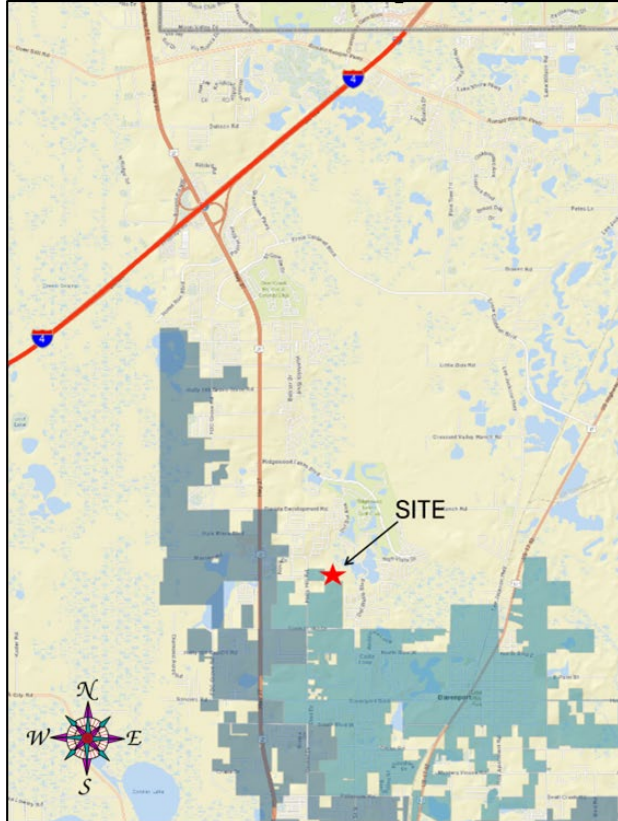


**POLK COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE
STAFF REPORT**

DRC Date: March 26, 2026	Level of Review: Level 3 Review
PC Date: May 6, 2026	Type: Conditional Use
BoCC Date: n/a	Case Numbers: LDCU-2026-6
Applicant: Polk County Utilities	Case Name: Northeast PRWC Receiving Facility
	Case Planner: Erik Peterson, AICP

Request:	Conditional use approval of a Class III Utility for potable water production, treatment, storage and distribution including 1.25-million-gallon ground storage tank.
Location:	East of Holly Hill Road and Sugarwood Street, west of Del Webb Boulevard and Castellon Court, north of Forest Lake Drive and Navarra Lane, north of the Haines City, north of the town of Davenport in Section 32, Township 26, Range 27.
Property Owners:	Polk County
Parcel Size (Number):	±9.91 acres (272632-709500-020231)
Future Land Use:	Institutional-2 (INST-2X)
Development Area:	Urban Growth Area (UGA)
Nearest Municipality:	Town of Davenport (abutting) Haines City (2/3 miles)
DRC Recommendation:	Approval
Planning Commission:	Pending Public Hearing

Location Map



2024 Satellite Photo



Summary:

Polk County Utilities is applying for a Class III Utility on parcel #272632-709500-020231. This facility will be the receiving site for water from the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) where it will be blended into the Northeast Regional Utility Service Area Potable Water System to expand the system capacity in the future. This facility will include a 1.25-million-gallon ground storage tank and production well in addition to the interconnection. On October 1, 2024, Polk County purchased the property from Walton Acquisitions, LLC for this purpose.

This facility will have multiple water pumps and ground storage tanks. It will mostly resemble a similar facility on Ronald Reagan Parkway near Champions Gate Boulevard. The water from the PRWC is treated at a reverse osmosis facility that removes the brine from the higher salinity Lower Floridan Aquifer water. This water will taste different from the water treated from the Upper Floridan Aquifer. The two sources of water need to be blended before being distributed through the system, so the public does not encounter a significant change in water flavor when the PRWC water is added to the greater system. This proposed water production facility includes a 1.25-million-gallon ground storage water tank to perform that blending.

Staff find that the interconnect facility as designed will be compatible with the surrounding land uses given the elevation grade and the County's standard Land Development Code (LDC) design requirements for landscaping, buffering, and setbacks. All three abutting residential developments included additional landscaping and buffering features to enhance compatibility with the inevitable future development of this property. The closest residences are on a higher grade than the subject property. There are very few environmental limitations with the property, and the intended use will become vital in the future for other infrastructure investments in the area.

The first project to be developed by the PRWC is the Southeast WPF and multiple well sites. It is under construction and line extensions are underway to connect to facilities like this in many locations throughout the County. The goal of this project is to utilize the brackish, Lower Floridan Aquifer (LFA) in Southeast Polk County as a "non-traditional" water supply. The Southeast Wellfield is a permitted supply, and after treatment via reverse osmosis, will deliver up to 30 million gallons per day (MGD) of high-quality drinking water to the member governments. Oversight of PRWC is solely in the hands of the elected officials from the sixteen Polk County member governments. In addition to Polk County, these include the cities of Auburndale, Bartow, Davenport, Dundee, Eagle Lake, Fort Meade, Frostproof, Haines City, Lake Alfred, Lake Hamilton, Lake Wales, Lakeland, Mulberry, Polk City, and Winter Haven.

Findings of Fact

- *On October 1, 2024, Polk County purchased this property from Walton Acquisitions LLC for the purpose of a potable water interconnect facility to blend water acquired from the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) with the water in the Northeast Utility Service Area potable water system. This Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map amendment request was presented to the Development Review Committee (DRC) in a pre-application meeting under case# LDDRC-2025-103.*
- *A County-initiated request for a Small-Scale Future Land Use designation change from Residential Low (RLX) to Institutional (INSTX) on approximately 9.91 acres in the Urban Growth Area (UGA) was approved on May 5, 2026.*

- *A County-initiated request for an LDC Sub-District change from Institutional-1X (INST-1X) to Institutional-2X (INST-2X) on approximately 9.91 acres in the Urban Growth Area (UGA) was approved on May 5, 2026.*
- *This request is for conditional use approval of a Class III Utility for potable water production, treatment, storage and distribution including 1.25-million-gallon ground storage tank approximately 9.91 acres of INST-2X.*
- *The property is located within the North Ridge Selected Area Plan which gives it an “X” suffix on the Future Land Use Map.*
- *The property was part of the Ridgewood Lakes Development of Regional Impact (DRI).*
- *The neighboring land uses to the east, south, and west are single-family residential developments. To the north, the property is currently vacant but it is planned for a park within the town of Davenport.*
- *The closest public school is Horizons Elementary, approximately one mile travel distance from the site.*
- *The current fire response to this project is from Polk County Rescue Station 38, located at 126 Cottonwood Drive, just under three (3) miles travel distance from the site.*
- *The current ambulance response is from Polk County Rescue Station 38, located at 126 Cottonwood Drive, just under three (3) miles travel distance from the site.*
- *The site is served by the Polk County Sheriff’s Office Northeast District Command at 1100 Dunson Road, six (6) miles driving distance from the site.*
- *Polk County provides potable water, reclaimed water, and wastewater service to this area through its Northeast Regional Utility Service Area (NERUSA). This site will become a part of the potable water system.*
- *The site’s access will be on Holly Hill Road from a 30-foot-wide unopened right-of-way. Holly Hill Road is a two-lane, 20-foot wide, urban major collector roadway.*
- *According to the Polk Transportation Planning Organization, there are capacity deficiencies on U.S. Highway 27. All other supporting roadways have available capacity. The designation of the property for Institutional land uses has a low probability of significantly increasing current traffic demands.*
- *There is a sidewalk system along Holly Hill Road, but it is incomplete to provide connections to transit and commercial services.*
- *The closest fixed route transit stop is at Heart of Florida Hospital at U.S. Highway 27 and Holly Hill Road, just over a mile from the site.*
- *The nearest public park will be developed in the future on the norther boundary of the site within the town of Davenport. The closest County recreation facility is Loughman Park approximately 11 miles away from the north in Loughman.*

- *POLICY 2.125-D1: UTILITIES PERMITTED USES of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan states that “utility facilities shall be permitted throughout the County in all land use classifications, subject to County approval, to support existing and proposed development:*
 - a. *water and sewer transmission and treatment facilities, including, without limitation, collection and distribution mains, water and sewerage-treatment facilities, and pumping facilities;*
 - b. *electrical-transmission and distribution facilities including, without limitation, electrical transmission lines, substations, and related electrical-distribution facilities;*
 - c. *communications facilities, including, without limitation, radio towers and microwave transmission facilities, (subject to other restrictions within the Plan or the County's Land Development Code);*
 - d. *public potable wells and temporary or permanent package treatment plants; ande.natural-gas and liquefied-fuel pipelines.*

- *POLICY 2.125-D2: UTILITIES' DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS of the Comprehensive Plan states that “Utility facilities shall be subject to the following criteria:*
 - a. *Utility facilities shall generally be limited to the non-Rural-Development Areas, as designated on the Future Land Use Map Series. 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-D2(a) notwithstanding, it may be in the best interest of public health, safety, and welfare to provide utilities 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 utility facilities shall be permitted in the Rural-Development Area, as designated on the Future Land Use Map Series, 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), F.S., to further define appropriate development controls to govern the locational and site criteria for utilities.*

- *POLICY 3.105-D3 of the Comprehensive Plan states that the “County, in partnership with the municipalities within Polk County, formed the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) in 2016. The purpose was to develop projects that are environmentally sound, sustainable, and include adequate alternative water supplies within the region. Alternative water supplies may be sold to end users or retail and/or wholesale distributors as permitted by the appropriate water management district. Members of the PRWC within Polk County shall have first priority on alternative water supply production in accordance with the provisions of Section 373.1961 (5), FS.”*

- *POLICY 3.105-D4 of the Comprehensive Plan states that the “County shall incorporate into the Future Land Use Map Series the specific locations of future groundwater, surface water, alternative water, and supplemental water supply sources. Existing and future wellhead protection areas shall be mapped in the Future Land Use Map Series as they are identified by the water management districts.”*

- *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 requires water storage tanks to be setback one times the height from neighboring residential development.*
- *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 (DRC) finds that with the proposed conditions the request **IS COMPATIBLE** with the surrounding land uses and general character of the area and **IS CONSISTENT** with the Polk County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code. Therefore, the DRC recommends **APPROVAL of LDCU-2026-6.**

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Based upon the findings of fact, the DRC recommends APPROVAL of LDCU-2026-6 with the following conditions:

1. This approval shall be for a Class III Utility for potable water production, treatment, storage and distribution including 1.25-million-gallon ground storage tank.
2. The site plans included herein together with the conditions of approval shall be considered the “Binding Site Plan.” Any modifications to LDCU-2026-6, except for those listed in Section 906.E of the LDC, shall constitute a Major Modification to this approval and require a Level 3 Review before the Planning Commission.

GENERAL NOTES

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

NOTE: Approval of this request shall not constitute a waiver or variance from any applicable development requirement unless specifically noted in the conditions of approval and consistent with the LDC.

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: Approval of this request is only for Level 3 Review and only for those development decisions within the Planning Commissioners’ jurisdiction. Building permits will be required for improvements to structures in accordance with Chapter 553 of the Florida Statutes.

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.

Surrounding Land Use Designations and Current Land Use Activity

The following table provides a reference point for notable and pertinent Future Land Use Map districts and existing land uses of the properties immediately surrounding proposed facility.

Table 1

<p>Northwest: City of Davenport Future Park</p>	<p>North: City of Davenport Future Park</p>	<p>Northeast: RL-3X, PUD 85-08 Ridgewood Lakes DRI Village 11 Wetlands/100-year Floodplain</p>
<p>West: City of Davenport Forest Lake subdivision Single-family ±3.5 dwelling units per acre</p>	<p>Subject Property: INST-2X ±9.91 total acres vacant</p>	<p>East: RL-3X, PUD 85-08 Ridgewood Lakes DRI Del Webb Phase 1 subdivision Single-family ±3.5 dwelling units per acre</p>
<p>Southwest: City of Davenport Forest Lake subdivision ±3.5 dwelling units per acre</p>	<p>South: RL-3X, PUD 85-08 Ridgewood Lakes Del Webb Phase 1 subdivision Single-family ±3.5 dwelling units per acre</p>	<p>Southeast: RL-3X, PUD 85-08 Ridgewood Lakes DRI Del Webb Phase 1 subdivision Single-family ±3.5 dwelling units per acre</p>

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

The proposed facility will only occupy a small portion (<1/4) of the nearly 10-acre site (see Exhibit 5). Buildings and the 1.25-million-gallon ground storage tank will be placed over 50 feet from the property line and over 200 feet from the nearest residential lot. The structures will also be considerably lower than the nearest homes due to the grade of the land. The closest home sits approximately 10 feet above the future grade of the utility site.

Compatibility with the Surrounding Land Uses and Infrastructure:

Staff find that the interconnect facility as designed will be compatible with the surrounding land uses given the elevation grade and the County’s standard Land Development Code (LDC) design requirements for landscaping, buffering, and setbacks. All three abutting residential developments included additional landscaping and buffering features to enhance compatibility with the inevitable future development of this property. The closest residences are on a higher grade than the subject property. There are very few environmental limitations with the property, and the intended use will become vital in the future for other infrastructure investments in the area.

A. Land Uses:

This facility will operate with minimal staffing limited to routine testing and maintenance. The most pronounced feature on the site plan is the 1.25-million-gallon ground storage tank that will be where the water from the Lower Floridan Aquifer comes from the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) Southeast facility and is blended with the Upper Floridan water from the Northeast Utility Service Area water treatment facilities. It will be 100 feet in diameter and approximately 38 feet above adjacent grade. The site grade will be approximately 10 feet below the grade of the closest residences in the Forest Lake Subdivision. Section 220 of the LDC requires a 50-foot setback of non-residential uses from neighboring residential land uses or districts. Additionally, the neighboring properties have developed independently with additional landscaping and buffering for their residents from what future

The LDC 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.”

development may occur on this property. The buffer tracts range from 35 to 100 feet in width abutting the subject property.

B. Environment:

There are few environmental limitations with this site. Surface waters have a positive outfall. There is a small portion (<5% of the site) in the northeast corner of the property with wetlands, flood hazard area, and marginal soils which can be easily avoided. The area is nearly built out and as a result there have been no species sightings nearby in over twenty years. However, the County will do a species walkover prior to development as required by state and local funding sources. This change in land use will not adversely impact nearby wells, airports, and there have been no findings of historical resources in the area. All but the wetland/floodplain area has been cultivated for citrus in the recent past.

C. Infrastructure:

The proposed interconnect facility will operate mostly unmanned and monitored through System Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems during most of its operation. It will expand the infrastructure capabilities of the Northeast Regional Utility Service Area (NERUSA) by infusing water from the Lower Floridan Aquifer supplied through the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC). This facility will have no adverse impacts on schools. It will ensure that there are adequate water supplies and pressure for fire hydrants in the system. It will add water to the system and need very little wastewater treatment. Unless the rest of the site is used for offices, there will be no significant impact on the roadways after construction is completed. Drainage will outfall into a wetland system that connects to Horse Creek and into the Kissimmee River chain. The site is adjacent to a future park for the town of Davenport.

Nearest and Zoned Elementary, Middle, and High School

School capacity is not a concern for non-residential uses. Proximity and traffic conflicts are a concern. Fortunately, the activity on this site is benign and will have no potential conflicts with any school’s operation. Listed in the table to follow are the three closest schools to the site.

Table 2

Name of School	Average driving distance from subject site
Horizons Elementary	±1 mile driving distance
Davenport School of the Arts Middle School	±9 miles driving distance
Ridge Community High School	±2 miles driving distance

Source: Polk County School Board GIS

This potable water interconnect and storage facility will pose no potential adverse impacts upon any nearby schools. One of the three schools listed in Table 2 above along with five others in the utility service area will be served by this future facility. Two more schools are planned within the service area over the next five years.

Nearest Sheriff, Fire, and EMS Station

Fire and EMS response to this project is from Polk County Fire Rescue Station 38, located at 126 Cottonwood Drive. The travel distance is just under three (3) miles from the site and response times can average six or more minutes depending on the type of call. There will be fire hydrants constructed onsite with ample water pressure since it will be a water interconnect and storage facility.

Demand for services will be low since the facility will be sparsely manned and there are very little flammable equipment items. Needs for emergency medical services will increase slightly if offices are added.

Table 3

	Name of Station	Distance	Response Time*
Sheriff	Northeast District Command (1100 Dunson Road)	±6 miles	6 minutes
Fire	Station 38 (126 Cottonwood Drive, Davenport)	±2.86 miles	6 minutes
EMS	Station 38 (126 Cottonwood Drive, Davenport)	±2.86 miles	6 minutes

Source: Polk County Sheriff's Office and Public Safety

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

The nearest Sheriff's substation is the Northeast Command Center on Dunson Road, six (6) miles to the north. Sheriff response times are not as much a function of the distance to the nearest sheriff's substation, but more a function of the overall number of patrol officers within the County. However, the closer to the command center increases the number of patrol officers available in the area.

Water and Wastewater Demand and Capacity:

This facility will bring more water supplies into the Northeast Regional Utility Service Area (NERUSA). By June of 2028, an additional 410,000 will come from the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) through the facility that will be developed on this site. Additional water supplies will follow. This property may also host some other Polk County Utilities functions such as a satellite utilities operations office and a storage facility for vehicles, materials, and equipment.

A. Estimated Demand and Service Provider:

The interconnect facility will be unmanned and monitored through System Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems during most of its operation. There will be restroom facilities and sinks in the chemical room show on the site plan. It will be periodically visited by staff to conduct water testing and maintenance of the system.

Table 4

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
±9.91 acres INST-2X	Demand as Currently Permitted in the INST-2X district	Maximum Permitted in the INST-2X district	Proposed Plan
Permitted Intensity	Office building (323,760 sq.ft @ 75% FAR)	Office building (323,760 sq.ft @ 75% FAR)	Unmanned Potable Water Interconnect and Storage Facility and 1,000 sq.ft. chemical building
Potable Water Consumption (GPD)	77,702	77,702	250 GPD
Wastewater Generation (GPD)	62,162	62,162	200 GPD

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual & Polk County Utilities

The NERUSA is the fastest growing utility system in all of Polk County. Over the last year, the water system has been growing at 5.7 new connections per day. The wastewater system has been growing at 3.06 new connections per day.

B. Available Capacity:

The NERUSA potable water system has a permitted capacity of 12,940,000 gallons per day (GPD). Current usage is approximately 10,654,000 GPD with 83,000 GPD of committed capacity. This leaves 2,286,000 GPD of remaining capacity which is enough to serve nearly 6,350 single-family residential units. There are approximately 57,211 customers being served. The system growth rate is 1,427 GPD which equates to over 2,000 new connections per year. At the current rate of growth, expansion of the system is needed in approximately four (4) years.

The NERUSA wastewater system has a permitted capacity of 6,000,000 gallons per day (GPD). Current usage is approximately 5,459,000 GPD. This leaves 541,000 GPD of remaining capacity which is enough to serve nearly 2,004 single-family residential units. The plant will be expanding to 7,000,000 GPD within a year and to 9,000,000 GPD by June of 2029.

C. Planned Improvements:

The facility planned for this site will bring in 410,000 GPD from the PRWC Southwest Lower Floridan Aquifer Wellfield east of Lake Wales, 1,200,000 from the Cypress Lakes Lower Floridan Aquifer system in Osceola County, and by June of 2033, a new Lower Floridan Aquifer well may be operational in the NERUSA Holly Hill Plant on Sand Mine Road.

The NERUSA wastewater treatment facility on Homerun Boulevard has been enabled to increase treatment to a permitted capacity of 7,000,000 GPD. The plant is undergoing an expansion that will raise the capacity to 9,000,000 GPD. This is to be completed by June of 2029. While under construction, the subject property may be utilized for storage of vehicles, materials, and equipment that would be located at the Homerun Boulevard facility were it not for the construction.

Roadways/ Transportation Network

Access to the site is a narrow (30-foot wide) unopened right-of-way. This will not likely be permanent. The town of Davenport has acquired land immediately to the north of the interconnect site to become a park in the future. Polk County Utilities will be serving the site water and wastewater services. In return, the town has agreed to allow access to the interconnect through the park. Class III Utilities do not often generate significant amounts of traffic on roadways. They are typically more of a “land intensive” use. This means they can use a lot of land but don’t have as much activity to go with it. There is more than ample capacity on the directly affected roadways, even for a use with higher transportation demands.

A. Estimated Demand:

The interconnect facility will be unmanned and monitored through System Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems during most of its operation. However, the chemical building shown on the site will be routinely accessed by staff to perform water quality monitoring.

Table 5

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
±9.91 acres INST-2X	Demand as Currently Permitted in the INST-2X district	Maximum Permitted in the INST-2X district	Proposed Plan
Permitted Intensity	Office building (323,760 sq.ft @ 75% FAR)	Office building (323,760 sq.ft @ 75% FAR)	Unmanned Potable Water Interconnect and Storage Facility

Table 5

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
	Demand as Currently Permitted in the INST-2X district	Maximum Permitted in the INST-2X district	Proposed Plan
±9.91 acres INST-2X			and 1,000 sq.ft. chemical building
Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT)	7,314	7,314	23
PM Peak Hour Trips	493	493	2

Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip generation Manual 11th Addition
Single-family Residential = 7.81 AADT, 1 PM Peak (100% new)

There will also be the occasional delivery of chlorine and other facility materials. These will be large vehicles and semi-trucks.

B. Available Capacity

Although the request will have a limited impact on the transportation system, it is still pertinent to be aware of available capacity when making land use decisions. Table 6, to follow, provides a good snapshot of the capacity on the surrounding road network. U.S. Highway 27 is a constrained facility.

Table 6

Link #	Road Name	Current Level of Service (LOS)	Available PM Peak Hour Capacity	Minimum LOS Standard
8316N	Holly Hill Road From: County Road 547 To: U.S. Highway 27	C	668	E
8316S	Heller Brothers Road From: U.S. Highway 27 To: County Road 547	C	663	E
4053E	County Road 547 From: U.S. Highway 27 To: Lee Jackson Highway	C	277	E
4053W	County Road 547 From: Lee Jackson Highway To: U.S. Highway 27	C	256	E
5110N	U.S. Highway 27 From: CR 547 To: I-4	F	-436	D
5110S	U.S. Highway 27 From: I-4 To: CR 547	F	-301	D
8222E	Interstate-4 From: CR 557 To: Osceola County Line	C	4,071	D
8222W	Interstate-4 From: Osceola County Line To: CR 557	C	4,324	D

Source: Polk County Transportation Planning Organization, Concurrency Roadway Network Database January 17, 2025

Recent travel lane additions on I-4 have provided a temporary solution while work begins on the ultimate widening to 10 lanes. Polk County Roads and Drainage Division cannot control these facilities, but it can control the roadways that feed into them and improve alternative routes such as Holly Hill Road to lessen the local demand on the state thoroughfares.

C. Roadway Conditions

Polk County uses the Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) method established by the Transportation Information Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The roadway conditions are displayed in the table to follow under the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) rating.

Table 7

Road Name	Roadway Classification	Pavement Width	Pavement Condition Index (PCI)
Holly Hill Road	Urban Major Collector	20'	“very good” (8)
County Road 547	Urban Major Collector	22'	“very good” (8)

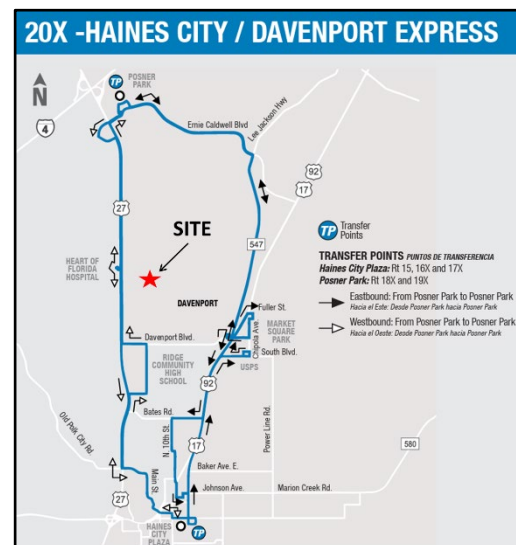
The property does not have frontage on Holly Hill Road, but it connects to it through a 30-foot wide unopened and currently unmaintained right-of-way platted by the Florida Land Development Company at the turn of the 20th century. The County will use this access for construction and early operation. Eventually the site may take access through the town of Davenport’s future park for which they have acquired land to the north of the site. Holly Hill Road is a two-lane, 20-foot wide, urban major collector roadways with a PCI rating of “very good” (8) along the project frontage. U.S. Highway 27 is not rated under the County’s Road Inventory but appears to be in excellent condition since it was recently re-surfaced earlier this year. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) maintains it.

D. Planned Improvements:

There are no transportation improvements planned for the immediate area of the facility. However, there are many roadway projects in the Northeast Utility Service Area (NERUSA). With new roadway projects comes new development and new development needs water. This site is vital to the growth of the area.

E. Mass Transit

Mass transit service is provided along U.S. Highway 27. The closest fixed route transit stop is at Heart of Florida Hospital at U.S. Highway 27 and Holly Hill Road. This is just over a mile from the site which is not a convenient walking distance and there are gaps in the sidewalk network. The route has 40 minute headways, but only nine cycles on weekdays and six on Saturday. The proposed uses are not likely to be conducive to use of mass transit.



F. Sidewalks

The sidewalk network along Holly Hill Road is less than 60% complete. But that is not a concern for the development of this site. Most of the operations will be conducted remotely through the system control and data acquisition (SCADA) network. In the future, a satellite operations center may be located onsite. If that happens, there will be approximately 20 employees coming and going from the facility. They will be driving vehicles with equipment predominantly.

Park Facilities:

The closest County recreation facility is Loughman Park approximately 11 miles away from the north in Loughman. The town of Davenport will be constructing a park immediately to the north. The request will not adversely affect either the park or its operations. The proposed facility will most likely provide potable water to park.

A. Location:

Loughman Park is located at 6302 Old Kissimmee Road approximately 11 miles from the site. The Northeast Regional Park is located 12½ miles to the north of on U.S. Highway 27.

B. Services:

Loughman has soccer, basketball, multi-purpose fields, picnic tables, pavilion, and a playground. The Northeast Regional Park has six lighted soccer/football fields, five lighted baseball fields, basketball, tennis, and racquetball courts, concession facilities, boat access, as well as playground facilities for children and dog walks.

C. Environmental Lands:

Lake Bonnet Marsh is on the west side of U.S Highway 27. There is public access at the end of Sanders Road to the southwest within two miles of the site.

C. Planned Improvements

There are no planned improvements to park facilities in this area in the County's 5-year capital improvements plan. However, the town of Davenport is likely to begin construction of their park, (abutting the site) within the next three years.

Environmental Conditions

There are no significant environmental limitations to the development of this property. It has good soil, is connected through a wetland system to surface waters, minimal wetland and flood hazard area, no recent endangered species sightings, or archeological resources.

A. Surface Water

The highest point of the site is in the southwest corner at 150 feet above mean sea level (MSL). It slopes from the southwest to the northeast corner at 114 MSL. The site naturally flows northeasterly into a wetland system connected to the Ridgewood Lakes development. These wetlands connect to Horse Creek which is a manmade canal that funnels water through creeks that reach Lake Marion and Reedy Creek. Reedy Creek connects to the Kissimmee River which flows to the Gulf. The site used for the interconnect and water tanks will be brought to a standard even grade. Stormwater treatment facilities will be placed between the developed area and the wetlands to pretreat runoff prior to discharge. The site is in an open basin. Drainage systems will be designed to meet the 25-year/24-hour storm event.

B. Wetlands/Floodplains

The very tip of northeast corner of the site is comprised of both wetlands and 100-year floodplain. This is approximately 3% of the total site (0.298 acres). It is a small portion of a former lakebed that silted in after mining was conducted within the Ridgewood Lakes development. It will be easy for all development within the site to avoid any disturbance or alteration.

C. Soils:

The usable portion of the site has very good soil for development. The portion that has soil with severe limitations is a wetland that will be avoided. No development will occur within a minimum of 25 feet from the wetland boundary.

Table 8

Soil Name	Septic Tank Absorption Field Limitations	Limitations to small commercial buildings	% of Site (approximate)
Candler Sand	Slight	Slight	90%
Tavares Fine Sand	Moderate: wetness	Slight	7%
Samsula Muck	Severe: ponding, poor filter	Severe: ponding, low strength	3%

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

There may be some need for offsite soil. Candler sand is so porous that it often needs some augmentation or heavy compaction to achieve foundational stability.

D. Protected Species

The area is very urbanized. There are not many locations of tracts of undeveloped land in the vicinity of the site. There have been no sightings within one mile of the proposed wastewater treatment plant site according to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory surveys in 2002, 2006, and 2011. A more in-depth protected species study will be required for both the Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as well as the federal agency providing the funding for the project.

E. Archeological Resources

There are no protected archeological resources in Section 32, Township 26, and Range 27, that the site of these proposed ground storage tanks would adversely impact, according to the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources.

F. Wells (Public/Private)

PCU's Edghill well site is 1.8 miles to the north. Davenport's water treatment facility is ¾ mile to the south.

G. Airports

The site is over 2½ miles from the edge of the runway for Gore Airport. A private airfield west of Hanes City. Wastewater Treatment Plants are typically close to grade and pose no threat to aircraft. The water tanks will not exceed 40 feet in height. A system control and data acquisition communication tower will be included. It will be approximately 80 feet high. Not enough to pose any threats to aviation.

Economic Factors:

There are very minimal land development capabilities in an area without an ample source of potable water to support them. Water is one of the most important infrastructure items in land development. It is not only needed for drinking, cleaning, and cooking; it is also needed for fire protection. There is a finite amount of water from the upper Floridan Aquifer to serve the Northeast Utility Service Area (NERUSA) and without more water, this area will no longer be able to grow in residences and businesses. Future development depends on a new water supply. This conditional use request is primarily for an interconnection with the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) Lower Floridan Aquifer well water supplies. This new source of water will enable development growth to continue in the utility service area for years to come. Many land investments will depend on an uninterrupted supply of potable water in the future. This facility will ensure continued growth in the area which will result in sustained land values in the future. Without this facility, development growth in the area will be capped under the current permitted level of drawdown from the Upper Floridan Aquifer which is approximately 12,940,000 gallons per day (gpd). Currently, 10,654,000 gpd are being used to serve existing development needs leaving only 2,286,000 gpd remaining to support more growth in the system. This is enough to support approximately 9,144 new dwelling units. The system averages approximately 2,000 new dwelling units each year. At such a continued rate, there will be no capacity for new development after 2030.

The water from the PRWC is treated at a reverse osmosis facility that removes the brine from the higher salinity Lower Floridan Aquifer water. This water will taste different from the water treated from the Upper Floridan Aquifer. The two sources of water need to be blended before being distributed through the system, so the public does not encounter a significant change in water flavor when the PRWC water is added to the greater system. This proposed water production facility includes a 1.25-million-gallon ground storage water tank to perform that blending. Without this tank, customers will experience a fluctuation in water taste. And that would not be good customer service.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, LDC, and Other County Ordinances:

The site is located in the Urban Growth Area (UGA), which is the 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*” according to POLICY 2.105-A1 of the Comprehensive Plan. This site is near all of the necessary infrastructure and services mentioned in the policy.

POLICY 2.125-D1: UTILITIES PERMITTED USES states that “*utility facilities shall be permitted throughout the County in all land use classifications, subject to County approval, to support existing and proposed development.*” This site is on the south end of the Northeast Regional Utility System (NERUSA) potable water network it provides the least distance for travel from the PRWC Southeast water treatment facility where it can connect to the NERUSA’s main distribution lines.

POLICY 3.105-D3 of the Comprehensive Plan states that the purpose of Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) is to “*develop projects that are environmentally sound, sustainable and include adequate **alternative water supplies** within the region.*” While the PRWC acts as an independent government authority and may sell water to both public and private utility providers, the members of the PRWC within Polk County “*shall have first priority on alternative water supply production in accordance with the provisions of Section 373.1961 (5), FS.*”

Table 9, to follow, provides an analysis of the proposed request when compared to typical policies of the Comprehensive Plan selected by staff for evaluation of development proposals. Based upon this analysis, the proposed request is consistent with relevant policies of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan.

Table 9

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
<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>This request is primarily potable water storage and distribution. The property is a lone vacant tract surrounded by suburban developments of single-family homes. Accessibility is difficult. It was previously intended to be a latter phase of the Ridgewood Lakes development. It will better serve the area as a utility facility that benefits the service area customers.</p>
<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: 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.</p>	<p>This site abuts residential development on three sides and that is taken into account in the design. The site plan shows it is designed to minimize visual and noise impacts. Adequate separation distances of 50 feet are maintained from residential district lines and include landscaping to augment visual screening. The existing developments have provided their residents with screening, landscaping, and buffering as well. So, it has buffers upon buffers.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>This site was chosen so that the water system can reach a balanced distribution throughout the service area.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>This site was purchased to connect the PRWC water to the Northeast water system. This system is being connected in advance of future water needs to maintain the County's level of service for potable water.</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>The water storage and interconnect facility expand the water volume in the area. With more water, there is more pressure in the system to serve the fire hydrants.</p>

Land Development Code (LDC) Section 401.06, Table 4.16, Use Table for Standard Land Use Districts in the Northridge Selected Area Plan lists Class III Utilities as a Level 3 Conditional Use in the Institutional (INST) districts. A Level 3 Review is approved by the Planning Commission under the criteria listed in Section 906.D.7 of the LDC

Table 10

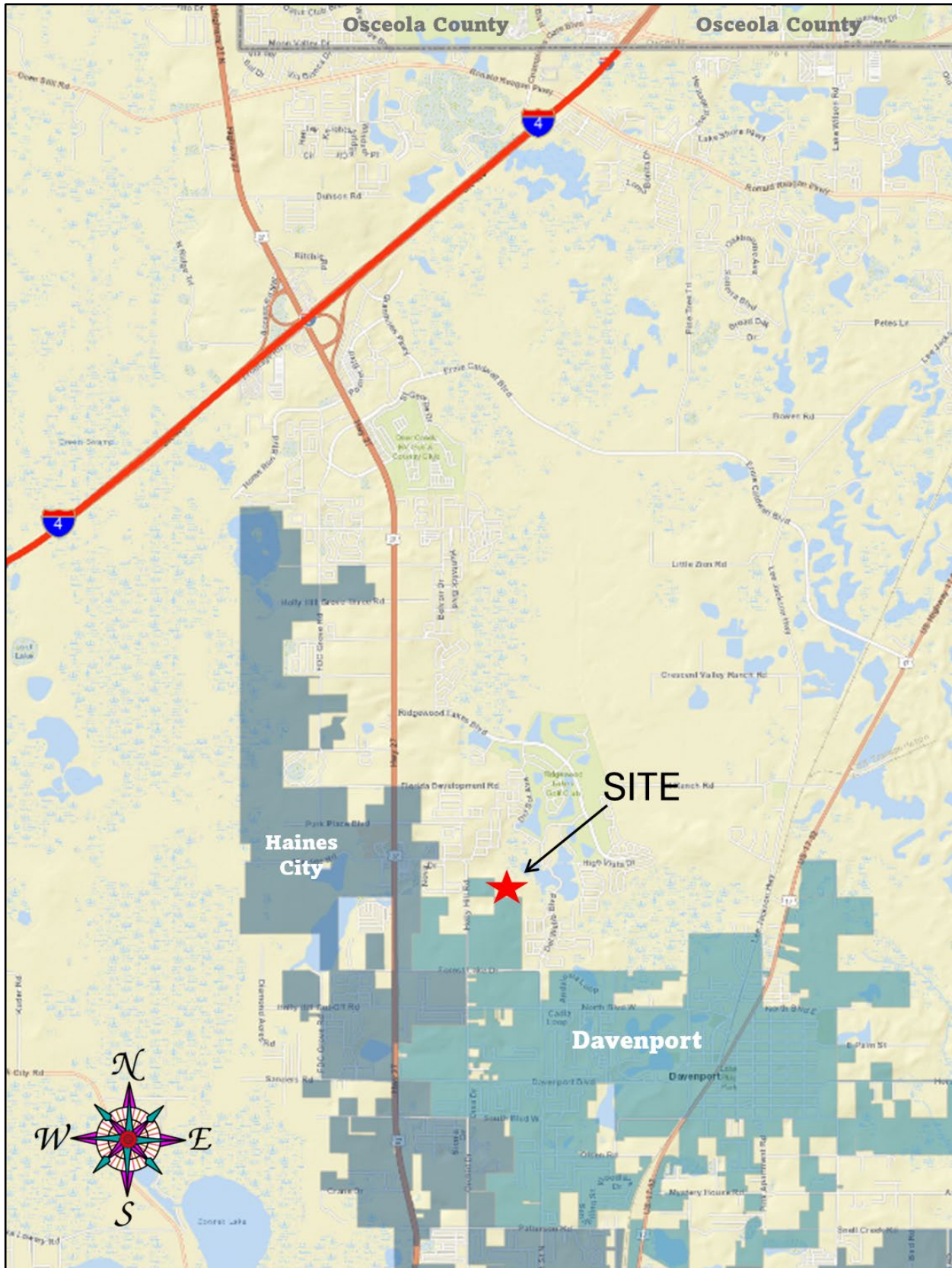
The Planning Commission, in the review of development plans, shall consider the following factors in accordance with Section 906.D.7 of the LDC:	
Whether the proposed development is consistent with all relevant requirements of this Code;	<i>Yes, this request is consistent with the LDC, specifically Sections 303, Class III Utilities, and 906.D Level 3 Review Procedures.</i>
Whether the proposed development is consistent with all applicable policies of the Comprehensive Plan;	<i>Yes, this development is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan because POLICY 2.125-D1 states “utility facilities shall be permitted throughout the County in all land use classifications” and POLICY 3.105-D3 to “develop projects that are environmentally sound, sustainable and include adequate alternative water supplies within the region.”</i>
Whether the proposed use is compatible with surrounding uses and the general character of the area, including such factors as density, height, bulk, scale, intensity, traffic, noise, and appearance; and	<i>The site plan shows it is designed to minimize visual and noise impacts. Adequate separation distances of 50 feet are maintained from residential district lines and include landscaping to augment visual screening. The existing developments have provided their residents with screening, landscaping, and buffering as well. So, it has buffers upon buffers.</i>
How the concurrency requirements will be met if the development were built.	<i>This interconnect, storage and treatment facility generates an insignificant amount of vehicle travel, requires no school or park capacity, must be designed to meet drainage requirements, and are a concurrency facility on their own.</i>

The request meets all conditions in Section 303 of the LDC for Class III Utilities in an INST land use district in the Northridge SAP. These conditions are listed in the Findings of Fact on page 3 of this report.

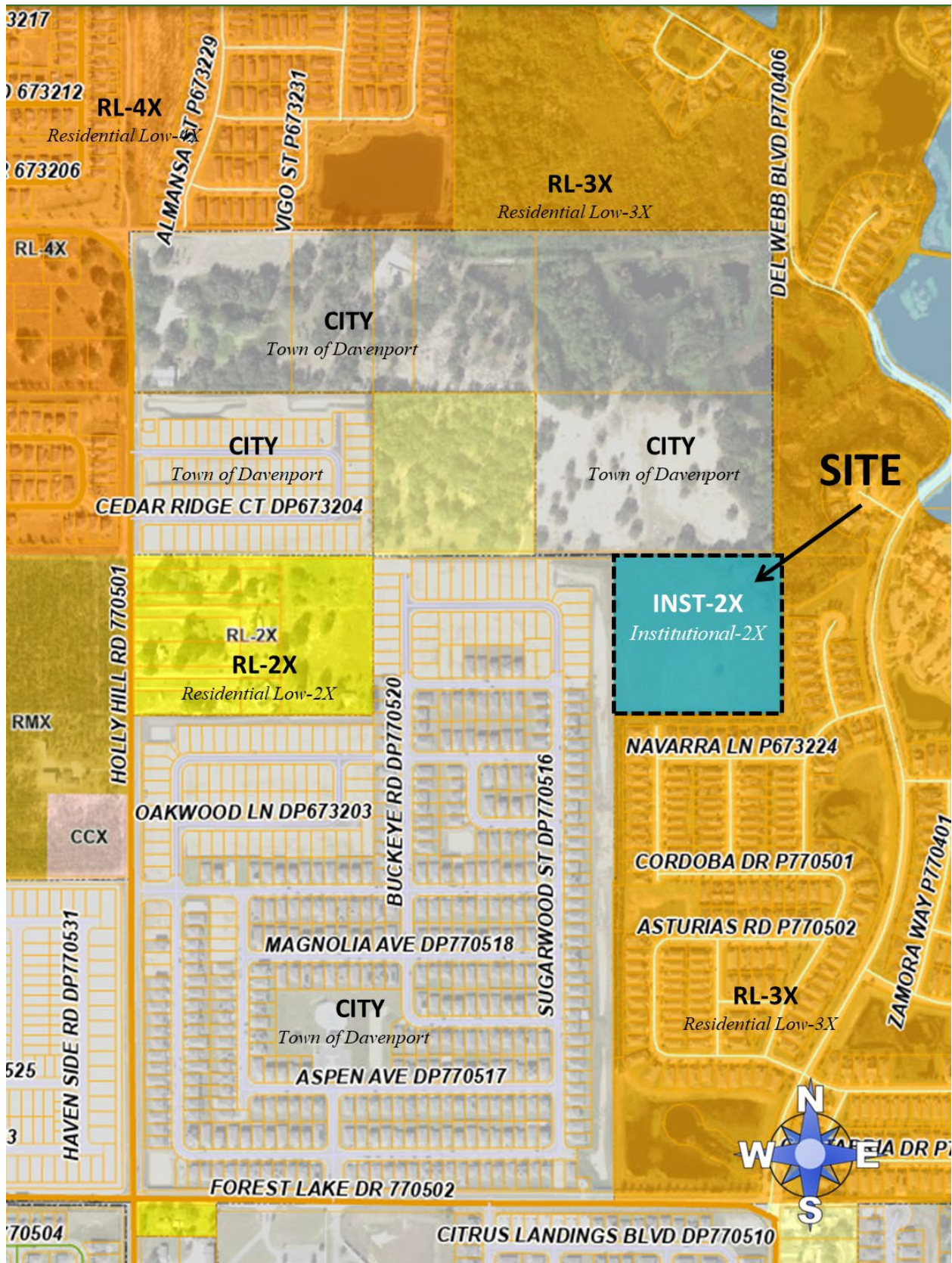
Comments from other Agencies: The Polk County Utilities, Land Development Engineering, County Surveyor, Polk County School Board, and the Polk County Public Safety Division contributed to the drafting of this report.

Exhibits:

- Exhibit – 1 Location Map
- Exhibit – 2 Future Land Use Map
- Exhibit – 3 2024 Satellite Photo (Context)
- Exhibit – 4 2025 Satellite Photo (Close-up)
- Exhibit – 5 Site Plan



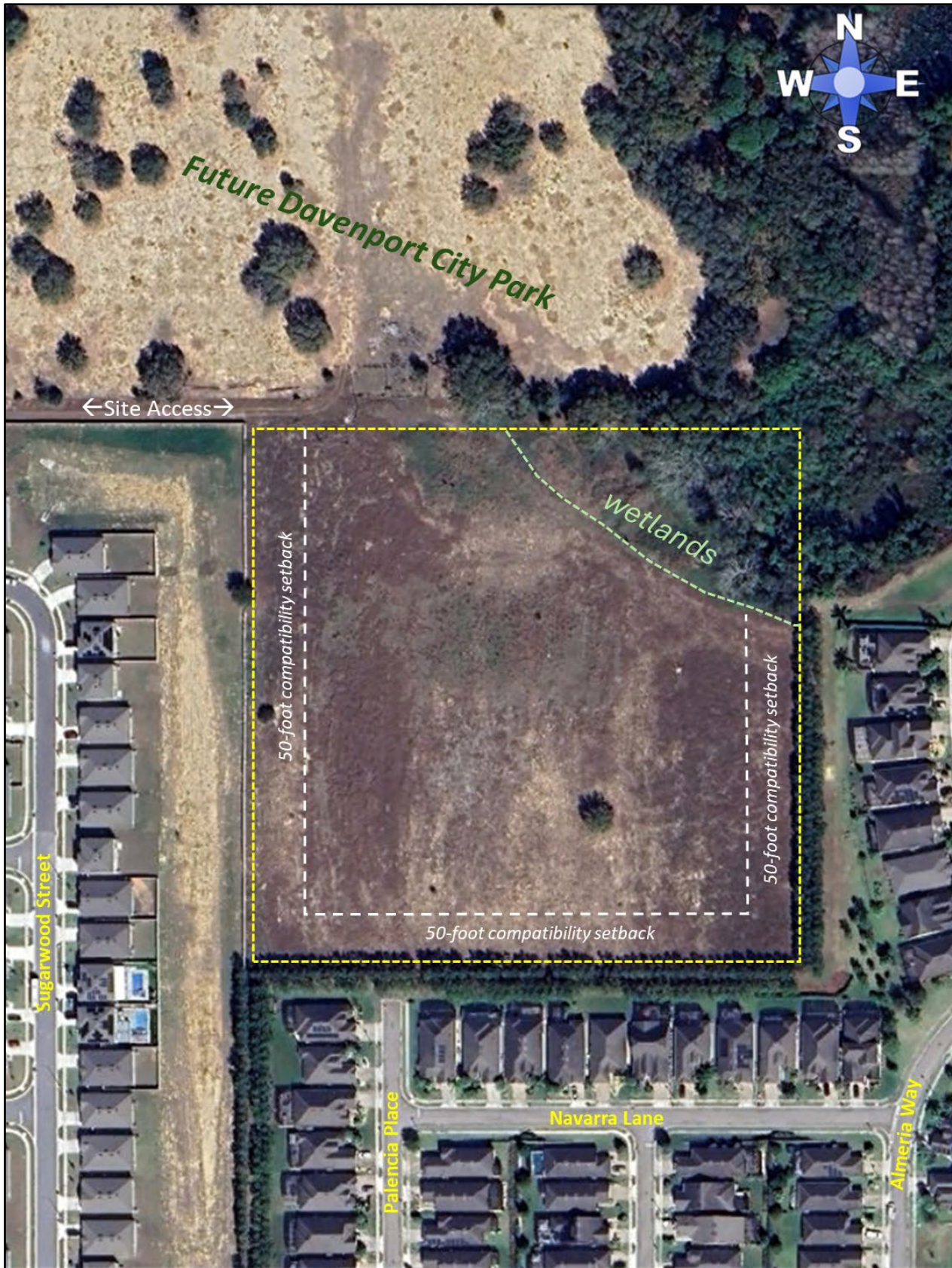
Location Map



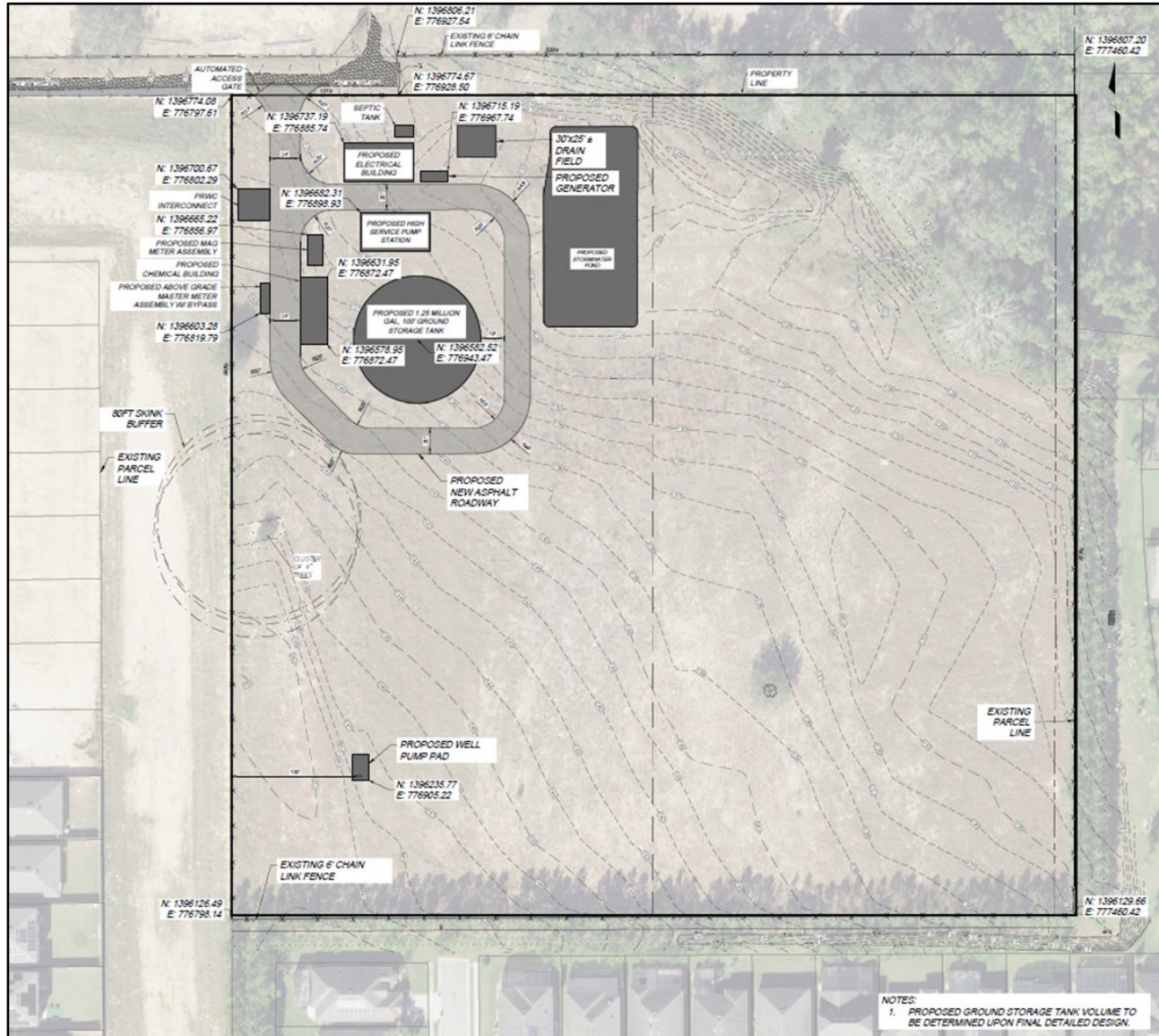
Future Land Use Map



2024 Satellite Photo (Context)



2025 Satellite (Close Up)



Water Treatment Facility Site Plan