



## **New neighborhoods slated for development near SR 207, I-95 interchange**

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As development rages throughout the northern and central parts of St. Johns County, the same thing is about to take hold in the southern region but on a smaller scale.

Plans submitted to the county show proposals for hundreds of new homes near the interchange of State Road 207 and Interstate 95.

Two relatively small developments — compared to what's happening in areas like County Road 210 and off State Road 16 — are currently in the approval process on the west side of I-95.

One project is for about 250 homes and is called Winding Oaks. It's further along than a larger development called Black Gold.

Both are Planned Unit Developments. Winding Oaks has already made its way through the county Planning and Zoning Agency and actually went before the County Commission last year.

Issues with proximity to fire stations eventually led to that item being continued. Now the project is set to go before the Commission on May 1.

Matt Lahti of Gulfstream Design Group, which put together the Winding Oaks application, said the developer is proposing to donate several acres of land to the county for a future fire station and lift station.

According to the application, the site of the development is 6.3 miles from the nearest fire station on West King Street. For more favorable home insurance rates, developers try to situate homes within 5 miles of a fire station.

Gulfstream also prepared the application for the Black Gold proposal, which sits on the southern side of S.R. 207 near Cypress Lakes.

Although there is no scheduled meeting date for the PZA or the County Commission, Lahti said that project is moving forward. It's currently in the staff review stage.

According to the application filed with the county, Black Gold will contain up to 400 homes. The phasing will be: the first 90 homes built between 2019 and 2024 and the 310 others plus 40,000 square feet of commercial development between 2024 and 2029. No waivers or variances are requested.

As the application notes, the area is ripe for development.

"The property is in a transitioning area that includes a significant amount of single-family residential development, contains differing land use designations, with both developed and vacant land," the application states. "The property is compatible with the surrounding area and does not promote urban sprawl."

The development site is near a couple of established neighborhoods like Cypress Lakes and Coquina Crossing. And on the other side of I-95 off of S.R. 207 Treaty Oaks recently opened.

Also on the east side of I-95, the property surrounding the St. Augustine Flea Market was recently cleared as the owners work to create space for possible hotels and restaurants.

The Black Gold developers argue that the residential project proposed will provide balance to the area as the commercial building is increasing.

It says the area "has developed to date primarily with non-residential uses that include commercial, light industrial and interstate commercial uses. As a result, there is a shortage of residential uses in the overall Mixed Use District at the SR 207/Interstate 95 interchange node."