction of Phase 2, a temporary site access/construction entrance was provided within the 80ft right-of-way for the north/south connector road providing a connection to Preston Way from Coastal Gateway Boulevard. This entrance was moved to Lot 96 at the request of the developer. The access will continue to serve two purposes; allows the applicant to meet the International Fire Code requiring 2 fire apparatus access roads for one- or two-family dwelling residential developments that exceed 30 dwelling units, and provides a construction entrance so that construction traffic is not required to traverse through Phase 1.

This temporary site access will remain in use until a connection from Raley Farms Drive in Phase 3 and the north/south connector road is provided.

**Temporary Turnarounds** – Section 6-3 Street Plan of the Subdivision Regulations, states that “temporary turnarounds shall be provided when a dead-end street is proposed for connection to an adjacent property”. In the case of a phased subdivision, turnarounds shall be provided for streets connecting to a future phase. The applicant is requesting a waiver to the required turnarounds for Kayleigh Circle, Leopold Avenue, and Preston

Way as the streets provide access to all the lots within each phase. Barricades and warning signage will be provided to notify drivers that the street is a dead-end. The same request was approved for Phase 2 of the development, and staff supports this request.

Major Street Plan – The Major Street Plan indicates a Planned Connector road (80ft right-of-way) from Coastal Gateway Boulevard north to the City of Gulf Shores/Foley city limits' boundary line. The Planned Connector designed to connect Coastal Gateway and Keller Road abuts Phase 2, Phase 3, and Phase 4 of the Raley Farm development.

Phase 2 of the development platted the entire length of the 80ft right-of-way from Coastal Gateway Boulevard to the development's northern property line, which is the City of Gulf Shores/Foley city limits' boundary line. Per the rezoning, Ordinance 2003, the City will construct the north/south connector road to the proposed eastern entrance (Raley Farms Drive) prior to the completion of the construction of Phase 3.

The City of Gulf Shores will begin design and construction of the connector road this year and construction will be complete in 2023.

Common/Open Space – Open Space regulations are intended to develop within new subdivisions, private recreation areas in the form of "Mini Parks" and "Neighborhood Parks" for the purpose of meeting the informal recreational needs of its residents. A minimum of 10% of the overall land area of the subdivision shall be reserved as Open Space, and each phase shall comply with the minimum percentage required. Specific design requirements are provided in the Subdivision Regulations in order to be credited for minimum Open Space.

The applicant is proposing a combined 14.84 acres of Open Space in Phases 3 and 4. Each phase provides at least 20% Open Space, doubling the minimum requirement of the Subdivision Regulations for each phase. The proposed Open Space is an extension of the Raley Farm Phase 1 and Phase 2 Open Space that contains a clubhouse, pool, and visitor parking spaces. Phase 2 Open Space contains open field areas that will be sodded along with a sidewalk system that connects to the clubhouse. Phases 3 and 4 will continue the 6ft sidewalk system through the proposed open space within each phase.

Because the applicant is proposing to include the drainage ponds within the Open Space calculations, 6ft sidewalks are proposed around the pond systems so that the drainage ponds serve a dual purpose; a functional storm water management system and an aesthetic element for passive recreation. The sidewalks will begin to provide an interconnected network of Open Space throughout the development. Phase 3 sidewalks will connect the Open Space to the sidewalk segment along Gulf Crown Street.

The overall Raley Farm Subdivision Master Plan demonstrates a central open space concept for the entire development. The plan presented as part of the 2018 Rezoning application utilized this concept to preserve the existing natural elements of the former farmland in order to provide a central parklike element for the subdivision development. The central open space incorporates the existing ponds, preserved Heritage Live Oaks and other Protected Trees, large expanses of natural areas including wetlands, along with the improvements constructed in Phase 1. With the centralized open space concept, each phase of the subdivision has used a portion of the open space to meet the open space requirements of the Subdivision Regulations. This is the reasoning behind the unconventional layout of the open space for Phases 3 and 4. The applicant has requested a waiver as required by the Subdivision Regulations Section 6-6B.3.g in order to utilize lands used for drainage and storm water management as part of the required Open Space. The same request was approved for Phase 2 of the development, and staff supports this request.

The Ownership and Management of the Open Space will be the responsibility of the Home Owners Association. The terms and conditions set forth in the recorded Covenants and Restrictions for Phases 1 and 2 will be extended to Phases 3 and 4. The applicant has provided a

certificate on the plat that will indicate the instrument number for the recorded document.

Drainage - The applicant is proposing to manage the water runoff by collecting the overflow within the street system that will connect to the east retention pond via storm pipes. The east pond is designed to outfall into the west pond. The Master Lot Grading Plan shows the typical drainage flow direction. Notes have been provided on the plat that describe the required side and rear yard drainage easements.

The Subdivision Regulations state that 'where a subdivision is traversed by a watercourse, drainageway, pipe trench, retention/detention area, channel, or stream, a common area conforming substantially to the lines of such water course, and such width and construction as will be adequate for the purpose, shall be platted to accommodate maintenance of the same.' The Site Storm Drainage Plan proposes storm pipes along specific side lot lines of specific lots within Phases 3 and 4. The storm pipe locations would be required to be platted within common areas. The applicant has requested a waiver to the common area requirement and has proposed to provide a conditional drainage easement that will prohibit the construction of any structure over the storm pipe; specifically the construction of fencing. The Engineering Department is supportive of the request.

The Engineering Department has reviewed and accepted the Pre-Design Geotechnical Testing Report and the applicant's Storm Drainage Analysis and Storm Water Management System Design narrative for Phases 3 and 4. Erosion Control Plans have also been reviewed and accepted.

Utilities – The applicant has provided the locations for the utilities and letters of availability from each utility company. Electricity and telecom/broadband conduit locations plan has been requested from Baldwin EMC by the applicant and will be provided to the city once it has been received. The applicant will be required to provide conduit for telecom/broadband utilities prior to final plat approval.

Tree Preservation/Landscaping – Phases 3 and 4 do not contain any Heritage or Protected Trees.

The Landscape Plan shows the required 10ft Neighborhood Border along the platted 80ft right-of-way for the north/south connector road. The border plantings provide the required trees and shrubs, and fence location. The detail of the fence design meets the requirements of the Subdivision Regulations by incorporating masonry columns and fence height at a minimum of 6ft. Street trees are shown along both sides of the new streets and around the perimeter of the retention pond. The remaining open space areas are proposed to be sodded.

The Lighting Plan proposes the continuation of the standard BEMC poles and fixtures installed in Phases 1 and 2. BEMC is phasing out the standard acorn style fixtures currently used within the subdivision. The developer will provide a fixture that closely resembles the existing fixtures used in the existing phases.

## **SUMMARY**

Below is a summary of the Modifications and Waivers requested and the outstanding conditions.

Modifications and Waivers – The applicant has requested the following Modifications and Waivers to the Subdivision Regulations:

1. Waiver to Sec 4-4 Traffic Impact Study – Applicant asks "that the traffic study performed and submitted with the rezoning package be accepted."
2. Waiver to Sec 6-3.B.9 Dead End Streets – Applicant asks "that the temporary, emergency turnaround requirement be waived."
3. Modification to Section 6-3.B.11 Sidewalks & Bike Path – Applicant requests "there be no separation between sidewalks and property lines."

4. Modification to Sec 6-6.B3.g – Applicant requests “the stormwater retention ponds be counted towards Open Space. It is the intent of the development that these ponds are part of the amenity and may be used by residents. Sidewalks are proposed around the ponds linking the phases and other amenity features.”
5. Modification to Sec 6-4D2 – Applicant requests “the drainage infrastructure, between lots, be enclosed in a dedicated drainage easement and not common area.”

Outstanding Revisions to Be Addressed

1. Conduit Plan for telecom/broadband utilities shall be provided prior to final plat approval.
2. Fire Hydrant locations and distribution does not appear to meet the requirements of Appendix C 2021 International Fire Code. Provide engineering statement showing compliance.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Raley Farm Phases 3 and 4 has been designed in a way that is consistent with the Master Plan provided during the rezoning in 2021. The application meets the Purposes and Policies of the Subdivision Regulations and conditions of the rezoning Ordinance No. 2003. Staff recommends the Commission approve the application with the Modifications and Waivers, and Outstanding Revisions to Be Addressed as conditions provided above.

**Attachments:** Master Plan, Plat, Preliminary Construction Plans, Resolution

## Raley Farm Phases 3 and 4 – Location Map



**RESOLUTION ZA22-000003**  
**Raley Farm Phases Three & Four**  
**Preliminary Plat**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GULF SHORES, ALABAMA, WHILE IN REGULAR SESSION ON FEBRUARY 22, 2022, as follows:

By a vote of 0-0, the Gulf Shores Planning Commission approved the Preliminary Plat for Raley Farm Phases 3 & 4 subdividing 66.71 acres into 200 single family residential lots with the following conditions:

1. Approve the applicant's request to waive the required Traffic Impact Study.
2. Approve the applicant's request to waive the temporary, emergency turnarounds required at dead end streets.
3. Approve the applicant's request to modify the location of the 6ft sidewalks within the 50ft rights-of-way so that the sidewalks abut the front property lines.
4. Approve the applicant's request to modify the Open Space design requirements to allow the stormwater retention ponds to be counted towards the minimum 10% Open Space requirement. Sidewalks shall be provided around the ponds for Phase 2 and future phases in order to interconnect the Open Spaces and use the stormwater retention ponds as an amenity.
5. Approve the applicant's request to designate the enclosed drainage infrastructure to be placed along common lot lines as drainage easements and not designated as common area.
6. Conduit for telecom/broadband utilities shall be provided prior to final plat approval.
7. Fire Hydrant locations and distribution does not appear to meet the requirements of Appendix C 2021 International Fire Code. Provide engineering statement showing compliance.

This resolution shall become effective upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this 22nd day of February, 2022.

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Robert Steiskal, Jr.  
Chairman, Planning Commission

Attest:

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Mell Davis  
Secretary, Planning Commission