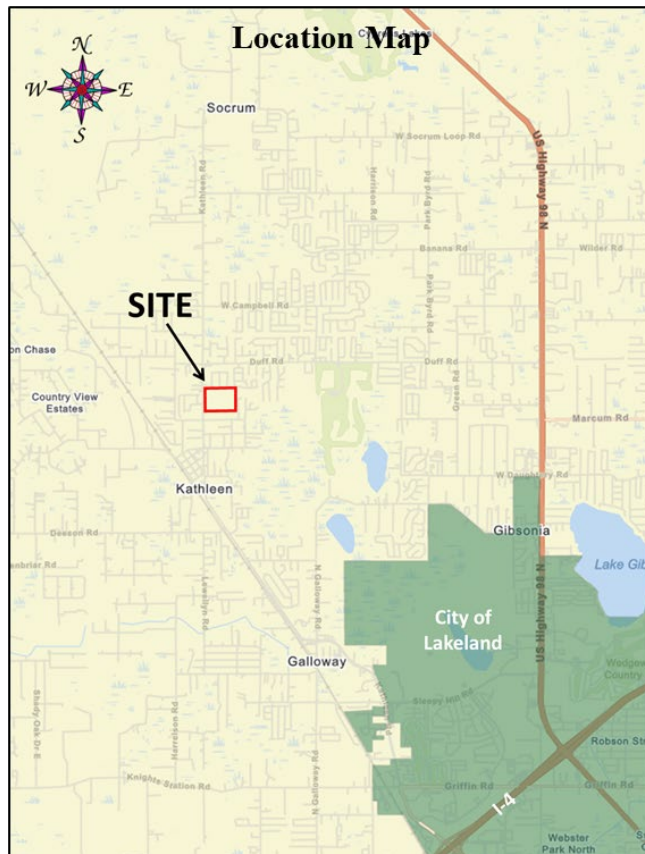


POLK COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

DRC Date:	April 23, 2026	Level of Review:	Level 4 Review
PC Date:	July 8, 2026	Type:	Small-scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment
BoCC Date:	August 18, 2026	Case Numbers:	LDCPAS-2026-8
Applicant:	Polk County Facilities Management	Case Name:	Kathleen Government Center
		Case Planner:	Erik Peterson, AICP

Request:	Future Land Use Map change from Residential Low-1 (RL-1) to Institutional (INST) on ±29.62 acres for a future County Government Center.
Location:	East of Kathleen Road, north of Wheeler Road, south of Hileman Drive, south of Duff Road, northwest of the city of Lakeland, Section 16, Township 27, Range 23.
Property Owners:	Polk County
Parcel Size (Number):	±29.62 acres (232716-000000-044010 & 044020)
Future Land Use:	Residential Low-1 (RL-1)
Development Area:	Urban Growth Area (UGA)
Nearest Municipality:	City of Lakeland (1.7 miles)
DRC Recommendation:	Approval
Planning Commission Vote:	Approval 7:0



Summary:

On February 5, 2026, Polk County finalized the purchase of approximately 27 acres fronting Kathleen Road northwest of the city of Lakeland with the intention of creating a County Government annex. As planned, this facility will provide the public with remote access to many County government branches of service. This will connect area residents and businesses with more direct access to Board of County Commissioner's services such as building permits, customer service for water, wastewater, garbage, drainage, road maintenance, and public meeting facilities. It will also provide access to services from the constitutional offices such as the Clerk of Courts, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Sheriff, and Supervisor of Elections.

This site was chosen because it is more central to the growing populations in the northwest portion of the County than the existing one in downtown Lakeland. A similar facility has recently been constructed in the northeastern portion of the County between Lake Alfred and Haines City. Another is planned for the southeastern area. Together with the County seat in Bartow which is in the southwest area of the County and the government center between Lakeland and Winter Haven on Winter Lake Road in the center of the County, the government centers will bring County services closer to the people that need them (see Exhibit 6).

The request includes an existing stormwater management pond for consistency and to incorporate its future use within the future site design. The change will result in a default to the INST-1 district in the Land Development Code (LDC). There is no request to change to INST-2. The uses within the INST-1 are listed in Exhibit 5.

Compatibility Summary

Comprehensive Plan Policy 2.116-A3 states that "Institutional development may occur within the lands designated Institutional on the Future Land Use Map Series, and in any other land use designation throughout the County." Therefore, designating government property INST should be considered compatible with any other land use district. Additionally, the future homeowners within the area will benefit from enhanced government services in the future. By designating this site as INST, it will increase awareness of future government facilities for the real estate and development community which can potentially increase the market value of properties in the area. The stormwater facility adjacent to the site is being included. This facility filters stormwater runoff from Kathleen Road through percolation and evaporation. It will be expanded to serve the proposed Kathleen Government Center and be incorporated into an aesthetic design that will include passive recreation facilities.

Infrastructure Summary

This requested map amendment is needed to implement a plan to decentralize and enhance the County's services to growing populations. Rather than requiring residents and businesses to always travel to Bartow for a multitude of in-person government services, efforts are being made to bring these services closer to the users. This site and the area are equipped with necessary infrastructure and services at an urban level needed to support a government facility. Potable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water are available onsite with ample line and system capacity. The property has 980 feet of frontage on Kathleen Road (CR 35A) which is a four-lane urban collector road with a continuous sidewalk network. There is a fire rescue station across the street. It is a short travel distance from the Sheriff's northwest district command center. There is an elementary and middle

school within walkable distance. The site is large enough to offset drainage constraints and there are restaurants, groceries, general mercantile, and personal services within a walkable distance. Plans include incorporating the onsite drainage into a passive recreational facility. The only necessary urban service lacking in the area is mass transit and there is time to plan for a service extension before the facility opens to the public.

Environmental Summary

The site has few environmental limitations. There are no natural wetlands and flood hazard areas onsite. Stormwater management will be an opportunity for the County. The existing retention pond that serves Kathleen Road and the outfall into it will be expanded to provide even higher levels of service. The soil is excellent for development, and the site elevation is high relative to surrounding properties. Threats to protected species are low given the amount of surrounding development and the historic use of the property. There are no historic or archaeological resources threatened by development of the site. There are no public wellfields nearby. The site development will connect to existing water and wastewater, and drainage will be diverted away from the only side where homes are on individual well systems. This avoids any potential runoff from adversely impacting neighboring properties.

Comprehensive Plan

The relevant sections of the Comprehensive Plan that are applicable to the project request:

- Section 2.102 – Growth Management Policies
- Section 2.105 – Urban Growth Area (UGA)
- Section 2.116 – Institutional (INST), Policy 2.116-A3: Location Criteria

Staff have reviewed each policy statement and addressed them in Tables 9 through 11 of this report. This site meets and exceeds the Comprehensive Plan criteria for establishing a new INST district.

Findings of Fact

Request and Legal Status

- *On March 5, 2026, the proposed Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map change request was presented to the Development Review Committee (DRC) in a pre-application meeting under case# LDDRC-2026-36.*
- *This is a County-initiated request for a Small-Scale Future Land Use designation change from Residential Low (RL) to Institutional (INST) on ±29.62 acres for a future County government facility.*
- *The Land Development Code Sub-District Map designation will default to INST-1 if this request is approved. There have been no applications submitted for a change to INST-2.*
- *If this request is approved, Government Buildings are permitted through the Level 2 Review (administrative approval) in the INST-1 district.*
- *POLICY 2.116-A1 of the Comprehensive Plan states that Institutional areas are primarily characterized by private and public-service structures.*

- *POLICY 2.125-E1 of the Comprehensive Plan identifies governmental facilities necessary to support existing and proposed development as Type “A” Community Facilities.*

Compatibility

- *Comprehensive Plan Policy 2.116-A3 states that “Institutional development may occur within the lands designated Institutional on the Future Land Use Map Series, and in any other land use designation throughout the County.”*
- *The property abuts residential development and residential Future Land Use Map districts on all four sides.*
- *Land Development Code (LDC) Section 220 Compatibility Standards will apply to the development of the property because there are abutting Residential districts and uses.*
- *INST-1 districts abut residential districts and uses in multiple locations throughout the County.*
- *Kathleen Elementary School, Kathleen Middle School, and the Fire Rescue Station #23 are designated INST-1.*

Infrastructure

- *The property is zoned for Kathleen Elementary, Kathleen Middle School, and Kathleen High School.*
- *The current fire response to this project is from Polk County Fire Rescue Station #23 (the Kathleen Station) which is located at 6750 Kathleen Road across the street from the site.*
- *The current ambulance response is from Polk County Fire Rescue Station #23 located at 6750 Kathleen Road across the street from the site.*
- *There is a fire hydrant abutting the property.*
- *The site is served by the Polk County Sheriff’s Office Northeast District Command at 1045 Wedgewood Estates Boulevard, approximately 5.2 miles driving distance from the site.*
- *Polk County provides potable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water to this site through the Northwest Regional Utility Service Area (NWRUSA). Connection opportunities are available within the abutting Kathleen Road right-of-way.*
- *The subject property has ±990 feet of frontage on Kathleen Road (County Road 35A).*
- *Kathleen Road (County Road 35A) is an Urban Collector Road of four lanes and a center turn lane.*
- *According to the Transportation Planning Organization, there is adequate capacity on Kathleen Road (County Road 35A) as well as other roads such as Duff Road, Galloway*

Road, Deeson Road, and Campbell Road, within the area transportation network to support the development of the property.

- *There is a sidewalk system present on both sides of Kathleen Road (County Road 35A).*
- *No mass transit services are provided on Kathleen Road (County Road 35A). The nearest route is Citrus Connection Blue Line 2 with the nearest stop on Park Byrd approximately 2.4 miles from the site.*
- *The nearest park is approximately than 2½ miles driving distance to the northeast.*

Environmental

- *The closest surface water is Ross Creek to the south that connects to Lake Lester to the east. The site does not naturally drain towards these surface waters.*
- *There are no portions of the site that contain areas within the 100-year Flood Hazard Area, according to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM).*
- *There are no natural wetlands, according to the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and the Southwest Florida Water Management District wetland estimations.*
- *A majority of the site is comprised of soil that is considered to have “slight limitations” for septic tank absorption fields and small commercial buildings, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Polk County Survey.*
- *According to Polk County Endangered Habitat Maps, the property is not located within a one-mile radius of a past endangered species sighting. (Source: Florida Natural Areas Inventory, 2002, 2006, 2011, 2015, &2021).*
- *According to the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, there are no historical or archeological sites listed in the Florida Master Site File for the property.*
- *The site is not shown as a potential network connection or existing natural area on the Polk Green District Map.*
- *There is a conservation easement for the Upper Hillsborough River basin over 2½ miles away managed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.*

Comprehensive Plan Policies

- *POLICY 2.102-A1 Development Location states that “Polk County shall promote contiguous and compact growth patterns through the development process to minimize energy costs, conserve land, water, and natural resources, minimize the cost of services, and prevent development patterns where tracts of land are by-passed in favor of development more distant from services and existing communities.”*

- *POLICY 2.102-A2 Compatibility states that “land shall be developed so that adjacent uses are compatible with each other, pursuant to the requirements of other Policies in this Future Land Use Element, so that one or more of the following provisions are accomplished: a. there have been provisions made which buffer incompatible uses from dissimilar uses; b. incompatible uses are made to be more compatible to each other through limiting the intensity and scale of the more intense use; c. uses are transitioned through a gradual scaling of different land use activities through the use of innovative development techniques such as a Planned Unit Development.”*
- *POLICY 2.102-A3 Distribution states that “development shall be distributed throughout the County consistently with this Future Land Use Element so that the public utility, other community services, and public transit and transportation systems can be efficiently utilized; and compact, high-density and intensity development is located where urban services can be made available.”*
- *POLICY 2.102-A4 Timing states that “development of land shall be timed and staged in conjunction with the cost-effective and efficient provision of supporting community services which, at a minimum, shall require compliance with the Plan's Level of Service requirements and the County's concurrency management system.”*
- *POLICY 2.102-A10 Location Criteria states “the following factors shall be taken into consideration when determining the appropriateness of establishing or expanding any land use or development area:*
 - a. nearness to incompatible land uses and future land uses, unless adequate buffering is provided;*
 - b. nearness to agriculture-production areas;*
 - c. distance from populated areas;*
 - d. economic issues, such as minimum population support and market-area radius (where applicable);*
 - e. adequacy of support facilities or adequacy of proposed facilities to be provided by the time of development, including, but are not limited to:*
 - 1. transportation facilities, including but not limited to, mass transit, sidewalks, trails and bikeways;*
 - 2. sanitary sewer and potable water service;*
 - 3. storm-water management;*
 - 4. solid waste collection and disposal;*
 - 5. fire protection with adequate response times, properly trained personnel, and proper fire-fighting equipment;*
 - 6. emergency medical service (EMS) provisions; and*
 - 7. other public safety features such as law enforcement;*
 - 8. schools and other educational facilities*
 - 9. parks, open spaces, civic areas and other community facilities*
 - f. environmental factors, including, but not limited to:*
 - 1. environmental sensitivity of the property and adjacent property;*
 - 2. surface water features, including drainage patterns, basin characteristics, and flood hazards;*
 - 3. wetlands and primary aquifer recharge areas;*
 - 4. soil characteristics;*
 - 5. location of potable water supplies, private wells, public well fields; and*

6. *climatic conditions, including prevailing winds, when applicable.”*

- *The Comprehensive Plan defines Compatibility in Division 4.400 as “A condition in which land uses or conditions can coexist in relative proximity to each other in a stable fashion over time such that no use or condition is unduly negatively impacted directly or indirectly by another use or condition.”*
- *Policy 2.116-A3 of the Comprehensive Plan states that “The following factors shall be taken into consideration when determining the appropriateness of establishing new Institutional areas on the Future Land Use Map Series, or in approving the location for an institutional use not located within lands classified as Institutional:*
 - a. Accessibility to roadways, with consideration being given to regional transportation issues for large-scale institutional developments having a regional market.*
 - b. Proximity to incompatible land uses, which is dependent upon the intensity of the institutional use (buffering may be provided to mitigate adverse impacts).*
 - c. The locational criteria enumerated in Policy 2.102-A9 and Policy 2.102-A10.*
 - d. Proximity to similar and compatible uses providing opportunities for shared facilities.*
 - e. Plans of the School Board and other public service agencies with jurisdiction in the County.”*
- *Policy 2.116-A4 of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan requires development within INST districts to “conform to the following criteria:*
 - a. Institutional uses include, but are not limited to: private and public-service structures. These commonly include:*
 - 1. public and private educational facilities;*
 - 2. **government-administration buildings;***
 - 3. public-safety structures (e.g. police and fire);*
 - 4. cultural facilities (e.g. libraries, museums, and performing-arts theaters);*
 - 5. health-care facilities e.g. hospitals, medical centers, clinics, nursing homes, adult day care centers, group homes, group living facilities, emergency shelters, residential treatment facilities.*
 - b. Large institutional areas should be designed so that the more intensive uses are at the center of the development, with less intensive uses near the fringes.*
 - c. Prior to site planning, the School Board, independent special districts, and other governmental entities shall communicate to one another to pursue potential colocation of government services.*
 - d. Commercial uses within institutional areas mapped on the Future Land Use Map Series shall be primarily for the purpose of serving the institutions within the area and shall be limited to a scale appropriate for that purpose.*
 - e. Institutional sites shall be designed to provide for:*
 - 1. Adequate parking to meet the present and future demands of the use.*
 - 2. Buffering where the effects of lighting, noise, odors, and other such factors would adversely affect adjacent land uses. Parking lots, loading areas, dumpsters, utilities and air conditioning units, signage, etc. are examples of facilities which may require special buffering provisions.*
 - f. Multi-family residential uses may be permitted at densities up to and including 15 dwelling units per acre as part of a Planned Development. Residential uses may be permitted according to the following:*

1. Residential uses shall only be established adjacent to or in conjunction with a university, college, vocational school or other similar educational institution.
 2. Residential development shall be intended to primarily meet the housing needs for students and facility members of the nearby educational institution
- g. *Recreational uses accessory to the institutional use or compatible with the location of the institutional district.”*
- *POLICY 2.125-E2 of the Comprehensive Plan states that “Type A facilities shall be permitted pursuant to the following:*
 - a. *Type A community facilities shall generally be limited to the non-Rural-Development Areas, as designated on the Future Land Use Map. **The scale of such facilities should be related to surrounding land uses and designed to preserve the character of residential neighborhoods, when so located.***
 - b. *The provisions of Policy 2.125-E2(a) notwithstanding, it may be in the best interest of public health, safety, and welfare to provide Type A community facilities in locations which are potentially incompatible with adjacent land uses. In such cases, these facilities will be buffered from adjacent incompatible land uses through the provision of open space, landscaping berms, site design or other suitable means.*
 - c. *The development of type A community facilities shall be permitted in the Rural areas, as designated on the Future Land Use Map, only when such developments provides regional services, or is incompatible with urban uses or services the existing needs of the immediate area in which it is located.*
 - d. *Polk County adopted the Land Development Code in accordance with Section 163.3202(1), FS, to further define appropriate development controls to govern the locational and site criteria for Type A Community Facilities.”*
 - *The Polk County Land Development Code Section 220 prohibits non-residential buildings, garbage dumpsters, loading facilities, wastewater lift stations within 50 feet of an offsite residential district. Parking and lighting are strictly regulated. Parking can be no closer than 15 feet from a residential property and requires additional landscaping within 50 feet of adjacent residential districts and uses.*
 - *The Polk County Land Development Code Section 303 has no standard conditions for Government Facilities.*

Development Review Committee Recommendation: Based on the information provided by the applicant, recent site visits, and the analysis conducted within this staff report, the Development Review Committee finds that with the proposed conditions, the proposed request **IS COMPATIBLE** with the surrounding land uses and general character of the area, **IS CONSISTENT** with the Polk County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, and therefore, the Development Review Committee (DRC) recommends **APPROVAL of LDCPAS 2026-8.**

Planning Commission Recommendation: Based on the information provided at the advertised public hearing on July 8, 2026, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed request **IS COMPATIBLE** with the surrounding land uses and general character of the area, **IS CONSISTENT** with the Polk County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, and therefore, the Planning Commission recommends **APPROVAL of LDCPAS 2026-8 with a vote of 7-0.**

NOTE: This staff report was prepared without the benefit of testimony and evidence submitted by the public and other interested parties at a public hearing.

NOTE: All written comments made in the application and subsequent submissions of information made during the application review process, which are on file with the Land Development Division, shall be considered to be binding upon the applicant, provided such comments are not at variance with the Comprehensive Plan, LDC or other development regulations in effect at the time of development.

NOTE: Issuance of a development permit by the county does not in any way create any rights on the part of the applicant to obtain a permit from a state or federal agency and does not create any liability on the part of the county for issuance of the permit if the applicant fails to obtain requisite approvals or fulfill the obligations imposed by a state or federal agency or undertakes actions that result in a violation of state or federal law.

Analysis

This section of the staff report includes data on the surrounding uses, infrastructure conditions, environmental conditions, and related Comprehensive Plan policies and Land Development Code regulations.

Surrounding Uses

Table 1 to follow lists the Future Land Use (FLU) designations and the existing uses surrounding the subject site that are immediately adjacent.

Table 1

Northwest: Residential Suburban (RS), Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) Single-family detached homes on lots ½ acre and up, Gas Station, Grocery, restaurants, and personal services.	North: Residential Low (RL-1) PUD 96-33 Ridgemont Subdivision Single-family detached homes 12,500 sq.ft. minimum lot size	Northeast: Residential Low (RL-3) Remington Oaks Subdivision Single-family detached homes 8,500 sq. ft. minimum lot size
West: Residential Low (RL-1), LDPD-2018-28 Willow Ridge subdivision 5,500 sq.ft. lots	Subject Property: Residential Low (RL-1) Vacant land, stormwater treatment facility	East: Residential Low (RL-1) Single-family detached homes on large acreage lots
Southwest: Institutional (INST-1) Residential Suburban (RS) Fire Rescue Station Single-family attached housing	South: Residential Low (RL-3), Residential Suburban (RS) Single-family detached homes Wheeler Road Estates ½ acre to 10,000 sq.ft. Smaller lots south of Wheeler Road	Southeast: Residential Low (RL-1), Institutional (INST-1) Single-family detached homes and Kathleen Elementary

Source: Polk County Geographical Information System and site visit by County staff

The site is surrounded on all four sides by residential development that varies from large acreage lots to 50'x110' lots. There are commercial and institutional land uses nearby. Other County government facilities are located adjacent to residential. Institutional (INST) Future Land Use Map districts often abut existing and future residential areas. This is seen nearby with the Future Land Use Map designations on Kathleen Elementary, Kathleen Middle School, and Fire Rescue Station #23.

Compatibility with the Surrounding Land Uses, Environment, and Infrastructure:

This site is chosen for the purpose of decentralization of needed government services to increase the levels of service to residents and businesses. It will serve current as well as future needs based on projected growth in the northwest portion of the County. This Comprehensive Plan amendment (CPA) will designate the property to serve government facilities in the future. The facility planning and site design are underway. The data provided in this analysis documents that this property is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and compatible with surrounding uses, infrastructure, and the physical environment.

A. Land Uses:

Comprehensive Plan Policy 2.116-A3 states that “Institutional development may occur within the lands designated Institutional on the Future Land Use Map Series, and in any other land use designation throughout the County.” Therefore, designating government property INST should be considered compatible with any other land use district, according to the Comprehensive Plan policies. By designating the property INST, there is a greater chance that future residents will be aware of the government facilities that are planned to be located there. The long-term plan is for this site to host a number of different County offices including the constitutional officers such as the Sheriff, Clerk of Courts, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, and Tax Collector. The current County government annex facility is in downtown Lakeland (930 East Parker Street) which has outgrown its space and is no longer central to the populations it serves. This site will enable many more functions and meet the needs of a broader population.

The Comprehensive Plan defines compatibility as
“A condition in which land uses or conditions can coexist in relative proximity to each other in a stable fashion over time such that no use or condition is unduly negatively impacted directly or indirectly by another use or condition.”

The proposed new INST site is surrounded by residential land uses and existing residential development. INST districts and residential development are not automatically assumed to be incompatible with one another. These same land use variations exist nearby with the schools and the fire rescue station in INST districts. Government offices and residential do coexist in many parts of the County. Hours of operation do not conflict between the uses with regard to traffic or activity because most residential occupants leave before government offices are being occupied. Most government offices are closed on weekends and holidays. The size of the property provides opportunities for further buffering and gradual scaling between residences. Staff are planning for the design of the site to incorporate the needed drainage structures into an aesthetically pleasing facility which includes passive recreation.

B. Infrastructure:

The only current infrastructure deficiency for this site is the lack of mass transit services and there are plans under development to address this prior to the opening. There is ample traffic capacity available and many different routes available to link to the area served. There is a sidewalk network that connects to nearby commerce. There is ample capacity for water, wastewater and reclaimed water. Public safety facilities are just across the street. Although not needed for the proposed district, there are school facilities and parks nearby.

C. Environmental:

The site has few environmental limitations that will have to be managed through design of the facility. Stormwater management will be the primary focus. There are no natural wetlands and flood hazard areas onsite. The existing retention pond that serves Kathleen Road and the outfall into it will have to be expanded. The soil is excellent for development, and the site elevation is high relative to surrounding properties. Threats to protected species are limited given the amount of surrounding development and the historic use of property. There are no historic or archaeological resources threatened by development of the site. There are no direct threats to private or public well systems. The site development will connect to existing water and wastewater, and drainage will be diverted away from the only side where homes are on individual well systems. There are no nearby airports.

Nearest Schools

The property is zoned for the closest schools, which would be ideal for residential development but not a factor for non-residential development. The table to follow provides data on the zoned schools and current capacities.

Table 2

Name of School	Annual Estimated Demand	Distance from subject site	School Capacity
Kathleen Elementary	0 students	±½ mile walking or driving	61%
Kathleen Middle	0 students	±½ mile walking or driving	73%
Kathleen Senior High School	0 students	±7½ miles driving distance	66%

Source: Polk County School Board, Duncan Associates Educational Facility Impact Fee Study, GIS

Proximity to schools and conflicts with school entrances are the primary concerns with non-residential uses due to the congestion caused by pick-up and drop-off of students. All vehicle access points to the proposed government center will be on Kathleen Road. Kathleen Elementary and Middle are accessed through Wheeler Road, Sherertz Road and Kathleen Pines. Conflicts are not anticipated due to the times of operation and the over half of a mile distance between entrances.

Nearest Sheriff, Fire, and EMS Station

This site is an ideal location in relation to public safety services. Fire and EMS are across the street from the property. The government facility will host courtrooms which include a law enforcement presence. It is also located closer to the Sheriff's Northwest District Command center than the current County government annex.

Table 3

	Name of Station	Distance	Response Time*
Sheriff	Northwest District Command (1045 Wedgewood Estates Blvd)	±5.2 miles	7 minutes
Fire	Station #23 Kathleen (6750 Kathleen Road) Station#6 Providence (8936 US Highway 98) Station#24 Winston Creek (1140 N Galloway Road)	±600 feet ±5.2 miles ±5.8 miles	2 minutes

Table 3

	Name of Station	Distance	Response Time*
EMS	Station #23 Kathleen (6750 Kathleen Road) Station #22 Gibsonia (5201 Cornell Street) Station #24 Winston Creek (1140 N Galloway Road)	±600 feet ±5.3 miles ±5.8 miles	2 minutes

Source: Polk County Sheriff's Office and Public Safety

*Response times are based on when the station receives the call and not from when the call is made to 911.

In the event of a major incident, there are two additional fire rescue stations just over five miles away. The responding Sheriff's command center is the Northwest District located at 1045 Wedgewood Estates Boulevard just off of U.S. Highway 98 near the Lakeland Mall. Sheriff response times are not as much a function of the distance to the nearest Sheriff's station, but more a function of the overall number of patrol officers within the district. The Northwest district command has the third highest staffing level of the five District Stations in the County. It is anticipated that there will be space for a law enforcement component incorporated into the site design.

Water and Wastewater

There is ample capacity of potable water and sanitary sewer in Polk County's Northwest Regional Utility Service Area (NWRUSA). There is even reclaimed water available. There is a potable and reclaimed waterline abutting the property and a wastewater line and lift station across the street.

A. Estimated Demand:

When analyzing the absolute worst-case scenario of what can be constructed in the INST district the table to follow shows a substantial discrepancy between the current and proposed district demands for services. However, Table 4a provides a very generalized estimate of the anticipated water and wastewater demands in the absolute maximum worst case scenario. However, it is not likely that the maximum will occur on this site. With a maximum floor-area-ratio of 0.75, a 967,685 square foot office building could be constructed on this site. This is twice the size of the nine-story courthouse in Bartow.

Table 4a

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
±29.62 acres RL	Demand as Currently Permitted	Proposed Change to 29.62 acres INST maximum effect	Percentage increase
Permitted Use	148 dwelling units	Office building (967,685 sq.ft @ 75% FAR)	
Potable Water Consumption (GPD)	37,000	232,245	628%
Wastewater Generation (GPD)	29,600	185,796	628%

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual & Polk County Utilities estimates. Offices are estimated at 0.24 GPD per sq.ft. for water and 80% for wastewater. Single Family is 250 GPD water, 200 GPD wastewater.

In reality, the proposed government facility will be a similar size to the one in the northeast area of the County. Table 4b, to follow, provides generalized estimates of the anticipated water and wastewater demands of the planned government facilities on the site. This more realistic comparison shows that the demand for water and wastewater falls in between the current level of permitting and the maximum allowed within the RL district.

Table 4b

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
	Demand as Currently Permitted <i>RL-1</i>	Maximum Permitted on the property <i>RL UGA</i>	Future Plan Government Facility
±29.62 acres <i>Residential Low-1</i>			
Permitted Intensity	Vacant 29 units	148 dwelling units	73,508 sq.ft. Government Facility
Potable Water Consumption (GPD)*	7,250	37,000	17,642 GPD
Wastewater Generation (GPD)*	5,800	29,600	14,114 GPD

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual & Polk County Utilities estimates, Single-family 250 gpd water, 200 wastewater, Offices = 0.24 gallons per square foot, 20% less for wastewater

B. Available Capacity:

There is a 16-inch potable waterline and fire hydrant in the abutting right-of-way on Kathleen Road. There is a 16-inch force main on the opposite side of the road and a lift station that sits at an elevation well below the lowest point on the site. There is a 6-inch reclaimed waterline on the north corner of the project site. All lines have capacity to serve the proposed government facility.

The Northwest Utility Service Area is permitted for 5,700,000 GPD of water capacity. Current flow is approximately 3,766,000 GPD leaving 1,934,000 GPD available. The system growth rate is approximately 120.5 gallons and 0.48 equivalent residential connections per day. At the current rate of growth there is over 43 years of potable water capacity remaining.

The Northwest Wastewater Treatment Plant is permitted to treat 3,082,000 GPD. Current flow is approximately 1,577,000 GPD leaving 1,505,000 GPD of uncommitted capacity. The system growth rate is approximately 54.8 gallons and 0.27 equivalent residential connection per day. At the current rate of growth, there are over 75 years of wastewater treatment capacity remaining.

Reclaimed water capacity is not tracked for concurrency. The capacity to serve reclaimed water is directly proportional to the amount of wastewater treatment. As more homes are connected to wastewater service, more are connected to reclaimed water for irrigation. This reduces demand on the potable water system which extends the capacity of the potable water facilities. Currently, the output at the wastewater treatment facility exceeds the demand for reclaimed because there are not as many reclaimed water customers relative to wastewater customers. The County has been running a pilot project in the Northwest to explore the feasibility of treating wastewater effluent to the level of drinking water. Reclaimed water service may be phased out in the future if new sources of potable water are needed to support growth in the area.

C. Planned Improvements:

The Northwest Utility Service Area is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of its master plan. The potential for vacant land to develop in the next 5 to 25 years is being evaluated and estimated. Staff are reviewing the potential to expand the utility service area to the north. Based on current data, there is ample capacity to serve the service area for many years. Much of the current service area is developed. Enhancements are underway to connect existing mobile home parks that were developed with small private water systems and package wastewater systems into the NWRUSA system. The growth in demand will follow transportation improvements such as the U.S. Highway 98 widening underway and the Kathleen Road widening that is soon to be under design.

Roadways/Transportation Network

There are more than adequate transportation facilities to accommodate an INST district to locate a government annex building at this location in a similar way to other County annex facilities. The surrounding roadway network has ample capacity remaining. There is a nearly complete sidewalk network, but mass transit services are not currently within reasonable reach in the area.

A. Estimated Demand

It is often difficult to estimate the impact of a Future Land Use Map change to an Institutional district because there are so many possible uses. Looking at the maximum buildout of the highest intensity possible is provided in the table to follow:

Table 5a

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
±29.62 acres <i>RL</i>	Demand as Currently Permitted	Proposed Change to 29.62 acres INST maximum effect	Percentage increase
Permitted Use	148 dwelling units	Office building (967,685 sq.ft @ 75% FAR)	
Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT)	1,156	21,860	1,891%
PM Peak Hour Trips	148	1,473	996%

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual rate of Government Office Complex = 89% new trips 22.59 AADT/1,000 sq.ft., 1.71 PM Peak Hour, Single-family Unit 7.81 AADT, 1 PM Peak hour

Current projection multipliers for government office traffic generation are 22.59 AADT per 1,000 square feet and 1.71 PM peak hour trips per 1,000 square feet with an estimated 89% new trips. This multiplier is based on numerous traffic studies collected overtime by the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE). Table 5a shows a substantial difference between the maximum development in an RL district versus an INST district. In reality, the County will not build a 967,685 square foot government complex on this site. That would be twice the size of the current courthouse in Bartow. Most likely, it will be the size of the Northeast Government Facility or smaller. It is on a similar size property and serves a larger population than this facility will serve. The analysis to follow in Table 5b uses the Northeast facility to estimate future traffic impacts and provides a spectrum between the current LDC Subdistrict Map designation and the maximum achievable through Planned Development.

Table 5b

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
±29.62 acres <i>Residential Low-1</i>	Demand as Currently Permitted <i>RL-1</i>	Maximum Permitted on the property <i>RL UGA</i>	Future Plan Government Facility
Permitted Intensity	29 units	148 dwelling units	73,508 sq.ft. Government Facility
Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT)	227	1,156	1,661
PM Peak Hour Trips	29	148	66

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual rate of Government Office Complex = 89% new trips 22.59 AADT/1,000 sq.ft., 1.71 PM Peak Hour

While the AADT numbers are high, the PM peak hour traffic is midway between the base development and the maximum allowed. A facility similar to the Northeast Government Facility

(73,508 sq.ft.) on U.S. Highway 17/92 will produce 66 PM peak hour trips. Based on the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) estimates, 25% of the traffic (17 vehicles) will be entering and 75% of the traffic (50 vehicles) will be exiting during the highest hour of a two-hour period. The majority of the exiting vehicles will be making a southbound (left turn) movement on Kathleen Road. The facility has not reached final design yet. When it does, a major traffic study will be required for a government facility larger than 33,200 square feet. Such study will provide more details and sharper projections into the potential traffic impacts. It will also indicate any necessary system improvements.

B. Available Capacity

There is available traffic capacity in the network to support a government facility at this location and much more. The weakest link is Kathleen Road north of Duff Road where it is only two lanes. Widening of this portion of Kathleen Road has been funded for design under the recently adopted state budget. The project will involve a northerly connection to U.S. Highway 98 north of the intersection of Rock Ridge Road.

Table 6

Link #	Road Name	Current Level of Service (LOS)	Available PM Peak Hour Capacity	Minimum LOS Standard
4167N	Kathleen Road (CR 35A) From: Galloway Road (CR 542A) To: Duff Road	C	731	D
4167S	Kathleen Road (CR 35A) From: Duff Road To: Galloway Road (CR 542A)	C	772	D
4035N	Kathleen Road (CR 35A) From: I-4 To: Galloway Road (CR 542A)	C	675	D
4035S	Kathleen Road (CR 35A) From: Galloway Road (CR 542A) To: I-4	C	720	D
4036N	Kathleen Road (CR 35A) From: Duff Road To: Socrum Loop Road (CR 35A)	C	195	D
4036S	Kathleen Road (CR 35A) From: Socrum Loop Road (CR 35A) To: Duff Road	C	174	D
4088E	Duff Road From: Kathleen Road (CR 35A) To: US Highway 98	C	331	D
4088W	Duff Road From: US Highway 98 To: Kathleen Road (CR 35A)	C	349	D
4165N	Galloway Road (CR 542A) From: 10 th Street To: Kathleen Road (CR 35A)	C	207	D
4165S	Galloway Road (CR 542A) From: Kathleen Road (CR 35A) To: 10 th Street	C	230	D
8084E	Deeson Road From: Hillsborough County line To: Kathleen Road (CR 35A)	C	609	D
8084W	Deeson Road From: Kathleen Road (CR 35A) To: Hillsborough County line	C	602	D
8077E	Campbell Road From: Kathleen Road To: Socrum Loop Road (CR 35A)	C	634	D
8077W	Campbell Road From: Socrum Loop Road (CR 35A) To: Kathleen Road	C	640	D

Source: Polk County Transportation Planning Organization, Concurrency Roadway Network Database April 13, 2026

This site is chosen for its transportation accessibility. Currently, it can be easily reached by the population it serves through a number of urban collector roadways operating above a “C” Level of Service. Table 6 provides a gauge of the area traffic at its peak hour, peak season level. In this location the major roads are projected to have ample capacity for the next five years. According to FDOT, there has been a 4.7% increase in traffic volume on Kathleen Road since 2022. Duff and

Deeson have seen a slight decline in traffic over the same period. Galloway has seen a 9.3% increase in traffic since 2022.

C. Roadway Conditions

Kathleen Road is a four-lane urban collector road with a center turn lane along the frontage of the property. It has a minimum of 110 feet of right-of-way until it narrows to two lanes north of Duff Road. It is rated in fair condition based on the pavement condition index (PCI) rating established by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Duff Road and North Galloway Road are two-lane urban collectors with substandard pavement widths below 24 feet and right-of-way widths below 80 feet in many locations. Their pavement is mostly rated in fair condition under the PCI with a few locations in poor condition. Deeson Road is a two-lane urban collector below standard for pavement width and right-of-way but is rated in good condition due to a more recent resurfacing in 2018.

D. Planned Improvements:

There are two roadway improvements currently planned in the five-year Community Investment Program (CIP) in this area. One drainage project has been completed in the unrecorded Rolling Oaks Estates neighborhood to the northwest of the site. Another is underway for the Willowridge community opposite the proposed government facility on Kathleen Road.

Table 7

Location	Fiscal Year CIP (construction cost)	Project Description
Kathleen Road at Deeson Road	2025-2026 (\$1,900,000)	Intersection improvements and signalization. Construction bids were received on May 13, 2026. CSX approval pending.
Kathleen Road at Campbell Road West	2025-2026 (TBD)	Intersection meets warrant for signalization as of March 2025. Meeting was held on 1/13/26 to discuss scope and fee. CSA sent to Procurement/CAO/CMO for review on 5/14/26.
Willowridge Sub-Division Outfall Improvements	2025-2026 (\$550,000)	Installing a "dry line" along Kathleen Road that will allow Maintenance Unit #5 to pump water out of the area in the event of another flooding event.

The County Sidewalk Advisory Committee annually assesses sidewalk needs and allocates allotted funding each year. There are several potential projects in the Kathleen area up for review.

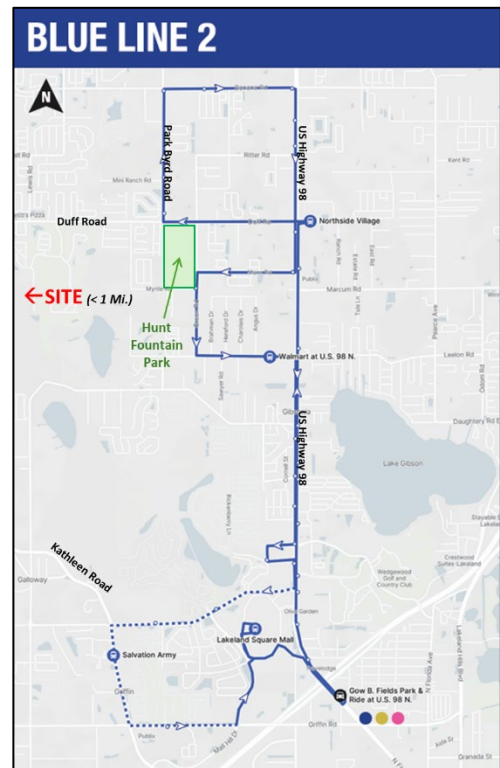
E. Mass Transit

The city of Lakeland has concerns that this facility is not located within the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD). The purpose of this facility is to provide government services closer to the center of growing population areas of the County. Unfortunately, there were no other properties within the current LAMTD that met all the land requirements for this facility. However, this facility can be a catalyst to LAMTD expansion into the area. Connecting mass transit to this facility before the opening is a priority for County staff. The Northeast Government Center is connected to a mass transit route that connects to Winter Haven, Lake Alfred, and Haines City terminals. While the Kathleen area is underserved by mass transit, the establishment of this new government center is an opportunity to provide transit to the area.

The closest mass transit stop is ± 2.4 miles from the site just north of Hunt Fountain Park on Park Byrd Road. There are sidewalks that connect with some gaps that require extra crossings. The Blue Line 2 connects to three transfer points and operates with one hour headways Monday through Friday.

F. Sidewalks

Kathleen Road has sidewalks on both sides which link all the surrounding neighborhoods to the site. Newer residential developments have internal sidewalks. The County has installed sidewalks connecting neighborhoods to Kathleen Elementary and Middle Schools and will continue to construct more through the annual sidewalk funds as priorities arise. Kathleen Road sidewalks extend from its origin in downtown Lakeland to Duff Road. This provides the proposed government complex with a pedestrian connection to commercial uses to the north and south. These include grocery, restaurants, general mercantile, medical, and personal services. Duff Road has one gap at Huntington Hills Country Club. Otherwise, there would be a complete connection between the proposed government complex and Hunt Fountain Park.



Park Facilities and Environmental Lands

Development of this site has some significant opportunities for providing some passive recreational facilities for nearby residents. The existing wet retention pond will need to be expanded to serve the government complex as well as the outfall from Kathleen Road that it currently contains. The likely drainage facility design will provide more wet retention that can lend itself to an aesthetic feature for walking/jogging paths and other facilities when it is combined with the amount of landscaping required under the County's standards.

The proposed Institutional (INST) Future Land Use Map district and the intention for a government complex does not typically increase the demand for parks and recreation facilities or environmental lands. The following data provides a description of the number of such facilities in the area.

A. Location:

- Hunt Fountain Sports Complex, 2020 Duff Road (2½ miles driving distance from site)
- Walker Road Park, 1285 Walker Road (6½ miles driving distance from site)
- Lake Gibson Boat Ramp, 4901 Lake Gibson Park (7¼ miles driving distance from site)
- Gator Creek Reserve, 9725 U.S. 98 North (6½ miles driving distance from site)

B. Services:

- Hunt Fountain Sports Complex – three (3) basketball courts, two (2) football fields, horse arena, pavilion, picnic area, playground, restrooms, four (4) soccer fields, two (2) tennis courts, five (5) tee-ball fields, two (2) softball/baseball fields, two (2) baseball fields.
- Walker Road Park – three (3) football fields, playground, restrooms, four (4) softball fields, walking paths/trails, wildlife viewing
- Lake Gibson Boat Ramp - Boat Launching Site, Picnic Area
- Gator Creek Reserve - Horseback Riding, Restrooms, Walking Paths/Trails, Wildlife Viewing

C. Environmental Lands:

Gator Creek Reserve is situated on 2,700 acres and has five miles of well-established trails taking hikers through marshes, cypress swamps and hardwood forests. Because of its close proximity to the Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve, the reserve is enjoyed by birders. Almost all of the birds found in the Green Swamp can also be found at Gator Creek. This includes summer tanager and Carolina chickadee. Hikers and nature enthusiasts may also see various snakes and alligators.

D. Planned Improvements:

The County is currently designing more football practice fields and has plan approval for a dog park for a new park facility on west Daughtry Road approximately 3½ miles driving distance from the proposed government facility.

Environmental Conditions

The site has few environmental limitations. Stormwater management will be the primary focus which will have to be managed through design of the facility. There are no real wetlands and flood hazard areas onsite. The existing retention pond that serves Kathleen Road and the outfall into it will have to be expanded. The soil is excellent for development, and the site elevation is high relative to surrounding properties. Threats to protected species are low given the amount of surrounding development and the historic use of property. There are no historic or archaeological resources threatened by development of the site. There are no direct threats to private or public well systems. The site development will connect to existing water and wastewater, and drainage will be diverted away from the only side where homes are on individual well systems. There are no nearby airports.

A. Surface Water

This area is part of a series of stressed and closed basins managed by the County Roads & Drainage Division through a comprehensive system of drainage structures that move the water from end to end of the four-lane portion of Kathleen Road. Development of the site will be required to design the stormwater system to contain up to a 100-year storm event onsite for a full 24-hour period. This site is split into two separate drainage basins (the Kathleen Drain and an isolated basin to the west). While the Kathleen Drain ultimately flows to the Hillsborough River it has constraints. It is also not easily reached from this site. This means that all of the site's drainage sits in a closed basin. LDC Section 740 requires onsite drainage in a closed basin to be designed to meet the full 100-year storm event for a full 24-hour period matching pre-development to post development

flows. The current drainage structure contains the 100-year standard for its section of Kathleen Road. The new and existing facilities will be combined.

The highest elevation on the site is 170 feet above mean sea level (MSL). With the exception of the existing stormwater pond that serves Kathleen Road, the lowest point is at an elevation of 146 feet MSL. The centerline of Kathleen Road is elevated above 148 MSL. The closest documented 100-year base flood elevation measurement is 131 MSL on Ross Creek to the south, according to Polk County/ FEMA GIS information.

It is likely that the entire site will be graded to a consistent elevation and the existing stormwater retention pond will be significantly expanded and additional drainage structures will be incorporated into the site design. Currently, the outfall from Kathleen Road flows into the existing stormwater retention pond on the site through a 36-inch pipe that collects drainage from the west side of the roadway and a 24-inch pipe collecting drainage from the east side. This pond holds the runoff from the road and other systems that outfall into it and assimilates it into the surficial aquifer through percolation or evaporation.

Drainage improvements are planned for the Willow Ridge Subdivision to provide greater outfall capacity. After Hurricane Milton, it was discovered the sub-division was lacking an adequate outfall to convey flooding away from several homes within the sub-division. The intent of this project is to install a "dry line" along Kathleen Road that will enable the County maintenance staff to pump water out of the area in the event of another flooding event. The estimated cost is \$500,000.

B. Wetlands/Floodplains

There are no flood hazard areas onsite. The stormwater pond that contains and treats runoff from Kathleen Road is labeled as a wetland based on modeling by the Water Management District and the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), but it is artificial. It was not identified as a wetland until after the road construction in 2014. This artificial system will be expanded onsite to treat the stormwater needs of the government center. This presents an opportunity to include this system within the design of the complex as an amenity for the people using the facility and surrounding community.

The closest flood hazard areas are within the Willow Ridge subdivision opposite Kathleen Road at an estimated elevation of 139 MSL according to LIDAR contours and the current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map. The development incurred significant street flooding during Hurricane Milton which was above a 100-year storm event. The government center is in a closed drainage basin which will require the entire site to be designed to accommodate at least a 100-year storm event onsite for a full 24-hour period. This means post development drainage volumes must match pre-development volumes onsite for the entire storm event. This level of stormwater management benefits surrounding properties by holding back more runoff after development than passed through the site before development. This is above and beyond the requirements of the Water Management district, city of Lakeland, and Hillsborough County.

C. Soils:

Most of the site is comprised of Candler Sand. This is an extremely well-drained soil and often located a significant distance from the surficial aquifer, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Soil Conservation Service. This type of soil is very malleable and conducive to both residential and non-residential development.

Table 8

Soil Name	Septic Tank Absorption Field Limitations	Limitations to small commercial buildings	% of Site (approximate)
Candler Sand	Slight	Slight	90%
Sparr Sand	Severe: wetness, poor filter	Moderate: wetness	10%

Source: Soil Survey of Polk County, Florida, USDA, Soil Conservation Service

Sparr Sand is not as conducive to development. This soil type is limited to the northeast corner of the site and is less than 10% of the property. It will not have any significant limitation to development of the site for a government center.

D. Protected Species

The property had been used for pasture and growing hay historically until 2023 when the agricultural exemption was no longer declared. According to Polk County Endangered Habitat Maps, the property is not located within a one-mile radius of an endangered species sighting. (Source: Florida Natural Areas Inventory, 2002, 2006 2011, 2015, &2021). There was a Bald Eagle's nest sighting in 2021 approximately 1½ miles to the southwest. It is beyond the required separation distance established by the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Regardless, a species study will be conducted prior to Level 2 Review (engineered plans). This will be necessary to receive funding under state and federal programs. The protected species with the highest potential for living on the site are Sand Skinks and the Gopher Tortoise. However, given the amount of existing development that surrounds the property and the lack of food sources onsite to support them, the potential is low for either species to be found onsite.

E. Historic and Archeological Resources

According to the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, there are no historical or archeological sites listed in the Florida Master Site File for the property. However, there have been historical resources discovered elsewhere in the Kathleen area. It is not likely that development of this property for a government center will adversely impact any of the known historical or archeological resources.

F. Wells (Public/Private)

Polk County Utilities provides potable water service to the site. The closest public wellfield is located at the Cherry Hill Water Treatment Plant on Raulerson Road over 1½ miles to the north. There are individual private wells serving some of the lots to the east of the site. This facility will have offices connected to central wastewater treatment. All surface water run-off will be diverted into retention ponds that will treat run-off before any offsite discharge. Drainage flows will be directed way from east to west because of the property's predominant slope.

G. Airports

There are no public use airports within seven miles of this site. The closest is Lakeland Linder International Airport over 9½ miles to the south. Zephyrhills Municipal Airport is over 10 miles to the northwest. There is a private airstrip for ultralight planes approximately 7½ miles to the west. There are no structures planned onsite above three floors. The height limit of INST-1 is 50 feet.

H. Conservation Lands

This site is intended to be central to the rapidly growing populations in the northwest portion of the County. As a result of the surrounding population growth that has occurred over the last 50 years, there have been few opportunities for environmental lands purchases and dedications. The closest conservation lands are farther to the north and east. The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) has purchased conservation easements on a vast amount of the Upper Hillsborough River basin over 2½ miles away. Additionally, the County has purchased significant amounts of land in the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern known as Gator Creek Reserve nearly four miles to the northeast. Huntington Hills Golf Club has a conservation easement 0.4 miles to the southeast.

Much of the land preserved by SWFWMD is not accessible to the public because they are easements and still under private control. The County's Gator Creek Reserve is open to the public for hiking and horseback riding.

I. Florida Wildlife Corridor

The property is not located within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Economic Factors:

This amendment request is the culmination of a lot of the County's growth management planning over the last 40 years. The County's Plan is centered around providing the highest levels of government services to the citizens and businesses in Polk County at the lowest expense to the taxpayers. Efficient and effective use of resources combined with analysis of consumer demand guides every element of the Comprehensive Plan. This site was chosen for the effective and efficient delivery of many government services to the most people who need them now as well as into the future.

The Polk County Board of County Commissioners adopted the Comprehensive Plan in 1991. A key part of the plan included significant capital improvements in the area northwest of the City of Lakeland to facilitate population growth. The Future Land Use Map designated this area for urban growth. Land was purchased in 1996 to construct a regional wastewater treatment plant that would consolidate a number of small treatment plants and provide more new lands with service. There were also a number of small water plants that were methodically either improved or consolidated into new more efficient facilities. Recently two more fire rescue stations have been added to the northwest public safety response network. Regional parks and recreation facilities have been expanded and added in the area. The School Board also added and expanded its facilities in the area. The widening of Kathleen Road from two to four lanes has induced demand for housing in the area through the reduction in travel time. These investments have paid off in a significant

amount of housing growth with many new developments providing the housing needs desired by the public. This next phase of capital investment is necessary to provide the residents of this area with higher levels of government services.

When Polk County had a population of less than 500,000, it was adequate to provide most of the needed government services in one central location in the County. However, as the population growth soared in the late 1990s and early 2000's, two things were realized: the center of the County population was no longer in Bartow and services needed to be provided closer to the people using them. This prompted the need to plan new locations for County services. At first, the Board and the other constitutional offices developed separate satellite offices through either land purchase or lease of existing buildings. To better serve the public, the Board and constitutional offices are banding together to provide joint facilities through more of a government campus concept such as the Polk Public Safety Complex that is the Headquarters for the Sheriff, Polk County Emergency Operations Center, Polk State College Public Safety School, Polk County Medical Examiner, and Polk County Utilities on Winter Lake Road (SR 540) between Lakeland and Winter Haven. This occurred recently with the Northeast Government Center located between Haines City and Lake Alfred north of Winter Haven on U.S. Highway 17/92. These facilities perform more efficiently and can also create a sense of place for the community they serve. In addition to this site and the ones mentioned, there is a similar facility planned in the east central area of the County between Lake Wales, Haines City, and Poinciana.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The first basic principle of the Comprehensive Plan states that the *“most effective and efficient delivery of public services requires that development occur where appropriate levels of service are provided.”* County government and constitutional officers can provide more efficient and effective services to the citizens of Polk County by decentralizing as many government functions as possible. Delivery of services closer to the people who need them is essential to better performance. While this is not concisely brought out in the last 35 years of the Comprehensive Plan, it is a key issue in the ongoing efforts to draft the plan for the next 25 years.

Many policies within the Comprehensive Plan are reviewed for consistency with an application. The most relevant policies for the proposed request are included in this section. The policy is first stated and then an analysis of how the request is provided to state that it may or may not be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The following sections from the plan are considered most pertinent to the Future Land Use Map designation requested:

- Section 2.102 – General Growth Management policies
- Section 2.105 – Urban Growth Area (UGA) policies
- Section 2.116 – Institutional

The table to follow provides a brief breakdown of Section 2.102 policies that are key to the land use decision.

Table 9

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
POLICY 2.102-A1: DEVELOPMENT LOCATION – Polk County shall promote contiguous and compact growth patterns through the development process to minimize energy costs, conserve land, water, and natural resources, minimize the cost of services, and prevent development patterns where tracts of land are by-passed in favor of development more distant from services and existing communities.	This site is the last undeveloped piece of available land in the area. It is infill development within an urban area. There were some potential sites farther north, but they would have been too far for servicing Lakeland residents.
POLICY 2.102-A2: COMPATIBILITY - Land shall be developed so that adjacent uses are compatible with each other, pursuant to the requirements of other Policies in this Future Land Use Element, so that one or more of the following provisions are accomplished: a. there have been provisions made which buffer incompatible uses from dissimilar uses; b. incompatible uses are made to be more compatible to each other through limiting the intensity and scale of the more intense use; c. uses are transitioned through a gradual scaling of different land use activities through the use of innovative development techniques such as a Planned Unit Development.	The size of the site and the need for more substantial drainage facilities will enable a design that buffers itself from neighboring residential uses and limits the intensity on the periphery for a gradual transition between the non-residential and residential uses. The government center will be designed so that the larger and more used buildings are located towards the center and closer to the roadway. The periphery will be designed like a passive park with walking trail and landscaping.
POLICY 2.102-A3: DISTRIBUTION - Development shall be distributed throughout the County consistently with this Future Land Use Element so that the public utility, other community services, and public transit and transportation systems can be efficiently utilized; and compact, high-density and intensity development is located where urban services can be made available.	The site will be connected to Polk County public water (potable and reclaimed) and wastewater services. The area is mostly built out. The Kathleen is not within the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD) area is therefore underserved by transit. The location of this government center will be a catalyst for expanding transit routes to Kathleen. Efforts will need to be made in the future to expand LAMTD to help this area.
POLICY 2.102-A4: TIMING - The development of land shall be timed and staged in conjunction with the cost-effective and efficient provision of supporting community services which, at a minimum, shall require compliance with the Plan's Level of Service requirements and the County's concurrency management system.	This site was recently purchased by Polk County. The INST designation will allow for government facilities to be provided where they can serve the most people. As development expands in the area, even more citizens will be served by it.
POLICY 2.102-A15: ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES - The County will direct new growth to areas where adequate public facilities exist or are planned; and ensure that essential services are in place to provide for efficient, cost-effective response times from the Fire Department, Sheriff's Department, and Emergency Management Service (EMS).	This site is located across Kathleen Road from a recently constructed fire rescue station.

The table to follow provides a brief breakdown of Section 2.105 Urban Growth Area (UGA) policies that are most pertinent to this request.

Table 10

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
POLICY 2.105-A1: DESCRIPTION - Urban-Growth Areas shall: - complement the TSDA in guiding growth, while promoting orderly and compact development; - be located contiguous to the TSDAs or a municipality as they represent the expansion areas; - be supported by existing or planned urban type services that are programmed for the 25-year planning horizon; - be those areas where the availability of infrastructure and other community facilities and services, including, but not limited to mass transit and other transportation alternatives, utilities, public safety, recreational and educational services, promotes and supports the location of higher density and intensity compact, mixed use development in close proximity to the development in the adjacent TSDAs; - include development criteria that: - promote the development of walkable communities which include a balance between employment opportunities, mix of complementary uses and activities, and a range of housing opportunities; - improve access to employment areas, schools, shopping and recreational opportunities; - support the preservation of open space and natural areas; - reduce capital and operating cost for the provision of infrastructure and public services.	This request is for a facility that will provide access to government services of all types. The purpose is to increase the availability of infrastructure and other community facilities and services.
POLICY 2.105-A5: DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA FOR URBAN GROWTH AREAS - Development within the Urban Growth Areas shall conform to the following criteria as further specified in the Land Development Code:	
a. connect to centralized potable water	There is a 16-inch potable main in the property frontage of Kathleen Road provided by Polk County Utilities. The Conty Government complex will connect to public water.
b. connect to sanitary sewer systems if available;	There is a 16-inch force main on the opposite side of Kathleen Road with a lift station at the intersection of Willow Ridge Drive and Kathleen Road where the site entrance will likely line up.
c. incorporate design features that promote healthy communities and green building practices, as established in Section 2.1251, Community Design, of this element;	It is likely that a walking track and possibly a dog park may be incorporated into the design of the government center.
d. implement “Complete Street” and “Conservation Development” principles as established under Section 2.1251, Community Design, of this element;	Kathleen Road is designed as a complete street with sidewalks, drainage, water lines wastewater lines, and reclaimed water lines. There is also ample space for major electrical transmission lines. The east side of the road has no overhead powerlines. Therefore, a full Type “A” Landscape buffer can be installed with canopy trees every 50 feet.
e. integrate pedestrian-oriented features, including sidewalks, trails or walkways into every development including appropriate pedestrian shelters or awnings;	There are already sidewalks. The government center will have an internal sidewalk network as well with benches placed throughout.

Table 10

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
f. provide access to civic space, parks, green areas, and open space and other amenities;	This site is intended for civic space.
g. be supported by public safety (i.e., fire, EMS and law enforcement);	There is a fire rescue station across the street with ambulance. A courthouse annex is proposed. There will be bailiffs from the Sheriff's Office.
h. have access to public schools, and	There is an Elementary School and middle school within less than a ½ mile walking distance from the site.
i. provide connectivity with adjacent uses within the TSDA, and facilitate connectivity between the TSDA and other urban centers and the rural development areas.	This location was chosen because it facilitates connectivity to urban city areas, TSDAs, UGAs, SDAs and RDAs in the northwest portion of the County.
j. encourage the inclusion of a variety of housing choices and mixed uses; and	This is a non-residential use. However, there is likely to be a building division annex located in the government center which will provide better service for obtaining housing permits in the area.

The table to follow provides a brief breakdown of Section 2.116 Institutional policies that are most pertinent to this request.

Table 11 – Institutional Policies

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
POLICY 2.116-A1: CHARACTERISTICS - Institutional areas are primarily characterized by private and public-service structures.	This CPA will enable the development of a County government annex facility.
POLICY 2.116-A3: LOCATION CRITERIA - Institutional development may occur within the lands designated Institutional on the Future Land Use Map Series, and in any other land use designation throughout the County, unless further prohibited by the Land Development Code the County in accordance with Section 163.3201(1), FS. The following factors shall be taken into consideration when determining the appropriateness of establishing new Institutional areas on the Future Land Use Map Series, or in approving the location for an institutional use not located within lands classified as Institutional:	a. This site has frontage on a urban collector road. b. The closest residential structure is approximately 28 feet away. c. It meets the criteria enumerated in Policy 2.102-A9 and Policy 2.102-A10. See pages 10 thru 18 of the staff report. d. This will be for shared government services offices including Clerk of Courts, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Sheriff, and

Table 11 – Institutional Policies

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
a. Accessibility to roadways, with consideration being given to regional transportation issues for large-scale institutional developments having a regional market. b. Proximity to incompatible land uses, which is dependent upon the intensity of the institutional use (buffering may be provided to mitigate adverse impacts). c. The locational criteria enumerated in Policy 2.102-A9 and Policy 2.102-A10. d. Proximity to similar and compatible uses providing opportunities for shared facilities. e. Plans of the School Board and other public service agencies with jurisdiction in the County	Supervisor of Elections in addition to Board of County Commissioners services. e. The closest school is just to the south and east of the site on Wheeler Road. There is a fire rescue station across the street to the west.
POLICY 2.116-A4: DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA - Institutional development shall conform to the following criteria: a. Institutional uses include, but are not limited to: private and public-service structures. These commonly include: 1. public and private educational facilities; 2. government-administration buildings; 3. public-safety structures (e.g. police and fire); 4. cultural facilities (e.g. libraries, museums, and performing-arts theaters); 5. health-care facilities e.g. hospitals, medical centers, clinics, nursing homes, adult day care centers, group homes, group living facilities, emergency shelters, residential treatment facilities.	The County acquired this property for the sole purpose of strategically locating a government services center to serve the northwest portion of the County.
b. Large institutional areas should be designed so that the more intensive uses are at the center of the development, with less intensive uses near the fringes.	The site is just under 30 acres. The most intensive uses will be in the center of the square property with buffering an passive recreational facilities on the perimeter.
c. Prior to site planning, the School Board, independent special districts and other governmental entities shall communicate to one another to pursue potential colocation of government services.	Polk County recently purchased the site. One of the attributes of this location is proximity to other government services such as the nearby elementary and middle school.
d. Commercial uses within institutional areas mapped on the Future Land Use Map Series shall be primarily for the purpose of serving the institutions within the area and shall be limited to a scale appropriate for that purpose.	This site is purposely located where it is accessible to the majority of the public needing to use it. It fronts a four-lane road that provides an expedient link to citizens in the greater Lakeland area and northwest portion of the County.
e. Institutional sites shall be designed to provide for: 1. Adequate parking to meet the present and future demands of the use. 2. Buffering where the effects of lighting, noise, odors, and other such factors would adversely affect adjacent land uses. Parking lots, loading areas, dumpsters, utilities and air conditioning units, signage, etc. are examples of facilities which may require special buffering provisions.	The site has adequate space for the required parking spaces for the proposed government office buildings. Buffering design will incorporate passive recreation facilities to achieve the goals of compatibility and service to the nearby community.

Table 11 – Institutional Policies

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
f. Multi-family residential uses may be permitted at densities up to and including 15 dwelling units per acre as part of a Planned Development. Residential uses may be permitted according to the following: 1. Residential uses shall only be established adjacent to or in conjunction with a university, college, vocational school or other similar educational institution. 2. Residential development shall be intended to primarily meet the housing needs for students and facility members of the nearby educational institution.	No multifamily uses are proposed for this facility. This site is intended to provide government buildings to house Board of County Commissioner's services such as building permits, customer service for water, wastewater, garbage, drainage, road maintenance, and public meeting facilities. It will also provide office space for services from the constitutional offices such as the Clerk of Courts, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector, Sheriff, and Supervisor of Elections.
g. Recreational uses accessory to the institutional use or compatible with the location of the institutional district.	There will be some passive recreational uses included in the design of the government center.

Urban Sprawl Analysis

The following table lists the criteria are the primary indicators of urban sprawl per Florida Statutes Policy 2.102-A11. Staff find that this proposed map change does not promote urban sprawl as defined in Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes.

Table 12 Urban Sprawl Criteria

Urban Sprawl Criteria	Sections referenced in this report
a. <i>Promotes substantial amounts of low-density, low-intensity, or single use development in excess of demonstrated need.</i>	No, this facility will promote higher density development that has occurred in north Lakeland and the northwest portion of the County and will continue into the future.
b. <i>Allows a significant amount of urban development to occur in rural areas.</i>	No, north Lakeland and the Northwest portion of the County have a significant amount of urban development to be served.
c. <i>Designates an urban development in radial, strip isolated, or ribbon patterns emanating from existing urban developments.</i>	No, this develops one of the last remaining tracts in the area.
d. <i>Fails to adequately protect and conserve natural resources and other significant natural systems.</i>	No, this site has no significant natural resources or natural systems.
e. <i>Fails to adequately protect adjacent agricultural areas.</i>	No, this site has very little agricultural value given the amount of residential development surrounding it.
f. <i>Fails to maximize existing public facilities and services.</i>	No, this brings needed public facilities and services to a growing area of the County.
g. <i>Fails to minimize the need for future facilities and services.</i>	No, there is an unmet demand for public facilities and services in this growing area of the County.
h. <i>Allows development patterns that will disproportionately increase the cost of providing public facilities and services.</i>	No, this will bring down the cost to the consumers of public facilities and services by bringing these facilities closer to the center of the population served by them.

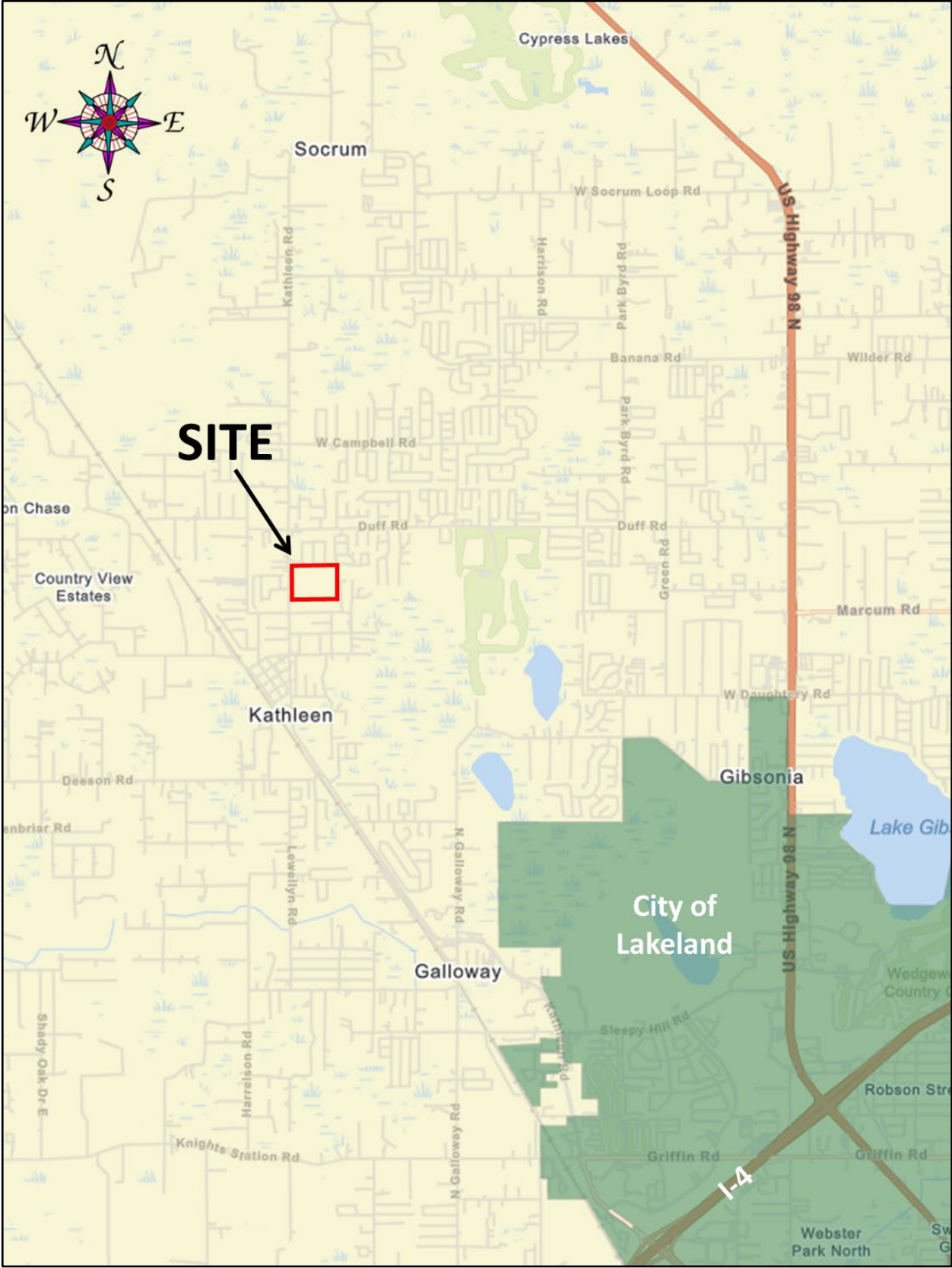
Table 12 Urban Sprawl Criteria

Urban Sprawl Criteria	Sections referenced in this report
i. <i>Fails to provide a clear separation between urban and rural uses.</i>	No, this is central to many existing urban services such as schools, water, wastewater, public safety, and transportation facilities.
j. <i>Discourages infill development or redevelopment of existing neighborhoods.</i>	No, this will encourage infill development or redevelopment of existing neighborhoods.
k. <i>Fails to encourage an attractive and functional mixture of land uses.</i>	No, this complements the mixture of government, residential, and commercial uses in the area.
l. <i>Will result in poor accessibility among linked or related land uses.</i>	No, this will create greater accessibility for government services in this portion of the County than before required journey to downtown Lakeland or Bartow.
m. <i>Results in the loss of a significant amount of open space.</i>	No, this land would have likely been developed for single-family residential development with only the required minimum 20% open space.

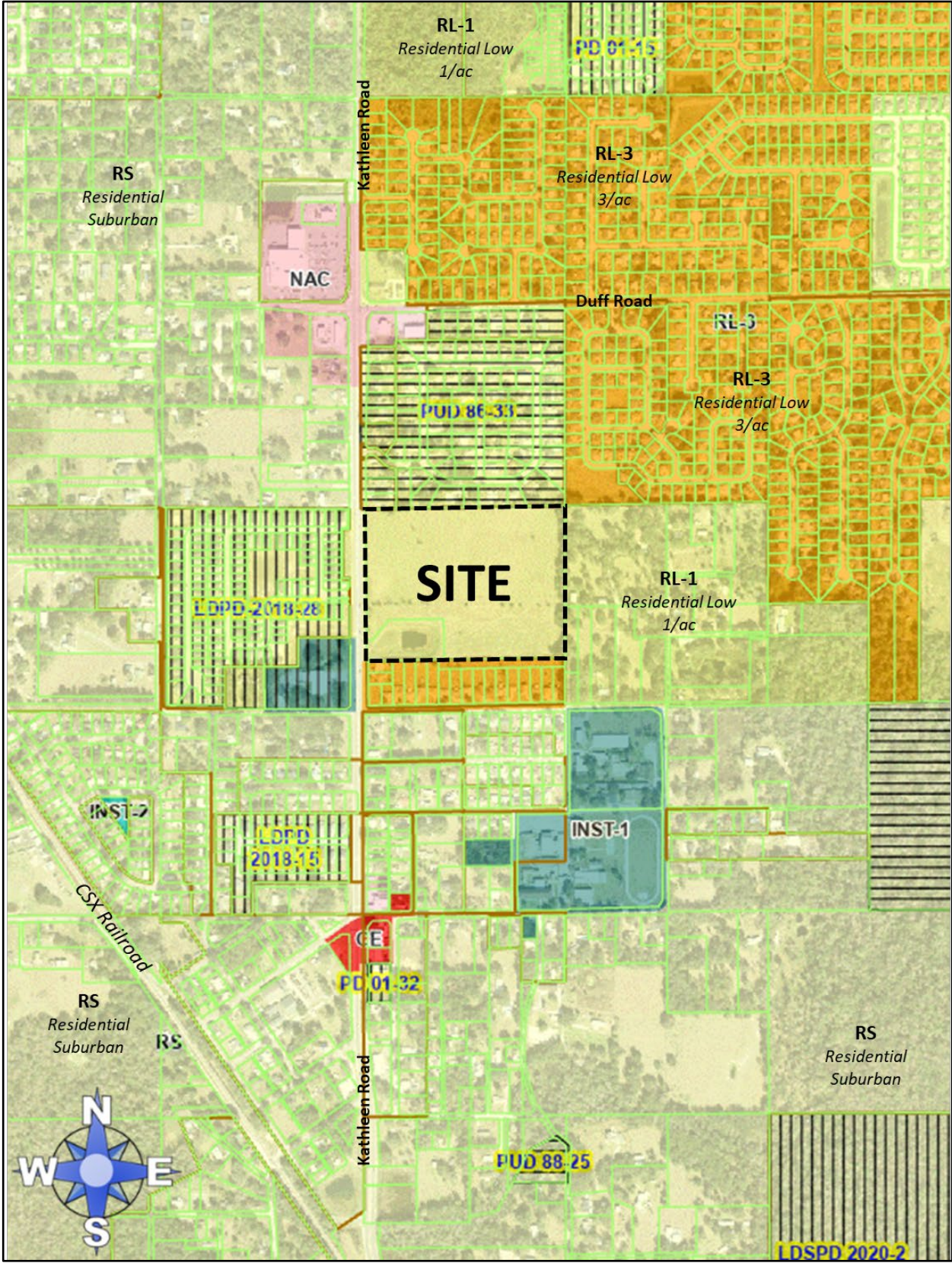
Comments from other Agencies: Polk County Land Development Engineering, Polk County Utilities, Polk County Roads & Drainage Division, Polk County Real Estate Services Division, and the Polk County Public Safety Division contributed to the drafting of this report.

Exhibits:

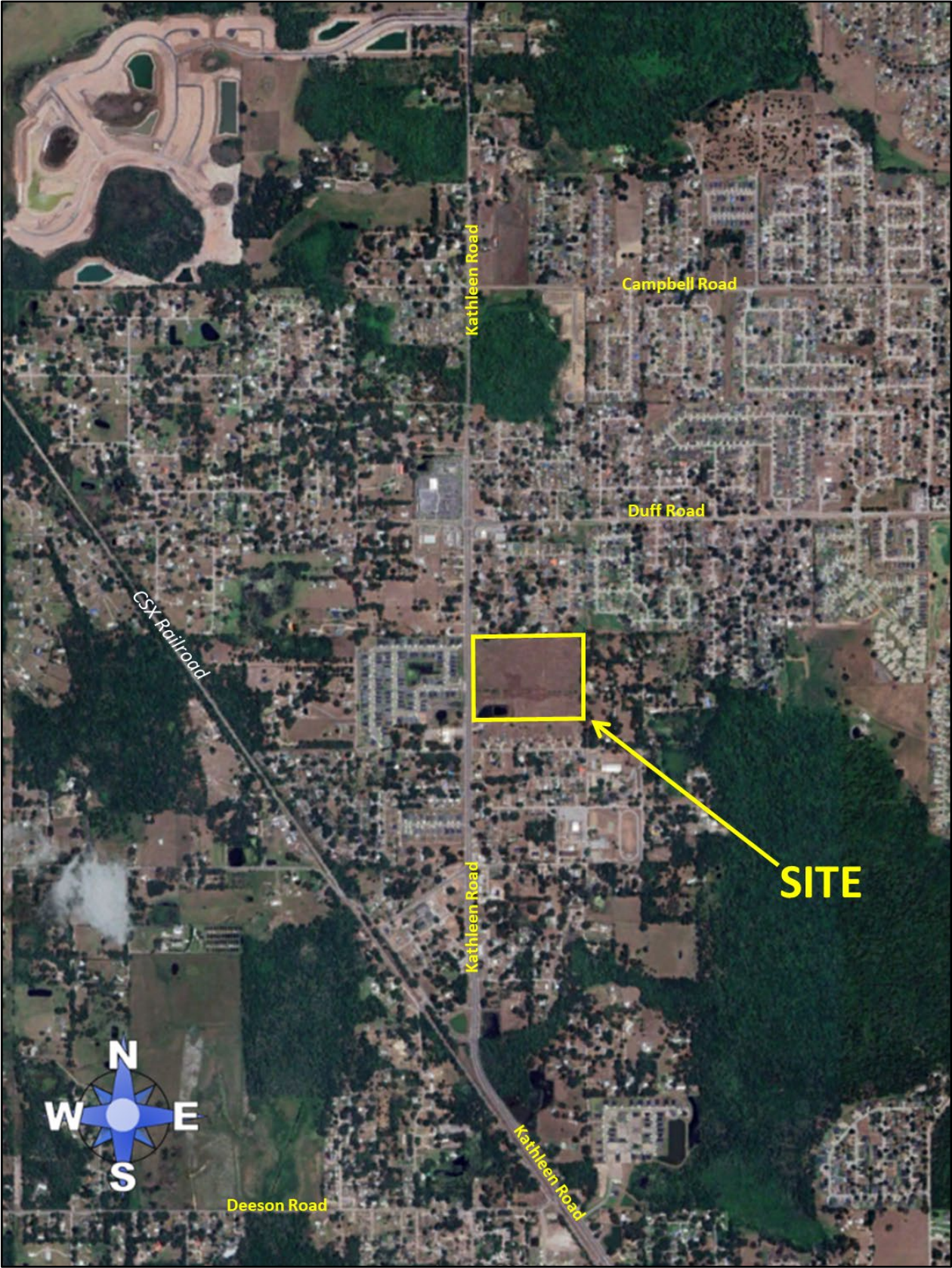
- Exhibit – 1 Location Map
- Exhibit – 2 Future Land Use Map
- Exhibit – 3 2025 Satellite Photo (Context)
- Exhibit – 4 2025 Satellite Photo (Close-up)
- Exhibit – 5 District Use Comparison Table
- Exhibit – 6 Current and Future Government Center Locations



Location Map



Future Land Use Map



2025 Satellite Photo (Context)

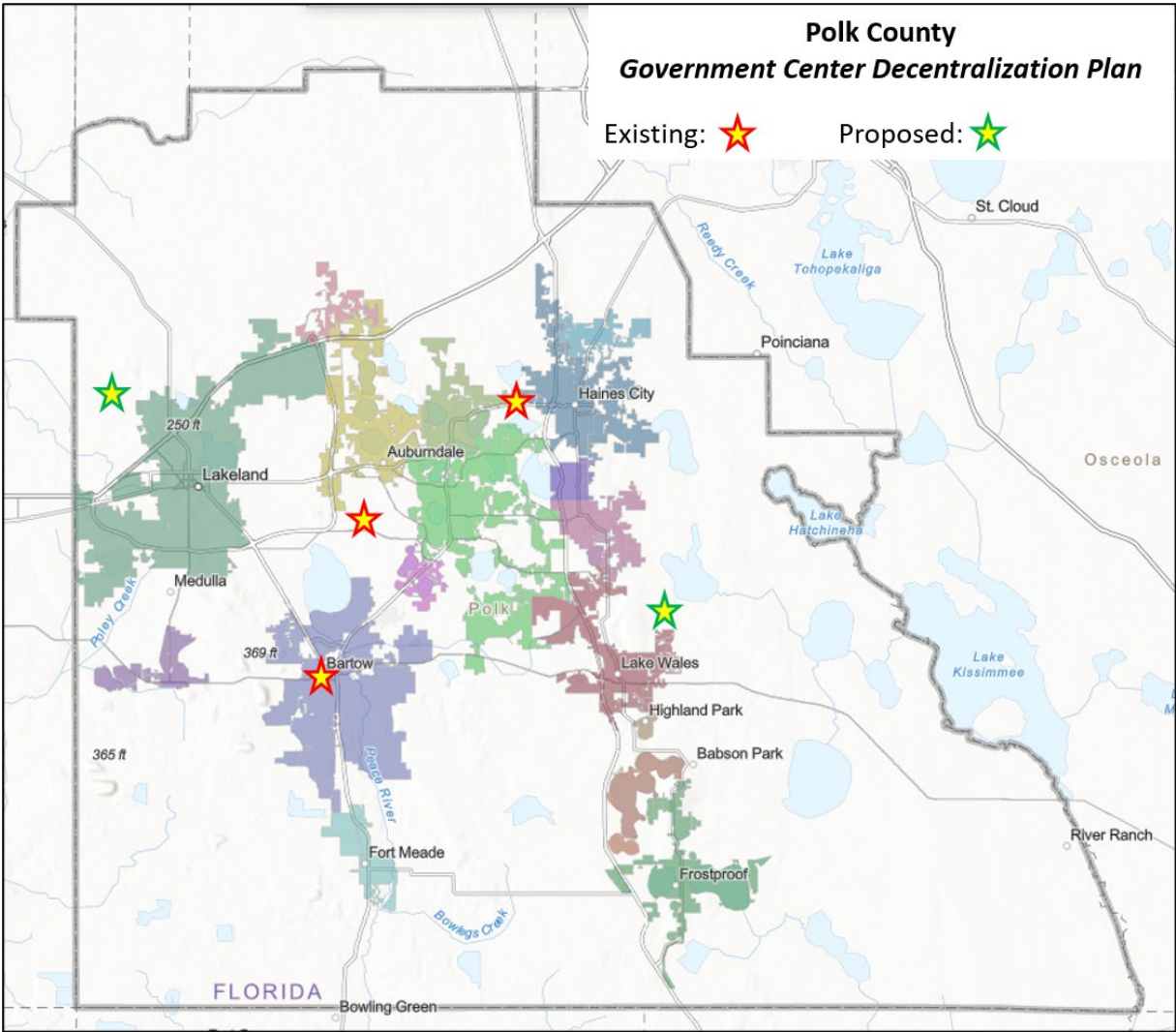


2025 Satellite (Close-up)

Comparison of Permitted and Conditional Uses*

District	Permitted Uses	Administrative Review	Public Hearing(s) Required
RL-1 <i>Residential Low-1</i>	Single-family Residential Class I Utilities	Small Group Homes (≤6 patients) Mobile Homes Residential Infill Development Golf Course Emergency Shelter (≤6 patients) Passive Recreation Low Intensity Recreation Elementary Schools Middle Schools Nurseries and Greenhouses Class II Utilities Livestock Auction Veterinary Service	Duplex Group Living Facility (≥15 patients) Mobile Home Park Mobile Home Subdivision Short-term Rental Planned Development Residential Based Mixed-Use Dev. Adult Day Care (≤6 patients) Agricultural Support, Off-Site Bed and Breakfast Childcare Center Communication Towers Community Center Cultural Facility Emergency Shelter (6> patients) Government Facility Helistop High Intensity Recreation Vehicle Oriented Recreation Religious Institution Riding Academies High School Leisure/Special Interest School Class III Utilities
INST-1 <i>Institutional-1</i>	Childcare Center Government Facility Lodges and Retreats Elementary School Middle School Leisure/Special Interest School Production Studio Transit Facility	Group Living Facility (7+ clients) Adult Day Care Center (7+ clients) Cemetery Clinics & Medical Offices Community Center Communication Tower Cultural Facility Emergency Shelter (7+) Heliports & Helistops Nursing Home Offices & Office Park High & Low Intensity Recreation Vehicle Oriented Recreation Religious Institution Research & Development Solar Power Generation Facility	Multifamily Housing (dormitories) Gas Station (fleet) Hospital Lime Stabilization Facility Residential Treatment Facility High School Residential Treatment Facility Vo-Tech, College or University

*Uses with the same level of review in both categories such as mining or agricultural uses which is preempted by State Law.



Current and Future Government Center Locations