

since the property has been in the city limits for more than 40 years and the applicant has only owned the property for barely the past 1 year.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out and emphasized that the applicant still has NOT petitioned nor discussed any requested Zoning designations with Lowndes County planning staff. It is believed that the County's "Conservation (CON)" zoning classification would be the most logical choice, since that is the designation on the remaining county-portion of the Mitigation Bank property and is the same zoning that elsewhere follows the boundaries of the river floodplain. However once deannexed, the City of Valdosta has no jurisdiction or purview over what the approved County zoning would be.

Nonetheless, the main question in reviewing any deannexation request is "Why?" and there is simply no compelling adequate reason(s) which support this particular request. If the property is truly to remain undeveloped and in a primarily natural state like it has for the past 40+ years, then leaving it in the city limits is clearly the best choice. This is particularly true if for no other reason than the City's access and protective services, and "if" there should be any form of a development proposal for this property (or a portion thereof) in the future. And because of these same reasons, staff would further encourage the applicant to go ahead and ANNEX the remaining portion of the Mitigation Bank property so that all of the property would be under one jurisdiction. This would also serve as a logical means of "rationalizing the City boundaries" by making the property lines along the River channel match the city limits line, like it does in many other places.

Staff Recommendation: Find inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommend **denial** to the City Council. Staff also formally recommends that the applicant pursue voluntary annexation of the remaining portion of the "Cherry Creek Wetlands Mitigation Bank" property.