

MEMO

To: Brevard County

From: Haley Ward, Inc. – Environmental Division

Re: Environmental Public Interest Statement

Date: June 5, 2025

Public Benefits of Wetland Impact for W King Street

1. Supports Economic Development and Small Business Growth

The project introduces two new commercial tenant spaces in an underserved area. This will create opportunities for local businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, and generate tax revenue for the City of Cocoa and Brevard County. The public benefits through job creation, increased local spending, and the revitalization of underutilized commercial land.

2. Improves Urban Infill and Reduces Sprawl

This infill development maximizes the use of an existing commercial corridor rather than extending growth into undeveloped rural or greenfield areas. It promotes compact, walkable development and aligns with sustainable growth principles by utilizing existing infrastructure.

3. Provides Enhanced Public Access and Services

The site plan includes direct access from SR 520 and is designed to serve both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The proposed tenants (retail and restaurant) are expected to provide valuable amenities to local residents and commuters. These services will enhance quality of life and help reduce travel times and congestion in other areas.



4. Low Wetland Quality and Habitat Value

The environmental assessment confirmed that the on-site wetland is composed primarily of exotic hardwoods and nuisance species (e.g., Brazilian pepper and cogon grass), with no meaningful ecological function. There is an absence of native habitat, listed species, or hydrologic connectivity to larger ecosystems, significantly reducing the public environmental value of preserving this wetland.

5. Regulatory Compliance and Compensatory Mitigation

Any unavoidable impacts to wetlands will be mitigated in accordance with Brevard County Code Section 62-3696. The project will comply with the “no net loss” policy through wetland restoration, preservation, or the purchase of credits from a mitigation bank. This ensures ecological function is preserved on a regional scale while allowing reasonable land use within urban limits.

Conclusion

While the project involves impacting a low-value exotic wetland, the overall public benefit clearly outweighs the environmental cost. The development promotes economic growth, provides essential local services, creates jobs, and supports urban revitalization—all while meeting environmental obligations through approved mitigation measures. For these reasons, the proposed wetland impact is justified and serves the public interest in alignment with the intent and policies of the Brevard County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.