



June 7, 2026

Amy M. Toman, City Attorney
Michael S. Alfano, J.D., MPA, MSP, Director of City and County Planning
City of Tallahassee
300 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear Ms. Toman and Mr. Alfano:

1000 Friends of Florida was established in 1986 as a statewide, nonpartisan, not-for-profit membership organization to promote sound growth management and planning in our rapidly growing state. To this end, we have a series of questions regarding the proposed annexation of the Phipps property on North Meridian Road. We would appreciate your response prior to the June 10 City Commission meeting:

1. **Determination of Need** – A hallmark of sound planning is to determine the need for new development prior to annexing land into the city. Tallahassee and Leon County adopted an updated comprehensive plan in December 2026 with the stated intent of accommodating future growth through 2050. As part of the update, planning staff stated that an estimated 23,000 more housing units were needed to accommodate population growth through 2050. Data from the City of Tallahassee Office of Economic Vitality show that there are currently about 21,000 units in the development pipeline, including only developments of 20 units or more, and excluding the 12,500 potential units in the Welaunee Arch. Has any additional analysis been undertaken to determine whether the Phipps annexation is necessary to accommodate projected population growth and, if so, in this location? If not, what is the justification for adding the potential for thousands more housing units than what the planning staff determined is needed by 2050?

These questions are based on Policy 2.4.2 [Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Mobility Element] – Criteria for Urban Service Area Expansion (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): “(EFF. 1/23/26) To avoid premature conversions of rural areas to higher density and intensity uses, expansions to the Urban Services Area shall be contiguous with the Urban Service Area boundary, shall demonstrate the availability of or ability to provide central water and sewer service, and shall be based on an analysis of population

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projections and growth trends and an analysis of developable vacant land currently within the Urban Services Area.”

2. **Compliance with Adopted City Annexation Policy** – How is the proposed annexation consistent with policies to:
 - a. Encourage infill development, affordable and workforce (inclusionary) housing, and a southern strategy for balanced growth.
 - b. Focus on areas within the Urban Services Area, including the Southwood and Welaunee study areas as stated in the Comprehensive Plan and, in particular, on areas that contribute to the fragmentation of the City’s existing boundaries.

This question is based on the City Commission Policy Manual No. 132, Annexation Policy adopted May 24, 1995, and last updated October 25, 2006. Policy 132.04: “The City will pursue annexation by referenda and encouraging voluntary petitions. The annexation program shall be directed through supporting the City's goals for maintaining an economically healthy and pluralistic community, providing urban services to urbanized and urbanizing areas, encouraging urban infill development, affordable and workforce (inclusionary) housing, and a southern strategy for balanced growth. The expansion of Tallahassee's corporate limits will focus on areas within the Urban Services Area (USA), including the Southwood and Welaunee study areas as stated in the Comprehensive Plan and, in particular, on areas that contribute to the fragmentation of the City's existing boundaries.”

3. **Determination of Impacts** – In the June 10 agenda, it states, “Without any additional build-out, this annexation is expected to generate approximately \$7,909.39 additional in ad valorem tax revenue for the City of Tallahassee annually. Leon County property tax collections are not affected by annexations.” Is this to say that no additional development potential will be proposed for the land once it is annexed? Clearly, the only reason to apply for annexation is to significantly increase the property's development potential beyond the current allowed 170 units. Sound planning would dictate that **a thorough and realistic** analysis be based on either the maximum allowable development for the intended land use (presumably Lake Protection), or the amount specified in a development plan or

Planned Unit Development (PUD) provided by the landowner. When does the City intend to undertake the following evaluations?

- Thorough environmental analysis of the potential impacts on the Lake Jackson system, the only freshwater lake in Florida to be designated as a State Aquatic Preserve. It is also a designated Outstanding Florida Water.
- Detailed transportation analysis of the potential impacts on the already congested Meridian Road. This scenic, two-lane canopy road, established in 1824, would be the primary access to new development. It is officially designated as a Tallahassee-Leon County Canopy Road and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Analysis of the cost to provide urban services and infrastructure to support any new development, including long-term maintenance of infrastructure that will be borne by taxpayers. This expansion represents a major public commitment to provide sewer and water, roads, and other urban services to this area.

We look forward to your responses to these questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vivian Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vivian Young, FAICP
Special Projects Director Emeritus

cc: Mayor John Dailey
Commissioner Jeremy Matlow
Commissioner Jack Porter
Commissioner Curtis Richardson
Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox
City Manager Reese Goad
1000 Friends of Florida President Paul Owens