



# AGENDA

## City Commission Meeting

6:00 PM – Thursday, February 05, 2026 – City Hall

**Invocation: Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Willie Hawkins**

**Call to Order**

**Acknowledge of Quorum and Proper Notice**

**1. Agenda Update**

**2. Approval of Minutes**

**2.1 Approval of Minutes**

December 9, 2026 City Commission Meeting

January 22, 2026 City Commission Meeting

**3. Presentations**

**3.1** Proclamation Declaring February Black History Month and Recognizing the 32nd Annual African American Heritage Celebration

**3.2** Targeted Industry and Smart Growth Study Presentation

**4. Audience to be Heard**

**5. Consent Agenda**

**5.1** Historic Preservation Board Annual Report for FY 2024-2025

**6. Ordinances, Public Hearings, & Quasi Judicial Hearings**

**6.1 Explanation of Ordinance Numbers 26-02, 26-03, and 26-04**

Ordinance Number 26-02: Voluntary Annexation

Ordinance Number 26-03: Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Ordinance Number 26-04: Design District Assignment

**SECOND READING**

Ordinance Number 26-02: Voluntary Annexation of Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1197309

**6.2 SECOND READING**

Ordinance Number 26-03: Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Alternate Key 1197309

**6.3 SECOND READING**

Ordinance Number 26-04: Design District Assignment for Alternate Key 1197309

**6.4 FIRST READING**

**7. Future Agenda Items and Comments**

**7.1 City Commission**

**7.2 City Manager**

**7.3 City Attorney**

**7.4 Mayor**

**8. Adjournment**

This Agenda is provided to the Commission only as a guide, and in no way limits their consideration to the items contained hereon. The Commission has the sole right to determine those items they will discuss, consider, act upon, or fail to act upon. Changes or amendments to this Agenda may occur at any time prior to, or during the scheduled meeting. It is recommended that if you have an interest in the meeting, you make every attempt to attend the meeting. This Agenda is provided only as a courtesy, and such provision in no way infers or conveys that the Agenda appearing here is, or will be the Agenda considered at the meeting.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based (Florida Statutes, 286.0105). In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, persons needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Clerk 48 hours prior to any meeting so arrangements can be made. Telephone (352) 483-5430 for assistance.



# City of Eustis

P.O. Drawer 68 • Eustis, Florida 32727-0068 • (352) 483-5430

TO: EUSTIS CITY COMMISSION

FROM: Tom Carrino, City Manager

DATE: February 5, 2026

RE: Approval of Minutes

December 9, 2026 City Commission Meeting

January 22, 2026 City Commission Meeting

**Introduction:**

This item is for consideration of the minutes of the Eustis City Commission.

**Recommended Action:**

Approval of the minutes as submitted.

**Prepared By:**

Mary C. Montez, Deputy City Clerk

**Reviewed By:**

Christine Halloran, City Clerk



# MINUTES

## City Commission Meeting

6:00 PM – Tuesday, December 09, 2025 – City Hall

Item 2.1

**Invocation: Reverend Kristina Spaude, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County**

**Pledge of Allegiance: Commissioner Emily Lee**

**Call to Order: 6:18 p.m.**

**Acknowledge of Quorum and Proper Notice**

PRESENT: Commissioner Emily Lee, Commissioner George Asbate, Vice Mayor Gary Ashcraft, Mayor Willie L. Hawkins

ABSENT: Commissioner Michael Holland

### 1. Agenda Update

Tom Carrino, City Manager, announced that Ordinance Number 25-38 (Item 7.8) needed to be considered before the other ordinances so it was being moved to 7.2.

### 2. Approval of Minutes

October 23, 2025 City Commission Meeting

November 6, 2025 City Commission Meeting

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve the Minutes. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Mayor Hawkins

### 3. Presentations

#### 3.1 Update from Mike Goman

Mike Goman provided an update noting that the notices have been sent. He indicated they previously have made contact with approximately 30 firms and that has been increased to approximately 40 firms. He explained their methods for making those contacts. He stated they have completed one physical tour of the site including the Waterman lots as well as the rest of the downtown. He noted that the individual requested additional information about Sharp's Mobile Home Park and the Grove Square shopping center. They thought the area along Eustis Street up to Pendleton was ripe for development. They also liked the traffic counts in the area. They indicated a willingness to do a second tour early in the next year and requested some additional information and a copy of the master plan.

Mr. Goman commented that nationwide there is a lot of market uncertainty. He indicated that many of the contacts were asking about areas closer to the 429. He added that there has been a slowdown in general in the Florida market as well as other areas of the country. He concluded that going forward they will continue to reach out to potential development candidate companies. He stated they will probably be doing more onsite tours in January.

Commissioner Lee asked how many information packets have been sent out with Mr. Goman responding they have mailed out over 30. He explained they typically reach out to organizations first and then mail out the market information. They should be over 40 within the next ten days.

Item 2.1

Commissioner Asbate asked what is their response if someone asks what the City is looking for with Mr. Goman responding that has not been asked of them. He explained they are asked what are the opportunities and their response is for multi-family, highly amenitized apartments, retail, food and beverage and a hotel/convention center.

Commissioner Asbate asked how much time he is spending on the City's project with Mr. Goman responding he is personally spending about eight hours per week with other staff also spending that amount for a total of about 24 hours per week.

Commissioner Lee asked what his vision is for multi-family with Mr. Goman responding better quality, highly amenitized apartments. He commented on the types of amenities people look for. He stated there is a lot of developer interest in that type of development. He noted they are looking for an area with residents that have a lot of disposable income. He commented on affordable housing development. He indicated that affordable housing is pretty much fulfilled in the area with the market gap being in the upscale apartments. He indicated that residents of interest to the amenitized housing are empty nesters and professional couples with no children.

Mayor Hawkins asked about the possibility of the City pulling from the Orlando and Villages areas with Mr. Goman responding that Eustis is marketed as a bedroom type of community for professionals working in the outer areas of Orlando.

#### 4. Appointments

##### 4.1 Appointment to the City of Eustis Firefighter's Pension and Retirement System Board of Trustees – Seat #1

Mr. Carrino indicated Rachel Holtzclaw is currently a member of the Eustis Firefighters' Retirement Board of Trustees whose term expired November 30, 2025. No other applications were received for this position; therefore, staff recommends reappointment for a two-year term to expire November 2027.

Motion made by Commissioner Asbate, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve the reappointment of Rachel Holtzclaw to the Firefighters' Pension Board. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

##### 4.2 Appointment to the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) - Member

Mr. Carrino stated that Monte Stamper has applied for reappointment to the Historic Preservation Board whose current term on the board will expire December 31, 2025. After posting of the position on the board per City protocol, Mr. Stamper was the only applicant. Staff recommends the reappointment of Mr. Stamper to a three-year term to expire December 31, 2028.

Motion made by Commissioner Lee, Seconded by Commissioner Asbate, to reappoint Monte Stamper to the Historic Preservation Board. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

### 4.3 Appointment to the Eustis Library Board of Trustees – Member

Mr. Carrino announced that Gwendolyn Manning has applied for reappointment to the Eustis Memorial Library Board of Trustees. Ms. Manning's current term on the board will expire December 31, 2025. After posting of the position pursuant to City protocol, no other applications were received. Staff recommends approval of the reappointment for a five-year term to expire December 31, 2030.

Motion made by Commissioner Lee, Seconded by Commissioner Asbate, to reappoint Gwen Manning to the Library Board of Trustees. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

### **5. Audience to be Heard**

Daniel DiVenanzo, Eustis business owner, commented on the upcoming election of Mayor in 2026. He expressed concern regarding the downtown redevelopment closing out local builders/developers and emphasized the need to not look for one large developer but utilize multiple smaller developers/builders. He commented on previous developer presentations provided to the City that were not well thought out.

### **6. Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Asbate asked to pull Resolution 25-106 regarding the utility easement to Duke Energy Florida for the Greenwood Cemetery.

- 6.1 Resolution Number 25-99: Approval Amending the FY 2025/26 adopted budget for the General Fund (001) and Governmental Grants Fund (018) to recognize award/receipt of FY 2025/26 Grants/Donations
- 6.2 Resolution Number 25-101: Adoption of Public Records Exemption Request Form and Administrative Procedures
- 6.3 Resolution Number 25-102: Adoption of a Public Records Search Certification Form (Personal Devices/Accounts)
- 6.4 Resolution Number 25-103: Approving a Purchase in Excess of \$100,000 for a Public Utilities Replacement Forklift
- 6.5 Resolution Number 25-104: Amending the FY2025/26 adopted Budget for the General Fund to including funding for the emergency rental of four (4) portable air conditioning units at the Eustis Memorial Library
- 6.6 Resolution Number 25-105: Amendment to Commission Rules of Order Regarding Adoption of Annual Meeting Schedule in December for the Upcoming Calendar Year and Adoption of Proposed City Commission Meetings for 2026 through January 2027
- 6.7 Resolution Number 25-107: Authorizing Award of Bid Number 007-25 to GPS Civil Construction Group for Coolidge Street Improvements and Approving an Expenditure in Excess of \$100,000
- 6.8 Resolution Number 25-108: Authorizing Acceptance of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 FDOT Legislative Appropriation for the Coolidge Street Improvements Project

Motion made by Commissioner Asbate, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve the Consent Agenda, less Resolution 25-106. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

## 7. **Ordinances, Public Hearings, & Quasi Judicial Hearings**

Item 2.1

### 7.1 Resolution Number 25-106: Approval of Perpetual Electric Utility Easement to Duke Energy Florida, LLC – Greenwood Cemetery Addition F

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-106 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida, approving and authorizing the execution of a perpetual utility easement in favor of Duke Energy Florida, LLC, over a portion of City-owned property identified as Greenwood Cemetery Addition F; providing for conflicts, severability and an effective date.

Rick Gierok, Engineering and Capital Projects Director, explained the need for the easement for the control panel for the fountain in the memorial gardens. He indicated it would be for a 10-foot strip for an overhead tower.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft expressed concern regarding what type of pole they may install with Mr. Gierok responding it would not be like the other poles as those are transmission poles.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft asked about the possibility of going underground with Mr. Gierok stating it might be possible but would be more expensive. He indicated the pole would be near the houses so it would not be as visible.

Mr. Gierok reviewed some of the planned improvements and indicated he could price out going underground but noted that it would be substantially more. He confirmed that the easement is for the City, not for Duke, and would be for the cemetery improvements.

Mr. Carrino indicated that he spoke with Duke Energy about whether or not they would be serving other customers through the easement and they responded that it was strictly for the City's use.

Attorney Garcia stated she had reviewed the documents and they had made changes she requested.

The Commission expressed concern about the possibility of Duke using the easement to serve other people and the City allowing it to be used in perpetuity. They questioned if the use of the easement could be restricted.

Mr. Gierok indicated he did not see how they could serve anyone else from that location. He explained that the five adjoining residences are already served through the front. Regarding the proposal to place it underground, he explained if they were going to serve other customers the placement wouldn't matter. He confirmed that the City would be maintaining the easement. He emphasized that the only reason the easement is being done is for the cemetery improvements. He explained that Duke cannot install the power for the fountain without the easement.

Discussion was held regarding the restrictions with Mr. Gierok confirming there are no burials where the construction is being done.

Commissioner Asbate provided to the rest of the Commission, the City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk copies of his written concerns regarding the easement. He then reviewed those concerns (see agenda attachment) including the possibility of Duke installing transmission lines through the easement in the future. He suggested utilizing a temporary access easement instead of a perpetual easement.

City Clerk computer auto-updated at 6:52 p.m. Restarted at 7:01 p.m.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

Daniel DiVenanzo suggested they consider the City taking ownership from the point of origin, then they don't need an easement.

There being no further public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:05 p.m.

Commissioner Asbate offered to meet with Mr. Gierok and then it could be brought back to the Commission.

Mr. Gierok asked them to allow him time to review Commissioner Asbate's concerns and consider other options and then he would contact Commissioner Asbate to discuss.

Motion made by Commissioner Asbate, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to table consideration of Resolution Number 25-106. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

7.2 Resolution Number 25-109: Approval of Addendum Number 1 to the Commercial Lease Agreement with W.I.N. 1 Ministries, Inc. for 301 West Ward Avenue

Sasha Garcia, City Attorney, read Resolution Number 25-109 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; approving and authorizing the City Manager to execute Addendum Number 1 to the commercial lease agreement with W.I.N. 1 Ministries, Inc., extending the lease term for City-owned property located at 301 West Ward Avenue; providing for conflicts; providing for severability; and providing for an effective date.

Mr. Carrino explained the proposed addendum extends the term of the current lease by two years to expire December 31, 2027. He indicated there were no other changes to the lease. He noted that there has been discussion about the need for space for additional recreation programming but they will be looking for other options for that.

The Commission asked what other space is available for programming with Mr. Carrino indicating that they could expand an existing facility. He noted there are funds budgeted in the CRA for a basketball shade structure that could be re-allocated for expansion of the Carver Park indoor space. He stated that would keep programming together rather than in different locations. He explained various complications to other possibilities including use of the Curtright Center which could not occur for several years.

Discussion was held regarding the Carver Park Master Plan and what that includes.

The Commission asked if the rent from W.I.N. 1 is going to Parks and Recreation with Mr. Carrino indicating it was originally going to the Corey Rolle Memorial Field Fund. He added that if Commission would like to have that go towards additional facilities at Carver Park that could be done.

Discussion was held regarding the need for additional programming space as well as storage space.

Commissioner Lee asked if an item already approved on the Consent Agenda could be reconsidered with Attorney Garcia responding negatively.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Gail Isaac-Thomas expressed concern as to whether or not the rental money was going to Parks and Recreation and commented on how much the funds are needed. She asked if she could get a report on how the rental funds have been spent.

Commissioner Asbate asked about something in the Rules of Order or in the Charter that would allow them to reconsider an agenda item during the same meeting with Attorney Garcia indicating she would look at those once the current item was completed. Item 2.1

Pastor Rene Hill, W.I.N. 1 Ministries, commented on them being good tenants for the City and expressed support for extension of the lease.

Pastor Benny Hill, W.I.N. 1 Ministries, noted that it costs them approximately \$6,000 to \$7,000 per month to be in the building, not just the \$4,000 rent. He commented on their improvements to the facility and the amount of food they have distributed to the community.

Mr. Carrino noted that they also have been a good partner with the Supervisor of Elections who still uses the facility for elections.

There being no further public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:21 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Lee, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to approve Resolution Number 25-109. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

### **7.3 FIRST READING**

Ordinance Number 25-38: 2025-CPT-01: Evaluation and Appraisal Report Amendment for the City's Comprehensive Plan

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-38 by title on first reading: An Ordinance amending the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Eustis, specifically to adopt City-initiated Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR) based amendments pursuant to Section 163.3191, Florida Statutes; (1) Update the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Future Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Infrastructure, Conservation, Recreation and Open Space, Intergovernmental Coordination, Capital Improvements, Economic Development, and Property Rights elements of the Comprehensive Plan; (2) To update the Future Land Use Map series; providing for severability; repealing all ordinances in conflict herewith and providing for an effective date.

Mike Lane, Development Services Director, asked the Commission if they wanted another presentation regarding the EAR. He confirmed that once transmitted, they can still make some additional amendments to the EAR.

Ray Greer explained that they are not approving the EAR, they are only approving the transmittal to the State for review. He noted the State has to return their comments within 90 days and the City will have to adopt within 180 days of transmittal.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:25 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:25 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve Ordinance Number 25-38 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

### **7.4 Explanation of Ordinances 25-03, 25-04 and 24-05 for Annexation, Future Land Use Designation and Design District Designation of Parcels with Alternate Key Numbers 1097070 and 1094712**

### **SECOND READING**

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-03 by title on second and final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; voluntarily annexing approximately 48.1 acres of real property at Alternate Key Numbers 1097070 and 1094712, generally located north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19.

Kyle Wilkes, Senior Planner, reviewed the proposed annexation, future land use designation and design district designation. He stated it was transmitted to the state in September as a large-scale comprehensive plan amendment but it was later determined to be a small scale due to a new survey. The state did approve the comprehensive plan amendment with no comments.

Mr. Wilkes further reviewed the requested FLU and design district designations and stated staff's recommendation for approval.

The Commission asked if the land behind the property is a wetland with Mr. Carrino indicating it is a wooded wetland but not a body of water. They asked if it could be built on with Mr. Carrino indicating they would have to jump through a lot of hoops in order to develop on a wetland.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:32 p.m.

Cindy Newton stated her belief that the rear property is wetland and the two ponds in front would be considered bodies of water. She commented that it does not appear to be suitable for much and would be difficult to develop and the possible effect on Trout Lake.

The Commission asked why the design district is Rural Residential with Mr. Wilkes responding that Rural Residential is to the north and it is the least intense design district that the City has.

Mr. Carrino explained that the design district does not designate allowed uses, that would be designated under the land use district of MCI.

The Commission asked about a light industrial designation with Mr. Carrino responding that MCI is essentially the City's light industrial. He noted that General Industrial would be the City's heavy industrial.

The Commission asked if the developer could build up the land with Mr. Carrino indicating they would have to have approvals from a number of other agencies in order to do so.

There being no further public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:36 p.m.

Commissioner Asbate expressed concern regarding the development; however, he would prefer that the City control the use of the property rather than the County.

Motion made by Commissioner Asbate, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-03 on second and final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

## **7.5 SECOND READING**

Ordinance Number 25-04: Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Parcels with Alternate Key Numbers 1097070 and 1094712

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-04 by title on final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; amending the City of Eustis

Comprehensive Plan pursuant to 163.3187 F.S.; changing the future land use designation of approximately 48.1 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Numbers 1097070 and 1094712, generally located north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19, from Urban Low in Lake County to Mixed Commercial Industrial in the City of Eustis. Item 2.1

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:38 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:38 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-04 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Mayor Hawkins

## **7.6 SECOND READING**

Ordinance Number 25-05: Design District Assignment for Parcels with Alternate Key Numbers 1097070 and 1094712

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-05 by title on final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; assigning the Rural Neighborhood design district designation to approximately 48.1 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Number 1097070 and assigning the Suburban Corridor design district designation to approximately 9.4 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key 1094712, north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:39 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:39 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-05 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Mayor Hawkins

7.7 Explanation of Ordinances for Annexation, Future Land Use Designation and Design District Designation of Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1213835

## **FIRST READING**

Ordinance Number 25-34: for Annexation of Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1213835

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-34 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; voluntarily annexing approximately 5.6 acres of real property at Alternate Key Number 1213835, generally located north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19.

Kyle Wilkes, Senior Planner, reviewed the requested annexation and proposed future land use and design district designations. He noted the property is in a flood zone and confirmed notices were completed. He stated staff's recommendation for approval.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:43 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:43 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve Ordinance Number 25-34 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Lee, Mayor Hawkins

## **7.8 FIRST READING**

### Ordinance Number 25-35: Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1213835

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-35 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; amending the City of Eustis Comprehensive Plan pursuant to 163.3187 F.S.; changing the future land use designation of approximately 5.6 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Number 1213835, generally located north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19, from Urban Low in Lake County to Mixed Commercial Industrial in the City of Eustis.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:44 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:44 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve Ordinance Number 25-35 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Mayor Hawkins

## **7.9 FIRST READING**

### Ordinance Number 25-36: Design District Assignment for Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1213835

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-36 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; assigning the Suburban Corridor design district designation to approximately 5.6 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Number 1213835, north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:45 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:45 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Lee, to approve Ordinance Number 25-36 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Mayor Hawkins  
Consent Agenda Item - Resolution Number 25-101

Attorney Garcia explained the process that would be required to reconsider a Consent Agenda Item. She explained that they would need to have a motion to correct the Consent Agenda and remove the item, which would require a motion and second. They would then discuss and vote on the item removed.

Commissioner Lee indicated the item she would like removed and discussed was Resolution Number 25-101.

Motion by Commissioner Lee to amend the Consent Agenda that was previously approved to also exclude Resolution Number 25-101 with all other votes remaining as stated. Commissioner Asbate seconded the motion. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Mayor Hawkins  
Resolution Number 25-101: Adoption of Public Records Exemption Request

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-101 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida, approving and adopting a public records exemption request form

and administrative procedures pursuant to Section 119.071(4)(d), Florida Statutes, and §   Item 2.1  
Bill 268 (2025), to protect certain personal information of elected officials, employees, and their family members; providing for implementation; providing for conflicts; providing for severability; and providing for an effective date.

Commissioner Lee indicated that was the wrong resolution. She indicated the resolution she had intended to pull was Resolution Number 25-102.

Attorney Garcia indicated they would need to make a motion to amend the previous motion.

Commissioner Lee moved to amend the previous motion and replace the resolution cited with Resolution Number 25-102 with Vice Mayor Ashcraft seconding. The motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Mayor Hawkins

Resolution Number 25-102: Public Records Search Certification Form

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 25-102 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; adopting a standardized public records search certification form for use in responding to public records requests that may involve personal devices or personal accounts; providing for implementation; and providing for an effective date.

Attorney Garcia noted that a presentation on the resolution was provided previously as a discussion item.

Commissioner Lee stated that the State of Florida already has instructions on handling these requests and indicated that this is not necessary.

Attorney Garcia explained that the intent of the form is to protect the City to provide documentation that a request was made and that the search was completed based on the "good faith" efforts required under state statute.

The Commission discussed whether or not the form was necessary based under state law with Attorney Garcia stating that it is based on case law pertaining to the public records requests.

Discussion was held regarding the public needing to pay for records requests with Deputy Clerk Mary Montez explaining the public pays for staff time exceeding 15 minutes except for herself and the City Clerk which is a longer period of time.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 8:01 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 8:01 p.m.

Mr. Carrino noted the absence of one Commissioner and the Commission's straw poll process.

Attorney Garcia took the straw poll with three Commissioners expressing support for denial and Mayor Hawkins supporting approval.

Commissioner Lee moved to deny Resolution Number 25-102 with Commissioner Asbate seconding. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Asbate, Vice Mayor Ashcraft

Voting Nay: Mayor Hawkins

## **8. Future Agenda Items and Comments**

### **8.1 City Commission**

Commissioner Lee asked for an update on the cemetery project. She also asked for a presentation on the Carver Park master plan. She thanked Elis Forman and the Eustis in Bloom team for the reception. She reported on the possibility of working with the Eustis-Mount Dora Garden Club.

Commissioner Asbate commented on the Light Up event and the large crowd that attended. He also thanked Mayor Hawkins for allowing the rest of the Commission to participate in the lighting. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Cheri Moan, Events and Communications Director, thanked the Commission for their comments. She reported on the attendance at the Light Up event and indicated that Placer showed 8600 cell phone pings which does not include the children present. The previous year only had 6300 pings.

Mayor Hawkins complimented Ms. Moan for getting Leslie Gayle to attend the event with Ms. Moan also commenting on coverage by Magic 107.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft asked to have an update on the CRA lots at the next meeting. He asked to have a discussion about Commissioners using the City letterhead to invite people to the City. He explained he would like to issue a formal invitation to other elected officials using City letterhead.

Mr. Carrino explained there would be a Japanese festival in March and the request was for the City to invite people to the festival. He explained that the concern was regarding the City inviting people to a non-City event. Staff felt that the event organizers should do the invitations, not the City.

Discussion was held regarding what would be appropriate and what would not be.

Mr. Carrino indicated he is less concerned about the use of City letterhead and more about whether the City should be inviting people to a non-City sponsored event.

Ms. Moan cautioned that personally endorsing another organization's event might set a precedent which means you need to endorse all the other events as well.

Discussion was further held regarding what would be appropriate.

Attorney Garcia suggested the City develop a policy that would provide for review of a letter to make sure it is appropriate. She suggested they could develop a policy so that each request did not need to be considered by the Commission.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft indicated he was only intending to send the letters to other elected officials. It was confirmed that the other Commissioners had not used City letterhead to invite anyone to the City.

## **8.2 City Manager**

Mr. Carrino reminded the Commission of the workshop on Friday with Dr. Levey. He noted that there would also be a discussion on the roll-over items after the workshop. He indicated that staff was preparing additional information and asked the Commissioners to let him know if there were questions on specific projects.

Mr. Carrino reminded them that the first meeting in January would be on January 8th and the second meeting would be on January 22nd. He thanked City staff for their work on the unfortunate incident the previous week. He wished everyone a happy and safe holiday.

Commissioner Lee expressed support for developing a policy or procedure for Commission use of City letterhead. Item 2.1

Mayor Hawkins suggested having a letter go from the "desk of ...".

Commissioner Asbate noted he was the one who sent a list of projects with questions to the City Manager and expressed concern regarding how long it is taking for him to get the information he requested. He further expressed concern regarding the Commission receiving a 484-page document to review before the meeting.

Discussion was held regarding setting the cut-off date for agenda packets with Mr. Carrino responding that staff is looking at trying to move up the deadline. He noted that there are other issues due to advertising requirements.

The Commission expressed support for getting the agenda a full week in advance.

Mr. Carrino asked the Commission if they want more time to review and get information regarding the roll-over items. He stated that the spreadsheets will go to the Commissioners the next day. He said if that is not sufficient time to discuss on Friday, then they will need to postpone until January 22nd.

Discussion was held regarding other monies that may be able to be re-allocated and whether to postpone the discussion to January 22nd.

Mr. Carrino indicated they would not be able to take any final action at the workshop but they can discuss and then have final action in January.

It was agreed to leave the discussion on the workshop agenda.

Commissioner Asbate commented there are only two municipalities that do not have a trail and those are Eustis and Pine Hills. He expressed concern about that.

Mr. Carrino stated that Dr. Levey will be discussing priorities and that could include trails.

Commissioner Asbate indicated that the City needs approximately \$2 million allocated for trails.

### **8.3 City Attorney: None**

### **8.4 Mayor**

Mayor Hawkins concurred with Mr. Carrino that the City team did a great job during the tragedy the previous week. He commented on the Special Needs Dance at the Community Building and announced that the Special Needs Prom will be on April 11th and invited the rest of the Commission to attend.

Mayor Hawkins commented on the new high school football coach coming to the City and thanked those who assisted. He noted he saw Bryce Hale out picking up trash around the parking garage. He wished blessings and safe travels to everyone.

Mr. Carrino asked Chief Swanson to report on an upcoming event. Chief Swanson reported that Hearts of Heroes will be shooting at Fire Station 22 and doing an episode about holiday safety. He noted that the program is aimed at 9 to 15 year olds.

Chief Swanson noted the Fire Department would also be at Eustis Elementary on Friday morning.

Commissioner Lee asked everyone to come to the Friday workshop with open minds to r Item 2.1  
things and working together.

Ms. Isaac Thomas announced the Golden Seniors would be having their holiday gathering on the 16th and they would be honoring Ms. Barbara for her 20 years of service. She noted the parade on the 20th.

**9. Adjournment: 8:50 p.m.**

*\*These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to [www.eustis.org](http://www.eustis.org) and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*

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CHRISTINE HALLORAN  
City Clerk

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WILLIE L. HAWKINS  
Mayor/Commissioner



# MINUTES

## City Commission Meeting

6:00 PM – Thursday, January 22, 2026 – City Hall

Item 2.1

**Invocation: Mayor Emily Lee**

**Pledge of Allegiance: Vice Mayor Gary Ashcraft**

**Call to Order: 6:09 p.m.**

**Acknowledge of Quorum and Proper Notice**

PRESENT: Vice Mayor Gary Ashcraft, Commissioner Willie L. Hawkins, Commissioner George Asbate, Mayor Emily Lee

ABSENT: Commissioner Michael Holland

**1. Agenda Update: None**

**2. Approval of Minutes**

2.1 January 8, 2026 City Commission Meeting

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to approve the Minutes. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

**3. Presentations**

3.1 Carver Park Master Plan

Tom Carrino, City Manager, reported that they have engaged Kimley-Horn for development of the Carver Park Master Plan. He commented on the need to use the master plan in their future planning for their various facilities.

Sam Brinson, Parks and Recreation Director, cited the discussions that have been held regarding the aquatics center and other City facilities. He introduced Ray Lopez and Scott Mingonet from Kimley-Horn to present the Carver Park Master Plan.

Scott Mingonet commented on his history with the City and their work for the City and County. He cited the need to have actionable objectives and noted that they have worked with Dr. Levey before. He provided an overview of the Carver Park Master Plan and cited the need for it to work with the citywide parks master plan. He commented on how some of the aspects might be monetized.

Ray Lopez, landscape architect, reviewed in-depth the proposed elements in each section of the park. Proposed improvements include sports fields and courts, parking, shade structures, two-story observation tower, aquatic center, rooftop terrace, pathways, community garden and community building to include exercise rooms and a kitchen. He cited the plan to enlarge the baseball fields to high school level at 300 feet with two fields and a two-story concession stand.

Mr. Mingonet discussed the overall image of the master plan as a critical element with CAPA certification which can assist with grant applications. He commented on potential financial costs to be overcome and how the master plan would fit into the vision of the Downtown Master Plan and Eustis Community Center. He highlighted the park and trail system and how that can increase property values. He cited the need to obtain additional input on the plan.

Item 2.1

Vice Mayor Ashcraft commented on the importance of the parks and recreation master plan. He asked about the anticipated costs with Mr. Mingonet responding they have not priced it out but it could cost as much as \$60 to \$70 million. He indicated the final cost would be based on specific details of the various facilities. He commented on how sports facilities can be an economic driver.

Commissioner Asbate asked about feasibility and the probable phase-in timeframe.

Mr. Mingonet cited additional information that would be needed to get that information and answer those questions. He commented that the northern section could be the first phase due to what is already in place.

Commissioner Asbate asked about a projected budget for phase one with Mr. Mingonet stating that a synthetic turf field with underground drainage and ancillary lights would probably run \$1.5 million. He suggested using pre-fab bathrooms to reduce the cost for the bathrooms initially. He added his belief that would still be a good value in phase one.

Discussion was held regarding the facilities they saw during the high school softball championship games.

Mr. Carrino reviewed the next steps, including consideration of the use of the Curtright Center property, placement of the aquatic center, and the probability that things will change based on other projects the City is undertaking. He noted the Downtown, Ferran Park and the waterfront are priorities for the upcoming workshop on January 29, 2026.

Mr. Mingonet discussed the possibility of renovating rather than rebuilding and consideration of the location of the North Lake Trail and how that might affect the City's plan.

Further discussion was held regarding how to phase the master plan and determining a clear direction.

Discussion was held regarding getting community engagement on the plan with Mr. Mingonet indicating that could take approximately one year although it could be done quicker. He emphasized the need to get the CAPA certification to assist with grants. He noted they have staff that specialize in those types of grants including stormwater projects that can be utilized for recreational activities.

Mr. Carrino stated that they should discuss what is low hanging fruit, what could be done right away, financing, and funding sources such as grants and bonds.

Discussion was held regarding the need for a workshop with Mr. Carrino indicating that the downtown, Ferran Park and the waterfront are priorities and will definitely be discussed at the workshop on January 29th. He noted they could possibly also discuss the aquatic center.

Discussion was held regarding expanding the CRA boundaries with Mr. Carrino indicating the process is the same as creating a new CRA. He explained the process that would be required including issuance of a Finding of Necessity and how that would be created. He added that the state legislature is currently not very supportive of CRA's.

Mr. Mingonet commented on other cities they are working with where they are doing subsurface stormwater management projects within an existing CRA. He indicated they would provide that information to staff.

#### 4. Appointments

##### 4.1 Lake County Library Advisory Board

Mr. Carrino explained the appointment is for a City representative to the Lake County Library Advisory Board and staff is recommending the appointment of Betsy Dokken.

Motion made by Commissioner Hawkins, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to approve the appointment of Betsy Dokken. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

#### 5. Audience to be Heard

Daniel DiVenanzo asked who will be responsible for cleaning the new drain system along the state highway that was installed by FDOT. He questioned if that would be the City's responsibility and noted trash that is accumulating in the drain system. He commented on the possible purchase by the City of the former Bank of America Building. He cited the additional parking and the possibility of relocating the Chamber of Commerce. He then commented on the Carver Park Master Plan presentation and how new facilities can result in displacement of the existing community residents due to gentrification.

Estella Mosley also expressed concern about the Carver Park Master Plan and the possible displacement of area residents and where they would go.

#### 6. Consent Agenda

##### 6.1 Resolution Number 26-06: Amending the FY2025/26 Adopted Budget for the General Fund for Duke Energy Donation

##### 6.2 Resolution Number 26-08: Approving a Purchase in Excess of \$100,000 for a Public Works Dump Truck

##### 6.3 Resolution Number 26-09: Amending the FY2025/26 Adopted Budget for the Library Impact Fees Fund to increase the Library's eBook Collection

##### 6.4 Resolution Number 26-10: Acceptance of FY 2025-2026 FDOT State Funded Grant Agreement (SFGA) for the Rosenwald Gardens Roadway and Stormwater Project

##### 6.5 Resolution Number 26-11: Approval of Purchase of Pumper Truck

##### 6.6 Resolution Number 26-12: Authorizing Acceptance of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 FDOT State Funded Grant Agreement (SFGA) for the Northshore Bridge and Culvert Engineering Project

Motion made by Commissioner Asbate, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

#### 7. Ordinances, Public Hearings, & Quasi Judicial Hearings

##### 7.1 Resolution Number 26-04: Budget Amendment for FY2025/26 for Carry-over of FY2024/25 unencumbered budgeted funds for various Capital Projects and Consulting Services

Sasha Garcia, City Attorney, read Resolution Number 26-04 by title: A Resolution by the Item 2.1 Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; amending the budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2025, and ending September 30, 2026, for the General, Sales Tax, Street Improvement, Parks Impact Fees, Cemetery Trust, Stormwater, Economic Development, Community Redevelopment, Grants, Water/Sewer Utility, R&R and Grants, Water Impact and Sewer Impact Fees Funds and by adjusting expenditures; repealing all resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith; and providing for an effective date.

Lori Carr, Finance Director, noted the previous discussions on the carry-overs and indicated staff was present to answer any questions.

Commissioner Asbate noted items he would like removed from the carry-over as follows: 1) Capital - Traffic calming - \$78,600; 2) Capital - Palmetto Plaza Park Phase 2 - \$469,000.

Mr. Carrino asked if the Commission wanted to go through the list and then discuss or discuss each item as it is brought up. It was a consensus of the Commission to discuss each item as presented.

The following items were discussed and agreed to be removed from the list and rolled into Reserves or the appropriate fund: Capital - Traffic calming - \$78,600; Palmetto Plaza Phase 2 - Reduced to \$300,000; Capital - Carver Park B-ball Court Pavilion - \$400,000; Prof Svc - Pavement Assessment Study - \$69,000; Prof Svc - Engineering Wetland Monitoring - \$55,300; Prof Svc - US Water Work - \$84,400; and Capital - Coolidge WM Expansion - \$6,700.

Ms. Carr reviewed the deletions and changes and noted that the \$6,700 had already been removed.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:28 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:28 p.m.

Attorney Garcia indicated that Ms. Carr would adjust the exhibit to coincide with the changes made. She asked for a motion to table the item to allow staff time to make the revisions and then consider action on the final version as the last item on the agenda.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to table Resolution Number 26-04 to the end of the agenda. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

## 7.2 Resolution Number 26-13: Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Habitat for Humanity of Lake-Sumter, Florida, Inc. for the City of Eustis Home Repair Program

Attorney Garcia read Resolution Number 26-13 by title: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; authorizing the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with Habitat for Humanity of Lake-Sumter, Florida, Inc. for the City Home Repair Program; providing for findings of public purpose; providing for administrative authority; providing for severability; and providing an effective date.

Attorney Garcia reviewed the proposed home repair program and explained the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). She stated the purpose is to establish a formal framework for the City's Home Repair Program, under which Habitat for Humanity of Lake-Sumter will assist the City with intake, eligibility screening, project development, construction oversight, and compliance monitoring for income-eligible, owner-occupied residential properties within the City limits. The MOU preserves full City discretion over funding, eligibility criteria, and program guidelines, and includes fiscal controls, insurance, indemnification, public

records compliance, and termination protections. She stated that approval of the resolution authorizes the City Manager to execute the MOU and delegates administrative authority to the City Manager or designee. Item 2.1

Attorney Garcia then reviewed the program guidelines contained in the MOU. She stated that application to the program does not create an entitlement. She noted that the current program is only within the CRA and is funded through the CRA so it can only be used for CRA properties. The MOU opens up the program to non-CRA properties to be funded with non-CRA monies. She explained that safeguards are in place to make sure properties do not receive services from both programs. She added that the program is coming to the Commission for approval since it may, in the future, exceed the \$100,000 limit.

The Commission asked if Habitat for Humanity ever does multi-tenant properties with Vice Mayor Ashcraft stating he did not believe so. Commissioner Asbate asked for the program to be only for owner-occupied properties.

Mayor Lee suggested that background checks be done on any applicants for both programs with Vice Mayor Ashcraft stating that would be the responsibility of Habitat, not the City.

Discussion was held regarding requiring background checks with Vice Mayor Ashcraft emphasizing these are people that already own their homes and expressing concern about over-complicating the program.

Attorney Garcia explained the vetting will be done by Habitat and each application will be brought to the City for approval before monies are spent.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:44 p.m.

Dee Gretzler expressed support for the program and agreed that the applicants are already living in the community.

Daniel DiVenanzo commented on the lower cost items that can be done to improve a home such as changing out doors and replacing a toilet or water heater. He questioned how much Habitat for Humanity is going to charge to manage the program.

Attorney Garcia closed the public hearing at 7:47 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to approve Resolution Number 26-13. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

### **7.3 Explanation of Ordinances 25-34, 25-35, 25-36 for Annexation, Future Land Use Designation and Design District Designation for Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1213835**

#### **SECOND READING**

##### **Ordinance Number 25-34: Voluntary Annexation of Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1213835**

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-34 by title on second and final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; voluntarily annexing approximately 5.6 acres of real property at Alternate Key Number 1213835, generally located north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:50 p.m. There being no public comment, hearing was closed at 7:50 p.m. Item 2.1

Motion made by Commissioner Hawkins, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-34 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

#### **7.4 SECOND READING**

##### Ordinance Number 25-35: Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Alternate Key 1213835

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-35 by title on second and final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; amending the City of Eustis Comprehensive Plan pursuant to 163.3187 F.S.; changing the future land use designation of approximately 5.6 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Numbers 1213835, generally located north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19, from Urban Low in Lake County to Mixed Commercial Industrial in the City of Eustis.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:51 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:51 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Hawkins, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-35 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

#### **7.5 SECOND READING**

##### Ordinance Number 25-36: Design District Assignment for Alternate Key 1213835

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 25-36 by title on second and final reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; assigning the Suburban Corridor design district designation to approximately 5.6 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Number 1213835, north of County Road 44 and east of State Road 19.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 7:52 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 7:52 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Hawkins, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-36 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

#### **7.6 SECOND READING**

##### Ordinance Number 26-01: Second Reading / Adoption of Development Agreement – Grand Island Crossings

Attorney Garcia announced that the ordinance was heard on first reading at the Local Planning Agency meeting and this would constitute second reading.

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 26-01 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; approving and authorizing the execution of a development agreement between the City of Eustis and Grand Island Crossings, LLC, a Florida limited liability company, for the development of approximately 19.96 acres of real

property into a single-family residential subdivision; providing for implementation; providing for severability; and providing for an effective date. Item 2.1

Attorney Garcia noted there were previous questions and stated the applicant is present to answer any questions. She noted there were answers to the previous questions distributed to the Commission.

Applicant Attorney Brett Jones clarified there would be a tot lot and they would comply with the City's open space requirements.

The Commission asked about seeing a site plan with Mr. Jones responding that a site plan would cost nearly a half million dollars. He stated they have submitted a conceptual plan and it will be substantially similar to what will be created and the only reason why it would vary would be if the Water Management District, City staff, FDOT or DEP says it can't be done that way.

Mike Lane, Development Services Director, explained that the plan will change. He stated that the City's code will require 25% open space and staff has not seen any plan for the stormwater pond to call it a recreational/park amenity. Until they actually see that, they would expect to see both the stormwater pond and another 25% open space. He emphasized the typical concept plan always changes. He confirmed that the Development Review Committee has reviewed the concept plan and made comments. He stated that their concept plan was changed based on comments from the reviewers.

The Commission asked if Mr. Lane is comfortable with the process so far with Mr. Lane commenting on the differences between the normal process.

Mr. Jones stated that the unit count could go down based on site specifications and the concept plan will change but will be substantially similar to what has been presented.

Mr. Lane explained that the DRC process will make sure that all recommendations and land development regulations are met.

The Commission asked how a retention pond can be made an accessible and usable amenity with Mr. Lane stating they can put in trails or benches and add trees to make it more aesthetically pleasing. If it's a dry stormwater pond, it can be available for recreation activities.

Discussion was held regarding how the developer is agreeing to the City's design standards in exchange for certain development allowances.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 8:01 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 8:01 p.m.

Due to the absence of Commissioner Holland, Mayor Lee took a straw poll which showed all Commissioners present supportive of the ordinance.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to adopt Ordinance Number 25-01 on final reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

RECESS: 8:02 p.m. RECONVENE: 8:07 p.m.

## **7.7 Explanation of Ordinance Numbers 26-02, 26-03, and 26-04 providing for voluntary annexation, future land use designation and design district designation for 0.31 acres of real property at Alternate Key Number 1197309**

## **FIRST READING**

### Ordinance Number 26-02: Voluntary Annexation of Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1197309

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 26-02 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida; voluntarily annexing approximately 0.31 acres of real property at Alternate Key Number 1197309, located at 77 West Seminole Avenue.

Kyle Wilkes, Senior Planner, reviewed the proposed annexation, comprehensive plan land use amendment and design district designation. He explained staff's review of the application, confirmed the proposal conforms to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations and stated staff's recommendation for approval.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 8:11 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 8:11 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Hawkins, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to approve Ordinance Number 26-02 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

## **7.8 SECOND READING**

### Ordinance Number 26-03: Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Alternate Key 1197309

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 26-03 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; amending the City of Eustis Comprehensive Plan pursuant to 163.3187 F.S.; changing the future land use designation of approximately 0.31 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Numbers 1197309, located at 77 West Seminole Avenue, from Urban Low in Lake County to Residential Office Transition in the City of Eustis.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 8:12 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 8:12 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Hawkins, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to approve Ordinance Number 26-03 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

## **7.9 SECOND READING**

### Ordinance Number 26-04: Design District Assignment for Alternate Key 1197309

Attorney Garcia read Ordinance Number 26-04 by title on first reading: An Ordinance of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida; assigning the Urban Neighborhood design district designation to approximately 0.31 acres of recently annexed real property at Alternate Key Number 1197309, 77 West Seminole Avenue.

Attorney Garcia opened the public hearing at 8:13 p.m. There being no public comment, the hearing was closed at 8:13 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Hawkins, Seconded by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, to approve Ordinance Number 26-04 on first reading. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

Ms. Carr reviewed the changes made to Exhibit A with the removal of the following items: 1) Traffic calming in the Street Improvement Fund; 2) Palmetto Park Plaza Phase 2 reduced to \$300,000; 3) Carver Park pavilion; and 4) Water & Sewer Fund - Professional services for Pavement Assessment Study, Engineering Wetland Monitoring and US Water Work.

Attorney Garcia announced that the new amount of the Carry Forward is \$4,911,600. She asked for a motion to re-open the voting on the resolution.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to re-open the voting on Resolution Number 26-04. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

Motion made by Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Seconded by Commissioner Hawkins, to approve Resolution Number 26-04 with the amended exhibit and a new total of \$4,911,600. Motion passed on the following vote:

Voting Yea: Vice Mayor Ashcraft, Commissioner Hawkins, Commissioner Asbate, Mayor Lee

## **8. Other Business**

### 8.1 Discussion on Agenda Process

Mr. Carrino reviewed the current agenda preparation process and his and staff's commitment to try to get the agenda out one day earlier. He indicated that, if that is delayed, staff will let them know or if an item needs to be amended or added, staff would notify the Commission of the changes.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft explained his reasons for requesting that the agenda get out a little sooner. He commented on the need to have an extra day to prepare for the meeting and, by the time the Commission gets the agenda on Friday, staff isn't available for questions. He expressed the hope that any questions can be answered prior to the weekend.

Mr. Carrino committed to staff trying to get the agenda out by close of business on Thursday so that they have Friday to contact staff.

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to proceed with the new process.

### 8.2 Discussion on Interim City Manager

Mr. Carrino announced that he has executed an agreement with Strategic Government Resources (SGR) which was executed January 21st. They have sent a request for information regarding the City and photos of the City so they can begin putting together their marketing materials. He indicated SGR would engage with the Commissioners, facilitated by City staff, so they can put together the Commission's ideal candidate profile which will then be advertised. He explained the City was able to move forward by piggybacking off another City's agreement with SGR. He stated that their process, if it goes perfectly, is a four-to-five-month process. He indicated he would be leaving mid-March; therefore, the Charter requires that the Commission appoint an Acting City Manager. He noted that ICMA and FCCMA both have a Senior Advisor program which can be used. He stated that it now seems to be just to obtain advice on specific issues not to obtain a fulltime interim city manager.

Mr. Carrino cited the need for institutional knowledge, consistency, stability, and continuing positive momentum; therefore, he recommended that they consider Rick Gierok as the Interim City Manager. He emphasized that is with the full support of Miranda Burrowes (Deputy City Manager).

Item 2.1

The Commission asked if Mr. Gierok would work with him during the interim before Mr. Carrino leaves and Mr. Carrino responded affirmatively. He stated that he, Rick and Miranda would work together to ensure the continuity.

The Commission asked about Mr. Gierok managing his current position with Mr. Carrino explaining the City will need to negotiate with Mr. Gierok. He indicated they will not be able to fill Mr. Gierok's position as he wants to go back to his position after. He added that Mr. Gierok's staff will provide him the support he needs. He noted he will have to perform some aspects of both jobs.

The Commission discussed who would be doing the various jobs with Mr. Carrino explaining that Mr. Gierok is now over Engineering and Capital Projects with Greg Dobbins being the Public Works Director. The Commission expressed support for Mr. Gierok's appointment once a contract is negotiated. It was noted that there should be some protection for him to go back to his previous position.

**CONSENSUS:** It was a consensus of the Commission for staff to prepare an employment contract for Mr. Gierok as Interim City Manager.

## **9. Future Agenda Items and Comments**

### **9.1 City Commission**

Commissioner Asbate thanked Commissioner Hawkins for his introduction to the FBLA organization. He commented on their attendance at a recent competition. He noted he has a new grandson and cited his wife's 30th anniversary of her 30th birthday. He expressed thanks to Mr. Gierok.

Commissioner Hawkins complimented the FBLA students on their presentations. He noted he spoke with Mr. Lane and stated that the City owns a lot of land. He expressed support for the City working on developing trails within the City using City property.

Vice Mayor Ashcraft congratulated Darius Kerrison on the So Funny Sunday event and encouraged people to attend. He cited the need for the City to get more economic development and the need to develop the big picture. He complimented staff on the Carver Park Master Plan.

### **9.2 City Manager**

Mr. Carrino invited Chief Swanson to report on the Tri-City Food Drive.

Chief Swanson announced the food drop off would be at Station 22 and reported on various activities in support of the drive. He noted the lack of participation by Winn Dixie due to their store closing this year which has made it more difficult.

Mr. Carrino announced they received confirmation from Florida Commerce that they are receiving a \$1.5 million grant for road improvements. He recognized Greg Dobbins and Veronica Whetro for their work on the grant who pulled it together quickly.

Mr. Carrino then reported on the group going to Tallahassee for Lake County Days on legislation they both support and have concerns about. He noted the participation by Continental Strategy who helps them have access to various legislators. He stated that he and

Miranda Burrowes would both be in Tallahassee. He recommended they appoint Rick G [redacted] Item 2.1

CONSENSUS: It was a consensus for Rick Gierok to be the Acting City Manager.

**9.3 City Attorney: None**

**9.4 Mayor**

Mayor Lee asked everyone be prepared to discuss good ideas at the January 29th workshop with Dr. Levey. She asked them to work on having shorter meetings. She commented on the need for the City to work on "tightening its belt" and reducing the budget.

**10. Adjournment: 8:48 p.m.**

*\*These minutes reflect the actions taken and portions of the discussion during the meeting. To review the entire discussion concerning any agenda item, go to [www.eustis.org](http://www.eustis.org) and click on the video for the meeting in question. A DVD of the entire meeting or CD of the entire audio recording of the meeting can be obtained from the office of the City Clerk for a fee.*

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CHRISTINE HALLORAN  
City Clerk

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WILLIE L. HAWKINS  
Mayor/Commissioner



# City of Eustis

P.O. Drawer 68 • Eustis, Florida 32727-0068 • (352) 483-5430

TO: EUSTIS CITY COMMISSION  
 FROM: TOM CARRINO, CITY MANAGER  
 DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2026  
 RE: TARGETED INDUSTRY AND SMART GROWTH STUDY PRESENTATION

**Presenter**

Gray Swoope, President and CEO, Vision First Advisors will present the final Target Industry and Smart Growth Study.

**Background**

The Economic Development Administration awarded the City a matching grant on a 60/40 basis to conduct a Target Industry and Smart Growth Study. Vision First was selected from the group of bidders and hired to conduct a comprehensive look at this area's assets, supportive resources, and the ecosystem compatibility with the City's long-term growth needs, and match them with industries that could thrive in Eustis. The outcome of the analysis provides the City with data to expand and diversify its industry base, attract new business, support the expansion of existing companies, create more jobs, and overall establish a more resilient and sustainable economic foundation for our community.

The Targeted Industry and Smart Growth Study was conducted over 4 months from August to December of 2025.

**Action Requested**

Approve the implementation of the Target Industry and Smart Growth Study recommendation by the Economic Development Department.

**Prepared by:**

Al Latimer, Economic Development Director

**Attachment:**

Target Industry and Smart Growth Overview



# TARGET INDUSTRY & SMART GROWTH ANALYSIS

OCTOBER 2025



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# INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE STAGE FOR INDUSTRY FOCUS.

This Target Industry Analysis is intended to provide the City of Eustis with a focused, data-informed perspective on industries that align its assets, constraints, and long-term goals. The purpose of this work is to help guide future economic development efforts by identifying sectors that can support job creation, tax base growth, and community vitality.

Importantly, this effort reflects a proactive step by the city. Rather than continuing with business as usual or relying on outdated assumptions, Eustis is choosing to take a thoughtful and deliberate approach to shaping its economic future. This analysis is part of a broader commitment to understanding what is possible and what must be addressed to move forward with confidence.

While the intent is to highlight opportunity, it is equally important to understand the broader context in which these opportunities exist. This is not a strategic plan. It does not offer solutions or prescribe specific actions. Instead, it presents the foundational conditions that will influence the success of any industry attraction effort. Eustis has several strengths to build on, including a strong sense of place, access to natural resources, and proximity to a growing regional economy. These assets provide a platform for growth, but there are also structural and political realities that must be acknowledged and addressed.

## Key Considerations for Industry Attraction

- **Infrastructure Capacity:** Eustis has some utility infrastructure in place, but power availability remains a concern, particularly for energy-intensive industries such as data centers. Water resources exist, though they are carefully managed, and wastewater capacity may need to be expanded to support certain types of industrial activity.
- **Land Use and Development Pressure:** Much of the land that could support new development is located in areas where agricultural preservation is a priority. The community's rural identity and the influence of the agricultural sector create resistance to large-scale industrial uses, especially those that could disrupt existing land use patterns.
- **Workforce and Industry Fit:** The local workforce is well-positioned to support light manufacturing, logistics, and skilled trades. However, many of the industries that align with this labor pool also face land use or infrastructure constraints, which limits the range of feasible options.
- **Community Vision and Market Alignment:** There is strong interest in attracting high-tech and innovation-driven industries. While these aspirations are commendable, they may not align with current infrastructure or workforce realities. Achieving this vision will require long-term investment and a clear understanding of what is realistically attainable in the near term.
- **Coordination and Strategic Focus:** Eustis is actively pursuing a range of efforts to support growth and improve quality of life. These initiatives reflect a strong commitment to progress. However, without a shared framework to connect them, there is a risk that resources may not be fully aligned or opportunities may be missed. A more coordinated approach would help ensure that all efforts are moving in the same direction and reinforcing the City's long-term goals.

These considerations are not barriers to progress. They are important guideposts that can help the city make informed decisions and avoid missteps. By acknowledging these realities early, Eustis can better position itself to pursue industries that are both desirable and achievable. The following sections outline industry opportunities that reflect this balance, grounded in current conditions but with an eye toward future potential.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

Communities experience difficulties seeing their surroundings as clients, guests, prospective industries and newcomers to the area see them. The information below outlines impressions as perceived by a site selector. Note that these impressions from visiting a community are often the second impression, the first impression a site selector sees is a community's online data.



### 01 COMMUNITY IDENTITY & ASPIRATIONS

- There is pride in local heritage and interest in reviving arts, culture and beautification.
- Stakeholders want to differentiate Eustis from neighboring cities like Mount Dora and Clermont.
- Eustis is widely seen as a “diamond in the rough” with untapped potential.
- There is a desire to cultivate a boutique, artsy, Winter Garden/Winter Park-style vibe; not replicate Orlando.

### 02 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK

- Stakeholders are optimistic about the business incubator’s potential to catalyze innovation.
- Strong interest in clean, tech-forward industries such as aerospace, AgTech, digital marketing and creative design.
- HUBZone and Opportunity Zone designations are viewed as strategic assets for attracting investment.
- Downtown is envisioned as a future hub for retail, hospitality and entertainment.

### 03 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & WORKFORCE

- Stakeholders are passionate about providing opportunity that retains the city’s youth.
- There is a desire to create generational wealth throughout the city, while being cognizant of underserved areas.
- Lake Tech and Lake Sumter College are seen as valuable partners for workforce development.
- There are concerns about underperforming schools, lack of youth programming and limited job opportunities in East Eustis.



## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK.

### YOU SPOKE, WE LISTENED



VisionFirst held in-person interviews with numerous stakeholders, including elected officials, existing business leaders, board members, city leadership, young professionals, and regional partners to gain a better understanding of current operations, programs, products and services related to economic development efforts in Eustis, FL.

Every stakeholder meeting produced productive dialogue about the city's future, identifying both critical issues and attainable opportunities. The group interviews sought to gather candid observations, feedback and ideas from the community to help direct focus and prioritize our analysis.

During the conversations, VisionFirst sought answers to questions centered on such topics as:

- What is the definition of economic development for Eustis?
- What are the barriers to success?
- Who are the partners for the city's economic development efforts?
- What does success look like for Eustis and economic development over the next three to five years?
- What industries are desired or not desired by Eustis?
- How will the organization measure success?

Through synthesis, VisionFirst identified the strongest themes, insights and supporting details.

Key findings from the meetings are presented in aggregate on the following pages and have been grouped by the main themes that resulted from the stakeholder conversations. Although the meetings focused on the City of Eustis and its role in leading local economic development, the discussion also covered the needs in the broader community.

*The comments listed on the following page are a sampling of the meeting outcomes from local leaders and do not reflect VisionFirst's opinion.*

## Industry Targets & Growth

- Strong interest in clean, tech-forward industries such as aerospace, AgTech, digital marketing and creative design.
- Stakeholders are optimistic about the business incubator's potential to catalyze innovation.
- HUBZone and Opportunity Zone designations are viewed as strategic assets for attracting investment.
- Downtown is envisioned as a future hub for retail, hospitality and entertainment.

## Education and Workforce Development

- Workforce gaps persist, especially in East Eustis, where youth are disconnected from job opportunities.
- Local schools face performance and staffing challenges, despite strong county-wide ratings.
- Stakeholders support supplemental education programs, STEAM initiatives, and career pathways tied to local industries.
- Lake Tech and Lake Sumter College are highly engaged and seen as critical partners for customized training and internships.

## Community Development and Infrastructure

- City-owned land (e.g. 44B, 70-acre site) presents development opportunities, but lack of zoning and annexation strategy hinders progress.
- Traffic congestion, consumptive use permits (CUP) limitations, and lack of affordable housing are recurring concerns.
- Infill development is possible but complicated by jurisdictional boundaries and unclear land control.
- Beautification efforts and cultural programming (e.g., Eustis in Bloom) reflect a desire for placemaking and civic pride.

## Governance and Engagement

- The strategic planning process has stalled, and the City Commission is seen as reactive and inconsistent.
- Public engagement is low, especially among younger residents and underserved communities.
- Stakeholders want visionary leadership, stronger intergovernmental coordination, and more transparent decision-making.
- City staff are praised for doing “the most with the least,” but internal processes are perceived as slow and siloed.

## UNDERSTANDING THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE.

The race for jobs and capital investment is exactly that — **a competition**. Every day, communities compete to attract new businesses, support the expansion of existing ones and influence where private capital is invested.

To assess Eustis' position in this landscape, a comprehensive competitive data analysis was conducted. This analysis synthesizes key data points, including demographics, economic trends and performance rankings that impact the region.

The evaluation compared data from multiple geographic perspectives:

- Eustis, FL (City)
- 45-Minute Drive Time (from city center)
- Lake County, FL
- Florida (State)
- USA (Nation)

This data was benchmarked against state and national figures across various categories such as:

- Labor force and educational attainment
- Industry size and growth trends
- Occupational patterns and laborshed dynamics
- Location quotients
- Social service metrics

The research included over 25 metrics, strategically grouped into key categories to provide a comprehensive view of Eustis' competitive advantages and opportunities for growth. On the following pages is a snapshot of Figure 1 data.



## DATA-AT-A-GLANCE.



The data-driven, decision-making approach can often be the first step in how site selectors and business decision makers evaluate a potential location after understanding the needs assessment of the client.

Potential economic development projects often begin with the consideration of states and defined geographic regions (i.e., metros, electric utility service territories). Rarely does a prospect, company or site selector have a specific community in mind. However, communities can increase their visibility through increased internal and external messaging, while also having a strong online presence. Good data and statistical information help site selectors and corporate decision makers conduct a cost-benefit analysis and gives them an idea of the project's likelihood for success in the region.

Because site selectors and location advisors often review high-level data prior to a visit, it is vital for Eustis to understand and analyze data from an online data viewpoint to:

- Highlight favorable data in the region that indicates a bottom-line advantage to a company.
- Recognize less favorable data that could cause a potential threat to a company, while explaining how the community and region are addressing issues.
- Recognize flawed data and provide alternative yet reliable aggregated data.

## Economic Overview

FIGURE 1: ECONOMIC OVERVIEW COMPARISON

To help interpret the data more easily, we've applied a simple color-coding system in the figure below. **Green highlights indicate positive or strong data points**—areas where performance or conditions are favorable. **Yellow is used for neutral or moderate values** that may warrant monitoring but are not immediately concerning. **Red flags potential risks, challenges, or underperforming indicators** that may need further attention. This visual layer is designed to complement the narrative by drawing attention to key insights and helping users quickly identify strengths, watch areas, and possible concerns.

		Eustis, FL (City)	45-Minute Drive Time (Zip Codes)	Lake County, FL	Florida	USA
Current Population (ACS)		23,567	2,245,091	398,696	21,928,881	332,387,540
2020 Population (ACS)		21,010	-	356,115	21,216,924	326,569,308
2015 Population (ACS)		19,198	-	310,561	19,645,772	316,515,021
Annual Population Growth (2022 – 2023)		2.02%	1.65%	3.07%	1.36%	0.39%
People per Square Mile (ppsm)		-	-	446.1	421.4	94.8
Median Age		43.7	42.0	46.7	42.6	38.7
Civilian Population – age 16 years and over	Current Labor Force Size	11,725	1,111,662	178,746	10,725,531	168,567,852
	Labor Force Participate Rate	59.8%	60.4%	53.9%	59.4%	63.3%
	2020 Labor Force Size	10,488	-	158,035	10,240,825	164,759,496
	2020 Labor Participation Rate	61.4%	-	53.5%	58.8%	63.2%
Civilian Population – age 25-54	Current Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate	83.6%	83.3%	81.6%	82.5%	83.0%
	2020 Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate	86.6%	-	80.4%	81.5%	82.4%
Veterans (Age 18-64)		942	63,382	13,052	640,175	8,410,268
Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate		57.9%	75.1%	69.5%	74.4%	77.0%
Mean Commute Time (Min.)		26.8	28.5	29.9	28.0	26.6
Educational Attainment (H.S. Diploma or Higher)		87.8%	91.3%	90.9%	90.3%	90.0%
Educational Attainment (Assoc Degree or Higher)		32.8%	46.8%	39.1%	45.0%	45.8%
No High School Diploma		12.2%	8.7%	9.1%	9.7%	10.0%
High School Graduate		35.9%	25.8%	30.6%	26.7%	25.0%
Some College, No Degree		19.1%	18.8%	21.2%	18.6%	19.3%
Associate degree		12.0%	12.1%	12.8%	11.0%	9.2%

	Eustis, FL (City)	45-Minute Drive Time (Zip Codes)	Lake County, FL	Florida	USA
Bachelor's Degree	14.0%	23.1%	18.1%	22.0%	22.8%
Postgraduate Degree	6.9%	11.6%	8.2%	12.0%	13.8%
Total Housing Units	10,735	967,048	182,666	10,082,356	142,332,876
Median House Value (owner-occupied)	\$245,400	\$331,861	\$287,900	\$325,000	\$303,400
2020 Total Housing Units	9,231	-	160,237	9,562,324	138,432,751
Annual Average Wage	\$52,270	\$63,929	\$52,214	\$67,809	\$74,181
Cost of Living Index	92.4	95.6	92.4	103.3	100.0
Poverty Level (of all people)	12.9%	11.3%	9.5%	12.6%	12.4%
Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	12.8%	11.8%	9.9%	12.6%	11.8%
Disconnected Youth	10.7%	2.5%	4.1%	2.5%	2.4%
Children in Single Family Homes (% of all children)	33.6%	35.5%	33.4%	38.0%	34.0%
Union Membership (Private)	2.9%	3.0%	3.1%	2.5%	5.9%
Union Membership (Mfg)	2.9%	3.0%	2.8%	3.0%	7.6%

## WHAT THE DATA TELLS US.

### Demographics

- Population Growth:** The City of Eustis has experienced robust population growth, adding over 4,000 new residents since 2015, a 22.8% increase. With an annual growth rate of 2.02%, Eustis is expanding faster than the surrounding 45-minute drive time area (1.65%), the state of Florida (1.36%), and the national average (0.39%). **This upward trend highlights Eustis as a dynamic and growing community.** Notably, Lake County leads the region with an annual growth rate of 3.07%, reinforcing the area's overall vitality and appeal. This population growth enhances economic development by expanding the labor force, increasing consumer demand, and boosting the city's market competitiveness.
- Median Age:** Eustis has a median age of 43.7, slightly older than the surrounding 45-minute drive time area (42.0), the state of Florida (42.6), and significantly older than the national median (38.7). Lake County has the highest median age in the region at 46.7. This demographic trend suggests a mix of retirees and seasoned working-age residents, which can bring stability and experience to the workforce. However, it also raises concerns about long-term workforce sustainability and the availability of younger talent to fill future labor needs. **As the population continues to age, strategic efforts to attract and retain younger residents and workers will be critical to maintaining a vibrant labor pool and supporting ongoing economic growth.**

- **Population Density:** While specific density data for Eustis isn't provided, Lake County's 446.1 people per square mile is higher than both the state (421.4) and national (94.8) averages, suggesting a relatively concentrated population that can support workforce accessibility and infrastructure efficiency.

## Labor Force

- **Labor Force Participation Rate:** Eustis has a labor force participation rate of 59.8%, which is slightly below the national average of 63.3%. It is consistent with Florida at 59.4% and Lake County at 60.4%. This marks a small decline from 61.4% in 2020, suggesting a gradual decrease in overall workforce engagement.
- **Prime Age Labor Force Participation Rate:** The prime age labor force participation rate, which includes individuals between the ages of 25 and 54, remains strong at 83.6% for the city. This is higher than Florida at 82.5%, the 45-minute drive time at 83.3%, and Lake County at 81.6% and is consistent with the national average of 83.0%. **Still, it has decreased from 86.6% in 2020.** These shifts point to a need for continued focus on workforce development and talent retention. Supporting working-age residents and attracting younger workers will be important to maintaining a stable and competitive labor pool in the years ahead.
- **Veterans:** Eustis is home to 942 veterans between the ages of 18 and 64. Their labor force participation rate is 57.9%, which is significantly lower than the national rate of 77.0% and the Florida rate of 74.4%. **This may point to opportunities for veteran-focused workforce development and support services, especially given that the rate has declined from 61.9% in 2020.** In comparison, the 45-minute drive-time region has a veteran participation rate of 75.1%, which has increased slightly from 74.8% in 2021, the most recent historical data available.
- **Commute Time:** The average commute time in Eustis is 26.8 minutes, slightly below the state (28.0) and national (26.6) averages, suggesting reasonable access to employment centers and a manageable transportation burden for workers.

## Educational Attainment

- **High School Attainment or Higher:** 87.8% of Eustis residents have at least a high school diploma, slightly below Lake County (90.9%) and the state (90.3%), but close to the national average (90.0%).
- **Associate Degree or Higher:** Eustis lags behind with 32.8% of residents holding an associate degree or higher, compared to the 45-minute drive time region (46.8%), Florida (45.0%), and the U.S. (45.8%). This presents an opportunity to expand access to postsecondary education and workforce training.
- **Bachelor's and Postgraduate Degrees:** In Eustis, 14.0% of residents hold a bachelor's degree and 6.9% have earned a postgraduate degree. Both figures fall below the national averages of 22.8% and 13.8%, which may indicate a gap in higher-skilled labor. **When looking at the broader 45-minute drive time region, educational attainment improves significantly, with 23.1% of residents holding a bachelor's degree and 11.6% having a postgraduate degree.** This suggests that while Eustis may face challenges in attracting or retaining highly educated workers, the surrounding area offers a stronger pool of talent.

## Social Indicators

- **Housing Value:** The median home value in Eustis is \$245,400, significantly lower than the greater 45-minute drive time region (\$331,861), Lake County (\$287,900), Florida (\$325,000), and the national average (\$303,400). This affordability may attract new residents but could also reflect limited investment or slower housing market growth.
- **Poverty Rate:** Eustis's poverty rate of 12.9% is significantly higher than Lake County (9.5%) but in line with the national average (12.4%) and with Florida (12.6%), suggesting moderate economic challenges. **However, the city has made great strides, with the rate falling from 16.0% in 2020, reflecting positive momentum in local economic conditions and community support systems.**
- **SNAP:** In Eustis, 12.8% of households receive SNAP benefits. This is higher than Lake County at 9.9% and slightly above the state average of 12.6% and the national average of 11.8%. These figures point to a continued need for economic support services in the community. The elevated rate of participation may reflect underlying challenges related to income, employment, and access to opportunity. Strengthening local assistance programs, expanding outreach, and connecting residents to workforce development and financial stability resources will be important to help reduce reliance on public assistance and improve overall economic well-being.
- **Disconnected Youth:** Eustis has a high rate of disconnected youth at 10.7%, which is more than double the rate in Lake County at 4.1%. The rate is even lower when looking at the broader 45-minute drive time area and the state, both at 2.5%, and the national rate of 2.4%. **Unlike the poverty rate, which has improved over time, the rate of disconnected youth in Eustis has increased from 6.7% in 2020 to 10.7% today.** This upward trend is a serious concern. Disconnected youth are not in school and not working, which directly affects long-term workforce readiness, economic mobility, and community stability. Focused efforts will be needed to re-engage these young people and strengthen the future labor pipeline.
- **Single Parent Homes:** In Eustis, 33.6% of children live in single-parent households. This is in line with Lake County at 33.4% and the national average of 34.0%. **Encouragingly, this marks a significant improvement from 2022, when the rate was 44.8%.** Even with this progress, single-parent families often face added financial pressures, limited access to childcare, and fewer opportunities to work full-time. These challenges can affect participation in the workforce and overall economic mobility. Continued support through community programs and workforce initiatives will be important to help these families thrive and contribute fully to the local economy.

## Union Membership

- **Union Rates:** In Eustis, union membership is relatively low in both the private sector and manufacturing. About 2.9% of private sector workers are union members, which is well below the national average of 5.9% and closely aligned with Lake County and Florida. The same rate applies to manufacturing jobs in the city, which is also significantly lower than the national average of 7.6%. **These lower unionization rates suggest a more flexible labor environment, which may appeal to employers looking for fewer labor constraints and more control over workforce operations.**

Eustis shares many characteristics with Lake County and the state of Florida, but the data also highlights some important differences. Lower levels of educational attainment, a rising number of disconnected youth, and lower veteran labor force participation points to areas where focused investment could make a meaningful impact. **At the same time, Eustis shows clear strengths that can be used to support business recruitment and economic development messaging.**

### Steady Population Growth

- Eustis has grown by more than 22% since 2015, with an annual growth rate of just over 2%. That pace is faster than Lake County, the state, and the nation. This kind of growth is a strong signal that the community is attracting new residents and building momentum. A growing population means more workers, more customers, and a stronger foundation for long-term economic success.

### Affordable Housing & Cost of Living

- The median home value in Eustis is around \$245,400, which is significantly lower than the county, state, and national averages. This affordability can be a major advantage for families and workers looking to relocate, and for employers who want to attract talent without the high cost of living found in other parts of the state.

### Strong Core Workforce

- The prime working-age population in Eustis is highly engaged, with a participation rate of 83.6%. That is slightly above the state and national averages and shows that the city has a dependable labor pool at the heart of its workforce.

### Flexible Labor Conditions

- Union membership in Eustis is low in both the private sector and manufacturing, with rates at 2.9%. These are well below national averages and in line with local and state trends. This suggests a labor environment that offers flexibility for employers and may be appealing to companies looking for fewer labor constraints.

These strengths, combined with intentional efforts to improve educational attainment, re-engage disconnected youth, and support underutilized segments of the workforce, can position Eustis as a competitive and opportunity-rich community. With a growing population, affordable living, and a reliable core workforce, the city is well positioned to attract new investment and support the expansion of existing businesses.

# Eustis, FL Industry & Occupation Snapshot.

## INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

The top five industry sectors account for **66.9%** of total employment Eustis. Notably, two of these sectors - **Healthcare and Social Assistance (\$58,322)**, and **Construction (\$69,354)** have annual wages that exceed the city average of **\$52,270**.

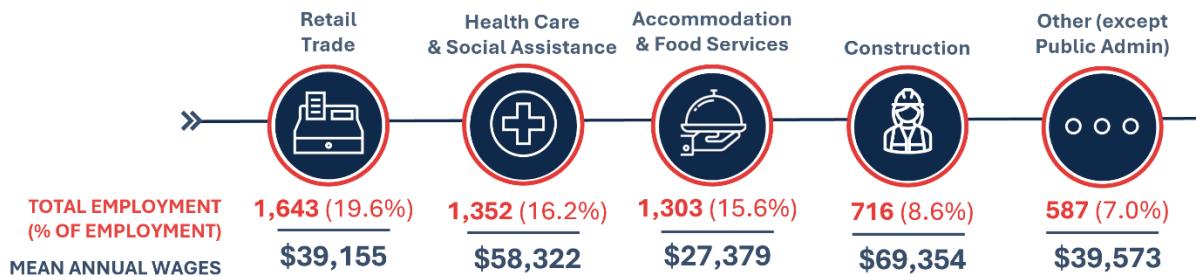


FIGURE 2: INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT (2025Q1)<sup>1</sup>

CHART READS » PERCENT OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE AREA SPECIFIED – TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN SECTOR | AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE | 5-YEAR HISTORIC CHANGE | 5-YEAR PROJECTED FORECAST.

NAICS	Eustis, Florida	Total Sector Employment	Average Annual Wages	5-Year HISTORIC	5-Year FORECAST
44	Retail Trade	1,643	\$39,155	2.9%	1.6%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,352	\$58,322	-1.3%	2.4%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	1,303	\$27,379	1.9%	2.2%
23	Construction	716	\$69,354	5.6%	2.2%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	587	\$39,573	3.5%	2.2%
61	Educational Services	574	\$47,702	1.9%	1.3%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	439	\$85,692	9.2%	2.6%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	336	\$45,503	1.4%	2.1%
31	Manufacturing	313	\$61,491	2.4%	1.9%
92	Public Administration	305	\$63,228	3.4%	2.0%
52	Finance and Insurance	269	\$78,906	-0.8%	2.1%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	171	\$44,595	-1.0%	2.0%

<sup>1</sup> Source: JobsEQ: Data as of 2025Q1; Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. All data based upon a four-quarter moving average. Exits and transfers are approximate estimates based upon occupation separation rates.

NAICS	Eustis, Florida	Total Sector Employment	Average Annual Wages	5-Year HISTORIC	5-Year FORECAST
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	83	\$32,098	2.6%	2.5%
51	Information	63	\$101,144	6.7%	2.4%
42	Wholesale Trade	56	\$65,336	-2.2%	2.0%
22	Utilities	55	\$86,691	-1.9%	2.7%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	55	\$49,119	-16.2%	2.2%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	28	\$78,385	4.2%	2.4%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	13	\$38,443	-22.3%	1.6%
99	Unclassified	9	\$49,413	4.2%	2.1%
<b>Total - All Industries</b>		<b>8,371</b>	<b>\$52,270</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

### WHAT THE DATA TELLS US.

The largest sector in Eustis, FL is Retail Trade, employing 1,643 workers. Following this are Health Care and Social Assistance (1,352 workers) and Accommodation and Food Services (1,303 workers).

Location Quotients (LQs) reveal sectors in the region with higher concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in Eustis, FL are:

- **Retail Trade** (LQ = 2.03)
- **Accommodation and Food Services** (LQ = 1.79)
- **Other Services (except Public Administration)** (LQ = 1.64)

These industries have a stronger local presence than the national average.

The sectors with the highest average wages per worker in Eustis, FL are:

- **Information:** \$101,144
- **Utilities:** \$86,691
- **Professional, Scientific and Technical Services:** \$85,692

Over the past five years, the sectors in Eustis, FL with the most significant job growth (or smallest losses) have been:

- **Retail Trade:** +222 jobs
- **Construction:** +170 jobs
- **Professional, Scientific and Technical Services:** +156 jobs

Looking ahead, employment in Eustis, FL is projected to increase by 891 jobs over the next five years. The fastest growing sector is expected to be Health Care and Social Services, with a year-over-year growth rate of +2.4%. The sectors projected to see the greatest job gains during this period are:

- **Health Care and Social Assistance:** +167 jobs
- **Accommodation and Food Service:** +147 jobs
- **Retail Trade:** +132 jobs

Forecasting (projections) is a technique that uses historical data as inputs to make informed estimates that are predictive in determining the direction of future trends. The forecasts are just that, forecasts. They do not account for the activities undertaken by the City of Eustis, community and region to influence the projections nor does it consider the impacts from the closing. VisionFirst utilizes data to provide insight as to how the community and region are seen by site selectors and offers the data as a benchmark for measuring the success of activities undertaken.

## Occupation Snapshot

Occupation wages differ from the industry wages listed previously because of differences in the definition which result in varying estimates. Industry wages include bonuses, stock options, severance pay, profit distributions, etc. and sometimes employer contributions to 401(k) plans – which are not included in occupation wages.

The top five occupations in the City of Eustis collectively represent **50.6%** of total employment. Notably, of these top occupations, **Management (\$112,300)**, has a wage significantly higher than the city mean wage of **\$55,100**.



FIGURE 3: OCCUPATION SNAPSHOT (2025Q1)<sup>2</sup>

SOC	Occupation	Current					5-Year HISTORIC	5-Year FORECAST
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages <sup>2</sup>	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate		
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	1,325	\$34,200	1.92	60	4.9%	1.8%	2.1%
41	Sales and Related Occupations	1,011	\$44,200	1.40	42	2.8%	1.8%	1.4%
43	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	773	\$43,800	0.81	32	1.4%	0.0%	1.3%
53	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	563	\$40,600	0.79	46	5.4%	0.7%	2.2%
11	Management Occupations	560	\$112,300	0.84	9	4.6%	4.3%	2.4%
31	Healthcare Support Occupations	487	\$36,600	1.22	16	5.6%	0.4%	2.6%
47	Construction and Extraction Occupations	474	\$50,300	1.27	36	2.6%	4.7%	2.4%
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	464	\$94,000	0.92	6	1.3%	1.6%	2.5%
25	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	445	\$48,300	0.98	7	2.4%	0.4%	1.5%
13	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	382	\$80,900	0.70	9	1.7%	4.2%	2.3%

<sup>2</sup> Source: JobsEQ. Data as of 2025Q1 unless noted otherwise. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

1. Data based on a four-quarter moving average unless noted otherwise. 2. Wage data represent the average for all Covered Employment 3. Data represent found online ads active within the last thirty days in the selected region.

SOC	Occupation	Current					5-Year HISTORIC	5-Year FORECAST
		Empl	Mean Ann Wages <sup>2</sup>	LQ	Unempl	Unempl Rate	Ann %	Ann % Growth
49	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	552	\$53,000	1.08	12	1.8%	2.5%	2.2%
37	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	522	\$36,900	1.16	23	3.3%	2.0%	2.1%
51	Production Occupations	519	\$42,800	0.60	17	3.0%	1.3%	1.8%
39	Personal Care and Service Occupations	398	\$35,300	1.23	11	3.0%	0.4%	2.4%
21	Community and Social Service Occupations	382	\$53,500	0.94	3	2.1%	-1.4%	2.5%
15	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	317	\$94,700	0.49	3	2.0%	7.5%	2.8%
33	Protective Service Occupations	261	\$52,100	0.71	6	2.0%	2.8%	1.8%
27	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	210	\$63,300	0.79	2	2.4%	2.8%	2.1%
17	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	206	\$88,300	0.48	1	1.5%	5.5%	2.5%
23	Legal Occupations	198	\$104,700	0.67	1	0.7%	1.6%	2.2%
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	161	\$75,600	0.42	0	n/a	3.3%	2.5%
45	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	80	\$32,900	0.20	5	4.5%	-15.0%	1.8%
Total - All Occupations		8,371	\$55,100	1.0	-	-	1.8%	2.0%

## WHAT THE DATA TELLS US.

The largest major occupation group in Eustis, FL is Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, employing 1,325 workers. The next largest occupation groups in the city are Sales and Related Occupations (1,011 workers) and Office and Administrative Support Occupations (773 workers).

Location quotients (LQs) indicate the concentration of an occupation group in a region compared to the national average. The occupation groups with the highest LQs in Eustis, FL are:

- **Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations:** (LQ = 1.92)
- **Sales and Related Occupations:** (LQ = 1.40)
- **Construction and Extraction Occupations:** (LQ = 1.27)

These groups have a notably higher concentration of employment in the region than the national average.

In terms of average wages, the highest-paying occupation groups in the community are:

- **Management Occupations:** \$112,300
- **Legal Occupations:** \$104,700
- **Computer and Mathematical Occupations:** \$94,700

The unemployment rate in the region varied among the major groups from 0.7% among Legal Occupations to 4.5% among Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations.

Looking ahead, the fastest-growing occupation group in Eustis over the next five years is expected to be Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, with a projected +2.1% growth year over year. The largest job gains over this period are expected in:

- **Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations:** +147 jobs
- **Sales and Related Occupations:** +74 jobs
- **Management Occupations:** +70 jobs

Additionally, the highest separation demand (due to retirements and worker transitions) is expected in:

- **Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations:** 1,394 jobs
- **Sales and Related Occupations:** 743 jobs
- **Office and Administrative Support Occupations:** 466 jobs

### Why High LQ Industry Clusters Matter

When an industry cluster has a Location Quotient (LQ) above 1.25, it signals a regional competitive advantage. This high concentration reflects specialized expertise, efficient supply chains, and a skilled labor force—all of which lead to:

- **Specialization & Innovation:** A strong LQ means critical mass—firms benefit from shared knowledge, technology, and best practices, driving innovation and productivity.
- **Increased Efficiency:** Proximity to suppliers, customers, and talent lowers production costs and enables economies of scale.
- **Attracting Investment:** Clusters with strong LQs are magnets for private and public investment due to their lower risk and established infrastructure.
- **Labor Market Strength:** Deep pools of industry-specific talent benefit both employers and workers through better job matches and higher wages.
- **Knowledge Spillovers:** Firms, universities, and research centers share insights, fueling continual growth and renewal within the cluster.
- **Economic Resilience:** Specialized clusters often rebound faster from downturns due to strong local networks and adaptability.
- **Sustained Regional Growth:** High-performing clusters drive entrepreneurship, attract new businesses, and support long-term economic development.

## A Closer Look at Participation Rates.

One of the key metrics analyzed in today's economy is the **labor force participation rate (LFPR)**. It is frequently cited but often not fully explained. Before diving into U.S. Census data, it is important to understand what the labor force participation rate includes, what it excludes, and why some experts believe it is so low.

**Definition:** The labor force participation rate reflects the proportion of the civilian non-institutional population (everyone aged 16 or older, excluding individuals in institutions such as prisons, nursing homes, mental hospitals, or those on active duty in the military).

When examining labor force participation from a national perspective:

### Overall Labor Force Participation Rate

- As of **May 2025**, the **seasonally adjusted LFPR** for ages 16+ stood at **62.4%**, unchanged from February but down from April's 62.6%
- This is about **4.9 percentage points below** its 2000 peak of 67.3%.

### Prime-Age Workers (25–54)

- Participation in this group remains strong at **83.4%** (May 2025), slightly below the post-pandemic high of 83.9% in summer 2024.
- Among men in this cohort, it's **89.2%** (down from 89.9%), and among women it's **77.7%**, both near two-decade highs.

### Gender & Education Gaps

- **Men (16+):** Participation in May was **67.7%**, a slight dip from April's 67.9%.
- **Women (16+):** At about 57.5% in February 2025 (coinciding overall rate), reflecting a persistent ~10-point gap.
- Workers with some college or associate degrees saw a dip from 63.6% (Feb) to **62.4%** in May.

### Impact of Aging Population

- Despite near-record prime-age participation, the **overall LFPR** is suppressed by population aging—more retirees—and **lower rates among older age groups**.

### COVID-19 Pandemic Effects

- Older workers: A notable spike in exits during the pandemic persists—echoing recent studies.
- Women: The pandemic initially drove many out of the workforce, but participation has rebounded, especially among prime-age.

### Recent Labor Market Signals

- Job growth slowed in May with only 139,000 new positions and falling LFPR concealing a decline of 696,000 in household employment.
- Private-sector job losses in June (-33,000) further indicate weakening momentum.
- While layoffs remain historically low, new hiring is the slowest in years.

## WHY IT MATTERS

- **Aging** continues to depress the headline rate—even as prime-age participation remains robust.
- A slowdown in hiring and flat-to-falling LFPR could signal underlying labor-market softness.
- The gender/education divides reflect ongoing structural disparities—non-college men lag significantly, while female participation has rebounded post-pandemic.

Metric	Latest Value	Trend
Overall LFPR	~62.4%	Stagnant, slightly down
Prime-age (25–54) LFPR	~83.4%	Near recent high
Male LFPR (16+)	~67.7%	Slight dip
Female LFPR (16+)	~57.5%	Gradual recovery

- **Aging population** remains a drag on overall participation.
- **Prime-age participation** is back to pre-pandemic trends.
- **Labor market slack:** decelerating hiring and soft employment indicators point to caution ahead.

## SWOT ANALYSIS + LEVERAGE POINTS.

Based on stakeholder engagement and data analysis, VisionFirst identified the City of Eustis' economic development strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This analysis relied on qualitative inputs as well as VisionFirst's experience in corporate site selection and state and local economic development.

### STRENGTHS

- Proximity to Orlando, plus HUBZone and Opportunity Zone designations, position Eustis for strategic growth.
- Lake Tech and Lake Sumter College offer customized training and are active partners in workforce development.
- City-owned land presents opportunities for commercial and mixed-use development.
- Community pride is strong, with support for beautification, arts, and heritage tourism.
- City staff are respected for their dedication and ability to deliver with limited resources.

### WEAKNESSES

- Strategic planning efforts have stalled, and leadership is seen as reactive.
- Public engagement is low, especially among younger and underserved residents.
- Lack of zoning tools and annexation strategy limits development readiness.
- Local schools face performance and staffing issues, particularly in East Eustis.
- Infrastructure challenges include traffic congestion, CUP limitations, and limited affordable housing.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Strong interest in clean industries like tech, aerospace, AgTech, and healthcare logistics.
- Business incubator is attracting international attention and could anchor innovation.
- Infill and redevelopment potential around lakes and city-owned parcels.
- Stakeholder support for youth programs, STEAM education, and creative economy training.
- Downtown revitalization could support boutique retail, hospitality, and entertainment.

### THREATS

- Cultural resistance to growth and influence of legacy networks may stall progress.
- County opposition to annexation and lack of coordination complicate planning.
- Economic leakage persists, with many residents commuting out for work.
- Jurisdictional boundaries and unclear land control hinder infill development.
- Disconnected youth and underutilized talent pose long-term workforce risks.

## LEVERAGE POINTS

Far too often SWOT analyses are conducted for discovery purposes only. VisionFirst goes beyond the initial step of conducting the analysis and develops strategies to leverage or capitalize on opportunities to minimize or mitigate weaknesses.

These strategies, or “leverage points,” highlight the most urgent and impactful actions the economic development team should consider to strengthen its position, fulfill its mission and enhance the city’s competitiveness for jobs and investment.

STRENGTHS	LEVERAGE POINTS
Proximity to Orlando, plus HUBZone and Opportunity Zone designations, position Eustis for strategic growth.	Promote these designations to attract federal contractors and small business investment.
Community pride is strong, with support for beautification, arts, and heritage tourism.	Build on efforts like Eustis in Bloom to support placemaking and downtown revitalization.
WEAKNESSES	LEVERAGE POINTS
Strategic planning efforts have stalled, and leadership is seen as reactive.	Restart the strategic planning process to provide clear direction and unify leadership.
Public engagement is low, especially among younger and underserved residents.	Use targeted outreach (e.g., churches, schools, pop-ups) to engage broader demographics.
Infrastructure challenges include traffic congestion, CUP limitations, and limited affordable housing.	Prioritize infrastructure upgrades in key areas to support smart growth and housing access.
OPPORTUNITIES	LEVERAGE POINTS
Business incubator is attracting international attention and could anchor innovation.	Position the incubator as a regional innovation anchor and promote its global reach.
Strong interest in clean industries like tech, aerospace, AgTech, and healthcare logistics.	Market Eustis as a clean industry hub and align incentives with target sectors.
THREATS	LEVERAGE POINTS
Cultural resistance to growth and influence of legacy networks may stall progress.	Engage long-term residents early in planning to build trust and reduce opposition.
County opposition to annexation and lack of coordination complicate planning.	Strengthen intergovernmental relationships and advocate for shared priorities.

## RECOMMENDED TARGET INDUSTRIES.

Focusing on the right industries is an important step in helping Eustis grow in a way that reflects its values, strengths, and long-term goals. Just as a business identifies its target market to guide decisions and use resources wisely, a community benefits from concentrating its efforts on industries it is best positioned to support. This section outlines five industry sectors that offer the most potential for Eustis to explore and attract.

These recommendations are based on a combination of local assets, workforce capacity, infrastructure readiness, and broader market trends. They are not meant to cover every possible opportunity but instead offer a practical starting point for where the city can focus its efforts and see the greatest return.

Two of these industries, data centers and food processing, have already been identified as areas of interest. While each comes with its own set of considerations, they also offer clear advantages that make them worth continued attention. The remaining three were selected through a review of economic and workforce data, conversations with local stakeholders, and an understanding of what types of businesses are most likely to succeed in the current environment.

It is important to note that these five industries are not the only ones the city can pursue. Eustis should remain open to opportunities that fall outside of these categories, especially when a project aligns with community goals and can be supported with available resources. However, having a defined set of targets helps guide outreach, shape messaging, and ensure that limited time and resources are used effectively.

The five recommended target industries for Eustis' consideration are:

- 1. Food Processing/Manufacturing**
- 2. Information Technology**
- 3. Distribution**
- 4. Aerospace Manufacturing**
- 5. AgTech/Agribusiness**

Together, these five industries offer a clear and realistic path forward for Eustis. They reflect where the city is best positioned to compete and where it can build momentum over time. While this focus helps guide outreach and investment, it does not limit the city's ability to consider other opportunities. Eustis should remain open to projects that align with its goals and values, even if they fall outside of these categories. What this framework provides is a sense of direction, one that supports more intentional decision-making and helps the city tell a stronger story to potential partners and employers.

# Food Processing/Manufacturing

## Strategic Fit for Eustis:

Food Processing/Manufacturing (NAICS 311) food manufacturing is already present in Eustis with 96 jobs and a location quotient of 1.05, indicating a slightly higher concentration than the national average. Regionally, the 45-minute drive-time area supports approximately 6,500 food manufacturing jobs, highlighting a broader ecosystem that can reinforce local growth and supply chain connectivity. The sector includes a mix of small-scale and mid-sized operations, and even some entrepreneurial activity, with 8.6% of employment coming from self-employment.

As an essential industry, food manufacturing plays a critical role in supporting both local and regional supply chains. Its presence contributes to economic stability and public well-being, making it a valuable component of a diversified and resilient economy.

## Drivers:

### Growing demand for processed and specialty foods

- Across the country and region, more people are consuming packaged, ready-to-eat, and specialty food products. This steady demand supports a wide range of food manufacturing operations, from snack foods to health-conscious alternatives.

### Shift toward domestic production after COVID

- The pandemic highlighted the risks of relying on global supply chains. As a result, many companies are bringing food production closer to home, creating opportunities for communities like Eustis to support regional supply chain resilience.

### Advancements in technology and food safety

- Modern food manufacturing is becoming more efficient thanks to automation, robotics, and digital quality control systems. These tools help reduce labor needs and improve compliance with safety standards, making it easier for smaller communities to support high-quality operations.

### Changing consumer preferences

- Consumers are increasingly looking for healthier, plant-based, and locally sourced food options. This shift creates opportunity for small and mid-sized producers to meet evolving market demands, especially in areas with access to regional distribution networks.

## Opportunities:

Water availability is a key consideration for food processing operations in Eustis. While the city has access to water, it is a carefully managed resource, and there is a clear desire to avoid overextending capacity. This makes it important to focus on food manufacturing operations that **use less water**.

Several types of food manufacturing are well-suited to these constraints:

- **Dry Food Processing:** Snack foods (chips, pretzels, popcorn), cereals, crackers, cookies, and powdered products like spices or baking mixes typically require minimal water.
- **Frozen & Refrigerated Foods:** Frozen meals and vegetables, especially when blanching is minimized or water is recycled, and plant-based dairy alternatives.
- **Specialty & Artisan Foods:** Chocolate and dry confectionery, nut roasting, and jerky production are relatively low in water use.

- **Packaging & Assembly Operations:** Co-packing and repackaging of dry goods involve little to no water usage.

### How Eustis Stands Out:

- Food manufacturing employment in Eustis has grown at an average annual rate of 12.6% over the past ten years, significantly outpacing the national rate of 1.8%. Within a 45-minute drive of the city, regional employment in the sector has also increased by a healthy 2.7% each year, suggesting strong and sustained momentum across the broader area.
- Wages in the sector have increased by 5.1% per year, outpacing the national average of 3.5%, contributing to rising household incomes.
- The average wage for food manufacturing in Eustis is \$60,816, slightly below the national average of \$61,118. This offers a cost advantage for employers while remaining competitive for workers.
- The local and regional workforce includes individuals with experience in key food manufacturing roles such as machine operators, bakers, batchmakers, and supervisors. Across the broader drive-time area, the talent pool is especially strong, with more than 1,000 bakers, 618 packaging machine operators, and 329 batchmakers employed in top occupations.
- Lake Technical College offers programs aligned with industry needs, including Baking and Pastry Arts, helping to build a pipeline of skilled talent.
- The graphic provided on the following page illustrates relationships and potential movement between occupations that share similar skill sets, with flows from entry-level roles to more specialized positions. Developing career pathways as a strategy promotes industry employment growth and workforce engagement, helping workers advance while supporting employer needs.

### Strategic Considerations:

- For targeted and proactive recruitment in food processing and manufacturing, Eustis should consider participating in key industry events. These can be attended independently or as part of a regional presence in collaboration with Lake County, LEAD, or the Florida Department of Commerce.
- Attending trade shows and conferences allows Eustis to showcase its workforce assets, infrastructure, and business climate directly to decision-makers in the food industry.
- These events offer valuable opportunities to build relationships, generate leads, and stay informed about industry trends and innovations.

### Industry Events for Recruitment:

While attending industry events can be valuable, Eustis should take a thoughtful and selective approach. Rather than participating in every opportunity, the city might consider attending one key event each year, ideally one that aligns with its target industries or strategic goals. These events offer more than just recruitment potential; they provide insight into emerging trends, technologies, and evolving business needs.

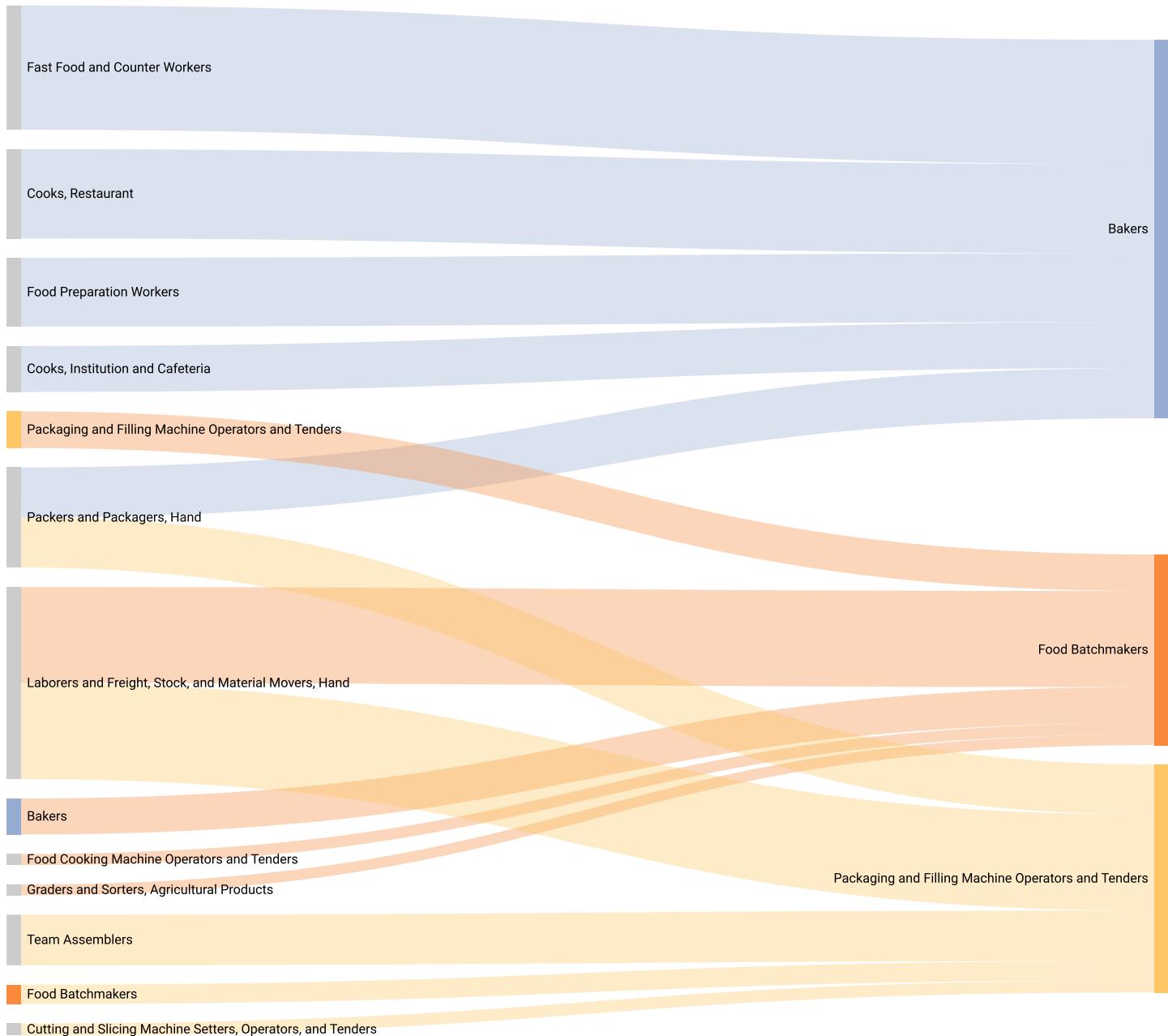
After each event, conducting a post-event review to assess outcomes, such as connections made, leads generated, and knowledge gained, can help determine the return on investment and guide future participation. **This strategic framework should be applied consistently to all industry event lists provided throughout this report.**

- **International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE)** (Jan 27–29, 2026, Atlanta, GA): One of the largest food processing expos in the U.S., covering feed, meat, and poultry sectors.
- **Natural Products Expo West** (Mar 3–6, 2026, Anaheim, CA): Major event for organic and health-focused food brands.
- **Future Food-Tech Summit** (Mar 19–20, 2026, San Francisco, CA): Focused on innovation and sustainability in food production.
- **Food Northwest Process & Packaging Expo** (Apr 20–21, 2026, Portland, OR): Largest regional food manufacturing trade show in the U.S., with a focus on automation and sustainability.
- **GroceryLab** (Jun 2–4, 2026, Detroit, MI): A co-creation forum for food retailers, technologists, and operators focused on innovation and collaboration.

Eustis presents a strong opportunity for food manufacturing investment, especially in operations that align with the city's approach to resource stewardship. The sector's consistent growth, rising wages, and entrepreneurial activity reflect a healthy business climate. With continued support for workforce development and a focus on efficient production methods, Eustis can attract companies that contribute to a resilient economy while respecting local infrastructure and environmental priorities.

## Sector Strategy Pathways

The graphic below shows how occupations with similar skill sets are connected and how individuals may move between them over time. Using career pathways as a strategy can help grow industry employment and increase workforce participation by guiding workers toward opportunities that match their skills and interests.



## Information Technology (Inclusive of Data Centers)

### Strategic Fit for Eustis:

The Information Technology sector (NAICS 51) currently employs 63 people in Eustis, with a location quotient of 0.40, indicating a lower concentration than the national average. However, within this sector, Web Search Portals, Libraries, Archives, and Other Information Services stand out with a location quotient of 1.60, suggesting regional strength and potential for growth. Regionally, the 45-minute drive time area supports 22,006 jobs in the Information Technology sector, with a location quotient of 1.00, matching the national average and indicating a balanced concentration across the broader area.

This target industry includes data centers, which were consistently identified as a priority during stakeholder engagement. Data centers represent a strategic opportunity for Eustis to attract high-value investment in digital infrastructure. As companies seek secure, scalable, and cost-effective locations outside major metros, Eustis offers a compelling alternative with proximity to Orlando's tech ecosystem and a lower cost profile.

While overall employment in the sector has declined by 8.6% over the past ten years, wages have increased by 8.7% annually, reaching an average of \$101,144. This wage growth reflects the presence of high-value roles and signals potential for upward mobility. Entrepreneurial activity is also notable, with 15.1% of employment coming from self-employment, pointing to a foundation of innovation and flexibility that can support future growth in digital services and infrastructure.

### Drivers:

#### Rising demand for cloud services and data storage

- The growth of digital content, e-commerce, and remote work continues to drive demand for secure and scalable data infrastructure. Communities with available land, reliable power, and fiber connectivity are well-positioned to attract investment.

#### Decentralization of data infrastructure

- Companies are increasingly locating data centers outside major urban areas to reduce costs and improve redundancy. Eustis offers access to regional assets while maintaining a business-friendly environment.

#### Growth in AI and machine learning applications

- These technologies require significant computing power and data storage, creating demand for facilities that can support high-performance computing environments.

#### Cybersecurity and data compliance needs

- As regulations around data privacy and security expand, businesses seek locations with workforce training and infrastructure that support secure operations.

### Opportunities:

Just like Food Processing/Manufacturing, water availability is a key consideration for data center operations in Eustis. Although water is available to the city, it's a tightly managed resource. This underscores the importance of exploring data center models that use less water, like air-cooled systems or other low-water cooling technologies.

Power reliability is also a critical factor. While large hyperscale data centers may exceed local capacity, several types of data center operations may be well-suited to Eustis's infrastructure constraints:

- **Edge Data Centers:** These smaller facilities support localized computing needs and typically require less water and power. They are ideal for supporting regional users and applications with low latency requirements.
- **Modular and Containerized Data Centers:** Pre-fabricated and scalable, these units can be deployed quickly and operate efficiently with lower resource demands.
- **Enterprise Data Centers:** Built to serve individual companies, these facilities are generally smaller than hyperscale centers and can be tailored to available infrastructure.
- **Colocation Facilities:** Shared data centers that host multiple clients offer flexibility and efficiency, often with lower environmental impact than larger standalone operations.

### How Eustis Stands Out:

- Wage growth in the sector has averaged 8.7% annually, well above the national rate of 6.8%.
- Entrepreneurial activity is strong, with 15.1% of employment coming from self-employment.
- Key occupations such as Software Developers (\$154,200 average wage), Sales Representatives, and Telecommunications Installers are already present in the local workforce.
- The average wage for Information Technology sector workers in Eustis is \$101,144, compared to \$166,186 nationally. This wage differential offers a cost-effective location for employers, especially when compared to neighboring major metros, while still remaining competitive for workers.
- Lake Technical College offers programs aligned with industry needs, including Cloud Computing and Network/System Administration, helping to build a pipeline of skilled talent.
- The regional presence of 1,098 Telecommunications Equipment Installers and 498 User Support Specialists supports the operational needs of data centers and digital services.
- The city's inland location may be seen as a competitive advantage in Florida, where the risk of natural disasters such as hurricanes is a concern in the site selection process for data centers. Eustis offers geographic stability that can appeal to companies prioritizing operational continuity and disaster resilience.

### Strategic Considerations:

For targeted and proactive recruitment in the Information Technology sector, particularly data centers and digital infrastructure, Eustis should consider a multi-pronged approach that highlights its workforce, infrastructure, and business climate.

- Strategic partnerships with utilities and broadband providers can help Eustis meet industry expectations for power reliability and fiber connectivity, which are essential for data center operations.
- Eustis should explore regional partnerships to market itself as a secondary data center location for companies based in Orlando or Tampa.
- Participation in tech and infrastructure-focused events can help build visibility and attract investment.

- Consider developing a technology park or innovation zone with infrastructure tailored to data and digital services.
- Web Search Portals and Information Services already employ 27 people locally, with a strong location quotient of 1.60 and average wages of \$207,914, indicating high-value activity and potential for expansion.
- Lake Technical College offers programs aligned with industry needs, including Cloud Computing and Network/System Administration, helping to build a pipeline of skilled talent.

These considerations position Eustis to attract companies that value cost-efficiency, workforce readiness, and proximity to major tech hubs, while also aligning with the city's approach to resource stewardship and infrastructure planning.

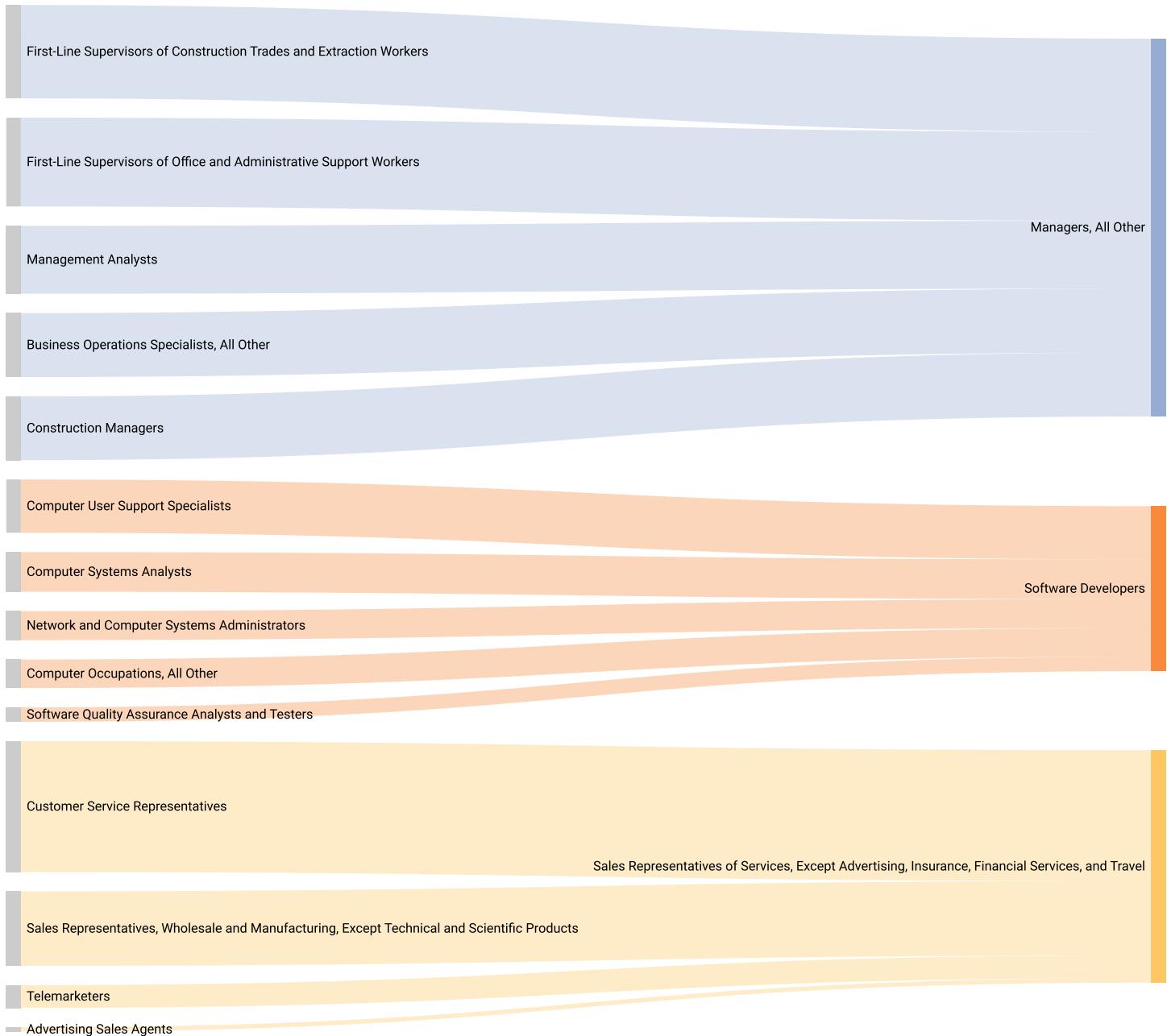
#### **Industry Events for Recruitment:**

- **Data Center World** (March 16–19, 2026, Washington, D.C.): Focused on infrastructure, operations, and strategy for data centers.
- **InfraGard National Congress & Technology Showcase** (May 2026, Las Vegas, NV): Covers cybersecurity and critical infrastructure protection.
- **Florida Technology Summit** (Fall 2026, Orlando, FL): Regional event focused on IT, cloud, and data services.
- **AI & Big Data Expo North America** (November 2026, Santa Clara, CA): Highlights trends in data analytics, cloud, and infrastructure.

Eustis offers a promising environment for growth in the Information Technology sector, particularly in data centers and digital services. With rising wages, a developing pipeline of skilled talent, and a foundation of entrepreneurial activity, the city is well-positioned to appeal to companies seeking cost-effective locations with access to regional infrastructure and proximity to major tech hubs.

## Sector Strategy Pathways

The graphic below shows how occupations with similar skill sets are connected and how individuals may move between them over time. Using career pathways as a strategy can help grow industry employment and increase workforce participation by guiding workers toward opportunities that match their skills and interests.



## Distribution

### Strategic Fit for Eustis:

Distribution, classified under Transportation and Warehousing (NAICS 48 and 49), was identified as a priority industry during stakeholder engagement. While Eustis currently has a small employment base in this sector with 55 jobs and a location quotient of 0.13, the broader 45-minute drive-time area supports approximately 52,443 jobs. This regional activity reflects a more developed ecosystem that may offer opportunities for Eustis to participate in supply chain operations and benefit from proximity to established infrastructure and talent.

Though the city is still emerging in the distribution sector, its favorable location and access to skilled labor and training resources suggest strong potential for strategic advancement. With thoughtful planning and strategic partnerships, Eustis may be able to support niche distribution operations that complement regional activity.

### Drivers:

#### Expansion of E-Commerce and Delivery Services

- The continued rise of e-commerce has increased demand for distribution services, particularly in communities that can support fulfillment, delivery, and reverse logistics. Eustis may be able to capture niche opportunities in this space.

#### Stakeholder Prioritization

- During stakeholder engagement, Distribution was mentioned as a target industry of interest several times. Participants expressed interest in leveraging Eustis's location and infrastructure to support regional supply chains and attract new investment.

#### Regional Growth and Demand

- The 45-minute drive-time area has experienced strong growth in distribution employment. More than 6,500 positions are expected to be in demand annually, driven by both industry expansion and workforce turnover.

#### Workforce and Training Pipeline

- The region includes a deep talent pool with thousands of workers in key distribution roles. These include more than 8,700 heavy truck drivers, nearly 7,000 freight and material movers, and over 4,700 light truck drivers. Postsecondary institutions such as Lake Technical College, Valencia College, and Universal Technical Institute offer programs in truck technology, diesel mechanics, operations management, and entrepreneurship, helping to build a pipeline of future workers.

### Opportunities:

Eustis may be able to support distribution operations that align with its existing infrastructure, workforce and scale. These include:

- **Last-mile and regional delivery:** Small distribution firms focused on serving Central Florida's consumer base may find Eustis a viable location for operations.
- **Fleet services and maintenance:** Training programs and skilled mechanics support opportunities for vehicle maintenance and fleet operations.
- **Entrepreneurial distribution activity:** Self-employment accounts for 14.4% of regional employment in the sector, suggesting a strong base of independent operators and small businesses.

- **Support services for manufacturing:** Distribution operations that serve food manufacturing and other local industries, such as packaging, cold storage, and inventory management, may benefit from co-location and shared resources.

### How Eustis Stands Out:

- While current employment in distribution is limited, Eustis is located near major transportation corridors and regional hubs, offering potential advantages for small-scale operations.
- The regional labor pool includes more than 8,700 heavy truck drivers, 6,980 freight and material movers, and 4,700 light truck drivers, supported by a variety of training programs.
- Average wages in the sector are approximately \$54,908, below the national average of \$66,104, offering a cost advantage for employers.
- Educational institutions across the region offer relevant programs in vehicle maintenance, operations management, and business administration, supporting both entry-level and advanced workforce needs.
- The graphic provided on the following page illustrates relationships and potential movement between occupations that share similar skill sets, with flows from entry-level roles to more specialized positions. Developing career pathways as a strategy promotes industry employment growth and workforce engagement, helping workers advance while supporting employer needs.

### Strategic Considerations:

- Not every major community surrounding Eustis will be able to accommodate every distribution project that comes their way. Through regional partnerships and consistent messaging, Eustis may be able to position itself as a referred location, helping to keep projects within the region even if they are not a direct fit for other communities.
- For targeted and proactive recruitment in distribution, Eustis should consider participating in key industry events. These can be attended independently or as part of a regional presence in collaboration with Lake County, LEAD, or the Florida Department of Commerce.
- Attending trade shows and conferences allows Eustis to showcase its workforce assets, infrastructure, and business climate directly to decision-makers in the distribution industry.
- These events offer valuable opportunities to build relationships, generate leads, and stay informed about industry trends and innovations.

### Strategic Considerations:

- **Modex** (March 9–12, 2026, Atlanta, GA): One of the largest supply chain and distribution expos in North America, focused on material handling, logistics, and automation.
- **Home Delivery World** (June 3–4, 2026, Philadelphia, PA): A major event focused on last-mile delivery, e-commerce logistics, and retail supply chains.
- **CSCMP EDGE Conference** (September 20–23, 2026, Orlando, FL): Hosted by the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals, this event covers trends in distribution, transportation, and supply chain strategy.
- **Parcel Forum** (October 2026, Chicago, IL): Focused on shipping, fulfillment, and delivery operations for small to mid-sized distribution firms.

- **Florida Supply Chain Summit** (Date TBD, Florida): A regional event that brings together supply chain professionals, economic developers, and logistics firms to discuss opportunities and challenges across Florida.

Eustis may not currently be a major player in the distribution sector, but its proximity to regional activity, access to workforce and training assets, and stakeholder interest suggest potential for growth. With continued support for workforce development and a focus on targeted opportunities, the city can begin to build its presence in the distribution industry in a way that complements its infrastructure and economic priorities.

### **Sector Strategy Pathways:**

The graphic below shows how occupations with similar skill sets are connected and how individuals may move between them over time. Using career pathways as a strategy can help grow industry employment and increase workforce participation by guiding workers toward opportunities that match their skills and interests.



## Aerospace Manufacturing

### Strategic Fit for Eustis:

Aerospace Manufacturing, which falls under the broader Transportation Equipment Manufacturing sector (NAICS 336), was identified as a potential target industry during stakeholder engagement. While Eustis itself has very limited activity in this sector, just 5 jobs and a location quotient of 0.06, the broader 45-minute drive-time region supports more than 7,100 jobs, including aerospace engineers, aircraft mechanics, and systems assemblers. This regional strength, combined with Florida's statewide leadership in aerospace, suggests that Eustis may be able to play a supporting role in the sector's continued growth.

As a lower-cost alternative to major metro areas, Eustis could offer value to aerospace firms seeking expansion opportunities outside of high-cost urban centers. Like Distribution, with access to regional talent, training programs, and infrastructure, the city may be able to attract niche operations or serve as a referral location for projects that do not fit elsewhere in the region.

### Drivers:

#### Florida's statewide strength in aerospace

- Florida is home to a robust aerospace ecosystem, including major manufacturers, defense contractors, and space industry leaders. This statewide presence creates opportunities for smaller communities to support supply chain activity and workforce development.

#### Emergence of advanced air mobility and space commercialization

- Technologies such as electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, drones, and satellite systems are reshaping the aerospace landscape. Commercial space ventures and government initiatives are accelerating innovation and creating new market segments.

#### Defense sector expansion

- Geopolitical tensions and national security priorities are fueling increased defense spending worldwide. Aerospace manufacturers are scaling up to meet demand for military aircraft, unmanned systems, and advanced defense technologies.

#### Emergence of advanced air mobility and space commercialization

- Technologies such as electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, drones, and satellite systems are reshaping the aerospace landscape. Commercial space ventures and government initiatives are accelerating innovation and creating new market segments.

### Opportunities:

Although Eustis is not currently a center for aerospace manufacturing, there are several niche opportunities that may align with the city's scale, cost profile, and regional position:

- **Component and subassembly manufacturing:** Small-scale operations focused on producing specific aerospace components such as brackets, wiring harnesses, or composite parts may find Eustis attractive due to lower costs and access to regional talent.
- **Precision machining and fabrication:** With access to regional machinists and welders, Eustis could support firms specializing in CNC machining, metalworking, or fiberglass fabrication for aerospace applications.

- **Maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) support:** While full-scale MRO operations may be better suited to larger airports, Eustis could support satellite services such as parts refurbishment, avionics testing, or component inspection.
- **Engineering and quality assurance services:** Small firms providing design validation, testing, or compliance support could locate in Eustis to serve larger aerospace manufacturers in the region.
- **Tooling and fixtures production:** Manufacturers of jigs, molds, and fixtures used in aerospace assembly may benefit from Eustis's lower cost environment and skilled trades access.
- **Supplier consolidation and logistics support:** Eustis could serve as a location for supplier coordination, packaging, or distribution of aerospace parts, especially for firms streamlining regional supply chains.
- **Training and workforce development partnerships:**

### **How Eustis Stands Out:**

- Although local employment is limited, Eustis is located near a region with more than 7,100 transportation equipment manufacturing jobs, including hundreds in aerospace-specific roles.
- Regional wages in the sector are significantly higher than the national average, indicating the presence of advanced and specialized operations.
- Postsecondary institutions offer relevant programs in aircraft maintenance, welding, engineering, and operations, supporting both entry-level and advanced workforce needs.
- Entrepreneurial activity is present, with 2.1% of regional employment in the sector coming from self-employment.

### **Strategic Considerations:**

- Florida's reputation in aerospace can be leveraged to position Eustis as a cost-effective alternative for firms seeking expansion outside of major metros.
- Through regional collaboration and consistent messaging, Eustis may be able to attract projects that may not fit in larger communities but still benefit from remaining within the Central Florida region.
- Eustis should consider participating in aerospace and advanced manufacturing industry events, either independently or as part of a regional presence with Lake County, LEAD, or the Florida Department of Commerce.
- These events provide opportunities to showcase workforce assets, infrastructure, and business climate directly to decision-makers in the aerospace industry.
- With institutions like Lake Technical College and the Aviation Institute of Maintenance nearby, Eustis could host training centers or apprenticeship programs in partnership with regional employers.

### Industry Events for Recruitment:

- **Aerospace and Defense Supplier Summit** (April 2026, Seattle, WA): Focused on supply chain partnerships and procurement for aerospace manufacturers.
- **SpaceCom** (May 2026, Orlando, FL): A major event for commercial space and aerospace innovation, held in Florida.
- **Farnborough International Airshow** (July 2026, UK): One of the largest global aerospace events, with strong participation from U.S. firms.
- **Florida Manufacturing and Supply Chain Summit** (Date TBD, Florida): A regional event focused on advanced manufacturing, supply chain, and workforce development.
- **National Aerospace Technology Conference** (Date TBD): Covers aerospace innovation, engineering, and manufacturing trends.

Positioning Eustis within the aerospace manufacturing landscape will require a strategic blend of regional collaboration, targeted outreach, and workforce alignment. By leveraging Florida's reputation, participating in industry events, and cultivating partnerships with training providers, Eustis can begin to build visibility and credibility in the sector. While the city may not be a primary destination for large-scale aerospace operations, it can play a meaningful role in supporting the broader regional ecosystem and attracting projects that benefit from its cost advantages and proximity to talent.

## Agribusiness/AgTech

### Strategic Fit for Eustis:

Agribusiness and AgTech are gaining attention as transformative sectors for rural and regional economies. While the term "AgTech" is widely used, it's not always clearly defined. Many components of the industry span multiple sectors—agriculture, manufacturing, logistics, and technology, which can make it difficult to capture through a single data source. Traditional industry classification systems like NAICS codes often miss the full scope of AgTech, especially when it comes to value-added activities such as food processing, equipment manufacturing, and precision farming technologies.

In Eustis, the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector employs 13 people, with a location quotient of 0.13, indicating a much lower concentration than the national average. However, 81.6% of this employment is self-employment, pointing to a strong entrepreneurial base. The average wage in the sector is \$38,443, which is below the national average of \$53,359, but high-wage roles like Agricultural Managers earn \$98,700 annually.

Across the broader 45-minute drive time region, the sector supports 8,004 jobs with a location quotient of 0.57. While employment has remained relatively flat over the past decade, wages have grown by 4.9% annually, outpacing national trends. The average wage in the region is \$43,608, and the sector generates 1,106 annual job openings with a projected growth rate of 1.5% per year.

Complementing this is the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector (NAICS 541), which includes many AgTech-related activities such as biotechnology, engineering, and R&D. In Eustis, this sector employs 439 people with a location quotient of 0.72 and an average wage of \$85,692.

Employment has grown by 6.2% annually over the past decade, and wages have increased by 6.8% annually. Regionally, the sector supports 86,940 jobs with a location quotient of 1.04, average wages of \$103,178, and a projected annual growth rate of 1.8%.

The regional workforce includes more than 2,400 agricultural managers, over 2,500 farmworkers, and 3,400 software developers, creating a strong foundation for AgTech innovation. Postsecondary institutions such as Valencia College, Seminole State College, and Lake Technical College offer programs in biotechnology, cloud computing, network administration, diesel mechanics, and entrepreneurship, all of which align with the needs of modern agriculture.

### Drivers:

#### Technology is transforming agriculture

- Automation, data analytics, and precision tools are reshaping how farms operate. These innovations improve efficiency, reduce resource use, and support sustainable practices across the agricultural value chain.

#### Climate and crop challenges are accelerating innovation

- Issues like citrus greening, hurricane damage, and shifting weather patterns are driving demand for resilient farming solutions. AgTech offers tools for disease detection, adaptive crop management, and controlled environment agriculture.

#### Value-added agriculture is expanding

- Activities such as food processing, packaging, and specialty crop production are creating new opportunities beyond traditional farming. These often fall under manufacturing and logistics sectors, highlighting the cross-sector nature of AgTech.

### Entrepreneurial activity is strong

- High levels of self-employment in both agriculture and technical services point to a culture of innovation. This entrepreneurial momentum supports the growth of small-scale AgTech ventures and niche agricultural businesses.

### Federal and state support is increasing

- Programs from USDA, SBA, and state agencies are investing in AgTech, especially in rural and HUBZone communities like Eustis. These resources can help local businesses scale and attract outside investment.

### Opportunities:

Eustis may not currently be known for AgTech innovation, but its unique characteristics and regional strengths suggest meaningful opportunities for growth in targeted areas such as:

- **AgTech-focused programming within existing incubator infrastructure:** Eustis already hosts a business incubator with proven success, which provides a strong foundation for supporting startups. By layering in targeted programming, mentorship, and partnerships specific to agricultural technology, the city can position itself as a launchpad for innovation in precision agriculture, automation, and sustainable farming solutions.
- **Controlled environment agriculture (CEA):** Vertical farms, hydroponics, and greenhouse operations offer scalable, climate-resilient solutions that reduce dependence on traditional crop cycles. **These systems are also highly water-efficient, using up to 90% less water than conventional farming through closed-loop irrigation and precise nutrient delivery.** CEA models are well suited to Eustis's available land and infrastructure and align with the city's commitment to sustainable resource management.
- **Smart equipment and IoT manufacturing:** With access to regional talent in diesel mechanics, fabrication, and technical trades, Eustis could support small-scale production of smart farming tools, sensors, and automated machinery.
- **Agri-tourism and specialty crop ventures:** The city's natural assets and entrepreneurial spirit support niche markets such as organic farming, farm-to-table experiences, and experiential tourism. These ventures can diversify the local economy while enhancing community identity.

### How Eustis Stands Out:

- The city's HUBZone designation opens doors to federal funding and contracting opportunities, making it an attractive location for startups and companies looking to scale.
- Eustis has a strong entrepreneurial spirit, with more than 80% of its agricultural employment coming from self-employed individuals. This foundation supports innovation and small-scale ventures, which are often key drivers in emerging industries like AgTech.
- The surrounding region offers a deep talent pool, with over 8,000 people working in agriculture and nearly 87,000 in professional and technical services. This mix of hands-on experience and technical expertise creates a unique opportunity for cross-sector collaboration.
- Wages in both sectors are rising faster than the national average, signaling growing demand for skilled workers and the presence of higher-value roles.
- Local and regional colleges and training centers offer programs in biotechnology, business, diesel mechanics, and IT, fields that align with the needs of modern agriculture and AgTech.

- Eustis benefits from its proximity to Orlando, giving businesses access to a major tech and logistics hub while maintaining a more affordable cost structure.

### Strategic Considerations:

To position Eustis as a hub for AgTech and value-added agriculture, the city can build on existing assets and take targeted steps to support growth:

- Use NAICS data to identify cross-sector opportunities that span agriculture, manufacturing, and technology, helping to capture the full scope of AgTech activity. **Partners such as FloridaCommerce, Lake County, and LEAD have access to JobsEQ and can help the city delve deeper into the data provided in this report and beyond, offering valuable insights without requiring additional cost to the city.**
- Leverage partnerships with colleges and the existing incubator to develop workforce training and entrepreneurial support tailored to agricultural innovation.
- Promote Eustis as a rural innovation zone, emphasizing its geographic stability, affordability, and access to regional tech and logistics networks.
- Tap into USDA, SBA, and state programs to attract funding, technical assistance, and pilot projects that align with local strengths.
- Review land use policies and explore incentives that support controlled environment agriculture and small-scale manufacturing, ensuring infrastructure is aligned with industry needs.

### Industry Events for Recruitment:

- **World Agri-Tech Innovation Summit** (March 17–18, 2026, San Francisco, CA): A leading global event focused on sustainable agriculture, climate-smart solutions, and AgTech innovation. Brings together agribusiness leaders, tech firms, investors, and startups for strategic networking and partnership development.
- **Indoor Ag-Con** (February 11–12, 2026, Las Vegas, NV): The premier conference for vertical farming and controlled environment agriculture. Features dedicated tracks on crop types, smart systems, automation, and AI integration, with practical insights for growers and innovators.
- **FIRA USA** (October 21–23, 2025, Woodland, CA): Focused on autonomous farming and agricultural robotics, this event showcases in-field demos, startup pitches, and investor matchmaking. Ideal for exploring automation and smart equipment trends in specialty crops.
- **World Ag Expo** (February 10–12, 2026, Tulare, CA): The largest annual agricultural show in the U.S., featuring over 1,200 exhibitors and 100,000 attendees. Covers equipment, technology, and innovation across the full spectrum of agriculture.
- **Sunbelt Ag Expo** (October 14–16, 2025, Moultrie, GA): A major Southeastern event showcasing agribusiness innovation, youth engagement, and educational programming. Includes live demonstrations and networking opportunities for farmers and suppliers.

AgTech is still taking shape, with communities, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders all playing a role in defining what it means. It's a sector that blends tradition with innovation, and its boundaries continue to evolve. Eustis may not have all the answers yet, but it has the right ingredients—entrepreneurial energy, regional talent, and a willingness to explore new ideas. With thoughtful planning and collaboration, Eustis has the potential to become a place where the future of agriculture is not just imagined, but built.

## CONCLUSION: A TARGETED PATH FORWARD.

Eustis is making a deliberate choice to shape its economic future with intention. This analysis highlights five industry sectors that align with the city's strengths and aspirations, Food Processing/Manufacturing, Information Technology, Distribution, Aerospace Manufacturing, and AgTech. These sectors were selected not only for their growth potential but also for their compatibility with local infrastructure, workforce capacity, and community values.

A targeted approach allows Eustis to focus its efforts on where the city will have the greatest impact. It provides clarity for decision-makers, helps align public and private resources, and supports a more compelling message to potential investors and partners. By concentrating on industries that fit the city's profile, Eustis can build momentum and create meaningful opportunities for residents and businesses alike.

While these five sectors are the primary focus, other industries such as the creative economy and professional services were also considered. These areas contribute to the city's identity and offer potential for future development. As conditions evolve and new opportunities emerge, Eustis should remain open to ideas that complement its goals and enhance its economic diversity.

This report is meant to serve as a guide, not a prescription. By combining focus with adaptability, Eustis can build a strategy that reflects both current realities and future possibilities, creating space for growth, innovation, and long-term success.





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# City of Eustis

P.O. Drawer 68 • Eustis, Florida 32727-0068 • (352) 483-5430

TO: EUSTIS CITY COMMISSION

FROM: Tom Carrino, City Manager

DATE: February 5, 2026

RE: Historic Preservation Board Annual Report

**Introduction:**

The purpose of this item is to provide the City Commission with an annual report as required by Section 46-59 of the Code of Ordinances.

**Background:**

On September 7, 1995, the City adopted Ordinance Number 95-27 establishing a historic preservation program within the City. The ordinance is now codified as Chapter 46 of the Eustis Code of Ordinances. Section 46-59 states that, "The board shall annually make a report to the city commission of its activities." Pursuant to that requirement, the Eustis Historic Preservation Board (HPB) offers the following regarding its activities for the period beginning October 1, 2024, and ending September 30, 2025.

**Summary of Regular Historic Preservation Activities:**

Activity	Number Reviewed/Attended	Number Submitted / Under Review	Number Approved	Number Denied
New Local Landmark Designations	0	0	0	0
National Register Proposals:	0	0	0	0
Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs):	4	0	4	0
Administrative COAs:	2	0	2	0
Ad Valorem Tax Exemption Projects:	0	0	0	0
Historic Preservation Board Meetings:	4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Workshops Attended by Board Members:	0	n/a	n/a	n/a

## **Other Historic Preservation Activities:**

The number of Certificate of Appropriateness applications (COAs) were less than in previous years. In FY 23-24, a total of 13 COAs were issued, seven by the Historic Preservation Board and six administratively. This fiscal year, the HPB only approved four (4) COAs while just two (2) administrative COAs were requested and approved.

The HPB welcomed one new regular member – Shannon Graves – as well as a new alternate: Derek Stewart.

At the September meeting, HPB Attorney Cheyenne Rossi provided review of Florida's Sunshine Laws and the board approved its Rules & Procedures by adopting HPB Resolution 25-01, which was forwarded to City Commission for their acceptance.

As noted in last year's annual report, in July 2023 consulting firm Stantec completed an updated inventory of historical resources in the city's historic districts. The consultant identified 202 resources (Florida Master Site Files), and the potential for additional surveys along major roadways to recognize "roadway architecture" and other areas of the city such as Lake Nettie, East Crooked Lake and West Crooked Lake to identify potential for other historic districts.

HPB members agreed that that additional emphasis should be made in the next reporting period on better identifying the existing historic districts by leveraging grant resources.

## **Planned Activities for Next Reporting Period:**

- Review certificates of appropriateness and local landmark designation requests as needed.
- Look for grant opportunities for additional signage and public outreach efforts to make the public aware of the existence of the historic districts and what that means for them.
- Recognize May as Historic Preservation Month through City Commission proclamation and other activities.
- Conduct historic preservation education and research as staff availability allows, with offerings to the Board for training and education.
  - Focus on a mid-century modern component and the post-war years

## **Recommended Action:**

Acceptance of Historic Preservation Board Annual Report.

## **Policy Implications:**

None.

## **Alternatives:**

1. Accept the Historic Preservation Annual Report

2. Do not accept the Historic Preservation Annual Report and provide other direction to staff.

*Item 5.1*

**Budget/Staff Impact:**

There is no budget or staff impact related to this item.

**Business Impact Estimate:**

Not applicable.

**Prepared By:**

Kyle Wilkes, AICP, Senior Planner

**Reviewed By:**

Historic Preservation Board, approved during the November 12, 2025, HPB meeting



# City of Eustis

P.O. Drawer 68 • Eustis, Florida 32727-0068 • (352) 483-5430

TO: City of Eustis City Commission

FROM: Tom Carrino, City Manager

DATE: February 5, 2026

RE: **Explanation of Ordinance Numbers 26-02, 26-03, and 26-04**

Ordinance Number 26-02: Voluntary Annexation

Ordinance Number 26-03: Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Ordinance Number 26-04: Design District Assignment

**SECOND READING**

Ordinance Number 26-02: Voluntary Annexation of Parcel with Alternate Key Number 1197309

**Introduction:**

Ordinance Number 26-02 provides for the voluntary annexation of approximately 0.31 acres, located at 77 West Seminole Avenue (Alternate Key Number 1197309).

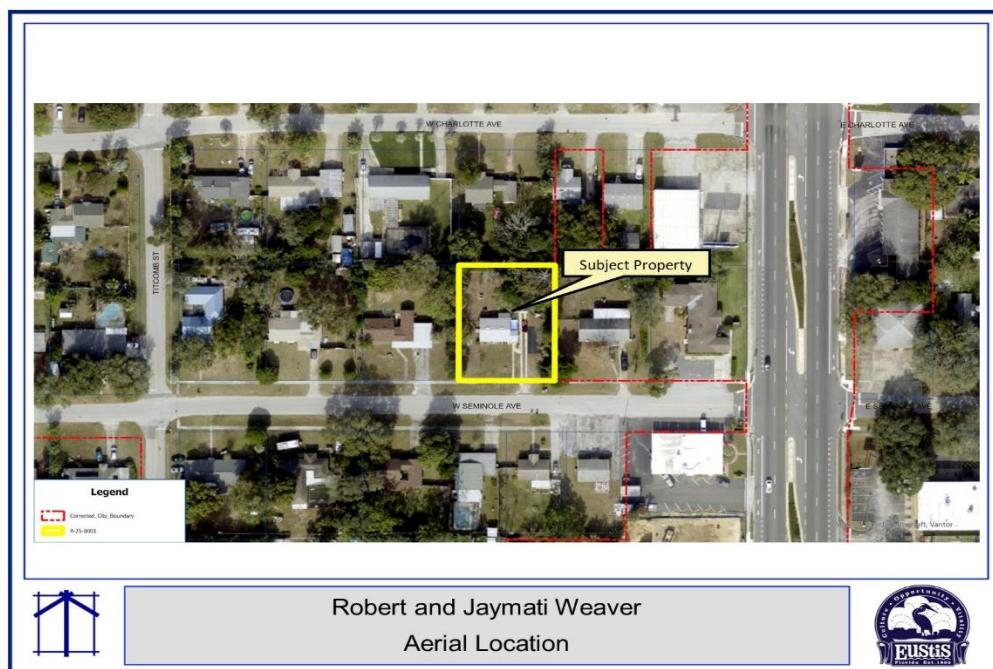
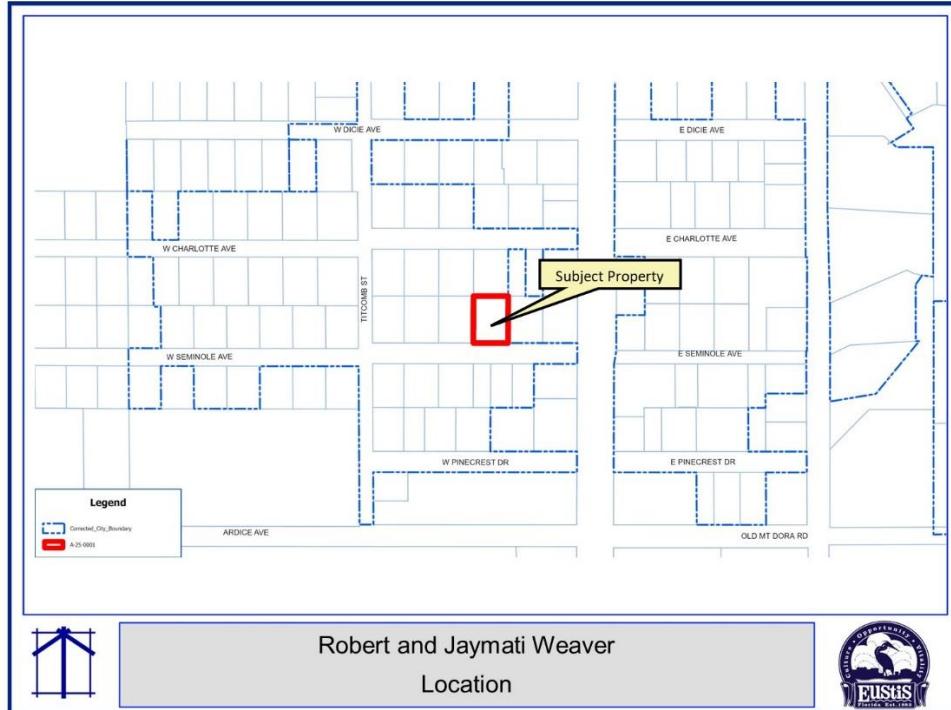
Provided the annexation of the subject property is approved, Ordinance Number 26-03 would change the future land use designation from Urban Low in Lake County to Residential Office Transition (RT) in the City of Eustis. If Ordinance Number 26-02 is denied, then there can be no consideration of Ordinance Number 26-03.

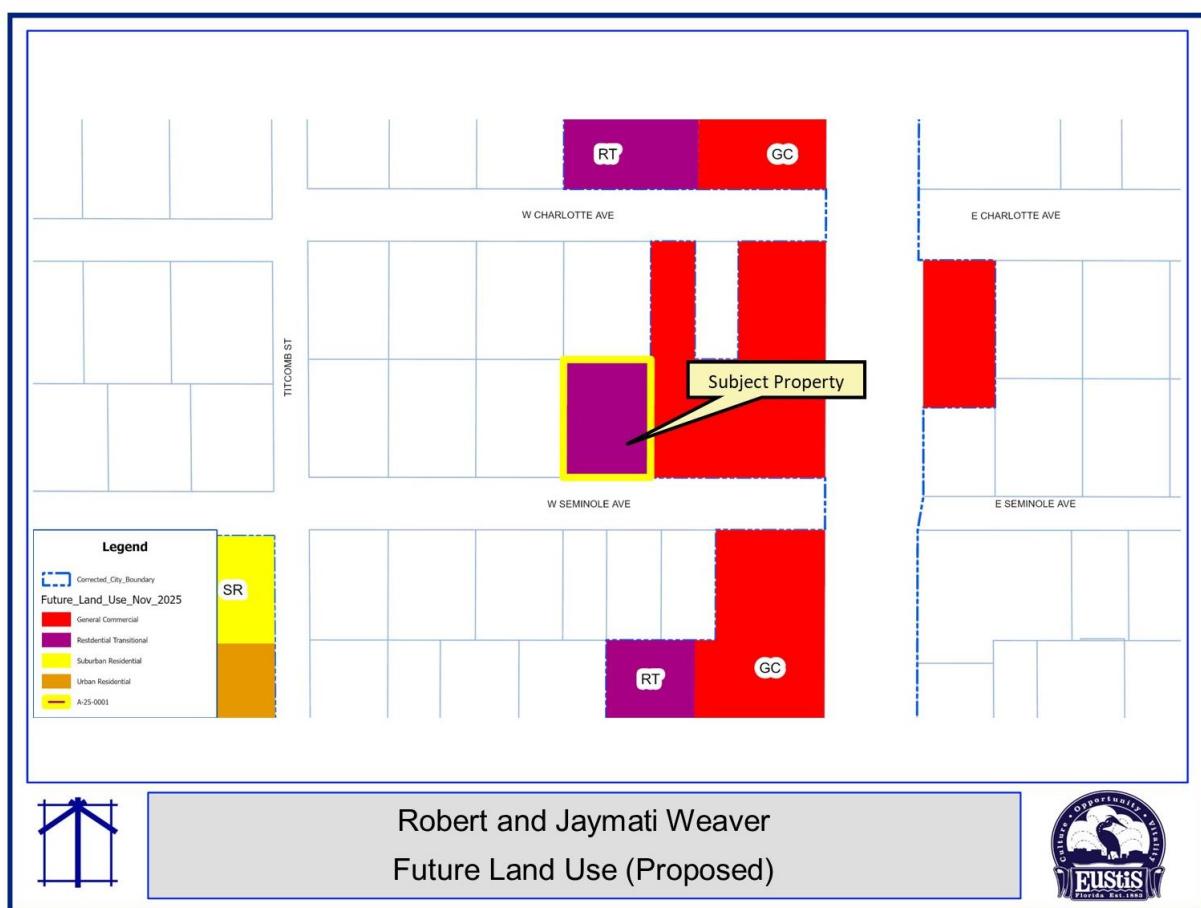
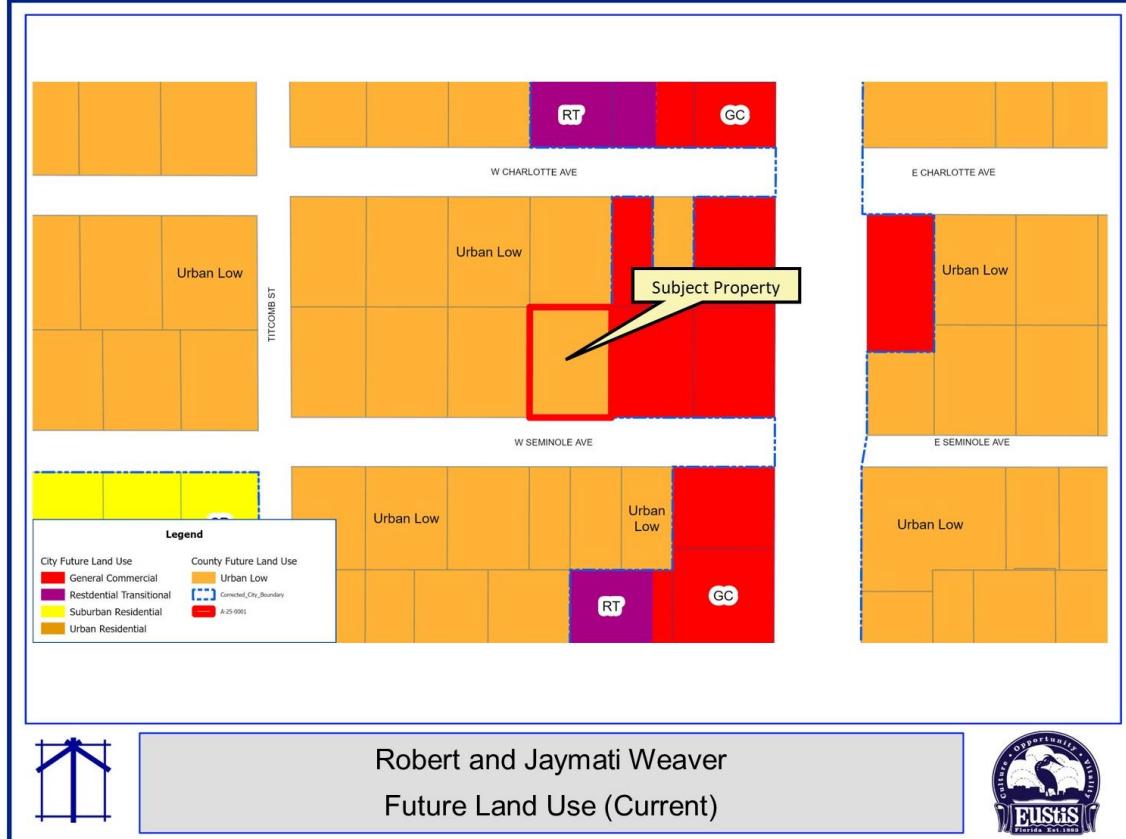
**Background:**

1. The site contains approximately 0.31 +/- acres and is located within the Eustis-Lake County Joint Planning Area. The property currently contains a single-family residence — Source: *Lake County Property Appraisers' Office Property Record Card Data*.
2. The site is contiguous to the City on the east and is located within an enclave.
3. The County Zoning for the property is R-6 (Urban Residential), which permits medium-density single-family and multi-family development under Lake County Urban Residential Zoning regulations.
4. The applicant seeks the RT (Residential Office) land use designation.

Surrounding properties have the following land use designations:

Location	Existing Use	Future Land Use	Design District
<b>Site</b>	Single-family	Urban Low (Lake County)	N/A
<b>North</b>	Single-family	Urban Low (Lake County)	N/A
<b>South</b>	Single-family	Urban Low (Lake County)	N/A
<b>East</b>	Single-family	GC	Urban Corridor
<b>West</b>	Single-family	Urban Low (Lake County)	N/A





## Applicant's Request

The property owners, Robert and Jaymati Weaver, wish to annex the property, change the future land use to Residential Office Transition (RT), and assign a design district of Urban Neighborhood.

The property currently holds a Lake County land use designation of Urban Low and a zoning classification of R-6 (Urban Residential). Under Lake County regulations, these designations permit multi-family development at densities of up to 4 dwelling units per acre, as well as professional services and limited commercial activities.

The applicant is seeking a Residential Office Transition (RT) land use designation within the City of Eustis. This designation allows for a maximum density of 12 units per acre and permits most residential and professional office uses. However, the site is developed currently as a single-family residence.

The requested RT designation aligns with the land use designations of neighboring properties.

### 5. Analysis of Comprehensive Plan/Future Land Use Request (Ordinance Number 26-03)

In Accordance with Florida Statutes Chapter 163.3177.9, to discourage urban sprawl, the Florida Statutes outlines the Primary Indicators of Sprawl. Staff has reviewed these indicators and finds that the proposed annexation and assignment of Future Land Use does not contradict the intent of the primary indicators of sprawl as outlined. The outline and summary of these indicators is included in supplement to this report.

### 6. Per the City of Eustis Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element Appendix

Staff has assessed the proposed amendment to the City of Eustis Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map relating to the development patterns described and supported within the Plan, including conditions and impacts to utility infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, natural features, and the environment. Staff review finds that the proposed assignment of the Residential Office Transition (RT) future land use will not result in impacts that will cause detriment beyond current patterns. The outline and summary of this analysis are included as a supplement to this report.

#### **Recommended Action:**

Development Services finds the proposed Future Land Use designation consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Regulations, and surrounding and adjacent land uses; therefore, it recommends adoption of Ordinance Numbers 26-03 to the City Commission for consideration.

#### **Policy Implications:**

None

#### **Alternatives:**

1. Approve Ordinance Numbers 26-02 (Annexation), 26-03 (Comp. Plan Amendment) and/or 26-04 (Design District Designation) on first reading and hold over for second reading and adoption.
2. Deny Ordinance Numbers 26-02, 26-03, and 26-04.

**Budget/Staff Impact:**

See attached Business Impact Estimate.

**Business Impact Estimate:**

Exempt from this Requirement per F.S. 164.041(4)(c)7.b. (*Comprehensive plan amendments and land development regulation amendments initiated by an application by a private party other than the municipality*)

**Prepared By:**

Kyle Wilkes, AICP, Senior Planner

**Reviewed By:**

Jeff Richardson, AICP, Deputy Director, Development Services

Mike Lane, AICP, Development Services Director

## ORDINANCE NUMBER 26-02

### AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA, VOLUNTARILY ANNEXING APPROXIMATELY 0.31 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY AT ALTERNATE KEY NUMBER 1197309, LOCATED AT 77 WEST SEMINOLE AVENUE.

**WHEREAS**, Robert and Jaymati Weaver, the legal owners of record, have made an application for voluntary annexation of approximately 0.31 acres of real property located at 77 West Seminole Avenue, more particularly described as:

Parcel Alternate Keys: 1197309

Parcel Identification Number: 14-19-26-1500-009-01900

Legal Description:

LYNNHURST LOTS 19, 20 BLK 9 PB 8 PG 50 ORB 2299 PG 1143 ORB 3475 PG 1797  
ORB 4938 PG 1534

(The foregoing legal description was created via optical character recognition from the applicant's PDF submittal and has not been verified for accuracy); and

**WHEREAS**, the subject property is reasonably compact and contiguous; and

**WHEREAS**, the annexation of this property will not result in the creation of enclaves; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject property is located within the City of Eustis Planning Area, and water service is available to the property; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 22, 2026, the City Commission held the 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing to consider the voluntary annexation of the property contained herein; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 5, 2026, the City Commission held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing to consider the voluntary annexation of the property contained herein;

### NOW, THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS HEREBY ORDAINS:

#### SECTION 1.

That pursuant to, and under the authority of, Florida Statute 171.044, the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida, does hereby annex and amend the municipal boundaries to include approximately 0.31 acres of real property, as described above.

A map depicting the location of the annexed property described above is attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

**SECTION 2.**

That the Director of Development Services shall be authorized to amend the City of Eustis Boundary Map to incorporate the change described in Section 1.

**SECTION 3.**

That all Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**SECTION 4.**

That upon final passage and adoption, the City Clerk is hereby directed to file a copy hereof with the Clerk of the Circuit Court, the County Manager for Lake County, Florida, and the Department of State for the State of Florida within 7 days after the adoption of such ordinances.

**SECTION 5.**

That should any section, phrase, sentence, provision or portion of this Ordinance be declared by any court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof, other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

**SECTION 6.**

That this Ordinance shall become effective upon passage and adoption.

**SECTION 7.**

That the property annexed in this Ordinance is subject to the Future Land Use Element of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan until the City adopts the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to include the annexed parcel in the City Comprehensive Plan.

**PASSED, ORDAINED, AND APPROVED** in Regular Session of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.

**CITY COMMISSION OF THE  
CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA**

---

Emily A. Lee  
Mayor/Commissioner

**ATTEST:**

---

Christine Halloran, City Clerk

## **CITY OF EUSTIS CERTIFICATION**

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF LAKE**

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged, by means of physical presence, before me this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026, by Emily A. Lee, Mayor/Commissioner, and Christine Halloran, City Clerk, who are personally known to me.

Notary Public - State of Florida  
My Commission Expires:  
Notary Serial No:

## **CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

This document is approved as to form and legal content, but I have not performed an independent Title examination as to the accuracy of the Legal Description.

City Attorney's Office Date

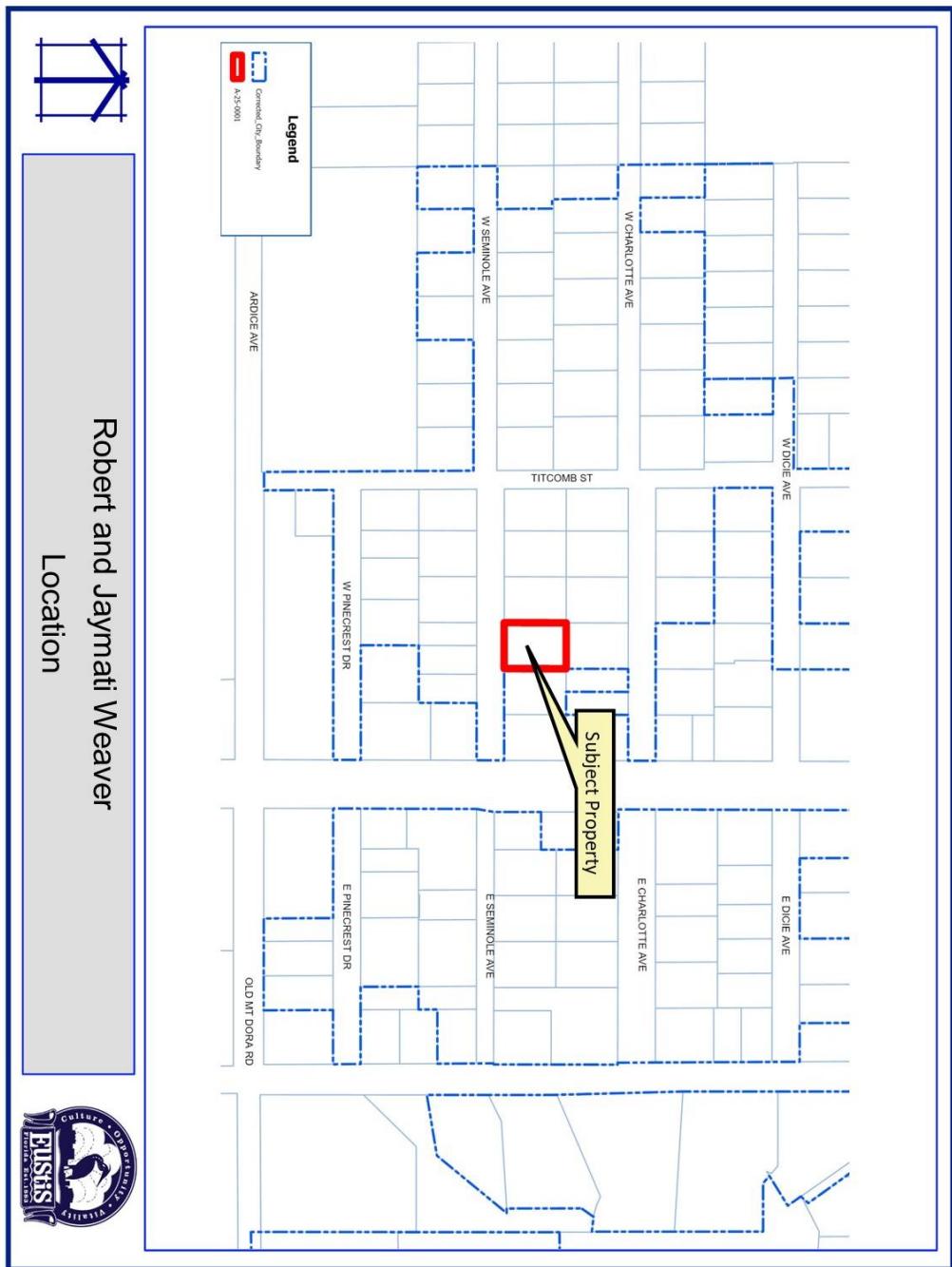
## **CERTIFICATE OF POSTING**

The foregoing Ordinance Number 26-02 is hereby approved, and I certify that I published the same by posting one copy hereof at City Hall, one copy hereof at the Eustis Memorial Library, and one copy hereof at the Eustis Parks and Recreation Office, all within the corporate limits of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida.

## Christine Halloran, City Clerk

# EXHIBIT A

## GENERAL LOCATION MAP



## Analysis of Comprehensive Plan/Future Land Use Request (Ordinance Number 26-03)

In Accordance with Florida Statutes Chapter 163.3177.9.:

### *Discourage Urban Sprawl: Primary Indicators of Sprawl:*

The future land use element and any amendment to the future land use element shall discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl. The primary indicators that a plan or plan amendment does not discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl are listed below. The evaluation of the presence of these indicators shall consist of an analysis of the plan or plan amendment within the context of features and characteristics unique to each locality in order to determine whether the plan or plan amendment:

#### Review of Indicators

##### 1. Low Intensity Development:

Promotes, allows, or designates for development substantial areas of the jurisdiction to develop as low-intensity, low-density, or single-use development or uses.

***The subject property is located within the Joint Planning Area. Urban services with adequate capacity are available to serve future development, consistent with the requested RT Future Land Use designation.***

##### 2. Urban Development in Rural Areas:

Promotes, allows, or designates significant amounts of urban development to occur in rural areas at substantial distances from existing urban areas while not using undeveloped lands that are available and suitable for development.

***This indicator does not apply. The subject property is located in a corridor with a mixture of uses, including RT designations and residential uses surrounding the property.***

##### 3. Strip or Isolated Development:

Promotes, allows, or designates urban development in radial, strip, isolated, or ribbon patterns generally emanating from existing urban developments.

***This indicator does not apply. The site is surrounded by a mixture of uses; predominantly residential, but with RT and GC (General Commercial) land uses nearby. The proposed RT land use (and current use as a single-family residence) would serve as a buffer between these varied uses.***

##### 4. Natural Resources Protection:

Fails to adequately protect and conserve natural resources, such as wetlands, floodplains, native vegetation, environmentally sensitive areas, natural groundwater aquifer recharge areas, lakes, rivers, shorelines, beaches, bays, estuarine systems, and other significant natural systems.

***The subject property is not in a floodplain and does not contain wetland areas and is located in an urbanized area.***

## 5. Agricultural Area Protection:

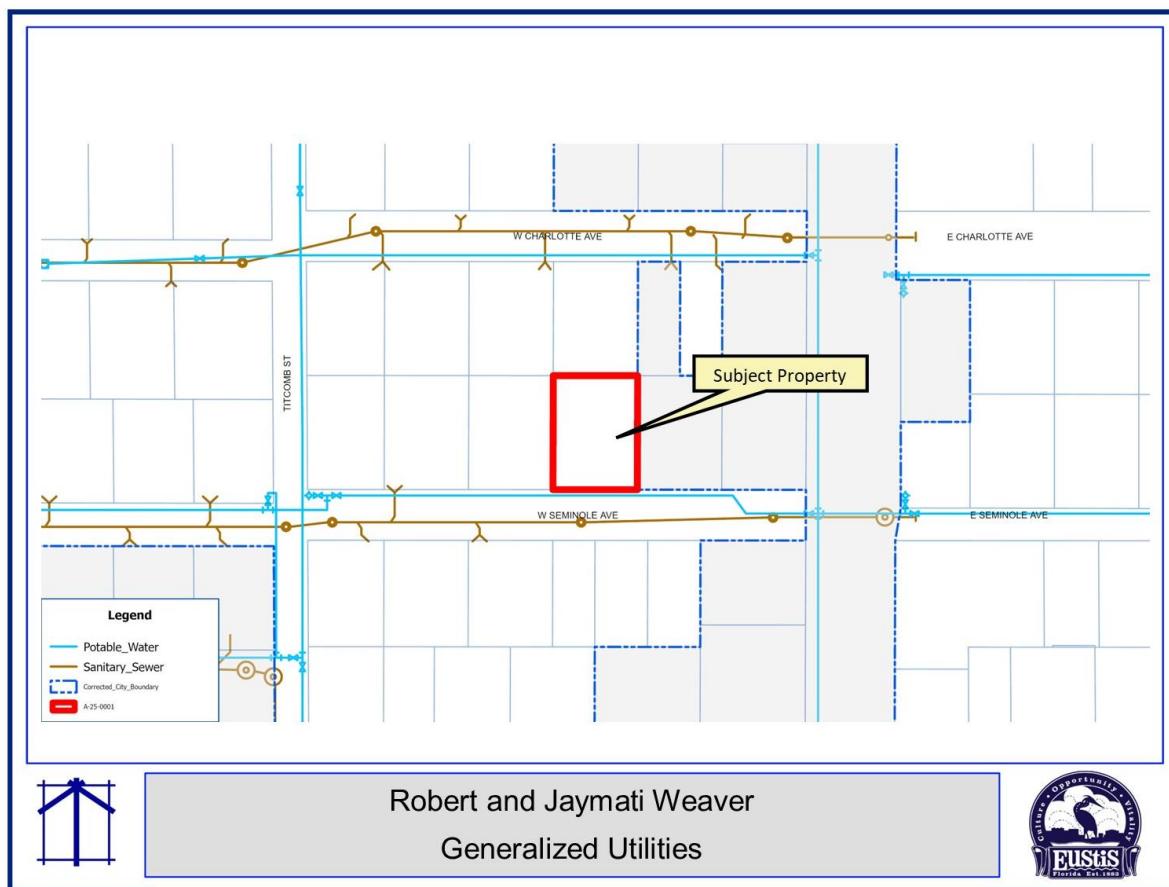
Fails to adequately protect adjacent agricultural areas and activities, including silviculture, active agricultural and silvicultural activities, passive agricultural activities, and dormant, unique, and prime farmlands and soils.

***This indicator does not apply. The site and surrounding areas do not include active agricultural or silviculture operations. The location lies within a developed area that is currently developed.***

## 6. Public Facilities:

Fails to maximize use of existing public facilities and services.

***This indicator is not applicable as city water and sewer is available to the property. Development of this parcel will maximize the use and efficiency of City water service. The property is seeking annexation into the City to utilize city water and sewer services.***



## 7. Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency of Public Facilities:

Allows for land use patterns or timing that disproportionately increase the cost in time, money, and energy of providing and maintaining facilities and services, including roads, potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater management, law enforcement, education, health care, fire and emergency response, and general government.

***This indicator does not apply as there is adequate capacity to accommodate both existing and future development aligned with the requested RT future land designation. The city already provides these services to other properties within the area, which will further efficiency.***

8. Separation of Urban and Rural:

*Fails to provide a clear separation between rural and urban uses.*

***This indicator does not apply. No nearby properties contain active agricultural activities or uses. The surrounding area is either developed or has development entitlements, featuring a mix of suburban and rural densities and intensities. The mixed-use nature of the RT land use designation and the Urban Neighborhood Design District align well with the established development pattern. Environmental constraints on the site may pose challenges to meeting Comprehensive Plan policies for natural resource protection, but these will be addressed during the site plan review process.***

9. Infill and Redevelopment:

Discourages or inhibits infill development or the redevelopment of existing neighborhoods and communities.

***This indicator does not apply.***

Functional Mix of Uses:

Fails to encourage a functional mix of uses.

***This indicator does not apply. This property is surrounded by a mix of residential and non-residential uses, with RT designations located in the general vicinity of the site.***

10. Accessibility among Uses:

Results in poor accessibility among linked or related land uses.

***The site has strong accessibility and linkages to related land uses, including both residential and non-residential uses.***

11. Open Space:

Results in the loss of significant amounts of functional open space.

***This indicator does not apply. The site lacks functional open space and is not linked to regionally significant open space.***

12. Urban Sprawl:

The future land use element or plan amendment shall be determined to discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl if it incorporates a development pattern or urban form that achieves four or more of the following:

a. Direction of Growth:

Directs or locates economic growth and associated land development to geographic areas of the community in a manner that does not have an adverse impact on and protects natural resources and ecosystems.

***Not applicable. The site is adjacent to established urbanized areas.***

b. Efficient and Cost-Effective Services:

Promotes the efficient and cost-effective provision or extension of public infrastructure and services.

***Water and sewer service is available.***

c. Walkable and Connected Communities:

Promotes walkable and connected communities and provides for compact development and a mix of uses at densities and intensities that will support a range of housing choices and a multimodal transportation system, including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit, if available.

***An existing sidewalk along the front of the property connects with an existing sidewalk system that promotes a walkable neighborhood and a connection to the community.***

d. Water and Energy Conservation:

Promotes the conservation of water and energy.

***At time of site development, the property must adhere to City development standards and Florida Building Code requirements, ensuring the use of energy and water-efficient appliances.***

e. Agricultural Preservation:

Preserves agricultural areas and activities, including silviculture, and dormant, unique, and prime farmlands and soils.

***Not applicable; this site and adjacent areas do not support active agricultural or silvicultural activities. The site is within an existing developed residential and non-residential area.***

f. Open Space:

Preserves open space and natural lands and provides for public open space and recreation needs.

***Not applicable. The site is currently developed in an urbanized area as a single-family residence.***

g. Balance of Land Uses:

Creates a balance of land uses based upon the demands of the residential population for the nonresidential needs of an area.

***The proposed land use allows for professional office and residential type uses, which serves as a transition from GC to the east and residential development to the west.***

h. Urban Form Densities and Intensities:

Provides uses, densities, and intensities of use and urban form that would remediate an existing or planned development pattern in the vicinity that constitutes sprawl, or if it provides for an innovative development pattern such as transit-oriented developments or new towns as defined in s. 163.3164.

**Not applicable.**

**In Accordance with the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element Appendix:**

All applications for a Plan amendment relating to the development patterns described and supported within the Plan including, but not limited to, site specific applications for changes in land use designations, are presumed to involve a legislative function of local government which, if approved, would be by legislative act of the City and shall, therefore, be evaluated based upon the numerous generally acceptable planning, timing, compatibility, and public facility considerations detailed or inferred in the policies of the Plan. Each application for an amendment to the Map #1: 2035 Future Land Use Map by changing the land use designation assigned to a parcel of property shall also be reviewed to determine and assess any significant impacts to the policy structure on the Comprehensive Plan of the proposed amendment including, but not limited to, the effect of the land use change on either the internal consistency or fiscal structure of the Plan.

**Major Categories of Plan Policies:**

This Plan amendment application review and evaluation process will be prepared and presented in a format consistent with the major categories of Plan policies as follows:

1. General Public Facilities/Services:

Since the Plan policies address the continuance, expansion and initiation of new government service and facility programs, including, but not limited to, capital facility construction, each application for a land use designation amendment shall include a description and evaluation of any Plan programs (such as the effect on the timing/financing of these programs) that will be affected by the amendment if approved. This analysis shall include the availability of, and actual and anticipated demand on, facilities and services serving or proposed to serve the subject property. The facilities and services required for analysis include emergency services, parks and recreation, potable water, public transportation if and when available, sanitary sewer, schools, solid waste, stormwater, and the transportation network.

a. Emergency Services Analysis:

***Eustis emergency services already provide emergency response to other properties in the area. Development in line with the RT Future Land use efficiency of Eustis emergency services.***

b. Parks & Recreation:

***Not applicable. The proposed RT Future Land Use to an existing single-family residential property will have negligible impacts on parks and recreation facilities. Existing parks and recreational opportunities exist to serve this property.***

c. Potable Water & Sanitary Sewer:

***Water and sewer are available to the subject property. Both water and sewer systems have adequate capacity to serve the site.***

d. Schools:

***The proposed RT request is an existing single-family residence; therefore, the change should not have a large impact on schools.***

e. Solid Waste:

***The City collaborates with Waste Management for solid waste collection, and the company already services the properties in the vicinity of the site. Providing service to this property will promote service delivery efficiency.***

f. Stormwater:

***The Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations include the level of service (LOS) standards to which new development must adhere. Projects designed to meet these standards will not negatively affect the existing facilities and services.***

g. Transportation Network Analysis:

***The existing single-family residential unit is expected to have no adverse effects on the existing transportation system. Currently, the adjacent transportation network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed RT property, even at full development standards.***

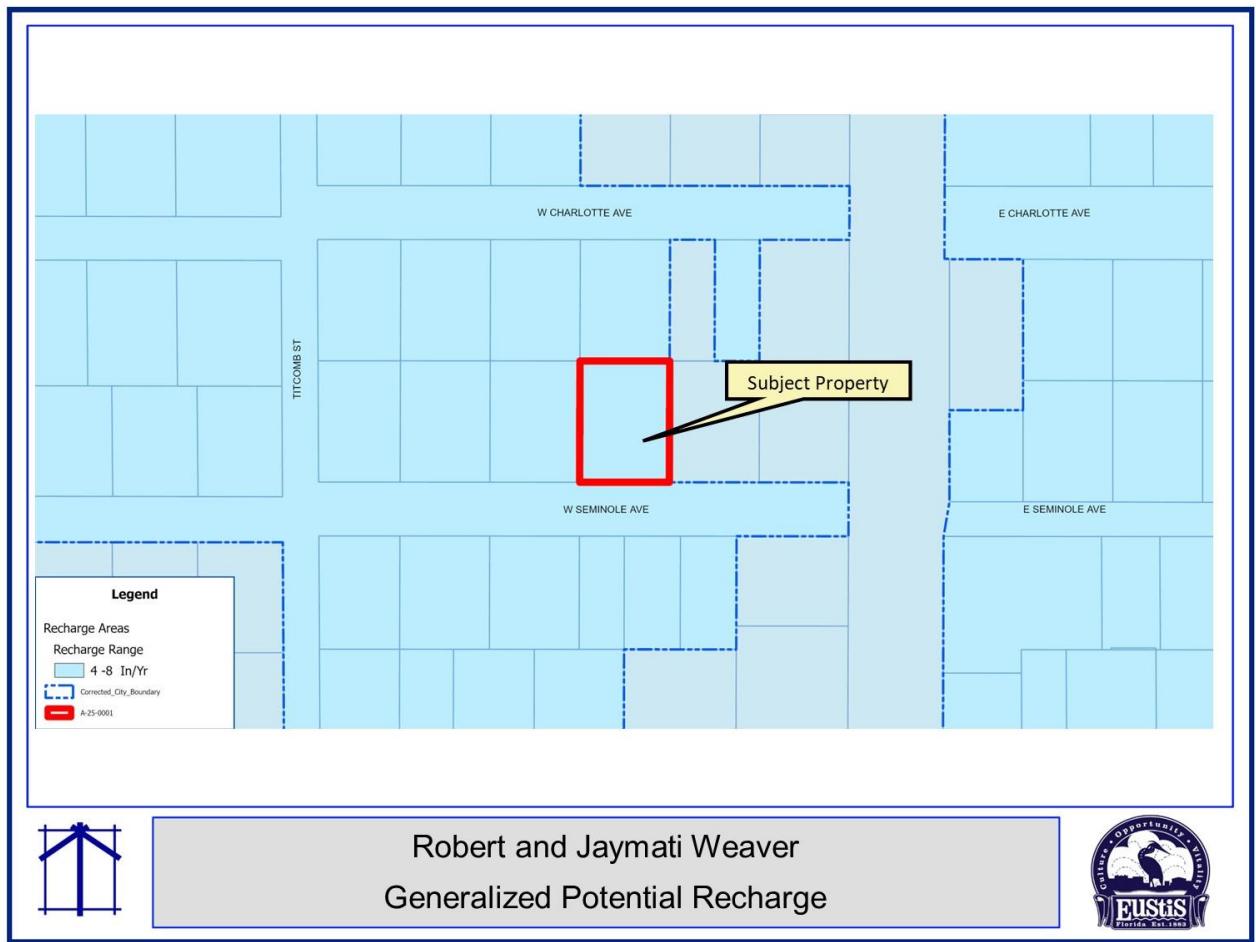
2. **Natural Resources/Natural Features:**

The policies of the Plan also contain general regulatory guidelines and requirements for managing growth and protecting the environment. These guidelines will be used to evaluate the overall consistency of the land use amendment with the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, each amendment will be evaluated to 1) determine the existence of groundwater recharge areas; 2) the existence of any historical or archaeological sites; 3) the location of flood zones and the demonstration that the land uses proposed in

flood-prone areas are suitable to the continued natural functioning of flood plains; and 4) the suitability of the soil and topography to the development proposed.

a. Groundwater recharge areas:

***The site may be within a recharge area; a site-specific geotechnical and hydrological study will be needed to determine the site-specific impact at the time of any redevelopment. Source: Lake County Comprehensive Plan 2030 Floridian Aquifer Recharge Map.***



b. Historical or archaeological sites:

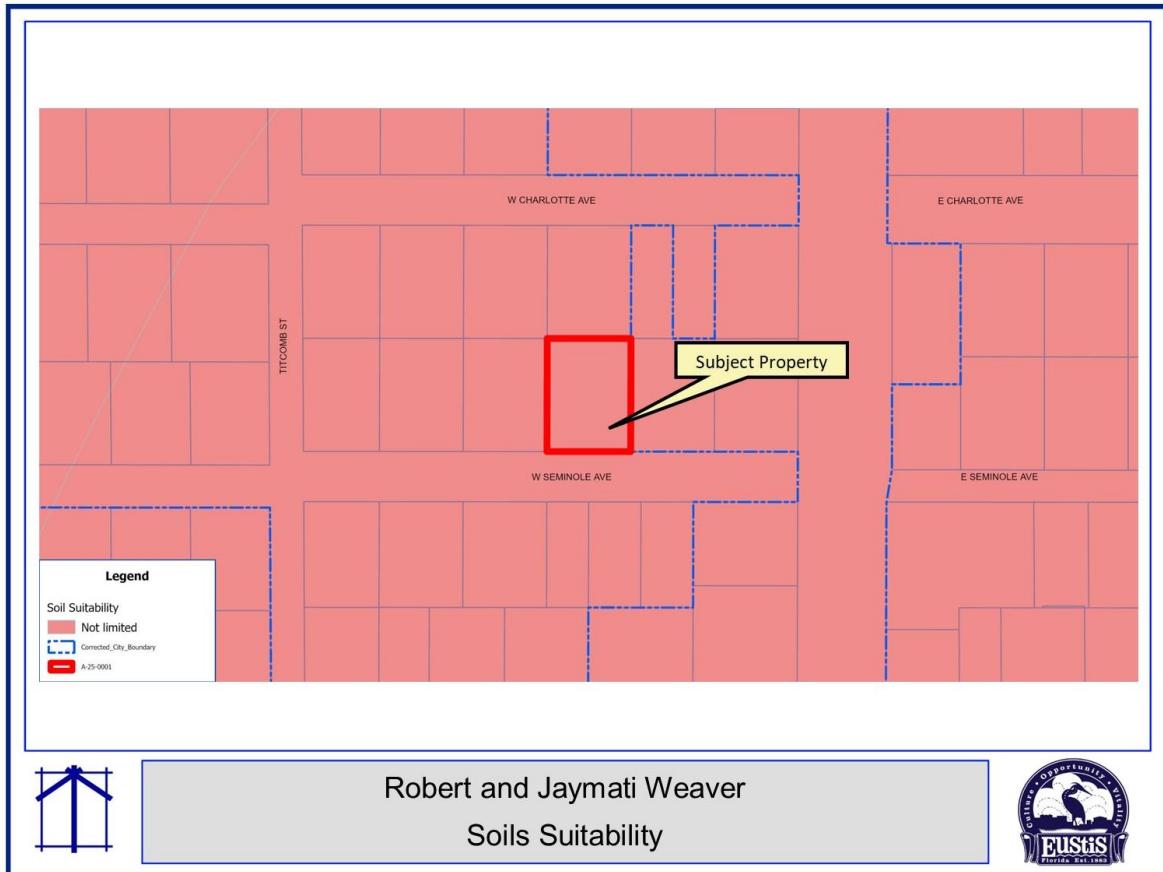
***The City does not have any record of Florida Master Site Files related to this property and no known historical or cultural resources exist.***

c. Flood zones:

***The subject property is not impacted by a 100-year flood zone area. Source - Lake County GIS - 2012 Flood Zones.***

d. Soil and topography:

***Soils appear to be suitable for development. The site is currently developed.***



### 3. Comprehensive Plan Review:

Additional criteria and standards are also included in the Plan that describe when, where and how development is to occur. Plan development policies will be used to evaluate the appropriateness of the compatibility of the use, intensity, location, and timing of the proposed amendment.

#### ***Existing Land Use According to the Lake County Comprehensive Plan:***

##### ***Policy I-1.3.2 Urban Low Density Future Land Use Category***

*The Urban Low Density Future Land Use Category provides for a range of residential development at a maximum density of four (4) dwelling units per net buildable acre in addition to civic, commercial, and office uses at an appropriate scale and intensity to serve this category. Limited light industrial uses may only be allowed as a conditional use, unless permitted as an Economic Development Overlay District use.*

*This category shall be located on or in proximity to collector or arterial roadways to minimize traffic on local streets and provide convenient access to transit facilities.*

*Within this category any residential development in excess of 10 dwelling units shall be required to provide a minimum 25% of the net buildable area of the entire site as common open space. The maximum intensity in this category shall be 0.25, except for civic uses and Economic Development Overlay District uses, which shall be 0.35. The maximum Impervious Surface Ratio shall be 0.60.*

**TYPICAL USES INCLUDE:**

- *Residential;*
- *Nursing and personal care facilities;*
- *Civic uses;*
- *Residential professional offices;*
- *Passive parks;*
- *Religious organizations;*
- *Day care services;*
- *Schools;*
- *Commerce uses, including: services, retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate as allowed pursuant to Policy I-1.3.10 Commercial Activities within the Urban Future Land Use Series; and*
- *Public order and safety; and*
- *Economic Development Overlay District Uses for properties included within the Economic Development Overlay District (Map 20, Future Land Use Map Series), and subject to Objective I-6.5.*

**TYPICAL USES REQUIRING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT:**

- *Active parks and recreation facilities;*
- *Light industrial such as manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation, communications, electric, gas and sanitary services shall require a conditional use permit, unless the proposed use is permitted as an Economic Development*

*Overlay District use. Light industrial conditional use activities are limited to those without off-site impacts and takes place primarily within an enclosed building;*

- *Animal specialty services;*
- *Mining and resource extraction;*
- *Hospitals; and*

Analysis of Design District Request (**Ordinance Number 26-04**):

Form-Based Code:

The City's Land Development Regulations are a form-based code. Design districts are unique to form-based codes. Lake County still uses traditional Euclidean zoning, so there are no design districts for parcels in unincorporated Lake County. When a parcel annexes into the City of Eustis, the City must assign a consistent design district that follows the urban, suburban and rural transect

1. *Standards for Review:*

The Land Development Regulations include the following standards for review of an amendment to the Design District Map. In approving a change in the designation, the City Commission shall consider: Whether the amendment is in conflict with any applicable provisions of the Code.

a. *Section 102-17(a) "...Section 109-3 Design Districts:*

identifies the definition, structure, and form of each design district. The assignment of design district must follow the district pattern and intent."

***The requested amendment assigns a newly annexed parcel a designation that meets the district pattern and intent (Urban Neighborhood). The Urban development pattern and intent, and the Urban Neighborhood definition, structure, and form description are stated below. The assignment of a Urban Neighborhood design district designation is appropriate due to the established and proposed development patterns in the area.***

b. *Sec. 109-5.3. Urban development pattern intent statements:*

*Intent. The urban development pattern relies primarily on a system of interconnected street grids that prioritizes pedestrians and transit features and links civic buildings, squares, parks and other neighborhood uses. Usable public open space organizes development to make a place. This pattern is characterized by a mix of building typologies with a defined center which can be a park, civic space or neighborhood commercial/retail feature.*

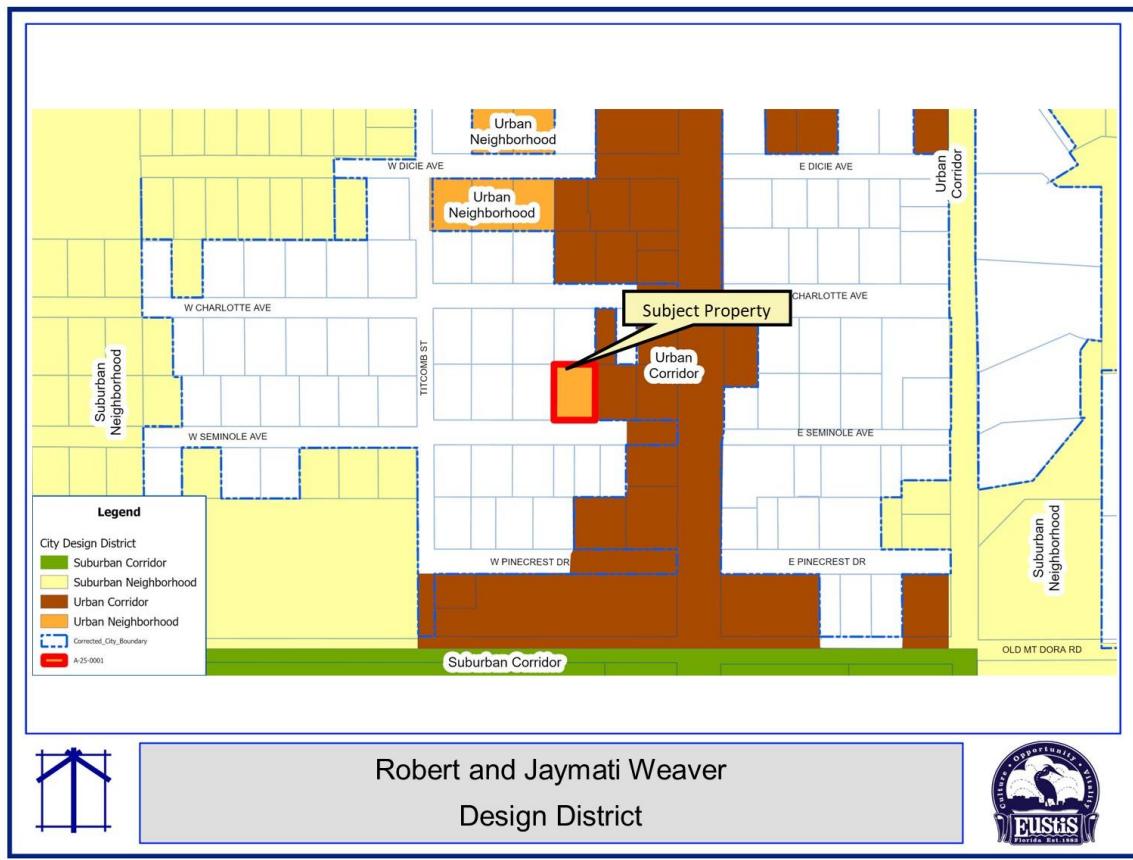
*Design districts – Urban Neighborhood*

a. *Definition. Predominately residential uses with some neighborhood scale commercial services.*

b. *Structure. Interconnected streets and blocks with alleys.*

c. Form. Mix of unit types with focus on “center” park, civic or neighborhood commercial/retail feature.

**The Urban development patterns statement above indicates that residential uses are primarily located on streets with more vehicle connections. An Urban Neighborhood designation follows the district pattern and intent outlined in the Land Development Regulations and is consistent with the existing transect in the area.**



### c. Section 102-17(a)

The following guidelines must be followed when proposing the reassignment of a design district:

Compatible intensities should face across streets. Changes in design districts should occur along rear alleys or lanes or along conservation edges.

**Reassignment is not being proposed; a Eustis design district designation must be assigned to annexed property; the proposed design district is compatible with the surrounding design districts.**

### d. Consistent with Comprehensive Plan:

Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with all elements of the comprehensive plan.

***The requested amendment is consistent with the Future Land Use element (including Policy FLU 1.2.4, Development Patterns, and FLU 1.3.2. Maintain Residential Compatibility), as well as all other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.***

***e. Consistent with Surrounding Uses:***

Whether, and the extent to which, the proposed design district is consistent with existing and proposed land uses.

***The Urban Neighborhood definition, structure, and form are compatible with the existing uses and any proposed uses permitted under the RT Future Land Use designation.***

***f. Changed Conditions:***

Whether there have been changed conditions that justify amending the design district.

***The subject property is proposed for annexation, and a design district assignment is necessary. The conditions have changed from land located in unincorporated Lake County without central services to a site within the City of Eustis with municipal services.***

***g. Public Facilities.***

Whether, and the extent to which, the proposed redistricting would result in demands on public facilities, and whether, or to the extent to which, the proposed change would exceed the capacity of such public facilities, including, but not limited to police, roads, sewage facilities, water supply, drainage, solid waste, parks and recreation, schools, and fire and emergency medical facilities.

***A redistricting is not proposed. Assigning a design district to an annexation property will not change the demand impact on public facilities. The Future Land Use designation controls the density and intensity permitted on the site, so the Design District map amendment would not result in impacts beyond that already anticipated. Also, see the analysis of public facilities in the above sections of this report.***

***h. Impact on Environment:***

Whether, and the extent to which, the redistricting would result in significant impacts on the natural environment.

***The proposed Design District designation for this property does not change the development potential of the parcel. Design Districts control the form and function of any development that does occur. The Future Land Use designation controls the density, intensity, and minimum open space permitted on the site, so the Design District amendment would not result in additional impacts on the natural environment. As building permit approval must be obtained before development can begin, the Comprehensive Plan and the Land***

***Development Regulations include standards for the protection of environmentally sensitive lands that would apply should conditions at the time of development warrant such protection.***

**i. Property Values:**

Whether, and the extent to which, the proposed redistricting would affect the property values in the area.

***Redistricting is not being proposed; a City of Eustis design district designation must be assigned to the annexed property. This request should not affect property values because the proposed Design District designation is consistent with the surrounding development patterns and design districts.***

**j. Orderly Development Pattern:**

Whether, and the extent to which, the proposed redistricting would result in an orderly and logical development pattern.

***The request is the assignment of a design district to an annexation parcel, not redistricting. However, the proposed Design District designation is consistent with the urban development pattern identified in Section 109-5.3 of the Land Development Regulations. Assignment of the requested designation will result in a more orderly and logical development pattern, making the designation consistent with the surrounding area designations and established development patterns.***

**k. Public Interest and Intent of Regulations:**

Whether the proposed redistricting would be in conflict with the public interest, and in harmony with the purpose and intent of these regulations.

***The request is the assignment of a design district to an annexation parcel, not redistricting. The proposed Design District is not in conflict with the public interest and reflects the purpose and intent of the regulations.***

**l. Other Matters:**

Any other matters that may be deemed appropriate by the city commission, in review and consideration of the proposed redistricting.

***The request is the assignment of a design district to an annexation parcel, not redistricting. The City's Land Development Regulations are a form-based code. The Design District designations define the development form, but not the types of land use, densities, intensities, or required open space. The districts, therefore, must be consistent and follow the urban, suburban, and rural transects. This request assigns an Urban Neighborhood design district designation to an annexation parcel, which is consistent with the existing transect.***

## Applicable Policies and Codes

### 1. Resolution Number 87-34

Joint Planning Area Agreement with Lake County: “The City and the County agree that the unincorporated areas adjacent to the City might be appropriately served by urban services provided by the City, and might therefore be annexed into the City in accordance with State law..... The City agrees to annex property in accordance with State law and provide adequate urban services and facilities to serve those areas within the Joint Planning Area.”

### 2. Florida Statues Chapter 171.044: Voluntary Annexation:

- a. “The owner or owners of real property in an unincorporated area of a county which is contiguous to a municipality and reasonably compact may petition the governing body of said municipality that said property be annexed to the municipality.”
- b. “Land shall not be annexed through voluntary annexation when such annexation results in the creation of enclaves.”

## Comprehensive Plan – *Residential Office Transition (RT)*

*This land use district applies to older residential areas having residential character, which are located adjacent to nonresidential development. The purpose is to provide for establishment of business and professional offices and limited retail and service business while maintaining residential character and compatibility.*

*General Range of Uses: This category accommodates a mix of residential and nonresidential uses, including but not limited to single-family detached and attached residential, duplex and accessory apartments, schools and churches, business and professional offices, and certain limited, neighborhood scale commercial.*

*Maximum Density: 12 units per acre.*

*Intensity Range: up to 2.5 FAR subject to restrictions in Section 109-3 of the Land Development Regulations.*

## **Business Impact Estimate Eligibility Form**

Section 166.041(4), Florida Statutes

*This form should be included in the agenda packet for the item under which the proposed ordinance is to be considered and must be posted on the City of Eustis' website by the time notice of the proposed ordinance is published.*

*This form simply assists in determining whether a Business Impact Estimate must be completed under Florida law for the proposed ordinance. Should a Business Impact Estimate be required or should the City opt to provide one as a courtesy based on the selection below then a separate form with the statutory components of Section 166.041(4)(a) shall also accompany the proposed ordinance.*

Ordinance Number	26-02
Ordinance Subject	A-25-0001
Legal Advertising Date	January 12, 2026
First Reading On	1/22/2026
Second Reading On	2/5/2026

### **Ordinance Title**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA,  
VOLUNTARILY ANNEXING APPROXIMATELY 0.31 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY  
AT ALTERNATE KEY NUMBER 1197309, LOCATED AT 77 WEST SEMINOLE  
AVENUE.**

**Based on the City's review of the proposed ordinance (must select one of the following):**

- The City has determined the statutory exemption identified below applies to the proposed ordinance; a Business Impact Estimate is NOT required and therefore not provided.
- The City has determined the statutory exemption identified below applies to the proposed ordinance; however, the City has prepared the Business Impact Estimate as a courtesy and to avoid any procedural issues that could impact the enactment of the proposed ordinance.
- The City has prepared a Business Impact Estimate in accordance with section 166.041(4), Florida Statutes.

### **Exemptions**

The City has determined that a Business Impact Estimate is NOT required as the following exemption applies to the proposed ordinance:

**Section 166.041 (4)(c) exemption:** It is enacted to implement comprehensive plan amendments and land development regulation amendments initiated by an application by a private party other than the municipality.

## ORDINANCE NUMBER 26-03

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF EUSTIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURSUANT TO 163.3187 F.S.; CHANGING THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF APPROXIMATELY 0.31 ACRES OF RECENTLY ANNEXED REAL PROPERTY AT ALTERNATE KEY NUMBERS 1197309, LOCATED AT 77 WEST SEMINOLE AVENUE, FROM URBAN LOW IN LAKE COUNTY TO RESIDENTIAL OFFICE TRANSITION IN THE CITY OF EUSTIS.**

**WHEREAS**, on November 4, 2010, the Eustis City Commission adopted the City of Eustis Comprehensive Plan 2010-2035 through Ordinance Number 10-11; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Florida FloridaCommerce found the City of Eustis Comprehensive Plan 2010-2035 in Compliance, pursuant to Sections 163.3184, 163.3187, and 163.3189 Florida Statutes; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Eustis periodically amends its Comprehensive Plan, in accordance with Chapters 163.3187 and 163.3191, Florida Statutes; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Eustis desires to amend the Future Land Use Map Series to change the Future Land Use designation on approximately 0.31 acres of real property located at 77 West Seminole Avenue (Alternate Key Number 1197309), and more particularly described herein and as shown in Exhibit "A"; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 22, 2026, the Local Planning Agency held a Public Hearing to consider the adoption of a Small-Scale Future Land Use Amendment for this change in the designation; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 22, 2026, the City Commission held the 1<sup>st</sup> Adoption Public Hearing to accept the Local Planning Agency's recommendation to adopt the Small-Scale Future Land Use Amendment contained herein; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 5, 2026, the City Commission held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adoption Public Hearing to consider the adoption of the Small-Scale Future Land Use Amendment contained herein as Exhibit "A";

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS HEREBY ORDAINS:**

### **SECTION 1.**

**Land Use Designation:** That the Future Land Use Designation of the real property as described below shall be changed from Urban Low in Lake County to Residential Office Transition (RT) within the City of Eustis:

Parcel Alternate Keys: 1197309

Parcel Identification Numbers: 14-19-26-1500-009-01900

Legal Description:

LYNNHURST LOTS 19, 20 BLK 9 PB 8 PG 50 ORB 2299 PG 1143 ORB 3475 PG 1797 ORB 4938 PG 1534

(The foregoing legal description was created via optical character recognition from the applicant's PDF submittal and has not been verified for accuracy); and

## **SECTION 2.**

**Map Amendment and Notification:** That the Director of Development Services shall be authorized to amend the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the change described in Section 1 and provide appropriate notification in accordance with Florida Statutes.

## **SECTION 3.**

**Conflict:** That all Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

## **SECTION 4.**

**Severability:** That should any section, phrase, sentence, provision, or portion of this Ordinance be declared by any court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof, other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

## **SECTION 5.**

**Effective Date:** The effective date of this plan amendment, if the amendment is not timely challenged, shall be 31 days after the FloridaCommerce notifies the local government that the plan amendment package is complete. If timely challenged, this amendment shall become effective on the date FloridaCommerce or the Administration Commission enters a final order determining this adopted amendment to be compliant. No development orders, development permits, or land uses dependent on this amendment may be issued or commence before it has become effective. If a final order of noncompliance is issued by the Administration Commission, this amendment may nevertheless be made effective by the adoption of a resolution affirming its effective status, a copy of which resolution shall be sent to FloridaCommerce.

**PASSED, ORDAINED AND APPROVED** in Regular Session of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.

**CITY COMMISSION OF THE  
CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA**

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Emily A. Lee  
Mayor/Commissioner

**ATTEST:**

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Christine Halloran, City Clerk

**CITY OF EUSTIS CERTIFICATION**

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF LAKE**

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me, by means of physical presence, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026, by Emily A. Lee, Mayor/Commissioner, and Christine Halloran, City Clerk, who are personally known to me.

---

Notary Public - State of Florida  
My Commission Expires:  
Notary Serial No:

**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

This document is approved as to form and legal content, but I have not performed an independent Title examination as to the accuracy of the Legal Description.

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City Attorney's Office

Date

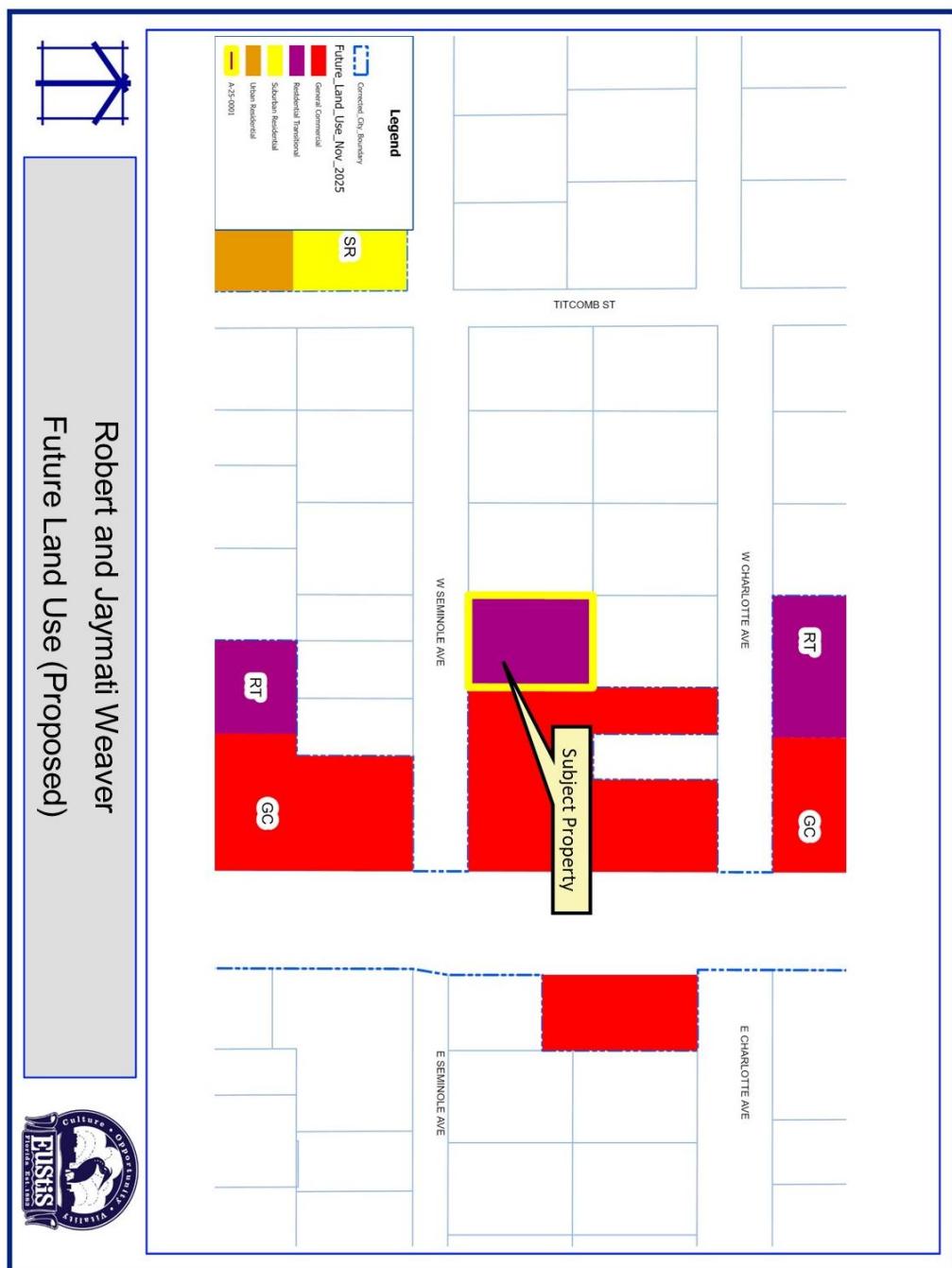
**CERTIFICATE OF POSTING**

The foregoing Ordinance Number 26-03 is hereby approved, and I certify that I published the same by posting one copy hereof at City Hall, one copy hereof at the Eustis Memorial Library, and one copy hereof at the Eustis Parks and Recreation Office, all within the corporate limits of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida.

---

Christine Halloran, City Clerk

## EXHIBIT A



## **Business Impact Estimate Eligibility Form**

Section 166.041(4), Florida Statutes

*This form should be included in the agenda packet for the item under which the proposed ordinance is to be considered and must be posted on the City of Eustis' website by the time notice of the proposed ordinance is published.*

*This form simply assists in determining whether a Business Impact Estimate must be completed under Florida law for the proposed ordinance. Should a Business Impact Estimate be required or should the City opt to provide one as a courtesy based on the selection below then a separate form with the statutory components of Section 166.041(4)(a) shall also accompany the proposed ordinance.*

Ordinance Number	26-03
Ordinance Subject	Assignment of Future Land Use for Recently Annexed Property – A-25-0001
Legal Advertising Date	January 12, 2026
First Reading On	1/22/2026
Second Reading On	2/5/2026

### **Ordinance Title**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF EUSTIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURSUANT TO 163.3187 F.S.; CHANGING THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF APPROXIMATELY 0.31 ACRES OF RECENTLY ANNEXED REAL PROPERTY AT ALTERNATE KEY NUMBERS 1197309, LOCATED AT 77 WEST SEMINOLE AVENUE, FROM URBAN LOW IN LAKE COUNTY TO RESIDENTIAL OFFICE TRANSITION IN THE CITY OF EUSTIS.**

**Based on the City's review of the proposed ordinance (must select one of the following):**

- The City has determined the statutory exemption identified below applies to the proposed ordinance; a Business Impact Estimate is NOT required and therefore not provided.
- The City has determined the statutory exemption identified below applies to the proposed ordinance; however, the City has prepared the Business Impact Estimate as a courtesy and to avoid any procedural issues that could impact the enactment of the proposed ordinance.
- The City has prepared a Business Impact Estimate in accordance with section 166.041(4), Florida Statutes.

### **Exemptions**

The City has determined that a Business Impact Estimate is NOT required as the following exemption applies to the proposed ordinance:

**Section 166.041 (4)(c) exemption:** It is enacted to implement comprehensive plan amendments and land development regulation amendments initiated by an application by a private party other than the municipality.



## ORDINANCE NUMBER 26-04

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS,  
LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; ASSIGNING THE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD  
DESIGN DISTRICT DESIGNATION TO APPROXIMATELY 0.31 ACRES OF  
RECENTLY ANNEXED REAL PROPERTY AT ALTERNATE KEY  
NUMBER 1197309, 77 WEST SEMINOLE AVENUE.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Eustis desires to amend the Design District Map of the Land Development Regulations adopted under Ordinance Number 09-33 to assign a Design District designation of Urban Neighborhood to approximately 0.31 acres of the recently annexed real property, further described below,

**WHEREAS**, on January 22, 2026, the City Commission held the 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing to consider the Design District Amendment contained herein; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 5, 2026, the City Commission held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing to consider the adoption of the Design District Amendment contained herein;

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA,  
HEREBY ORDAINS:**

**Section 1. Design District Designation**

That the Design District Designation of the real property described below, and shown in Exhibit "A", shall be Urban Neighborhood:

Parcel Alternate Key: 1197309

Parcel Identification Number: 14-19-26-1500-009-01900

Legal Description:

LYNNHURST LOTS 19, 20 BLK 9 PB 8 PG 50 ORB 2299 PG 1143 ORB 3475 PG 1797 ORB 4938 PG 1534

***(The foregoing legal descriptions for the parcel are from the Lake County Property Appraiser webpage based on the alternate key numbers provided by the applicant. They have not been verified for accuracy)***

**Section 2. Map Amendment**

That the Director of Development Services shall be authorized to amend the Design District Map to incorporate the change described in Section 1.

**Section 3. Conflict**

That all Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

**Section 4. Severability**

That should any section, phrase, sentence, provision, or portion of this Ordinance be declared by any court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole, or any part thereof, other than the part so declared to be unconstitutional or invalid.

**Section 5. Effective Date**

That this Ordinance shall become effective upon the annexation of the subject property through approval of Ordinance Number 26-04.

**PASSED, ORDAINED AND APPROVED** in Regular Session of the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026.

**CITY COMMISSION OF THE  
CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA**

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Emily A. Lee  
Mayor/Commissioner

**ATTEST:**

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Christine Halloran, City Clerk

**CITY OF EUSTIS CERTIFICATION**

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF LAKE**

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 5<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026, by Emily A. Lee, Mayor/Commissioner, and Christine Halloran, City Clerk, who are personally known to me.

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Notary Public - State of Florida  
My Commission Expires:  
Notary Serial No:

**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

This document is approved as to form and legal content, but I have not performed an independent Title examination as to the accuracy of the Legal Description.

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City Attorney's Office

Date

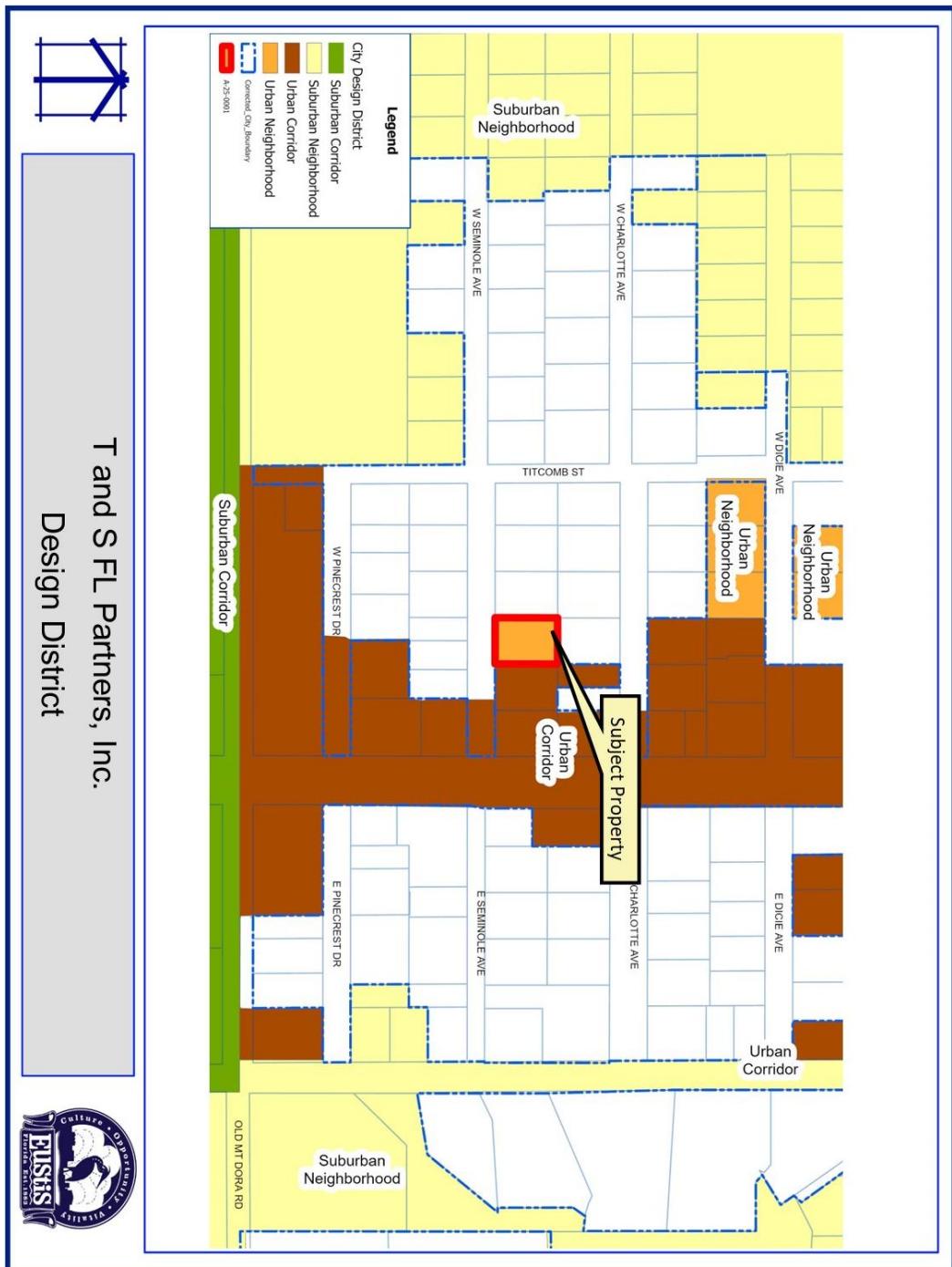
**CERTIFICATE OF POSTING**

The foregoing Ordinance Number 26-04 is hereby approved, and I certify that I published the same by posting one copy hereof at City Hall, one copy hereof at the Eustis Memorial Library, and one copy hereof at the Eustis Parks and Recreation Office, all within the corporate limits of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida.

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Christine Halloran, City Clerk

## EXHIBIT A



## **Business Impact Estimate Eligibility Form**

Section 166.041(4), Florida Statutes

*This form should be included in the agenda packet for the item under which the proposed ordinance is to be considered and must be posted on the City of Eustis' website by the time notice of the proposed ordinance is published.*

*This form simply assists in determining whether a Business Impact Estimate must be completed under Florida law for the proposed ordinance. Should a Business Impact Estimate be required or should the City opt to provide one as a courtesy based on the selection below then a separate form with the statutory components of Section 166.041(4)(a) shall also accompany the proposed ordinance.*

Ordinance Number	26-04
Ordinance Subject	Assignment of Design District for Recently Annexed Property A-25-0001
Legal Advertising Date	January 12, 2026
First Reading On	1/22/2026
Second Reading On	2/5/2026

### **Ordinance Title**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS, LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; ASSIGNING THE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN DISTRICT DESIGNATION TO APPROXIMATELY 0.31 ACRES OF RECENTLY ANNEXED REAL PROPERTY AT ALTERNATE KEY NUMBER 1197309, 77 WEST SEMINOLE AVENUE.**

**Based on the City's review of the proposed ordinance (*must select one of the following*):**

- The City has determined the statutory exemption identified below applies to the proposed ordinance; a Business Impact Estimate is NOT required and therefore not provided.
- The City has determined the statutory exemption identified below applies to the proposed ordinance; however, the City has prepared the Business Impact Estimate as a courtesy and to avoid any procedural issues that could impact the enactment of the proposed ordinance.
- The City has prepared a Business Impact Estimate in accordance with section 166.041(4), Florida Statutes.

### **Exemptions**

The City has determined that a Business Impact Estimate is NOT required as the following exemption applies to the proposed ordinance:

**Section 166.041 (4)(c) exemption:** It is enacted to implement comprehensive plan amendments and land development regulation amendments initiated by an application by a private party other than the municipality.





# City of Eustis

P.O. Drawer 68 • Eustis, Florida 32727-0068 • (352) 483-5430

TO: EUSTIS CITY COMMISSION

FROM: Tom Carrino, City Manager

DATE: February 5, 2026

RE: **FIRST READING**

Ordinance Number 26-05: Burger King Restaurant New Noncompliant Pylon Sign – SR 19 N

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**Case Number:** 2026-CUP-001

**Project Name:** SR19N Burger King Pylon Sign

**Application Type:** Conditional Sign Permit

**Applicant:** Eddie Alvarez, Adiser Orlando, LLC

**Property Owner:** Burger King Company LLC

**Location:** Outparcel of Publix at SR 19 & CR 44

**Parcel ID:** 35-18-26-0003-000-06500

**Alternate Key:** 3800866

**Future Land Use:** General Commercial (GC)

**Design District:** Suburban Corridor (SC)

## I. INTRODUCTION

The applicant requests approval of a Conditional Sign Permit to allow an existing pylon sign to remain at a height of 30 feet, exceeding the 15-foot maximum permitted for freestanding signs within the Suburban Corridor Design District under LDR §115-11.2(b)(4).

The sign was installed by a contractor without a permit, resulting in a Code Enforcement case and issuance of a Notice of Violation and Order to Correct (Violation ID 2501171). The sign currently stands at approximately 42 feet. The applicant proposes to reduce the height to 30 feet to bring the structure closer to compliance while maintaining visibility along SR 19.

In addition to height, the sign copy area is noncompliant. The existing sign cabinet measures approximately nine feet ten inches (9 ft. 10 in.) by nine feet (9 ft.), totaling approximately 88.88 square feet, exceeding the 50-square-foot maximum allowed for a single-tenant freestanding sign. This deviation requires City Commission approval under the Conditional Sign Permit process.

## II. BACKGROUND

The Burger King restaurant recently underwent a major renovation, with the owner investing approximately \$1.25 million at this location.

A sign contractor installed a new sign cabinet on top of an existing pole without obtaining a City sign permit, triggering enforcement under LDR §102-5 (Work Without Permit). As part of this enforcement action, Code Enforcement issued a Notice of Violation and Order to Correct (Violation ID 2501171), requiring the owner to bring the sign into compliance through permitting or approved deviations.

The Suburban Corridor Design District limits freestanding sign height to 15 feet (LDR §115-11.2(b)(4) to maintain corridor character and reduce visual clutter.

The sign cabinet installed without a permit measures approximately 88.88 square feet, exceeding the 50 square foot maximum copy area permitted for single-tenant freestanding signs. This noncompliant copy area must be reviewed and approved through the Conditional Sign Permit process.

The applicant states that lowering the sign to 15 feet or reducing the cabinet to 50 square feet would require full pole and cabinet replacement and significant cost but is willing to reduce the height to 30 feet.

### **III. DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST**

The applicant seeks approval of a Conditional Sign Permit under LDR §115-11.2(b)(4) to:

- Retain the existing pylon sign structure.
- Reduce its height from 42 feet to 30 feet.
- Allow a deviation from the 15-foot maximum height required in the Suburban Corridor Design District.
- Allow a deviation from the 50-square-foot maximum copy area requirement to retain the existing 88.88-square-foot sign cabinet.

No other site or building changes are proposed.

### **IV. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS**

#### **1. Suburban Corridor Design District Sign Standards:**

##### **LDR §115-11.2(b)(4)**

- Maximum freestanding sign height: 15 feet
- Maximum copy area for a single-tenant freestanding sign: 50 square feet
- Emphasis on reduced scale, corridor character, and visual consistency

#### **2. Conditional Sign Permit Criteria**

##### **LDR §115-11.5**

- Allows deviations from sign standards when unique site conditions, visibility needs, or public benefit justify relief
- Requires demonstration that the deviation will not create adverse aesthetic, safety, or corridor character impacts
- Requires that the deviation is the minimum necessary to address the hardship or condition

#### **3. Enforcement & Compliance**

##### **LDR §102-5 – Work Without Permit**

- Requires correction of unpermitted work
- Allows compliance pathways through permitting or approved deviations
- Notice of Violation and Order to Correct issued as Violation ID 2501171

## V. STAFF ANALYSIS

### A. Sign Height and Corridor Character

The Suburban Corridor Design District's 15-foot height limit is intended to create a cohesive, pedestrian-scaled visual environment. A 30-foot sign exceeds this standard but represents a significant reduction from the current 42-foot height.

### B. Existing Conditions

- The sign pole predates the recent renovation.
- The new sign cabinet was installed without a permit, triggering enforcement under LDR §102-5.
- Code Enforcement issued a Notice of Violation and Order to Correct (Violation ID 2501171), which remains active until the sign is brought into compliance.
- Lowering the sign to 15 feet would require full pole replacement.

### C. Visibility Considerations

SR 19 is a high-speed arterial roadway. A 30-foot sign may improve visibility for motorists while still reducing the current noncompliant height.

### D. Sign Copy Area

The existing nine-foot-ten-inch by nine-foot sign cabinet contains approximately 88.88 square feet of copy area, significantly exceeding the 50-square-foot limit. Reducing the cabinet to 50 square feet would require full replacement of the sign structure. The deviation must therefore be reviewed and approved by the City Commission as part of this Conditional Sign Permit.

### E. Precedent and Consistency

Approval should be conditioned to avoid creating precedent for excessive sign heights or oversized copy areas along the corridor. Limiting the approval to the existing pole and cabinet structure is appropriate.

### F. Public Impact

No residential properties are adjacent. The sign faces commercial traffic along SR 19.

## VI. FINDINGS

- The request seeks to correct an unpermitted installation under LDR §102-5.
- A Notice of Violation and Order to Correct (Violation ID 2501171) was issued by Code Enforcement and remains unresolved pending Commission action.
- The proposed 30-foot height exceeds the 15-foot maximum in LDR §115-11.2(b)(4) but is substantially lower than the existing 42-foot height.
- The existing sign copy area of 88.88 square feet exceeds the 50-square-foot maximum allowed under LDR §115-11.2(b)(4), requiring approval through the Conditional Sign Permit.
- The applicant has demonstrated unique structural and cost-related conditions.
- The deviations are unlikely to create adverse impacts on corridor aesthetics or public safety.
- Approval would resolve the active Code Enforcement case.

- The request meets the intent of LDR §115-11.5 for Conditional Sign Permits when conditioned appropriately.

Item 6.4

## VII. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends **APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS** of the Conditional Sign Permit to allow a 30-foot pylon sign and an 88.88-square-foot sign cabinet, subject to the following:

1. The sign shall be reduced to a maximum height of 30 feet, measured from finished grade to the top of the sign cabinet.
2. The existing sign cabinet measuring approximately 88.88 square feet is acknowledged as a deviation from the 50-square-foot maximum copy area. Approval includes authorization of this deviation for the existing cabinet only.
3. No further height increases, cabinet enlargements, or structural extensions are permitted.
4. All required sign permits must be obtained prior to any additional work.
5. This approval applies only to the existing pole and cabinet structure and is not transferable to a new or relocated sign.
6. All Code Enforcement violations associated with Violation ID 2501171 must be resolved prior to issuance of a final sign permit.

## VIII. ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the request as submitted.
2. Approve with modified conditions.
3. Deny the request, requiring full compliance with the 15-foot maximum.
4. Continue the item to a date certain.

## IX. BUDGET / STAFF IMPACT

No direct budget impact. Staff time is covered by application fees.

## X. BUSINESS IMPACT ESTIMATE

The applicant reports over \$2.5 million invested in recent Eustis renovations, including \$1.25 million at this location. Allowing a 30-foot sign and the existing cabinet size may support visibility and business operations while resolving a compliance issue.

**Prepared By:** Mike Lane, Development Services

## ORDINANCE NUMBER 26-05

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA, APPROVING A CONDITIONAL SIGN PERMIT FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT THE OUTPARCEL OF THE PUBlix SHOPPING CENTER AT SR 19 AND CR 44 (BURGER KING #13907); ALLOWING A FREESTANDING PYLON SIGN WITH A MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF THIRTY (30) FEET AND A SIGN CABINET WITH A COPY AREA OF EIGHTY-EIGHT POINT EIGHTY-EIGHT (88.88) SQUARE FEET; PROVIDING FOR CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**WHEREAS**, Burger King Company LLC is the fee simple owner of the property located at the outparcel of the Publix Shopping Center at SR 19 and CR 44, identified by Parcel ID 35-18-26-0003-000-06500 and Alternate Key 3800866; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant, Eddie Alvarez of Adiser Orlando, LLC, submitted an application for a Conditional Sign Permit pursuant to LDR §115-11.5 to allow deviations from the Suburban Corridor Design District sign standards for an existing freestanding pylon sign; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's Land Development Regulations, specifically LDR §115-11.2(b)(4), limit freestanding sign height within the Suburban Corridor Design District to fifteen (15) feet and limit copy area for a single-tenant freestanding sign to fifty (50) square feet; and

**WHEREAS**, a sign contractor installed a new sign cabinet measuring approximately nine feet ten inches (9 ft 10 in) by nine feet (9 ft), totaling approximately eighty-eight point eighty-eight (88.88) square feet, on an existing pole without obtaining a City sign permit, resulting in a Code Enforcement case and issuance of a Notice of Violation and Order to Correct (Violation ID 2501171) pursuant to LDR §102-5 (Work Without Permit); and

**WHEREAS**, the existing sign height is approximately forty-two (42) feet, and the applicant proposes to reduce the height to thirty (30) feet, representing a substantial reduction and bringing the sign closer to compliance while addressing visibility needs along SR 19; and

**WHEREAS**, the applicant further requests approval to retain the existing 88.88-square-foot sign cabinet, which exceeds the maximum copy area permitted under LDR §115-11.2(b)(4); and

**WHEREAS**, LDR §115-11.5 authorizes the City Commission to approve deviations from sign standards when unique site conditions, structural limitations, or visibility needs justify relief and when such deviations will not create adverse aesthetic, safety, or corridor character impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Commission finds that the existing pole structure and cabinet configuration present unique conditions, that the requested deviations represent the minimum necessary to address those conditions, and that approval will resolve an active Code Enforcement case; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Commission further finds that the request, with conditions, is consistent with the intent of the Land Development Regulations and is in the best interest of the public health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Eustis.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA:**

**SECTION 1. APPROVAL.**

The Conditional Sign Permit for the property located at the outparcel of the Publix Shopping Center at SR 19 and CR 44 (Burger King #13907), Case Number 2026-CUP-001, is hereby APPROVED, allowing a freestanding pylon sign with a maximum height of thirty (30) feet and a sign cabinet with a copy area of eighty-eight point eighty-eight (88.88) square feet, subject to the conditions set forth in Section 2.

**SECTION 2. CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL.**

**1. Maximum Height.** The freestanding pylon sign shall be reduced to a maximum height of thirty (30) feet, measured from finished grade to the top of the sign cabinet.

**2. Copy Area Deviation.** The existing sign cabinet, measuring approximately eighty-eight point eighty-eight (88.88) square feet, is approved as a deviation from the fifty (50)-square-foot maximum permitted under LDR §115-11.2(b)(4). This approval applies only to the existing cabinet and does not authorize enlargement, replacement with a larger cabinet, or installation of additional sign faces.

**3. No Additional Modifications.** No additional height increases, structural extensions, or cabinet enlargements shall be permitted.

**4. Permitting Requirements.** All required sign permits must be obtained prior to any additional work on the sign.

**5. Applicability.** This approval applies only to the existing pole and cabinet structure and is not transferable to a new or relocated sign.

**6. Code Enforcement Compliance.** All Code Enforcement violations associated with Violation ID 2501171 shall be resolved prior to issuance of a final sign permit.

**7. Compliance with Codes.** All work shall comply with the City of Eustis Land Development Regulations and the Florida Building Code.

### **SECTION 3. CONFLICTS.**

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

### **SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY.**

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is held invalid, the remainder shall continue in full force and effect.

### **SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026, by the City Commission of the City of Eustis, Florida.

**CITY COMMISSION OF THE  
CITY OF EUSTIS, FLORIDA**

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Emily A. Lee  
Mayor/Commissioner

**ATTEST:**

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Christine Halloran, City Clerk

#### **CITY OF EUSTIS CERTIFICATION**

**STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF LAKE**

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me, by means of physical presence, this 19th day of February, 2026, by Emily A. Lee, Mayor/Commissioner, and Christine Halloran, City Clerk, who are personally known to me.

---

Notary Public - State of Florida  
My Commission Expires:  
Notary Serial No:

**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

This document is approved as to form and legal content for the use and reliance of the Eustis City Commission, but I have not performed an independent title examination as to the accuracy of the legal description.

---

City Attorney's Office

Date

**CERTIFICATE OF POSTING**

The foregoing Ordinance Number 26-05 is hereby approved, and I certify that I published the same by posting one copy hereof at City Hall, one copy hereof at the Eustis Memorial Library, and one copy hereof at the Parks & Recreation Office, all within the corporate limits of the City of Eustis, Lake County, Florida.

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Christine Halloran, City Clerk

Date