

POLK COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

DRC Date:	June 11, 2026	Level of Review:	Level 4 Review
PC Date:	July 8, 2026	Type:	LDC Text Amendment
BoCC Date:	August 4, 2026	Case Numbers:	LDCT-2026-15
	August 18, 2026	Case Name:	RACX Vehicle Service
Applicant:	Evan Futch	Case Planner:	Ian Nance

Request:	This is an applicant-initiated request for a LDC text amendment to add the use “Vehicle Service, Mechanical” as a conditional use in Regional Activity Center (RACX) land use districts within Table 4.8, Use Table for the U.S. 27 Selected Area Plan (SAP).
DRC Recommendation:	Approval
Planning Commission Vote:	Approve 7-0

Among the changes to Section 401.03 North US 27 Selected Area Plan

- Adding “Vehicle Service, Mechanical” to Table 4.8, Use Table for U.S. 27 Selected Area Plan, as a “C1” conditional use in Regional Activity Center (RACX) land use districts.

Summary:

LDCT-2026-15 is an applicant-initiated request to add “Vehicle Service, Mechanical” to Use Table 4.8 within the U.S. 27 SAP in Regional Activity Center (RACX) land use districts in the Land Development Code (LDC). Vehicle service activities are typically conducted within enclosed, or partially enclosed, structures. Automotive services provided by this type of facility are generally characterized as routine maintenance, such as oil changes, brake work, tire changes, etc., though more substantial mechanical work may be offered. This does not include autobody repair where damage has been done to a vehicle which may be kept on a lot for an extended period.

Within the framework of the Comprehensive Plan, Regional Activity Centers are intended to accommodate regional needs of residents and commuters. They generally contain a shopping center and complementary uses that take advantage of the regional attractors within the center. Vehicle repair facilities fall within the concept of complementary uses. Vehicle repair is allowed within all other RAC districts in the County. Staff is uncertain why it was not added to the U.S. 27 Use Table when first adopted.

Staff recommends approval of this request. The application of this amendment and the resulting ordinance will affect only a small portion of the U.S. 27 SAP as the existing RACX district is limited to less than 4% of the SAP. The RACX is a land use district designed to provide for the regional needs of residents surrounding the center, and this use is one of those needs. The request is consistent with Comprehensive Plan and LDC policies for the RACX and U.S. 27 SAP.

Relevant Sections, Policies, and/or Regulations to Consider:

Comprehensive Plan Section 2.131-C: North US 27 Selected Area Plan

Comprehensive Objective 2.110-F: Regional Activity Centers

LDC Section 401.03: North US 27 Selected Area Plan

LDC Section 303: Criteria for Conditional Uses

Findings of Fact

- *This is an applicant-initiated request for a LDC text amendment to add the use “Vehicle Service, Mechanical” as an allowable use in Regional Activity Center (RACX) land use districts within Table 4.8, Use Table for the U.S. 27 Selected Area Plan (SAP).*
- *Chapter 10 of the LDC defines “Vehicle Service, Mechanical” as, “Vehicle repair and servicing activities which are typically conducted within enclosed, or partially enclosed, structures. Automotive services provided by this type of facility are generally characterized as routine maintenance, though more substantial mechanical work may be offered by these businesses.”*
- *LDC Section 303 establishes the conditional use criteria for “Vehicle Repair” uses:*

“In addition to the applicable district regulations in Table 2.2, the following standards shall apply:

- 1. A buffer equal to a Type C buffer (see Section 720) shall be provided between the vehicle repair facility and all abutting residential districts. Also, additional trees equal to one tree per 30 feet shall be provided adjacent to residential areas.*
- 2. All access points shall have at a minimum 50 feet of road frontage and be located at a minimum on an Urban collector or Rural Major collector road or better unless contained within a planned industrial park with access to an Urban collector or Rural Major collector road or better.*
- 3. There shall be no external activity beyond loading and unloading of materials. All repair shall be conducted within an enclosed structure.*
- 4. All outdoor storage shall be screened from off-site view.*
- 5. No activity shall be conducted that produces noise, odors, dust, fumes, fire hazard, or other nuisance beyond the property lines.*
- 6. All vehicle repair structures shall be set back 50 feet when abutting a residential or professional district.”*

- *LDC Section 401.03 details development standards within the North U.S. 27 SAP. According to the LDC, “This Selected Area Plan (SAP) was adopted in the Polk County Comprehensive Plan to recognize the anticipated high level of urbanization during the next twenty years. The districts and performance standards that follow implement the public/private initiatives outlined in the Plan. In order to achieve an efficient and highly desirable urban growth pattern, a balance of residential and non-residential uses is required, as well as a range of housing opportunities and short trips between housing, employment, and shopping. The approach utilized in the SAP districts includes the creation of traditional neighborhood villages and a town center while preserving sensitive environmental resources.”*
- *Comprehensive Plan Policy 2.131-C4 of the Comprehensive Plan states the following uses may be permitted in RACX:*
 - *research and development facilities;*
 - *helicopter landing facilities;*
 - *motel/hotel;*
 - *convenience stores, including pump islands for gasoline sales;*
 - *service stations;*
 - *retail commercial uses;*
 - *other similar and compatible uses as approved by the Land Development Director or his/her designee.*
- *The U.S. 27 SAP is approximately 4,904 acres. The RACX land use districts within the U.S. 27 SAP total approximately 193.07 acres (<4% of entire SAP).*
- *Land west of U.S. 27 within the U.S. 27 SAP is in the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. Table 4.8, the Use Table for the U.S. 27 SAP, is divided between those land use districts within the Green Swamp ACSC and those east of U.S. 27.*
- *“Vehicle Service, Mechanical” is allowed within the Neighborhood Activity Center (NACX) as a “P” permitted use and in the Town Center (TCX) district as a “C3” conditional use in the Green Swamp ACSC.*
- *Outside of the Green Swamp ACSC, “Vehicle Service, Mechanical” is a “P” permitted use in the NACX; and as a “C3” conditional use in the TCX and Leisure/Recreation (L/RX) future land use districts.*

- *“Vehicle Service, Mechanical” is listed as a “P” permitted use in RAC districts in Table 2.1; as a “P” permitted use in the RACX in the Ronald Reagan SAP; and as a “P” permitted use in the RACX in the North Ridge SAP.*

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 the proposed 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, and therefore, the DRC recommends **APPROVAL of LDCT-2026-15**.

Analysis:

Vehicle repair facilities can be generally described as “quick-fix” businesses where routine maintenance of vehicles takes place. Such businesses perform oil changes, tire changes, brakes and transmission work that can generally be finished within a matter of hours. These are not “extended stay” operations where the outdoor storage of vehicles for long periods of time is required. These fit within other commercial uses, often in tandem with retail centers, much like car washes.

The U.S. 27 SAP is a high-density residential area of Polk County that also attracts large numbers of commuters and seasonal travelers. Both residents and visitors benefit from this use. To achieve an efficient and highly desirable urban growth pattern in the SAP, a balance of residential and non-residential uses is required, according to the LDC and Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the RACX land use district is tailored to suit a variety of commercial uses to complement and serve surrounding development. Vehicle repair facilities fit under this umbrella of uses. Finally, this use is allowed in all other RAC future land use districts in Polk County. It is listed as a “P” permitted use in other RAC districts, but staff is recommending it be listed as a “C1” conditional use here to assure the standards in LDC Section 303, particularly the requirement that all repair work be conducted within an enclosed structure, are followed. This is a compatibility, design, and aesthetic measure that is important in the US 27 SAP since the RACX districts are arranged in a linear fashion along US Highway 27 and US 192.

Limits of the Proposed Ordinance

The scope of the amendment is limited to RACX land use districts within the U.S. 27 SAP and its use table. The RACX districts are +/- 193.07 acres of the approximate 4,904 acres in the SAP, which is less than four percent of that area. Though there is an RACX district on the west side of U.S. 27 within the SAP and Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, this amendment will only affect RACX districts outside of the Green Swamp ACSC.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan & Land Development Code

The request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code as noted before. The proposed use is consistent with the standards of both the subject Selected Area Plan and Future Land Use District. The establishment of this use here is also consistent with the Land Development Code as this use is found elsewhere in RACX districts within Polk County.

Comments from Other Agencies: None

Draft Ordinance: Under separate attachment