

Planning Commission to review details for two developments in northeast Venice

The 190 homes in Phase 2 of Vistera are not part of a mediation agreement that grew out of the City Council's April 2024 rejection of a request to add 317 homes to the Vistera Planned Unit development Earle Kimel, Sarasota Herald-Tribune 8-18-25

- The Venice Planning Commission will review plats for Cassata Oaks, a 60-home development, and Phase 2 of Vistera, a 190-home addition.
- Cassata Oaks includes stipulations to protect the nearby Fox Lea Farm Equestrian Center from construction and residential impacts.
- Vistera's Phase 2 involves single-family homes on the southwest portion of the development.

VENICE – The Venice Planning Commission will discuss preliminary plans for two high profile northeast Venice developments when it meets Tuesday. It will [review the preliminary plat for Cassata Oaks, a 60-home development north of Fox Lea Farm](#), and a plat for Phase 2 of Vistera, which would show the location of 190 homes in the 1,300-home planned unit development.

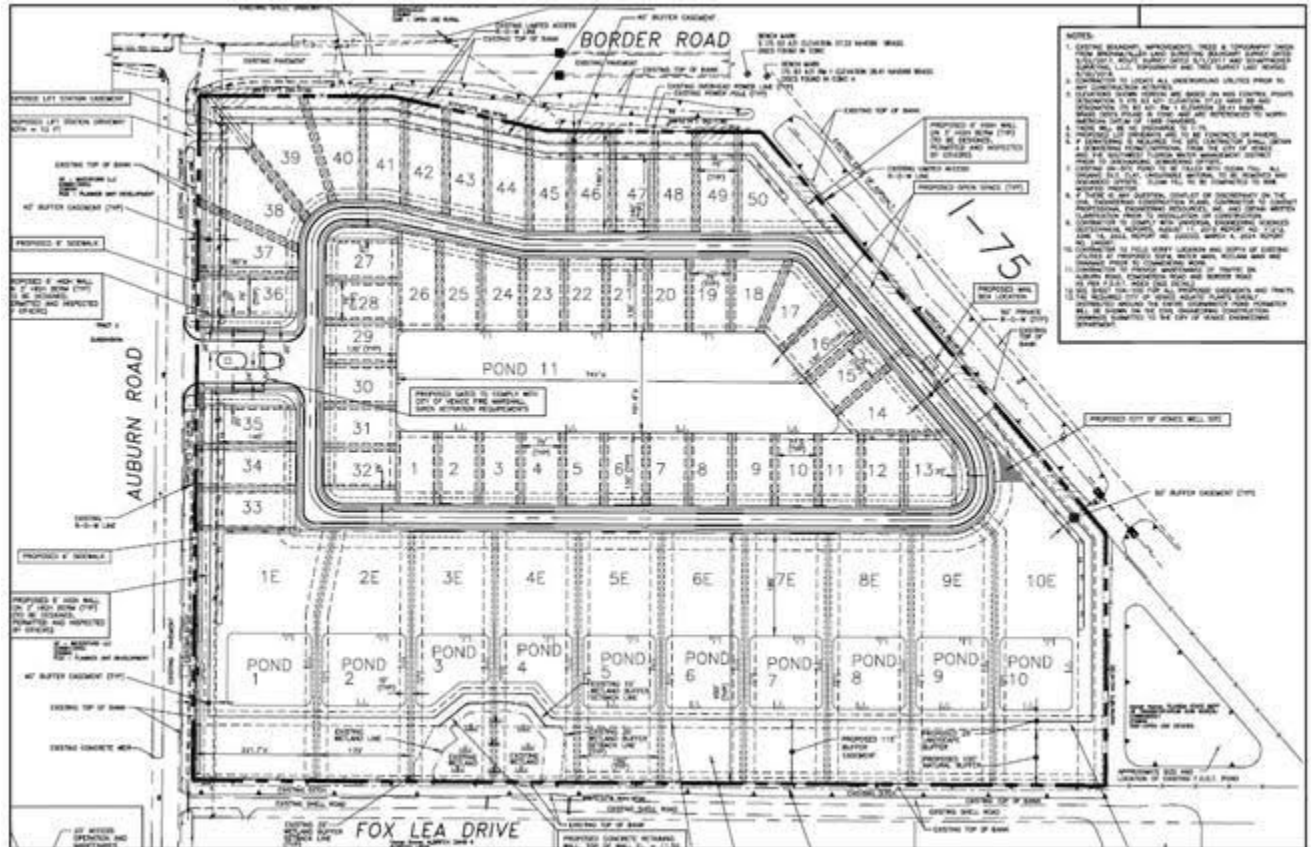
Those two developments will be discussed after a public hearing of a site and development plan for a self-storage facility at 2114 Border Road, east of Interstate 75 and west of Jacaranda Boulevard – near the southern entrance to Vistera.

The Planning Commission meets at 1:30 p.m. in City Council chambers at Venice City Hall, 401 W. Venice Ave.

Cassata Oaks plan a product of protracted negotiations

Because of its location just north of Fox Lea Farm Equestrian Center and concern about the impact of development on the horses during training and competitions – two separate developers spent almost eight years just to establish zoning for the 39.6-acre site on the southeast corner of Border and Auburn roads.

Last September, the City Council approved a 60-home subdivision, Cassata Oaks, planned by Mike Miller, principal for property owner Auburn Road FC, LLC, and MPS development.



[The late Frank Cassata, Miller's former partner](#), bought the property in May 2022, ending a protracted legal battle between Windham Development and the city over repeated denials of zoning requests for the development to proceed.

Fox Lea is a major driver of sports tourism in Sarasota County. It is estimated that Fox Lea visitors book roughly 30,000 room nights annually in Sarasota County for visiting contestants.

Several stipulations are designed to protect Fox Lea and the horses both during construction and afterward.

For example, the on-site burning of construction debris is prohibited, wood-chipper use is restricted to the northern part of the property and residents will not be able to fly drones, set off fireworks or light outdoor fires that produce excessive smoke.

Residents in the 10 southernmost lots – also the largest in the development – will not be able to use outdoor loudspeakers.

Because of concerns of the “footing” of horses, the developer must install a ground water liner to prevent a negative drawdown of the water table, and no stormwater will be

discharged into the ditch along Fox Lea Drive – the east-west road that serves as an entrance to the equestrian facility from Auburn Road.

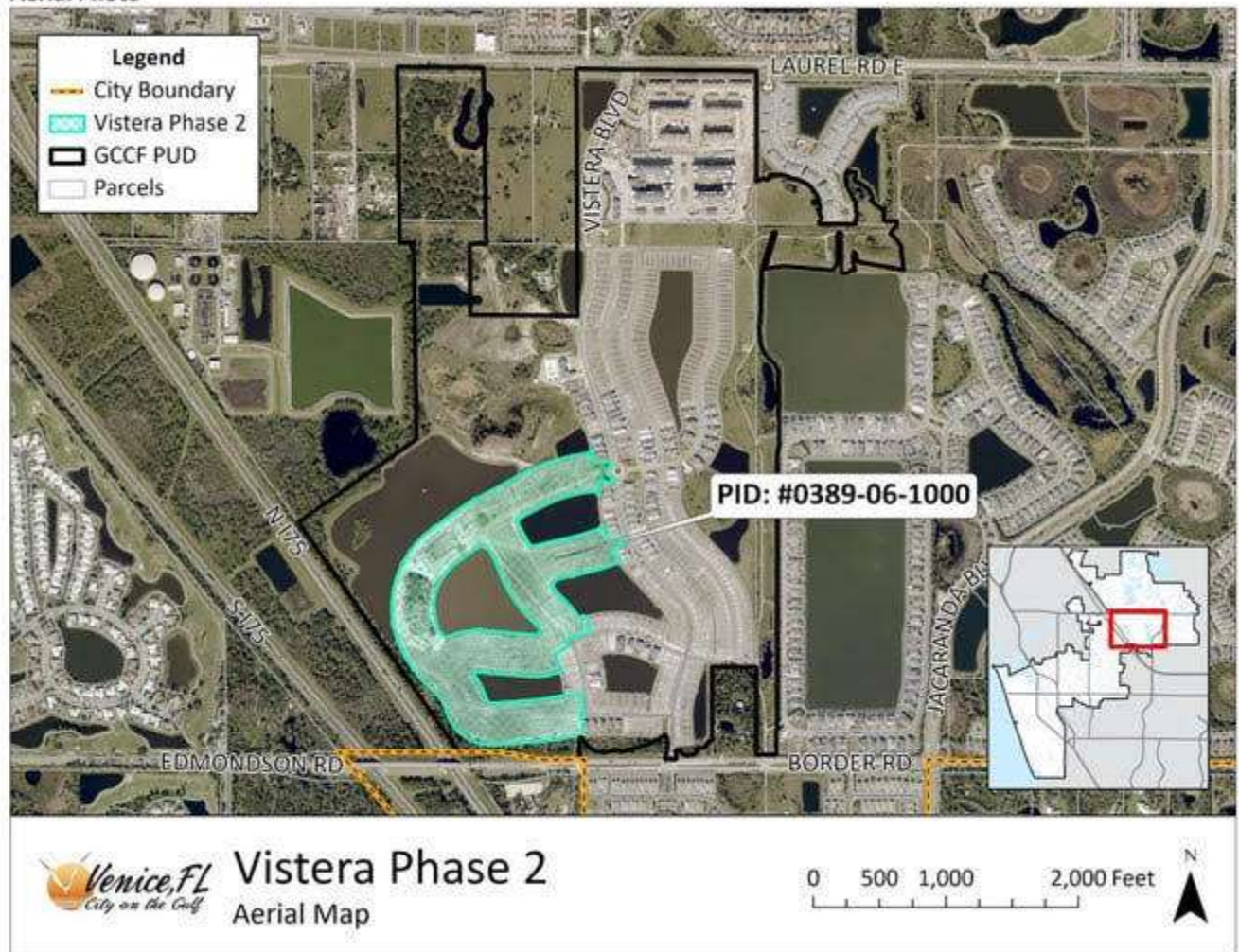
Related: [Venice council rejects proposed 'affordable' 70-home development plan because of density](#)

In a separate application, to augment the buffering between Fox Lea and Cassata Oaks, the developer is seeking a design alternative to keep invasive species in the existing 100-foot vegetative buffer area and increase the height of the wall along the southern side of the development from 6 to 8 feet.

Vistera addition would create single-family homes

The proposed Phase 2 addition to Vistera would create lots for single-family homes on the southwest portion of the planned-unit development, near the Border Road entrance to the 323.56-acre property. Most of the land was once owned by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation and still identified for planning purposes as the GCCF PUD after it was sold to four limited liability corporations affiliated with developer Pat Neal.

Aerial Photo



About 24 acres were later transferred from the Milano planned development to Visterra, in part to realign the back gate and powerlines on the new planned unit development.

[That extra acreage opened the door for Neal to ask for 317 homes in addition to the 1,300 already approved for Visterra but the Venice City Council denied that request in April 2024.](#)

That denial triggered a lawsuit by Border Road Investments, LLC and Visterra Associates, LLC.

A public hearing on a mediated settlement agreement for that lawsuit is scheduled for 8 a.m. Aug. 26, in council chambers at City Hall.

The Phase 2 homes are not part of that lawsuit.