



More development proposed for S.R. A1A in Ponte Vedra Beach

By Colleen Jones
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Continuing its push into St. Johns County, Sleiman Enterprises has submitted an application with the county's planning and building department to develop a 51,600 square-foot parcel for office, commercial and hotel space called the Villages of Ponte Vedra.

According to documents submitted to the county, the company seeks to construct the complex on 4 acres along State Road A1A, between Marsh Landing Parkway and Professional Drive, just south of the Duval County line.

The application, received by the county on June 19, is in the early stages of the review process and a public hearing date has not been set.

The property is currently zoned for residential use, but Sleiman Enterprises wants to rezone it to planned unit development. A preliminary site plan shows an office tower with ground-floor retail, as well as a 120-room hotel, also with retail space. At least 220 parking spaces would be provided, and significant landscape buffering is proposed for site boundaries. Approximately 3 acres of pine-mesic oak and 1 acre of exotic wetland hardwoods would be disturbed by the project.

The master development document says the uses are comparable with neighboring and adjacent properties on S.R. A1A such as a nearby Target, saying it does not promote urban sprawl.

According to the application, "The proposed development will promote a compact, mixed-use site that encourages walkability and will help attract larger, high-quality tenants that will result in more and higher paying jobs for county residents."

Representatives with Sleiman Enterprises did not return calls to The Record.

Some other recent projects Jacksonville-based Sleiman has brought to St. Johns County are the Shoppes of Ponte Vedra Pointe, Tournament Plaza and the Shoppes of St. Johns Parkway.

In recent years, neighborhood groups have mobilized to demand traffic changes to A1A as commercial growth along the corridor increases, such as intersection and roadway improvements.

A traffic study in 2017 made recommendations for the kinds of upgrades needed to ease congestion.

The Ponte Vedra Citizens Traffic Task Force could not be reached for comment for this story.

State Rep. Cyndi Stevenson has also prioritized traffic improvements along S.R. A1A in Ponte Vedra. Stevenson requested \$3 million for the project in the proposed 2019-20 budget, receiving partial funding of \$500,000 instead.