

Wellington's Marjory Stoneman Douglas Preserve

STAFF REPORT

Petition Number: Comprehensive Plan Amendment
Petition 2025-0001-CPA
Ordinance No. 2025-06

Owners/Applicant: Village of Wellington
12300 Forest Hill Blvd
Wellington, FL 33414

PCN: 73-40-44-24-00-000-1040

Current Future Land Use Map Designation:
PBC Rural Residential (RR/10)

Proposed Future Land Use Map Designation:
Conservation (CN)

Current Zoning Designation: Community Facilities

Acreage: 363 acres

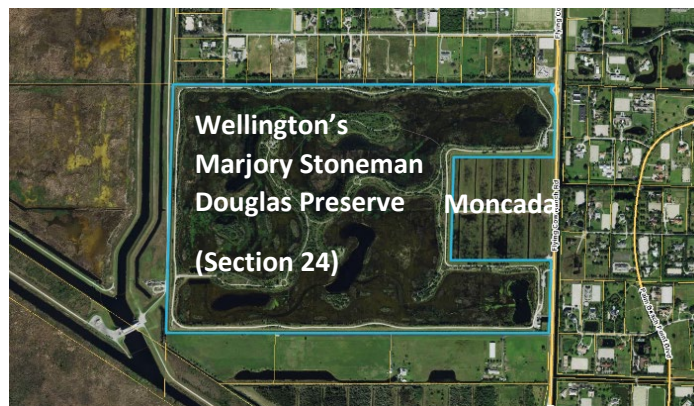
Request: To amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of the property known as Wellington's Marjory Stoneman Douglas Preserve (Section 24) from Palm Beach County's RR/10 to Wellington's Conservation (CN).

Project Manager:

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Location/Map:

The subject property is located approximately 3.25 miles south of the Southern Blvd and Flying Cow Road intersection, on the west side of Flying Cow Road.



Adjacent Property	FLUM	Zoning
North	Residential B (0.1 du/acre – 1.0 du/acre)	EOZD/RROZD
South	Residential B (0.1 du/acre – 1.0 du/acre)	AR/PBC-Agricultural Residential
East	Residential A (1 du/10 acre)	EOZD/Equestrian Residential (ER) (Low density)
West	PBC RR/10	STA - Stormwater Treatment Area

Boards, Committees, and Council:

	Notice Date	Meeting Date	Vote
PZAB	April 1, 2025	April 16, 2025	TBD
Council (1 st)	April 28, 2025	May 13, 2025	TBD
Council (2 nd)	June 23, 2025	July 8, 2023	TBD

Site History:

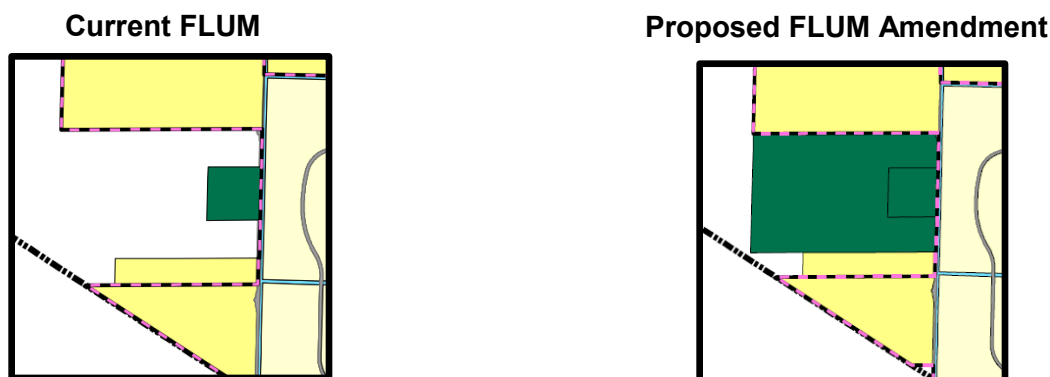
Wellington purchased the Wellington Environment Preserve at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Everglades Habitat (Section 24) in February of 2009 in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District. The partnership aims to reduce high phosphorus levels in Wellington's water discharge and ensure compliance with federal water quality standards. The preserve was constructed to provide for the filtration of stormwater prior to the water entering the C-1 canal and then traveling to Lake Okeechobee. The preserve was a solution that not only resulted in improved and compliant water quality, environmental restoration, and flood protection, but became a beautiful preserve that is used for recreation, leisure, and education. The preserve officially opened on November 12, 2010. The preserve includes recreational amenities such as a 3.6-mile-long equestrian bridle trail, paved multi-use pathways, boardwalks, designated learning areas, and a six-story observation tower. Wellington is requesting a land use designation change from Palm Beach County's residential land use (RR/10) to Wellington's Conservation (CN) to match the use of the property. This amendment does not change what is currently permitted/built on the property.

Wellington acquired the adjacent 45-acre Moncada property on November 27, 2021. On May 9, 2023, the Wellington Council approved the land use designation for the Moncada property as Conservation (CN). Wellington's Marjory Stoneman Douglas Preserve's current land use is designated RR/10 under the Palm Beach County's Land Use Map. Wellington is initiating this application so that the criteria and qualifications for future grant funds may be obtained. This amendment is consistent with the existing use and is compatible with the surrounding land use designations.

Wellington is requesting approval of Petition No. 2025-0001-CPA (Ordinance No. 2025-06), a Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment (CPA) to amend the FLUM designation of Wellington Environmental Preserve from PBC RR/10 to Wellington's Conservation (CN).

Analysis – Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment:

Below illustrates a section of the current Wellington FLUM (Exhibit A) and an illustration of the proposed FLUM designation (Exhibit B) for Wellington's Marjory Stoneman Douglas Preserve (Section 24):



This CPA request complies with the following specific goals, objectives, and policies of Wellington's Comprehensive Plan:

Land Use and Community Design Element

Policy LU&CD 1.6.2 Conservation Land Use: Preserve and protect areas with Conservation (CN) land use designation to protect natural functions of environmentally sensitive land. The uses permitted include wildlife management, passive recreation, and environmental restoration/preservation. The maximum FAR is 0.05.

The proposed land use amendment will designate the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Everglades Habitat (referenced as “MSD Preserve” throughout this analysis) property as Conservation (CN) in Wellington’s Future Land Use Map (FLUM). This designation change will further Policy LU&CD 1.6.2 by continuing to protect wildlife, provide passive recreational activities, and strengthen environmental preservation efforts.

Conservation, Sustainability, and Resiliency Element

Policy CSR 1.3.1- Water Conservation & Protection: Water resources, including groundwater recharge, wellhead and surface waters, shall be protected and conserved as part of the site development process, and from activities that are known to adversely affect the quality and quantity of the public water supply. Continue to support water management and emergency conservation programs, mitigate for the shortage of water sources, and educate the public on how to minimize usage to protect the current and projected supply in accordance with the Water Supply Plan.

The MSD Preserve property is currently consistent with Policy CSR 1.3.1 as the property acts as a stormwater management system in efforts to filter, conserve, and protect waters that are discharged to Lake Okeechobee. In fact, the site is a 365-acre stormwater treatment area with the additional benefit that includes nature trails and learning centers. Additionally, the property currently exhibits educational material along the public pathways in effort to raise public awareness about water conservation and its importance in protecting the water supply.

Policy CSR 2.2.1- Wetlands Protection: Continue to require the principle of “no net loss of wetlands” and preserve the natural functions of wetlands by directing or significantly buffering incompatible land uses such as those with a negative impact on wetlands away from wetlands and require the monitoring and preservation of the functions and values of wetlands/conservation areas, and pursue the designation of wetland/conservation areas as “Conservation” on the Future Land Use Map.

Historically, the MSD Preserve functioned as a natural wetland. The property lies directly east of the Everglades, mirroring its natural wetland environment. The proposed designation will further Policy CSR 2.2.1 by preserving existing wetlands for environmental benefits and advancing “no net loss of wetlands” initiative. Key environmental benefits are flood control, water filtration, and providing critical habitats for numerous species such as migratory birds, fish, and endangered wildlife.

Policy CSR 2.2.4 Conservation Land Use Designation: Identify and designate publicly and privately-owned wetlands, wildlife habitats, major water recharge areas, and environmentally sensitive lands as Conservation on the Future Land Use Map for protection of natural resources and also dedicate and maintain in perpetuity, by a legally binding, recorded instrument by a plat or separate agreement.

The proposed land use amendment is consistent with Policy CSR 2.2.4 as it will designate the MSD Preserve as Conservation (CN) on the Future Land Use Map. Although this property has been a preserve for many years, this amendment will formally document an additional



363 acres of conservation land. The property is adjacent to the 45-acre Moncada site that was previously designated Conservation (Ordinance 2023-08) in May of 2023. The two properties combined will provide 408-acres to continue the utilization of stormwater management of the water Wellington distributes to Lake Okeechobee.

Policy CSR 2.2.5- Natural Resource Preservation: *Design development and redevelopment projects to protect, preserve, and manage existing natural resources and environmentally sensitive land on-site, unless preservation on-site is not feasible, then off-site mitigation and/or payment in lieu of preservation may be permitted. Manage and prohibit hazardous waste use, storage, transfer, or generating facilities in known zones of influence to protect natural resources*

The proposed amendment is consistent with Policy CSR 2.2.5 as the site is designed as a restoration project to protect, preserve, and manage existing natural resources. The site consists of basins and canals that serves to cleanse phosphorous contamination in the water before it gets pumped into the C-1 canal by 7 stormwater pump stations. In fact, the southern half of Wellington (Basin B) has 9,230 acres of stormwater runoff that is now routed west to MSD Preserve.

Parks and Recreation Element

Goal PR 1- Excellent Parks & Recreation Opportunities: *Provide premier parks, recreational facilities, programs that enhance quality of life, provide recreational opportunities, enrich interaction with others, and promote physical and mental wellbeing.*

The proposed amendment is consistent with the Parks and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed amendment will continue to provide for exemplary parks and recreational facilities, and educational programs that enhance the quality of life by providing recreational facilities to promote physical and mental wellbeing to visitors and residents.

Policy PR 1.1.1 Recreational Land (Recommended Standards): *Provide a superior amount of recreational land to serve the population; at least 10 acres of recreational land per 1,000 residents is Wellington’s target. Recreational land may comprise land for active or passive recreational use.*

As of the April 2020 Census, Wellington’s population reached 61,768. Wellington currently has a total of 1,435 acres of recreational land. The proposed land use amendment will add 363 acres of Conservation land to the existing 196-acres. The land use amendment will increase Wellington’s Conservation land use total to 559-acres.

Figure 1: Wellington’s Current Recreational Land Use Size by Type

Recreational Land Use Designations	Size (acres)
Conservation	195.9
Open Space Recreation	1,050.8
Park	188.2

FINDINGS OF FACT/ACTION

All required application documentation has been reviewed by the Development Review Manager and Wellington Departments to determine compliance with the Land Development Regulations and Comprehensive Plan.

Findings of Fact have been provided in the Staff Report that support approval of this Ordinance No. 2025-06, Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment (Petition No. 2025-0001-CPA) to amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation from PBC RR10 to a Wellington Conservation (CN).

List of Exhibits

- Exhibit A: Current Future Land Use Map
- Exhibit B: Proposed Future Land Use Map
- Exhibit C: Recorded Deed & Survey