

Explanation of Request and Justification

The applicant is requesting a Small Scale Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment to change the future land use designation from Town Center- X (TCX) to Employment Center-X (ECX) on approximately five and one-half (5.5) acres of property. See attached exhibits included with the application. The Property Owner and Applicants have developed or are developing a number of uses on the property, including a fast casual restaurant with drive thru, and are proposing similar uses on the balance of the parcels. The proposed change reflects the fact the property has never developed in conjunction with the primary node of the Town Center. Moreover, the property is not of sufficient size or shape to take advantage of the TCX uses. As a result, the requested change will maintain the ability to develop with uses supporting and complementary to the larger TCX area.

An additional consideration in the design of the site, relates to maximizing the opportunity to draw from the existing vehicular traffic on US 98. Therefore, the proposed site will be designed to ensure the project related traffic moves south off of Clubhouse Road, at the existing signalized intersection. The project will not have direct access to US 98.

Finally, the proposed project is consistent with all of the locational criteria and policies for the Employment Center (ECX) future land use policies in the US 98 Selected Area Plan. A brief analysis of the relevant provisions is provided.

A. Transit Supportive Development Area Policies

The Polk County Comprehensive Plan provides guidance to identify the appropriate locations for the various land use designations available. Specifically, Under Policy 2.104-A3 of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan, Employment Centers are a permitted land use in the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA). Policy 2.104-A9 explicitly requires Employment Center as only available within an adopted Selected Area Plan. The subject property meets both location criteria. In addition, the site is adjacent to a Citrus Connection bus stop (Highland City at Central Ave SE) pursuant to Policy 2.104-A5(a.) of the Comprehensive Plan.

B. Employment Center X Policies

The general characteristics referenced in Policy 2.131-RA4(F)(2) of the Comprehensive Plan for Employment Center X (ECX) districts describes the uses as accommodating the functional services, commercial, and employment needs of the area. The subject property is in close proximity of the site to Polk State College (+/-2.3 miles) and Travis Technical College (3.1 miles). In addition, the site can provide commercial uses to residential districts to the east and south of the site and those utilizing US 98.

The Property Owner and Applicants have developed or are developing several uses on the property, including a fast casual restaurant with drive thru, oil change, and other similar uses pursuant to Policy 2.131-RA4(F)(2)(d) of the Comprehensive Plan and allowed pursuant to Allowable Uses identified in Table 4.12 of the County's Land Development Code which will support or directly relate to the needs of the area. This is consistent with the development pattern and integration of ECX and TCX districts at the northeast corner of the US 98 and Clubhouse

Road. Further, the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development code identify and prescribe certain development criteria relative shared access, buffering, parking, and other issues to establish compatible development with the adjacent TCX districts and existing residential to the east. All other site-specific requirements will be fully addressed at Level 2.