

June 4, 2024

Attn: Polk County Staff

**Re: Watts Ranch**  
**DSE Job #: CBD-16**

## **Watts Ranch – Impact Statement**

This report serves to elucidate the projected ramifications of the proposed land use development and its subsequent implications on the extant neighborhood and broader region.

### **Land and Neighborhood Specifications**

Watts Ranch is strategically positioned on a select parcel spanning approximately 10.76 acres, located at Grove Avenue, Lake Wales, FL 33853. The proposed site plan encompasses the construction of single-family houses. As per the county's comprehensive land use plan, the current designation for this property is "RS (Residential-Suburban)" we are requesting you to amend this to "RL-1 (Residential-Low) to meet the desired density of 5du/ac.

The distinct parcel identifiers are as follows:

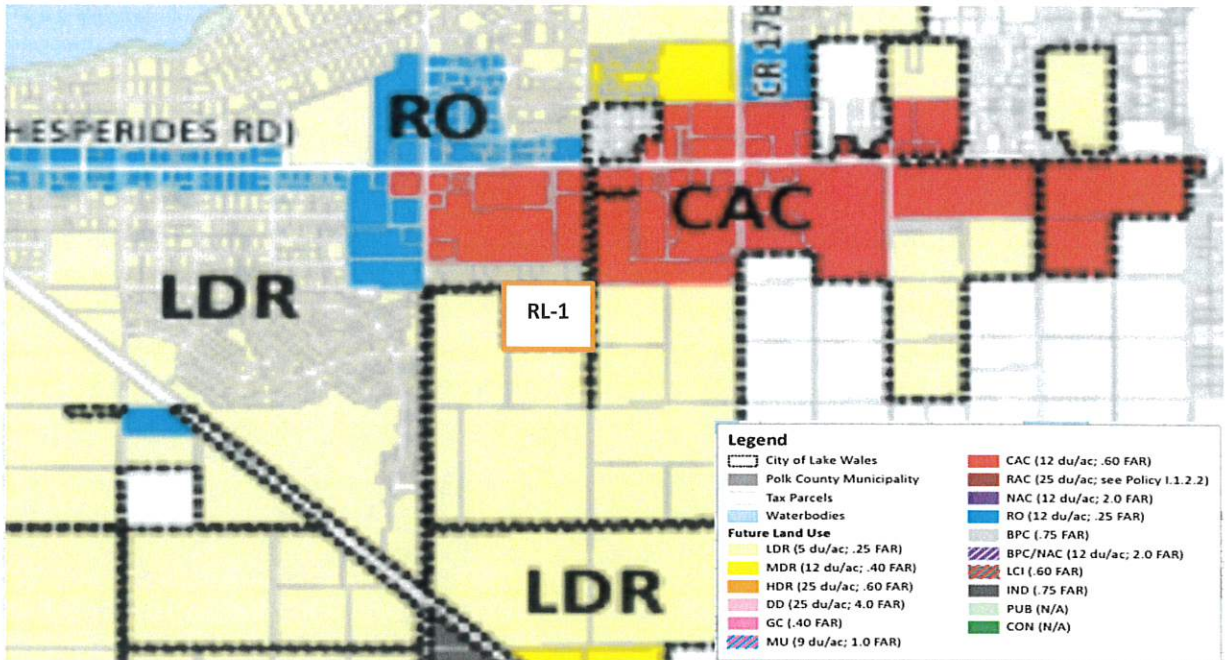
- **28-30-07-000000-034010**
- **28-30-07-000000-034040**

Within the precinct we are proposing each single-family house on average of 55'x116'. The overarching objective of this development initiative is to ensure systematic urban growth that addresses the prospective requirements of the community, whilst upholding an equilibrium between environmental sustainability and socio-economic considerations. Based on projections, the property is poised to accommodate an approximate populace of 110.4 residents.

## The Proposed Watts Ranch Site Development

1. **Strategic Location:** Watts Ranch is advantageously located, nestled within the confines of the future Hunt Club North and Hunt Club South developments. This prime location assures easy accessibility and centrality. Its strategic positioning guarantees that the new development will effortlessly meld into the adjacent infrastructure, thus reducing potential transportation or accessibility challenges.
2. **Adherence to the County Land Use Plan:** The "RS (Residential-Suburban)" designation, as outlined in the county's comprehensive land use plan, earmarks these parcels specifically for residential structures with a standard density cap of 3 du/a. The projected development encompasses 46 single family homes. This necessitates a Land Use change to RL-1 (Residential Low). Despite these alterations, the project retains its residential designation, ensuring its alignment with the county's vision and compliance with existing land-use directives.
3. **Optimal Land Utilization:** With these lot dimensions the design intends to optimize the land's utility. This strategic planning ensures effective space utilization, allowing room for amenities and open spaces that amplify the standard of living.
4. **Systematic Urban Growth:** The Watts Ranch development blueprint aligns with the principles of structured urban expansion. By conceptualizing a residential hub tailored for the anticipated population, the project aligns with the community's growth patterns. The incorporation of road accesses to the north, south, and east boundaries of the property dovetails with the design ethos of adjacent subdivisions and thoroughfares.
5. **Balancing Environmental and Socio-Economic Dimensions:** Beyond addressing housing needs, the development embodies a vision that harmonizes environmental stewardship with socio-economic evolution. This holistic view ensures community growth that respects ecological boundaries and leverages resources judiciously. Emphasis on recreational zones and expansive open spaces, enriched with landscaping, encourages residents to engage with outdoor environments, promoting well-being.
6. **Catering to Community Demands:** With an estimated population influx of roughly 110.4 residents, this development has been crafted to respond to the escalating housing demand in the region.





**Suitability of the Watts Ranch Site for Proposed Uses (RL-1) and Influence of the Requested District (RL-1) on Future Development Patterns**

**1. Strategic Location & Existing Development Blueprint:** The Watts Ranch site is ideally situated within the confines of the future Hunt Club North and Hunt Club South developments. This not only ensures that the location is prime and central, but it also means the site is geared for integration into an already planned infrastructure. Transitioning to the proposed RL-1 use would further integrate the site with surrounding developments and allow for a more seamless and cohesive urban layout.

**2. Density and Use Alignment:** The RL-1 designation permits a higher planning density than the current RS (Residential-Suburban) designation. Given that the projected development of the Watts Ranch suggests a higher density than RS designation, it is evident that the site's use and potential are better aligned with the RL district. This change can cater to the increasing housing demand in the area and provide more residential options, ensuring efficient land use.

**3. Positive Influence on Future Development Patterns:** Introducing an RL-1 district in an area that is presently undeveloped sets a precedent for future developments. Here's how:

a. **Structured Urban Growth:** The RL-1 designation encourages structured and low dense urban development, minimizing urban sprawl.

This results in a more compact urban form, preserving green spaces and reducing the carbon footprint due to decreased transportation needs.

b. **Resource Optimization:** Denser developments, like those allowed under the RL-1 district, optimize public resources such as water, sewage, and electricity infrastructure. This efficiency can guide future developers in the region to adopt similar sustainable practices.

c. **Socio-Economic Benefits:** A denser population can lead to more vibrant communities with increased economic activities, fostering a self-sustaining ecosystem. Future developments might take cues and prioritize creating spaces that balance residential, commercial, and recreational needs.

d. **Transit-Oriented Developments:** As the RL-1 district promotes a higher density, it can influence future developments to prioritize or incorporate public transit solutions, reducing reliance on personal vehicles and paving the way for a more sustainable urban environment.

**4. Ecological and Recreational Emphasis:** The Watts Ranch development plan not only focuses on housing but also emphasizes environmental preservation and open space areas. As these become integral parts of the RL-1 district, they can shape future developments to prioritize green spaces, parks, and other recreational amenities, enhancing the quality of life.

In essence, the Watts Ranch proposition, characterized by its strategic locale, innovative design, and harmonization with county directives, epitomizes a forward-thinking approach. This approach is set to enrich regional residential offerings while striking a balance between urbanization and sustainability.

In conclusion, the Watts Ranch site is not only suitable for the proposed RL-1 uses due to its location, density alignment, and design, but the adoption of the RL-1 can also positively influence future development patterns. It promotes a vision of structured urban growth, efficient resource utilization, and a holistic living environment, providing a roadmap for future undeveloped areas to follow.

### **Access to Roads and Highways**

Residents of Watts Ranch will have access to Hamlin Street to the east and Grove Avenue to the north. Reaching Scenic Rd 60 by vehicle is approximately a 2-minute drive, while walking would take around 13 minutes.

In collaboration with the City of Lake Wales staff, we've identified several departments that will serve the forthcoming residents of Watts Ranch. The proximity of these departments to the proposed development has been systematically arranged. Distances



to these departments average between 1.3 to 3.0 miles. Travel times, contingent on traffic, typically range from 3 to 8 minutes.

Department	Phone Number	Address	Miles
Fire Department	(863) 678-4203	253 W Central Avenue, Lake Wales, FL 33853	2.5
Police Department	(863) 678-4223	133 East Tillman Avenue, Lake Wales, FL 33853	2.0
Adventhealth Lake Wales	(863) 422-4971	410 S 11 <sup>th</sup> St, Lake Wales, FL 33853	0.8

Education	Grade	Address	Miles
Spook Hill Elementary	Kindergarten-Grade 5	321 Dr JA Wiltshire Ave Lake Wales, FL 33853	2.8
McLaughlin Middle School	Grade 6 – 8	800 S 4th St, Lake Wales, FL 33853	2.5
Lake Wales High School	Grade 9 – 12	1 Highlander Way, Lake Wales, FL 33853	3.0

Parks & Recreational	Address	Miles
Kiwanis Park	943 N Lakeshore Blvd, Lake Wales, FL 33853	1.6
Albert Kirkland Sr Gymnasium	409 N 3rd St, Lake Wales, FL 33853	2.7
Downtown Market Place	20 N. Market Place, Lake Wales, FL 33853	2.4
Fishing Pier	33 N Lake Shore, Boulevard, Lake Wales, FL 33853	2.0
James P Austin III Community Center	315 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard, Lake Wales, FL 33853	2.9

**Service Providers:**

**Electric Service:**

Duke Energy, PO BOX 14042, St. Petersburg, FL 33733.  
Phone: (800) 700-8744.

**Telephone Service:**

Verizon, PO BOX 11328, St. Petersburg, FL 33733.  
Phone: (800) 256-4646.

**Water & Sewer Service:**

City of Lakeland Water Utilities, PO BOX 1320, Lake Wales, FL 33859.  
Phone: (800) 678-4182 Ext. 285.

**Gas Service:**

Florida Public Utilities, 450 S. Charles Richard Beall Blvd, Debary, FL 32713.  
Phone: (800) 427-7712.

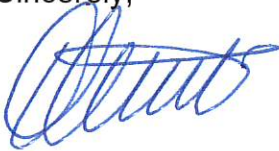
**Cable Service:**

Spectrum, 1004 US Highway 92 W, Auburndale, FL 33823.  
Phone: (866) 309-3279.

**Surface Water management and Drainage**

In alignment with the upcoming Hunt Club North Grove development, the stormwater management system for Watts Ranch will be directed towards the detention pond located to the south. This pond has been engineered to accommodate the entire site's stormwater runoff. Precipitation runoff will be conveyed via a structured stormwater piping network, subsequently discharging into the pond. Prior to groundwater infiltration, the water will undergo requisite treatment processes within this facility.

Sincerely,



Dave Schmitt, P.E.  
President  
Dave Schmitt Engineering, Inc.