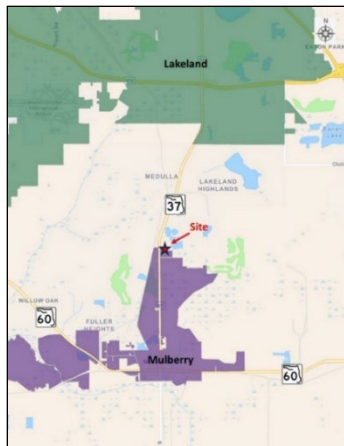
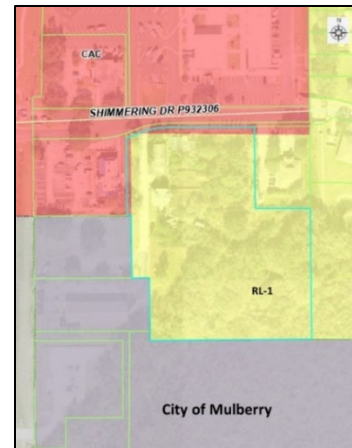


# POLK COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

<b>DRC Date:</b>	August 28, 2025
<b>Planning Commission Date:</b>	June 3, 2026
<b>BoCC Dates:</b>	July 21, 2026
<b>Applicant:</b>	Dario Cardona, Clark, Commercial Park, LLC
<b>Level of Review:</b>	Level 4 Review, Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment
<b>Case Number and Name:</b>	LDCT-2026-5 Shimmering Drive LDC Text Amendment
<b>Request:</b>	An Applicant-initiated LDC Text Amendment text amendment to Appendix E adding for an activity center plan. This request is related to a Small Scale Comprehensive Plan map amendment (LDCPAS-2025-24) from Residential Low (RL) to Community Activity Center-X (CAC) on 3.87± acres in the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA).
<b>Location:</b>	The site is located on the south side of Shimmering Drive (Shepherd Road) east of Strickland Avenue, east of SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.), west of Clark Lake and north of W. Carter Road, in Section 25, Township 29, Range 23
<b>Property Owner:</b>	Commercial Park, LLC
<b>Parcel Size:</b>	3.87± acres (232925-000000-033030)
<b>Development Area/Overlays:</b>	Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA), Transit Corridors and Centers Overlay, Corridor
<b>Future Land Use:</b>	Residential Low (RL)
<b>Nearest Municipality</b>	Mulberry
<b>DRC Recommendation:</b>	Approval
<b>Planning Commission Vote:</b>	Pending
<b>Case Planner:</b>	Robert Bolton, Planner III



**Location**



**Current Future Land Use**

## **Summary of Analysis**

This is an applicant request for a Land Development Code (LDC) Text Amendment (LDCT-2026-5) to add an Activity Center Plan. The applicant has a related request for a Small Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LDCPAS-2025-24) to change the Future Land Use Designation from Residential Low (RL) in the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA) on 3.87+/- acres. The site is located in the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA) located on the south side of Shimmering Drive (Shepherd Road) east of Strickland Avenue, east of SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.), west of Clark Lake and north of W. Carter Road, in Section 25, Township 29, Range 23.

## **Compatibility Summary**

The proposed land use change is compatible with the growth that has occurred in this area. The subject site is located within the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA) and the TCCO Corridor. The site is approximately 300 feet east of the SR 37 (S. Florida Avenue) and Shepherd Road at the southern entrance to the Imperial Christina Plaza. Shimmering Drive was developed with the original construction of the Imperial Christina Plaza as a southern entrance. With the development of the Twin Lake at Christina, the southern entrance to the shopping plaza became the entrance road to the residential development. Around the same time as the residential subdivision began development the subject site began operation as a plant nursery and operated as such until the past several years. Over the past several decades the southern expansion of unincorporated Lakeland has moved south into this area and the City of Mulberry has annexed and approved development north into this area.

Imperial Christina Plaza, a retail shopping center that includes uses from a grocery store, restaurants, and personal service providers. North of the shopping center is the Century Avenues apartment complex. At the eastern end of Shimmering Drive is the Twin Lake at Christina an 89-lot residential subdivision developed between 2000 and 2003. Adjacent to the east is a dental office developed in 2009. West of the site is a Burger King which was constructed in 1986. South of the Burger King is the City of Mulberry with a zoning of Highway Commercial.

The site has historically operated as a non-residential use property along side of the Twin Lake at Christina residential development. Shimmering Drive, from US 37 (S. Florida Avenue) to the entrance of Twin Lake at Christina has historically operated as an entrance to the retail center, or as a local commercial road with both uses working harmoniously together.

## **Infrastructure and Urban Services Summary**

The proposed CPA is not anticipated to degrade the Level-of-service (LOS) standard for transportation, the locally zoned schools, fire, EMS and sheriff public safety resources. The subject site will be connected to Polk County Utilities. There are no wells on the subject site.

## **Environmental Conditions Summary**

The subject's 3.87± acre site is comprised of an estimated 2.16 acres of uplands and an estimated 1.71 acres of wetlands. Preliminary proposed site plans indicate that the wetlands will not be impacted. The site is subject LDC Section 620 Wetland Protection. The proposed request is not anticipated to have a negative impact upon the environmental features present on site. The subject site is not located within the one-mile radius of a protected animal and plant species sighting. The site does have wetlands and a flood zone that would need to be address at the time of development. The project site is not located within an Airport Impact District and is not associated with any historical or archeological sites.

The subject site is not located within an airport height notification zone, there are no historical or archeological resources, and there are no indicated protected species. The subject site has no surface water, wetlands or flood zones, the soils are not of a problematic type.

### **Comprehensive Plan Policies Considered**

- Section 2.102 – General Growth Management policies
- Section 2.104 – Transit Supportive Development Areas (TSDA) policies
- Section 2.110-E – Community Activity Center policies

### **Findings of Fact**

#### **Request and Legal Status**

- This is an applicant-initiated request for a LDC Text Amendment text amendment to Appendix E adding an Activity Center Plan. This request is related to LDCPAS-2025-24, a request to change the Future Land Use (FLU) designation from Residential Low (RL) to Community Activity Center (CAC) in the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA).
- The request is an expansion of an existing Community Activity Center (CAC). The CAC district is predominantly to the north of the site and is comprised of approximately 93.5 acres, and predominantly on the east side of SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.).
- The subject site is located on the south side of Shimmering Drive (Shepherd Road) east of SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.), west of Clark Lake and north of W. Carter Road, north of the City of Mulberry, in Section 25, Township 29, Range 23.
- The subject site is located within the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA).
- The proposed FLU change totals approximately 3.87± acres.
- A community meeting was hosted by the applicant on Thursday May 28, 2026 at 5455 S. Florida Avenue, Lakeland. The meeting included information of the expansion of the Community Activity Center (CAC) and development of retail/office strip centers.

#### **Compatibility**

- The subject's surrounding uses are as follows:
  - North of the subject site is existing Community Activity Center (CAC)
  - East of the subject site is the Twin Lakes at Christina residential development.
  - South of the subject site is vacant in the City of Mulberry with a Conservation zoning.
  - West of the subject site is Community Activity Center (CAC) in the County and C-2 Highway Commercial in the City of Mulberry.
- The request is an expansion of an existing Community Activity Center (CAC). The CAC district is predominantly to the north of the site and is comprised of approximately 93.5 acres, and predominantly on the east side of SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.).

- The greater Shimmering Drive/Sheperd Road and US 37 (S. Florida Avenue) intersection has become a center for commercial uses, with the western side of US 37 (S. Florida Avenue) filling in the last vacant properties fronting US 37 between Ewell Road and Shepherd Road.
- The city of Mulberry is adjacent to the south of the site. The City of Mulberry land has a Zoning of Conservation.
- The subject site is located within the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA).
- The site is located approximately 300 feet east of the intersection of SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.) and Shepherd Road, both of which are four (4) lane divided Urban Collector roads..
- The request is related to LDCPAS-2025-24 a Small Scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the Future Land Use Designation from Residential Low (RL) to Community Activity Center (CAC) in the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA) on 3.87+/- acres.

### **Infrastructure**

- The zoned schools for the site are Scott Lake Elementary, Lakeland Highlands Middle School, and George Jenkins High School.
- First responder Fire/ response is from Polk County Fire Rescue Station 2, 2523 Ewell Rd, Lakeland with a travel distance of 2.7+/- miles.
- The subject site is within the Southwest District Commend Area for the Sheriff's office which is located at 4120 US 98 South, Lakeland.
- The subject site is within Southwest Regional Service District for water and wastewater. The Polk County Utilities reports that development require upsizing of the 8" water main.
- The site is located on the south side of Shimmering Drive, a local private road, approximately 300 feet east of the SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.) and Sheperd Road intersection. SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.) is a 4-lane divided roadway and Sheperd Road is a 4-lane divided roadway.
- The subject site is located on a private road, sidewalks are not required. SR 37 (S. Florida Ave.) and Sheperd Road both have sidewalks in both sides of the respective roads.
- Citrus Connection's nearest route is the Lime Flex Line along S. Florida Avenue with the nearest stop approximately 0.2 miles north along S. Florida Ave. if front of the Imperial Chistina Plaza.
- The nearest parks are the Carter Road Park. The closest environmental site is the Lakeland Highland Scrub Trail.

## **Environmental**

- The subject site is approximately 159 feet above sea level, with the lowest parts of the property located near the center and northern area of the property with an elevation of approximately 157 feet.
- The subject site, 3.87± acres, includes wetlands on the southern portion of the site. Development will require a formal wetland delineation. For purposes of this analysis a review of the Polk County Data view and wetland layer it is estimated that the site has 1.71± acres of wetlands, or 2.16± acres of uplands. See Exhibit 6
- According to the soil survey by the United States Department of Agriculture the subject site is made up of Hydraqents, clayey, and Arents, 0 to 5 percent slopes. Future development of the site will be subject to Section 2.303: “Soils” of the County’s Comprehensive Plan (in conjunction with the Land Development Code) which requires all development to implement Best Management Practices based on the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Florida Development Manual.
- According to Polk County Endangered Habitat Maps, the subject site is not located within a one-mile radius of an observed a protected animal species sighting (Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2015). However, the applicant will be required to submit a biological walk-over as part of the Level-2 review process.
- The site is not located within the Potential Network Connections area of the Polk Green District Comprehensive Plan Map Series. Approximately 1.3 miles southwest of the site, is a 46+ acre Conservation Easement recorded between Imperial Lakes Properties, LLC and National Farmers Trust, Inc., OR Book 9658, Page 1068.
- The site is not located within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.
- There are no known archeological or historical resources on the subject site per data from the Florida State Historical Commission.
- The subject site is not within a Wellfield Protection district; however, the nearest Wellfield Protection District is approximately 115 feet west of the site..

## **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 - 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 2.104-A5: DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA -Development within the Transit Supportive Development Areas shall conform to the following criteria as further specified by the Land Development Code:
    - a. provide access to transit facilities;
    - b. connect to centralized potable water and sanitary sewer systems;
    - c. incorporate design features that promote healthy communities and green building practices, as established in Section 2.1251, Community Design, of this element;
    - d. implement "Complete Street" and "Conservation Development" principles as established under Section 2.1251, Community Design, of this element;
    - e. integrate pedestrian-oriented features, including sidewalks, trails or walkways into every development including appropriate pedestrian shelters or awnings;
    - f. provide access to civic space, parks, green areas, and open space and other amenities;
    - g. be supported by public safety (i.e., fire, EMS and law enforcement);
    - h. have access to public schools;
    - i. provide connectivity with adjacent uses within the TSDA, and facilitate connectivity between the TSDA and other urban centers and the rural development areas.
    - j. encourage the inclusion of a variety of housing choices, other than single family detached homes, townhomes, condominiums, and residential units in mixed use buildings by establishing minimum densities that preclude the exclusive use of single family detached units within designated areas as established in Policy 2.104-A7.
  - POLICY 2.110-E1: CHARACTERISTICS - Community Activity Centers are intended to accommodate the shopping needs of residents living within the community and generally contain a shopping center and other commercial and office uses within close proximity. General (approximate) characteristics of Community Activity Centers are:
    - Usable Area: Over 20 acres to 60 acres
    - Gross Leasable Area (GLA): 150,000 to 500,000 square feet
    - Minimum Population Support: 20,000 to 80,000 people
    - Market-Area Radius: 2 miles or more

- Typical Leading Tenant: Variety, Discount, or Department Store
  - Other Typical Tenants: Supermarket, Theater, Offices, Restaurant, Drug Store, Professional Services.
- POLICY 2.110-E3: LOCATION CRITERIA - Community Activity Centers shall be located at the intersections of arterial and/or collector roads, and preferably with the capability to accommodate a fixed route mass-transit line. There shall be the following traveling distance, on public roads, between the center of a Community Activity Center and the center of any other Community Activity Center, or other higher-level Activity Center, Linear Commercial Corridor, or Commercial Enclave providing for the same community shopping needs:
    - a. Four (4) miles within the TSDA and UGA
    - b. Six (6) miles within the SDA and UEA
 This required separation may be reduced if:
    - a. The higher-level Activity Center, Linear Commercial Corridor or Commercial Enclave within the required distance separation is over 80% developed; or,
    - b. The proposed Community Activity Center market-area radius, minimum population support is over 50,000 people.
  - POLICY 2.110-E4: DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA - Development within a Community Activity Center shall conform to the following criteria:
    - a. Community Activity Centers shall have frontage on, or direct access to, an arterial or collector roadway, or a frontage road or service drive which directly serves an arterial or collector roadway.
    - b. Different uses within a Community Activity Center shall incorporate the use of frontage roads or shared ingress/egress facilities wherever practical.
    - c. Adequate parking shall be provided to meet the demands of the uses, and interior traffic-circulation patterns shall facilitate the safe movement of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.
    - d. Buffering shall be provided 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.
    - e. New residential shall be limited to Special Residential and shall not exceed 30 percent of the total area of the community activity center. Location of residential units above stores shall be encouraged by not considering such units against the maximum residential percentages.
    - f. There shall be no limits on the mix of office and commercial uses within a Community Activity Center.
    - g. The maximum floor area ratio shall not exceed 0.30 unless developed as a Planned Development.
    - h. Planned Developments within the Community Activity Center may be permitted a maximum floor area ratio up to 1.0 and a maximum residential density of 25 dwelling units per acre. Intensity and density increases shall only be awarded to innovative, efficient, and compatible Planned Development proposals that are consistent with the general district characteristics and are located within the TSDA and UGA. The Land Development Code shall establish specific development standards and criteria for Planned Developments within activity centers.

- POLICY 2.110-E5: ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT - Subject to the criteria and requirements of Section 2.125-C relating to Transitional Areas, development adjacent to a Community Activity Center may include the following uses: Office, Medium-Density Residential, Institutional, Open Space.
- POLICY 2.110-J1: Existing Activity Centers may be expanded to contiguous properties, subject to approval by the Board of County Commissioners, and approved as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment in compliance with state and local law. Expansions and reclassifications of Activity Centers shall be in accordance with the following criteria:
  - g. Existing Activity Centers requested to be expanded beyond the usable acreage listed in the "general characteristics" of the Center shall be in accordance with the following, in addition to other applicable policies of this Plan.
    1. be expanded to the contiguous properties only;
    2. submittal of Activity Center Plan (ACP) shall be required pursuant to the relevant policies under Objective 2.110 and the following:
      - i. a Master Drainage Plan for the undeveloped properties as well as how the existing development properties may benefit from a Master Drainage Plan;
      - ii. provisions for required shared parking; and
      - iii. shared access.
    3. the incorporation of the ACP into the Land Development Code with reference in the Comprehensive Plan shall be required; and
    4. demonstration that a collaborative process occurred between the applicant, County staff and adjacent property owners to identify potential buffer areas and areas most suitable for development.

**Development Review Committee (DRC) Recommendation:** Based on the information provided by the applicant, recent site visits, and the analysis conducted within this staff report, the DRC finds that with the proposed conditions, the proposed requests **ARE 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 DRC recommends **APPROVAL of LDCT-2026-5.**

**Planning Commission Decision:** On June 3, 2026, in an advertised public hearing, the Planning Commission voted ?? to **recommend APPROVAL or DENIAL of LDCT-2026-5.**

*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: 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.*

*NOTE: Approval of this request is only for Level 4 Review and only for those development decisions within the Board of County Commissioners purview. A Level 2 Review (engineered plans) will be required for all site development and shall implement the standard conditions listed in Section 303 of the Land Development Code and the development standards listed in Chapter 7 of the Land Development Code. Upon completion of the Level 2 Process, building permits will be required for all structures in accordance with Chapter 553 of the Florida Statutes.*

## Surrounding Land Use Designations and Current Land Use Activity

**Table 1: Surrounding Uses**

<b>NW</b> CAC Imperial Christina Plaza	<b>N</b> CAC Imperial Christina Plaza	<b>NE</b> RL-1 Dental Office Twin Lakes at Christina Residential subdivision
<b>W</b> CAC – Polk County C-2 Highway Commercial, Mulberry Burger King & Tire Choice	<b>Subject Property</b> RL-1 Vacant Former Plant Nursery	<b>E</b> RL-1 Twin Lakes at Christina Residential subdivision
<b>SW</b> C-2 Highway Commercial, Mulberry Tire Choice	<b>S</b> Conservation Zoning City of Mulberry Vacant	<b>SE</b> Conservation Zoning City of Mulberry Vacant

Source: Site Visit and Polk County GIS Data Viewer

The site is located on the south side of Shimmering Drive, a private road connecting SR 37 (S. Florida Avenue) and Shepherd Road with the Imperial Christina Plaza and the Twin Lakes at Christina residential subdivision. The site is located approximately 300 feet east of the SR 37 (S. Florida Avenue) and Shepherd Road intersection. On the northeast corner of the intersection is the Imperial Christina Plaza, a retail shopping center that includes uses from a grocery store, restaurants, and personal service providers. North of the shopping center is the Century Avenues apartment complex. At the eastern end of Shimmering Drive is the Twin Lake at Christina an 89-lot residential subdivision developed between 2000 and 2003. Adjacent to the east is a dental office developed in 2009. West of the site is a Burger King which was constructed in 1986. South of the Burger King is the City of Mulberry with a zoning of Highway Commercial.

Shimmering Drive was developed with the original construction of the Imperial Christina Plaza as a southern entrance. With the development of the Twin Lake at Christina, the southern entrance to the shopping plaza became the entrance road to the residential development. Around the same time as the residential subdivision began development the subject site began operation as a plant nursery and operated as such until the past several years. Over the past several decades the southern expansion of unincorporated Lakeland has moved south into this area and the City of Mulberry has annexed and approved development north into this area.

To the northwest of the SR 37 (S. Florida Avenue) and Shepherd Road intersection, north of the Walgreens are several projects under review and under construction that will complete the commercial corridor from Ewell Road south to Shepherd Road along the western side of US 37 (S. Florida Avenue).

The site has historically operated as a non-residential use property along side of the Twin Lake at Christina residential development. Shimmering Drive, from US 37 (S. Florida Avenue) to the entrance of Twin Lake at Christina has historically operated as an entrance to the retail center, or as a local commercial road with both uses working harmoniously together.

**Compatibility with the Surrounding Land Use:**

According to *Policy 2.102-A2* of Polk County's Comprehensive Plan, "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; and 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 adopted definition for compatibility states it is "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 subject site is located within the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA) which is an area 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 and improve access to employment areas, schools, shopping and recreational opportunities. This development includes improving access to employment areas, schools, shopping and recreational facilities, while reducing costs of providing infrastructure and public services. As previously discussed this is an expansion of an existing, fully function Community Activity Center (CAC). Within the Comprehensive Plan Policy 2.110-E1 Community Activity Centers (CAC) Usable Area is "Over 20 acres to 60 acres." The existing CAC district is approximately 93.5 acres, exceeding Comprehensive Plan's Useable Area criteria. LDCT-2026-5 provided for an Activity Center Plan to ensure proper cross-access connectivity.

In summary, the subject site is located within the Transit Supportive Development Area (TSDA), as part of a development that is located at the intersection for two (2) Urban Collector roads with full public services. The proposed CAC will provide non-residential support in an area that is well established for that use. The request is considered to be compatible and consistent with the surrounding area.

**Nearest Elementary, Middle, and High School:**

The schools zoned for the subject property, as shown in Table 2, include Scott Lake Elementary, Lakeland Highlands Middle School, and George Jenkins Senior High. The requested Community Activity Center (CAC) is intended for non-residential development and is not intended for residential development. Residential development within the CAC would require a Level 3 Planning Commission approval for multi-family development.

Table 2 School Information

Name of School	Annual Estimated Demand	% Capacity 2024-2025 School Year	Average driving distance from subject site
Scott Lake Elementary	0 students	83%	2.8± miles
Lakeland Highlands Middle School	0 students	84%	3.3± miles
George Jenkins Senior High	0 students	89%	4.4± miles

Source: Polk County School Board

**Nearest Sheriff, Fire, and EMS Station:**

The nearest Sheriff District office is located approximately 9.2 miles from the subject site. Response times vary depending on where the nearest sheriff’s deputy patrol car is located rather than the district office. The nearest Fire/EMS station is approximately 2.7 miles from the subject site.

Table 3: Public Safety

	Name of Station	Distance/Response Time*
<b>Sheriff</b>	<b>Southwest District Command</b> (4120 US 98 South, Lakeland)	Priority 1 – 8:58 min Priority 2 – 22:54 min
<b>Fire/EMS</b>	<b>Polk County Fire Rescue Station 2</b> 2523 Ewell Rd, Lakeland	2.7 ± miles / 10-12 min

Source: Polk County Sheriff’s Office and Public Safety. Response times for April 2026. \*Response times are based from when the station receives the call, not from when the call is made to 911.

**Water and Sewer Capacity and Service Provider:**

Table 4 below details the estimated impact to potable water and wastewater services based upon the buildout for the proposed FLU on the subject site. The subject property is within the Southwest Regional Service Area. The site is located within the TDSA and TCCO Corridor.

A. Available Capacity:

Table 4: Estimated Water and Sewer Impact Analysis

Permitted Density / Intensity	Maximum Permitted in Existing Land Use RL	Maximum Permitted in Proposed CAC
3.87± acres Gross 2.16± acres Upland	22 du	2.16± acres (94,090 sf) X 0.30 FAR = 28,227 sf
Potable Water Consumption	22 du X 250 gpd = 5,500 GPD	28,227 sf X 0.22 = 6,210 GPD
Wastewater Generation	22 du X 200 gpd = 4,400 GPD	6,210 GPD X 80% = 4,868 GPD

B. Service Provider:

The subject site is serviced by Polk County’s Southwest Regional Service District for water and wastewater. There is an eight (8) inch potable water main on the north side of Shimmering Drive

in front of the site. The location also has an Eight (8) inch reclaimed water main.

**C. Available Capacity:**

Polk County Utilities requires a maximum pipe velocity of 7.5 ft/s (1,175 gpm in an 8” water main) in proposed and existing infrastructure for the max day demand + fire flow scenario. Commercial fire flow requirements often exceed the 1,175 gpm limit and may require upsizing of the 8” water main. On the north side of Shimmering Drive is an eight (8) inch wastewater gravity main.

**Roadways/Transportation Network:**

**A. Estimated Demand:**

Table 5 following this paragraph shows the Average Annual Daily Trip (AADT) rate and the PM Peak hour trip rate. The proposed Future Land Use designation change to CAC, at maximum density, will generate more than the current combination of the RL land use.

*Table 5: Estimated Transportation Impact Analysis*

Permitted Density / Intensity	Maximum Permitted in Existing Land Use RL	Maximum Permitted in Proposed CAC
<b>3.87± acres Gross 2.16± acres Upland</b>	22 du	2.16± acres (94,090 sf) X 0.30 FAR = 28,227 sf
<b>Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT)</b>	22 du X 7.81 AADT = <b>172 Trips</b>	28 X 11.07 AADT X 92% <b>286 Trips</b>
<b>PM Peak Hour Trips</b>	22 du X 1.00 AADT = <b>22 Trips</b>	27 X 1.21 AADT X 92% = <b>32 Trips</b>

*Source: Concurrency Manual: Single-family @ 7.81 AADT per du and 1.00 AADT PM Peak Hour, CAC @ Office Park 11.07 AADT per 1,000 sf, 1.21 AADT per 1,000 sf PM Peak Hour,*

**B. Available Capacity:**

The subject site fronts the private road Shimmering Drive, which is not monitored by the Polk TPO. Shimmering Drive intersects with Shepherd Road to the west and SR 37 (Florida Ave S) to the north and south. Table 6, following this paragraph, displays the available capacity for Sheperd Road and SR 37 (Florida Ave S).

*Table 6: Roadway Link Concurrency*

Link #	Road Name	Lane Type*	Current LOS	Available Peak Hour Capacity	Minimum LOS Standard	Project 5 Year LOS
4144E	Shepherd Road	4D	C	836	D	C
4144W	Baily Rd to SR 37	UC	C	874	D	C
4144N	SR 37 (Florida Ave S)	4D	C	597	D	C
4144S	Shepherd Road to Pipkin Rd W	UC	C	539	D	C
5804N	SR 37 (Florida Ave S)	4D	C	1,099	D	C
5804S	SR 60 (Canal Stret E) to Shepherd Road	UC	C	1,062	D	C

*Source: Polk County Transportation Planning Organization, Roadway Network Database April 2026. \*4D means four-lane divided, , 2U means two lane undivided, UC means Urban Collector*

**C. Roadway Conditions:**

Shepherd Road is a four-lane Urban Collector roadway that is in excellent condition. US 37 is a four-lane Urban Collector roadway that is in excellent condition. Shimmering Drive is a private

road connecting the Sheperd Road and US 37 intersection with the Twin Lakes residential development to the east and running along the southern side of the Imperial Christina Plaza.

**D. Sidewalk Network:**

Currently there are sidewalks along the east and west side of SR 37 (S Florida Avenue) and the north and south sides of Shepherd Road. There are no sidewalks on the private road of Shimmering Drive.

**E. Planned Improvements:**

There are no road improvements currently planned for this area.

**F. Mass Transit:**

Citrus Connection runs the Lime Flex Line along S. Florida Avenue. The nearest stop is located on the east side of S. Florida Avenue in front of the Imperial Christina Plaza approximately 0.2 mile from the site.

**Environmental Conditions:**

Any impact to surface water, wetlands, and storm water management will be in accordance with the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.

**A. Surface Water:**

There are no observable surface waters on the subject site. The area is relatively flat with the highest points located primarily along the southern border at an elevation of approximately 159 feet, with the lowest parts of the property located near the center and northern area of the property with an elevation of approximately 157 feet.

**B. Wetlands/Floodplains:**

According to the Polk County Data Viewer, wetland provided by the FDEP wetland viewer indicates wetlands are on the subject site. A wetland determination will be needed for final uplands of the subject site. For this analysis it is estimated that of the 3.87± acre site, approximately 1.71 acres are wetland and 2.16 acres are upland acres.

**C. On-Site Soils:**

The subject site is comprised of two (2) different soil types: Hydraquents, clayey, and Arents, 0 to 5 percent slopes. Future development of the site will be subject to Section 2.303: “Soils” of the County’s Comprehensive Plan (in conjunction with the Land Development Code) which requires all development to implement Best Management Practices based on the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Florida Development Manual. The reported soils are based on the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soils Survey.

*Table 7*

SOIL NAME	SMALL COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS	SEPTIC TANK ABSORPTION FIELDS	PERCENTAGE OF SITE
Hydraquents, clayey	Severe: ponding	Severe: ponding	86+/-%
Arents, 0 to 5 percent slopes	Slight	Moderate: wetness	14+/-%
Source: USDA Web Soil Survey			

D. Wells (Public/Private):

The applicant did not indicate any wells located on the property. The subject property is not within a Wellfield Protection District; however, the nearest Wellfield Protection District is approximately 115 feet west of the site.

E. Protected Species

According to Polk County Protected Species Observation Map and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (2015), the subject site is not located within a one-mile radius of endangered animals. The applicant will submit a biological walk-over as part of the Level-2 review process.

F: Polk Green Districts and Conservation Easements:

The site is not located within the Potential Network Connections area of the Polk Green District Comprehensive Plan Map Series. Approximately 1.3 miles southwest of the site, is a 46+ acre Conservation Easement recorded between Imperial Lakes Properties, LLC and National Farmers Trust, Inc., OR Book 9658, Page 1068.

G. Florida Wildlife Corridor

The site is not located within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

G. Archeological Resources

There are no known historical or archeological resources onsite according to the Secretary of the State's Department of Historical Resources Florida Master File.

H. Airports:

The subject site is not located within an Airport Impact District (AID) and Airport Height Notification Zone.

**Park Facilities:**

The nearest park is the Carter Road Park. The closest environmental site is the Lakeland Highland Scrub Trail.

A. Location:

Loyce E. Harpe Park is located at 500 W Carter Road.

B. Services:

The park's current hours of operation are from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and features multi-use fields, Little League baseball fields, softball fields and more in an area where a phosphate mine once existed. Amenities include eight 200-foot youth fields; four 300-foot adult softball fields; six multi-use fields; seven miles of mountain biking course; dog park; two covered batting tunnels; seating capacity for 1,600; lights for nighttime play; concession stands; playground; and pavilion.

C. Multiuse Trails:

The closest multi-use trail is within the Lakeland Highland Scrub Trail. The trail offers off-road bicycle and hiking areas. Bicycle trails are also located at Loyce E. Harpe Park less than a mile to the south and in the new Seven Wetlands Park connected to it.

**D. Environmental Lands:**

The closest publicly accessible environmental lands are within the Lakeland Highland Scrub Trail. Lakeland Highlands Scrub is a 551-acre conservation area that is like no other in Polk County. Located in south Lakeland, it is home to one of the largest undeveloped scrub properties on the Lakeland Ridge, one of a series of elevated sandy ridges along the backbone of an area known as "peninsular Florida." This area used to be surrounded by water, but now, the Lakeland Highlands Scrub rises more than 230 feet above sea level. The Polk County Environmental Lands Program and the Florida Communities Trust Preservation 2000 Program jointly provided funding to acquire the Lakeland Highlands Scrub.

The Seven Wetlands is located at the southern end of Loyce E. Harpe Park. The City of Lakeland owns and operates Seven Wetlands, a constructed wetland treatment system, which provides tertiary treatment, or final polishing, for all of the City’s wastewater. It is comprised of over 1,600 acres of marshes, swamps, uplands, and lakes and connects to the North Prong of the Alafia River, which flows directly to Tampa Bay. Seven Wetlands also provides water for Tampa Electric Company's Polk Power Station. Seven Wetlands is home to a diverse community of plant and animal species.

**E. Planned Improvements:**

There are no further recreation improvements scheduled for this area of Polk County at this time.

**Consistency with the Comprehensive**

The following policies in Table 8 have been included as being the most relevant policies to the proposed request. The policy is first stated and then an analysis of how the request may or may not be consistent with the County’s Comprehensive Plan is provided.

*Table 8 Comprehensive Plan Policy*

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. there have been provisions made which buffer incompatible uses from dissimilar uses;</li> <li>b. incompatible uses are made to be more compatible to each other through limiting the intensity and scale of the more intense use;</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>	<p>The existing uses surrounding the site are primarily commercial in nature ranging from retail, restaurant, vehicle service, and office. The proposed CAC expansion will allow the site to develop in a similar manner to the surrounding development. The subject site’s location, not fronting an urban collector road, effectively an interior parcel to the existing CAC and the existing retail center at the southern end of the CAC. The sites location as previously mentioned necessitates the inclusion of an Activity Center Plan to address cross access with the existing uses to ensue proper traffic flow. LDCT-2026-5 provides an Activity Center Plan to ensure proper cross-access connectivity.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The request is an expansion of the CAC to a property that, as a result of development is located and has the characteristics of the adjacent CAC district. Therefore, the request is consistent with the policy.</p>

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p>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.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>The request is for an expansion of an existing CAC where all forms of infrastructure are available for commercial development on the subject site. Therefore, the timing of development of the subject site is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's growth management strategy.</p>
<p>Policy 2.102-A10: Location Criteria - 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</p>	
<p>POLICY 2.110-E1: CHARACTERISTICS - Community Activity Centers are intended to accommodate the shopping needs of residents living within the community and generally contain a shopping center and other commercial and office uses within close proximity. General (approximate) characteristics of Community Activity Centers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Usable Area: Over 20 acres to 60 acres</li> <li>➤ Gross Leasable Area (GLA): 150,000 to 500,000 square feet</li> <li>➤ Minimum Population Support: 20,000 to 80,000 people</li> <li>➤ Market-Area Radius: 2 miles or more</li> <li>➤ Typical Leading Tenant: Variety, Discount, or Department Store</li> </ul>	<p>The request meets the Characteristics of a CAC and is consistent with this policy as stated.</p>

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
Other Typical Tenants: Supermarket, Theater, Offices, Restaurant, Drug Store, Professional Services.	
<p>POLICY 2.110-E3: LOCATION CRITERIA - Community Activity Centers shall be located at the intersections of arterial and/or collector roads, and preferably with the capability to accommodate a fixed route mass-transit line. There shall be the following traveling distance, on public roads, between the center of a Community Activity Center and the center of any other Community Activity Center, or other higher-level Activity Center, Linear Commercial Corridor, or Commercial Enclave providing for the same community shopping needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Four (4) miles within the TSDA and UGA</li> <li>b. Six (6) miles within the SDA and UEA</li> </ul> <p>This required separation may be reduced if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The higher-level Activity Center, Linear Commercial Corridor or Commercial Enclave within the required distance separation is over 80% developed; or,</li> <li>b. The proposed Community Activity Center market-area radius, minimum population support is over 50,000 people.</li> </ul>	<p>The request is consistent with this policy as the subject site has access to a County maintained road, meets the distance requirements for the TSDA.</p>
<p>Policy 2.110-J1: Existing Activity Centers may be expanded to contiguous properties, subject to approval by the Board of County Commissioners, and approved as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment in compliance with state and local law. Expansions and reclassifications of Activity Centers shall be in accordance with the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Existing Activity Centers requested to be expanded beyond the usable acreage listed in the "general characteristics" of the Center shall be in accordance with the following, in addition to other applicable policies of this Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. be expanded to the contiguous properties only;</li> <li>2. submittal of Activity Center Plan (ACP) shall be required pursuant to the relevant policies under Objective 2.110 and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a Master Drainage Plan for the undeveloped properties as well as how the existing development properties may benefit from a Master Drainage Plan;</li> <li>ii. provisions for required shared parking; and</li> <li>iii. shared access.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. the incorporation of the ACP into the Land Development Code with reference in the Comprehensive Plan shall be required; and</li> <li>4. demonstration that a collaborative process occurred between the applicant, County staff and adjacent property owners to identify potential buffer areas and areas most suitable for development.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>A community meeting was hosted by the applicant on Thursday May28, 2026 at 5455 S. Florida Avenue, Lakeland. The meeting includes information of the expansion of the Community Activity Center (CAC) and development of retail/office strip centers.</p>

## Urban Sprawl Analysis

Polk County’s Comprehensive Plan *Policy 2.102-A10* establishes review criteria intended to discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl. Specific characteristics of urban sprawl have been examined throughout this staff report and are summarized in Table 7 (below). Based on the findings of fact and analysis conducted, the proposed request does not meet the criteria to be considered as urban sprawl.

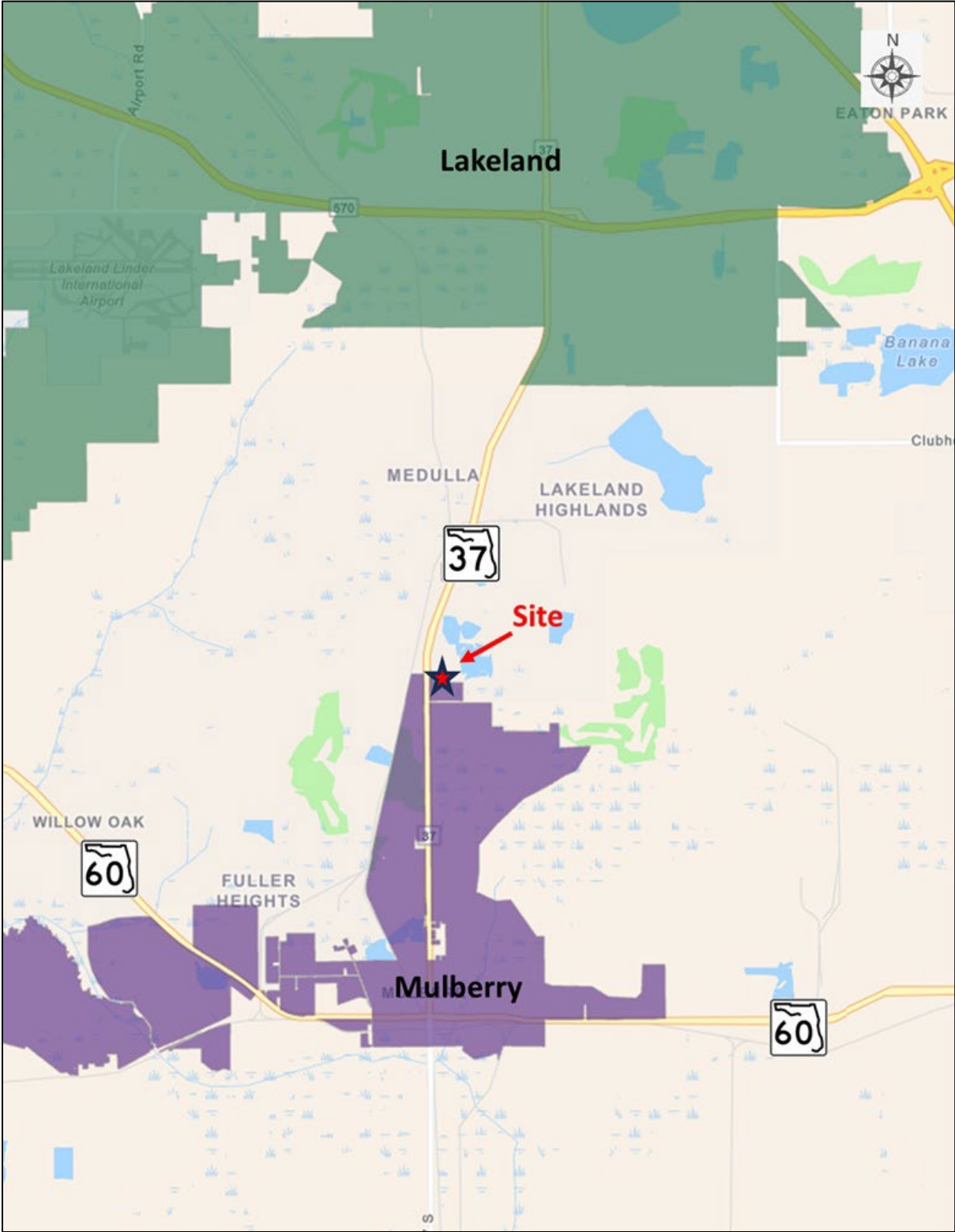
**Table 7: Urban Sprawl Criteria**

<b>Rule 9J-5 Urban Sprawl Criteria</b>	<b>Page(s) within report</b>
a. <i>Promotes substantial amounts of low-density, low-intensity, or single use development in excess of demonstrated need.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
b. <i>Allows a significant amount of urban development to occur in rural areas.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
c. <i>Designates an urban development in radial, strip isolated, or ribbon patterns emanating from existing urban developments.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
d. <i>Fails to adequately protect and conserve natural resources and other significant natural systems.</i>	Environmental Conditions
e. <i>Fails to adequately protect adjacent agricultural areas.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
f. <i>Fails to maximize existing public facilities and services.</i>	Schools, Public Facilities and Water/Sewer Sections
g. <i>Fails to minimize the need for future facilities and services.</i>	Schools, Public Facilities and Water/Sewer Sections
h. <i>Allows development patterns that will disproportionately increase the cost of providing public facilities and services.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
i. <i>Fails to provide a clear separation between urban and rural uses.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
j. <i>Discourages infill development or redevelopment of existing neighborhoods.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
k. <i>Fails to encourage an attractive and functional mixture of land uses.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
l. <i>Will result in poor accessibility among linked or related land uses.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses Section
m. <i>Results in the loss of a significant amount of open space.</i>	Surrounding Land Uses and Environmental Conditions Sections
Source: The following criteria are the primary indicators of urban sprawl per Rule 9J-5 of the Florida Administrative Code.	

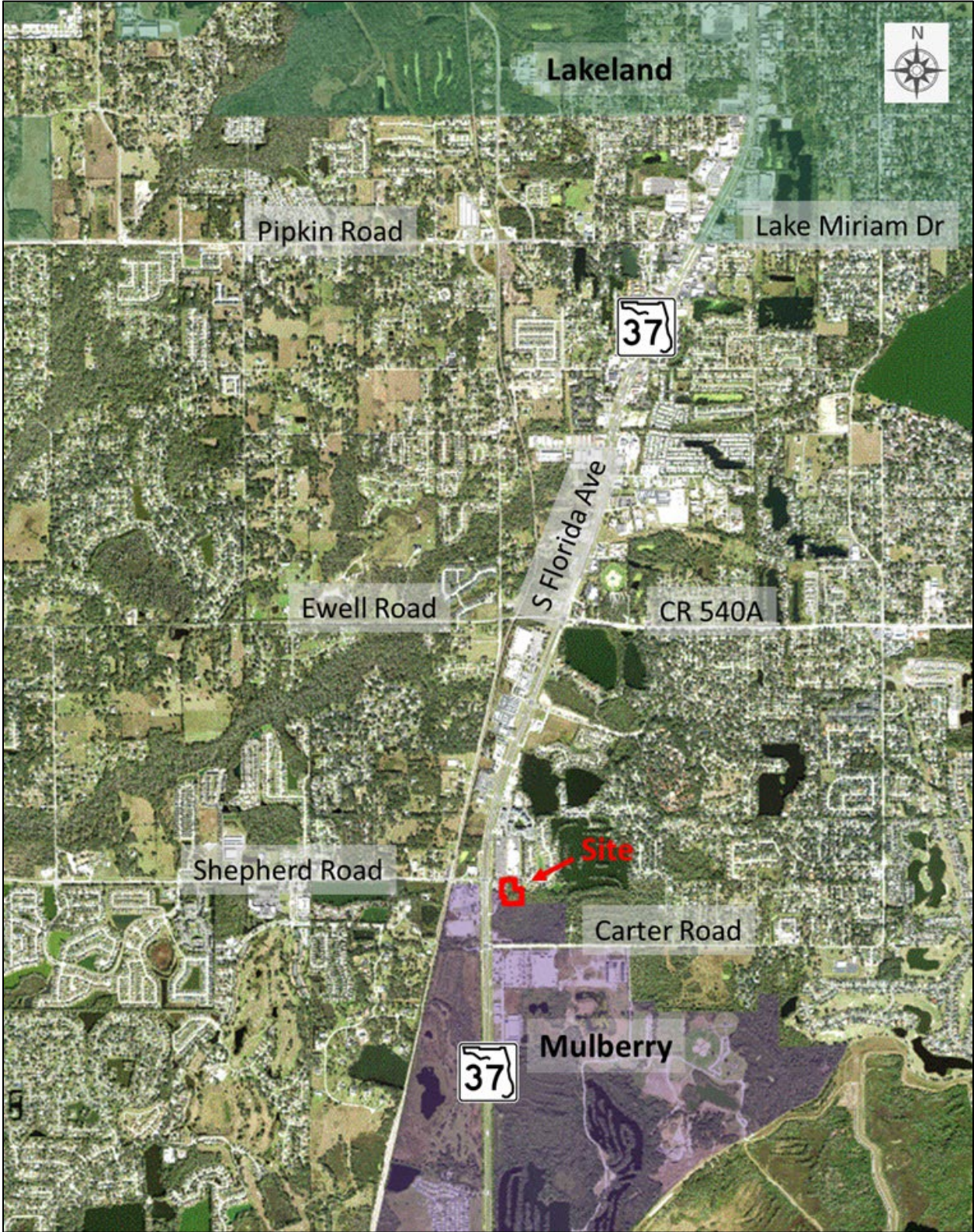
**Comments from Other Agencies:** See City of Auburndale’s letter under separate attachment.

### Attachments:

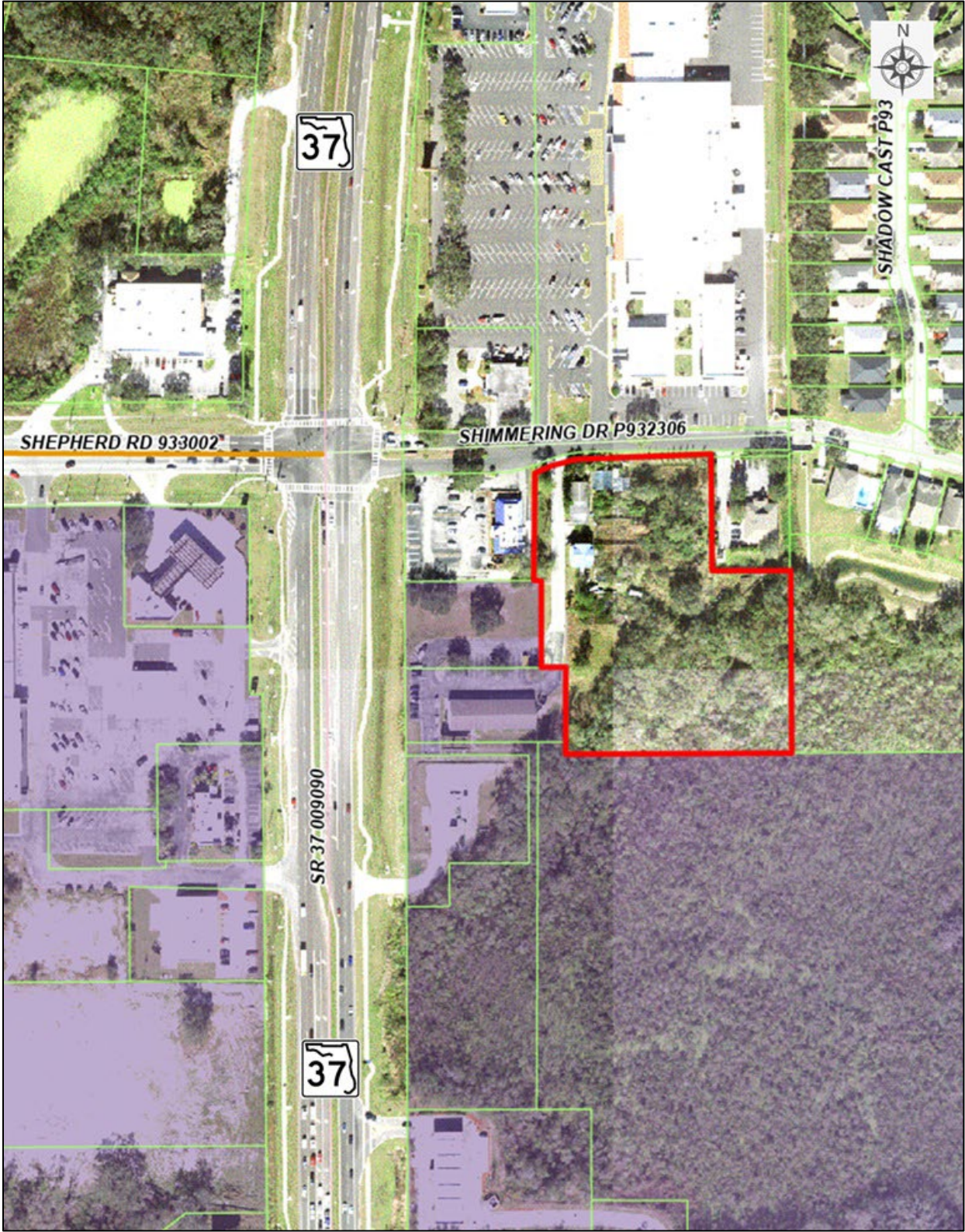
- Exhibit 1 – Location Map
- Exhibit 2 – Aerial Context Map
- Exhibit 3 – 2023 Aerial Closeup Map
- Exhibit 4 – Current Future Land Use Map
- Exhibit 5 – Proposed Future Land Use Map
- Exhibit 6 – Site Estimated Wetland/Uplands
- Exhibit 7 – Current Permitted and Conditional Uses
- Exhibit 8 – Proposed Permitted and Conditional Uses
- Exhibit 9 – Proposed Activity Center Plan



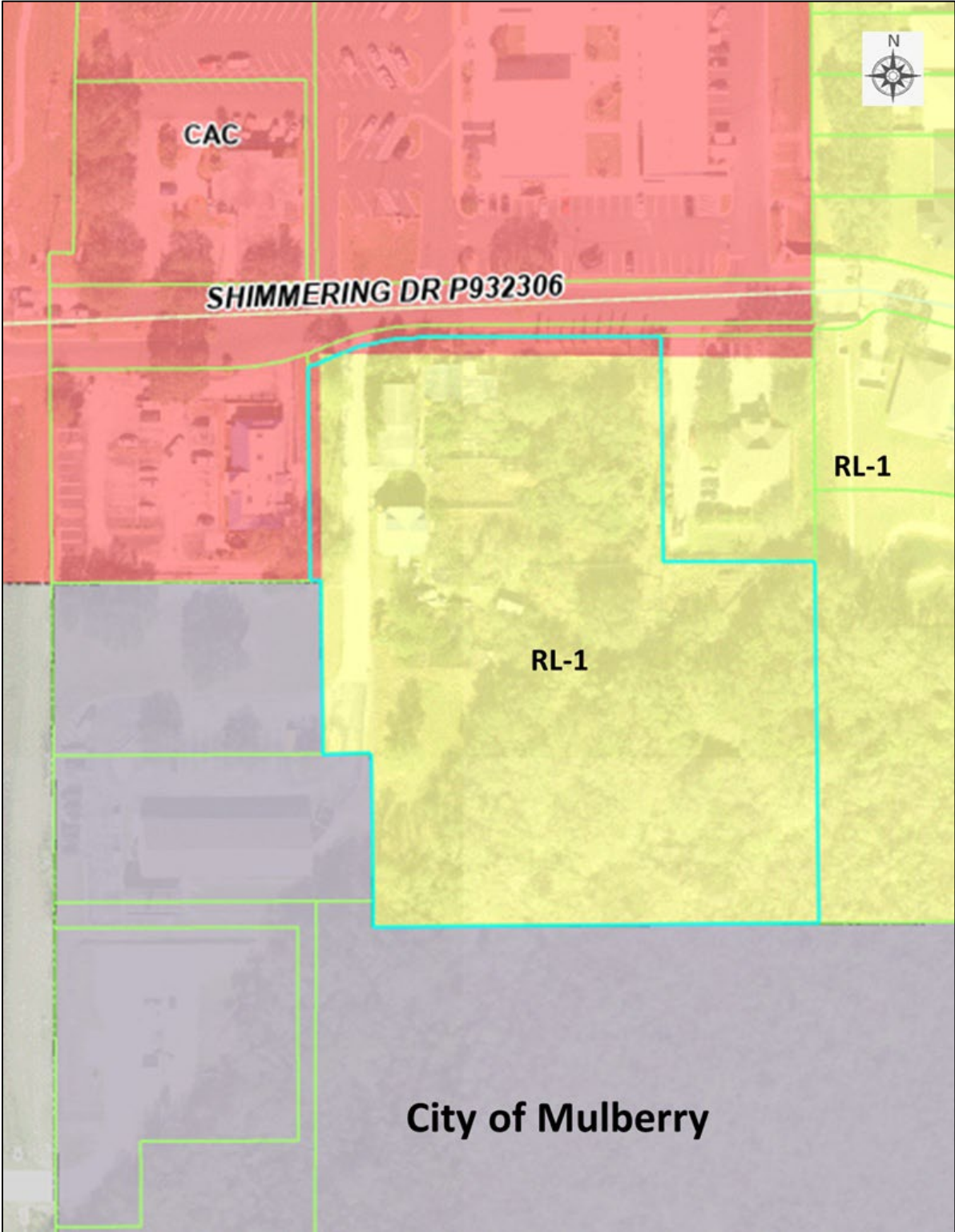
# LOCATION MAP



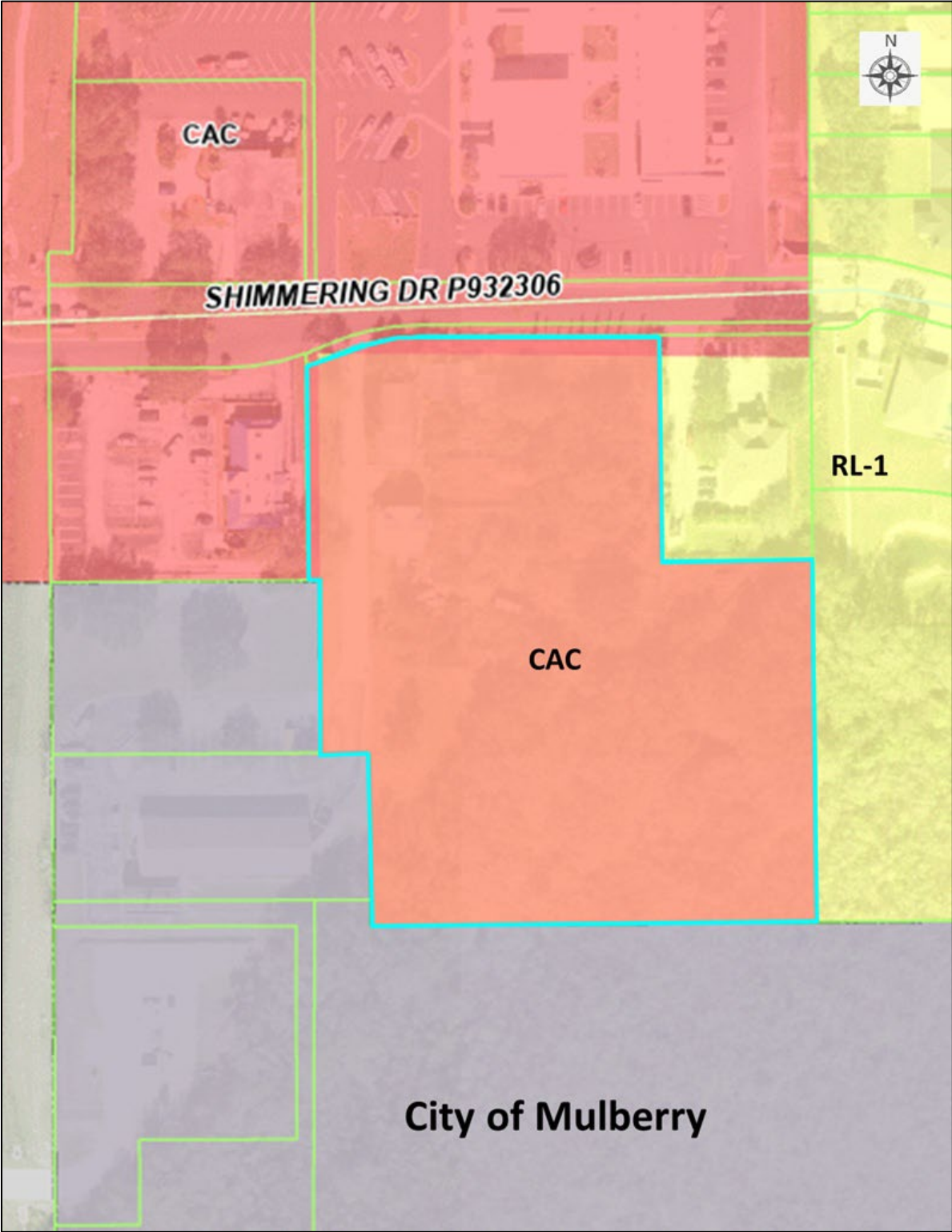
# AERIAL CONTEXT MAP



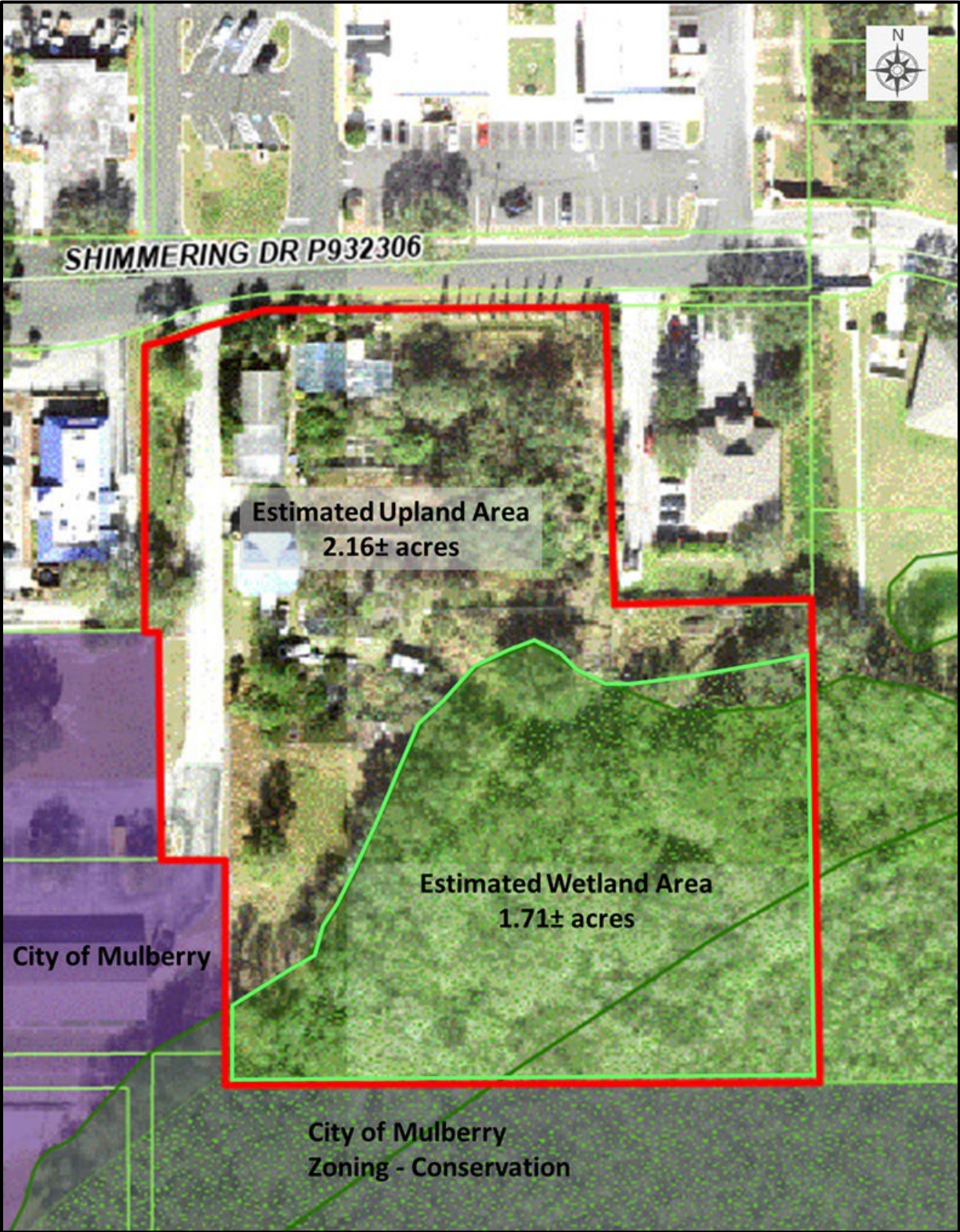
### 2023 AERIAL CLOSEUP MAP



**CURRENT FUTURE LAND USE  
RESIDENTIAL LOW-1**



**PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE  
COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER (CAC)**



**SITE ESTIMATED WETLAND/UPANDS**

Residential Low (RL-1)			
Technical Staff Review -Level 1& 2		Public Hearing (s) Required-Level 3 & 4	
<b>Residential Uses:</b>	Group Home, Small (6 or less residents), C1 Group Home, Small (6 or less residents), C1 Mobile Homes, Individual, C1 Residential Infill Development, C2 Single-family Detached Home & Subdivision, P	<b>Residential Uses:</b>	Duplex, Two-family attached, C3 Group Living Facility (15 or more residents), C3 Mobile Home Park, C4 Mobile Home Subdivision, C4 Multi-family, C3 Short-Term Rental unit, C3
		<b>Mixed Uses:</b>	Planned Development, C3 Residentially Based Mixed Development (RBMD), C3 Transitional Area Development, C3
<b>All Other Uses:</b>	Animal Farm, Intensive, C1 Emergency Shelter, Small (6 or less residents), C1 Farming General, P Golf Course, C1 Livestock Sale, Auction, C1 Nurseries and Greenhouses, C1 Recreation, Passive, C1 Recreation, Low Intensity, C2 School, Elementary, C2 Utilities, Class I, P Utilities, Class II, C1 Veterinary Service, C2	<b>All Other Uses:</b>	Adult Day Care Center (7 or more clients), C3 Agricultural Support, Off-Site, C3 Bed and Breakfast, C3 Childcare Center, C3 Community Center, C3 Emergency Shelter, Large (15 or more residents), C3 Government Facility, C3 Helistops, C3 Mining, Non-phosphate, C3 Recreation, High Intensity, C3 Recreation, Vehicle Oriented, C3 Religious Institution, C3 Riding Academies, C3 School, High, C3 School, Leisure/special Interest, C3 Utilities, Class III, C3

**CURRENT  
PERMITTED AND CONDITIONAL USES  
RESIDENTIAL LOW-1 (RL-1)**

<b>Community Activity Center (CAC)</b>			
<b>Technical Staff Review - Level 1 &amp; 2</b>			
Residential Uses:			
All Other Uses:	Adult Use , C1 Alcohol Package Sales , C1 Bars, Lounges, and Taverns , C1 Car Wash, Full Service , P Car Wash, Incidental , P Car Wash, Self Service , P Cemetery , C2 Childcare Center , P Clinics & Medical Offices , P Commercial Vehicle Parking , C2 Communication Tower, Community Center , C2 Cultural Facility , C2 Farming General , P Financial Institution , P Financial Institution, Drive Flea Market/Enclosed , C1 Funeral Home & Related Gas Station , P Government Facility , P Heliports , C2 Hospitals , P Hotels and Motels , P Kennels, Boarding and Breeding , Marinas and Related Facilities ,	All Other Uses:	Medical Marijuana Dispensaries , C2 Nurseries and Greenhouses , P Nurseries, Retail , P Nursing Home , C2 Office , P Personal Service , P Recreation & Amusement General , Recreation, Passive , C1 Religious Institution , C2 Restaurant, Drive-thru/Drive-in , C2 Restaurant, Sit-down/Take-out , P Retail, 10,000 - 34,999 sq. ft. , P Retail, 35,000 - 64,999 sq. ft , P Retail, Less than 10,000 sq. ft. , P Retail, More than 65,000 sq. ft. , P School, Leisure/Special Interest , P School, Technical/Vocational/Trade Self-storage Facility , C2 Transit, Facility , P Utilities, Class I , P Utilities, Class II , P Vehicle Sales, Leasing , C2 Vehicle Service, Mechanical , P Veterinary Service , P
<b>Public Hearing(s) Required - Level 3 &amp; 4</b>			
Residential Uses:	Multi-family , C3	All Other Uses:	Communication Towers, Guyed and Flea Market/Open , C4 Helistops , C3 Mining, Non-phosphate , C3 Nightclubs and Dance Halls , C3 Residential Treatment Facility , C4 Retail, Outdoor Sales/Display , C3 School, University/College , C3 Transitional Area Development , C4 Utilities, Class III , C3 Water Ski Schools , C3
Mixed Uses:	Planned Development , C3 Transitional Area Development ,		

**PROPOSED  
 PERMITTED AND CONDITIONAL USES  
 COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTER (CAC)**

