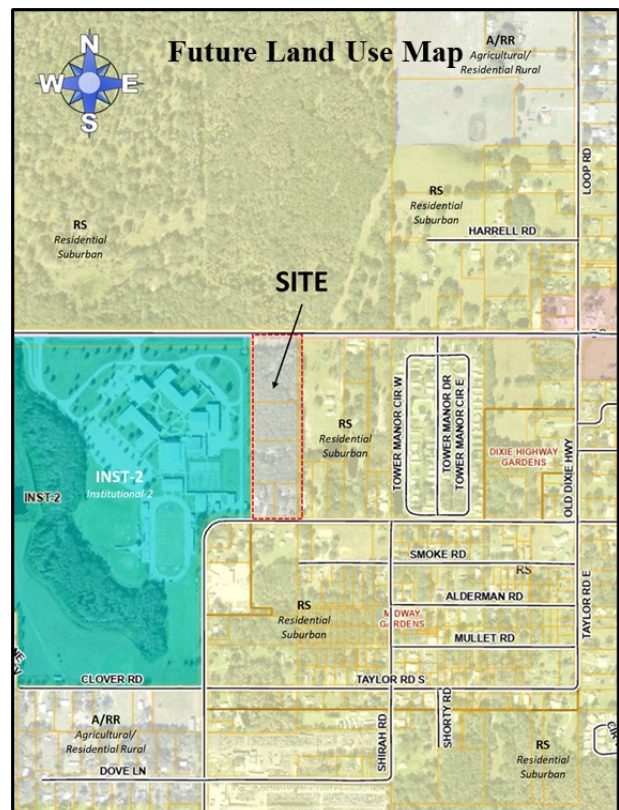
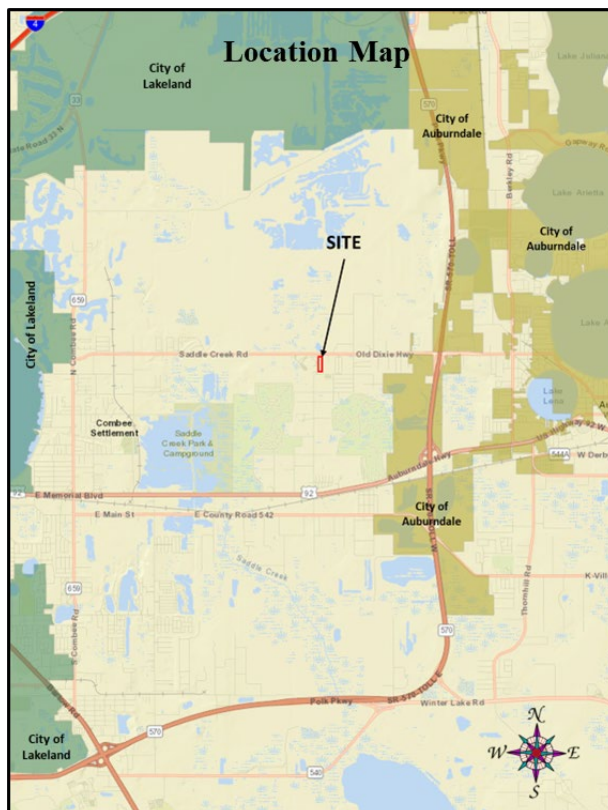


POLK COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

DRC Date:	November 6, 2025
Planning Commission Date:	January 7, 2026
BoCC Dates:	February 17, 2026
Applicant:	Polk County, Land Development Division
Level of Review:	Small-scale Comprehensive Plan Amendment
Case Number and Name:	LDCPAS-2025-34 CR 546 Map Correction
Request:	Future Land Use Map change from Agricultural/Residential Rural (A/RR) in the Rural Development Area (RDA) to Residential Suburban (RS) in the Suburban Development Area (SDA) on ±9.7 acres to correct an error in the Future Land Use Map.
Location:	Between CR 546 and Old Dixie Highway, east of Tenoroc High School, west of Tower Manor Drive, east of the city of Lakeland, west of the city of Auburndale in Section 6, Township 28, Range 25.
Property Owner:	James Mock, Richard Edwards, Tasha Gabany, and Michael Wells
Parcel Number (Size):	252806-000000-044140, 044160, 044090, & 044100 (±9.7 acres)
Development Area:	Rural Development Area (RDA)
Future Land Use:	Agricultural/Residential Rural (A/RR)
Case Planner:	Erik Peterson, AICP



Summary:

This approximately 9.7-acre collection of five properties is surrounded by Residential Suburban (RS) on three sides and INST-2 on the other side (see Exhibit 2). It is also hole of Rural Development Area (RDA) surrounded by Suburban Development Area (SDA). One of the property owners purchased approximately seven (7) acres on Saddle Creek Road in the spring of 2000. The maps at the time indicated that the property was Residential Suburban (see Exhibit 6). This was before the Geographical Information System (GIS) Data Viewers, and the Polk PA cadastral maps were utilized to display the Future Land Use Map and Development Area Map boundaries. Between the parcel map books and the Quadrangle Future Land Use Maps, the property appeared to be within the district lines. When the Future Land Use Map was attached to specific parcel boundaries, approximately 10 acres were not included in the RS district.

The property has potable water lines abutting three sides and a master lift station adjacent to the northwest corner, urban collector road frontages with a comprehensive sidewalk network, and a neighborhood park on the opposite side of Old Dixie Highway (see Exhibit 4). The INST-2 and SDA mapping of Tenoroc High School made the subject property an isolated district (spot zoning). Staff are requesting that this property be officially recognized as Residential Suburban (RS) in the Suburban Development Area (SDA).

Compatibility Summary

This Future Land Use Map and Development Area Map change request is primarily recognizing the existing development. It will enable the same capability for future growth as is currently allowed on neighboring properties. It is suspected that when the County transitioned from a more generalized Future Land Use Map to a more precise cadastral map, these properties were inadvertently placed in the wrong district on both maps (see Exhibits 2 and 6). Having the same development rights as all abutting properties is clearly meeting the Comprehensive Plan's definition of compatibility.

Infrastructure Summary

The site has ample water service, hydrants nearby, an excellent sidewalk network, and good access to major roadways. Wastewater connections are available but will probably never be needed for the most likely level of future development that may occur on this site. It is close to general mercantile stores, abuts a high school, and is across the street from a community park. There are also a number of different types of recreation available within close proximity.

Environmental Summary

The site has no significant environmental limitations. But the soil conditions are a limitation to an intense amount of development. There are no floodplains and only a small amount of wetlands onsite. The site is in an open drainage basin that feeds into Tenoroc State Preserve that forms the headwaters of Saddle Creek which flows to the Peace River. The area to the east and south is well developed with residences and there is a high school abutting the west boundary, so it is not likely that endangered species exist, especially on such a small site. The distances from airports and well sites are suitable. There are four dwellings within the area requested and only likely to be a few more as a result of this amendment.

Comprehensive Plan

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

- Policy 2.102(A1-A15) – Growth Management Policies
- Section 2.106 – Suburban Development Area (SDA) policies

Staff have reviewed each policy statement and addressed them in Tables 9 through 11 of this report. This site meets and exceeds the Comprehensive Plan criteria for a Residential Suburban district and Suburban Development Area (SDA) designation.

Findings of Fact

Request and Legal Status

- *On October 23, 2025, the proposed Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map change request was presented to the Development Review Committee (DRC) in a pre-application meeting under case# LDDRC-2025-256.*
- *This is a county-initiated request for a Small-Scale Future Land Use designation change from Agricultural/Residential Rural (A/RR) in the Rural Development Area (RDA) to Residential Suburban (RS) in the Suburban Development Area (SDA) on ±9.7 acres to correct an error in the Future Land Use Map.*

Compatibility

- *The property abuts Residential Suburban (RS) on three sides and Suburban Development Area (SDA) on all four sides.*
- *The surrounding Future Land Uses are Residential Suburban (RS) on three sides, but Institutional (INST-2) on the west side where a high school is currently located.*
- *This request will afford the subject properties the same development rights as all abutting properties.*

Infrastructure

- *The property is zoned for the closest schools, which are Lena Vista elementary, Stambaugh middle school, and Tenoroc High School which is abutting the property.*
- *The current fire closest response to this project is from Fire Station 39, the East Main Station in between the cities of Lakeland and Auburndale. The travel distance is approximately 4 miles and response times should average six (6) minutes.*
- *There is a fire hydrant within 800 feet of the north side of the site on Saddle Creek Road (CR 546) and a hydrant within 100 feet of the south side of the site on Old Dixie Highway.*
- *The site is served by the Polk County Sheriff's Office Southeast District Command 4120 US Highway 98, approximately 8½ miles driving distance from the site.*

- *The city of Auburndale provides potable water and wastewater to the area. There is a 12-inch water line on three sides of the property and the north side of the property abuts a wastewater lift station.*
- *The subject property has ±330 feet of frontage on Saddle Creek Road (CR 546) which is a two-lane urban collector road twenty-four (24) feet in width.*
- *The subject property has ±330 feet of frontage on Old Dixie highway which is a two-lane urban collector road twenty (20) feet in width.*
- *According to the Transportation Planning Organization, there is adequate capacity on Saddle Creek Road (CR 546) as well as other roads such as Combee Road and Berkley Road, and U.S. Highway 92 within the area transportation network to support the development currently. Old Dixie Road does not have enough traffic on it to track at this time.*
- *There are sidewalks on Saddle Creek Road (CR 546) and Old Dixie Highway that connect to recreation facilities, commerce and schools.*
- *The nearest park is immediately across the street on Old Dixie Highway.*

Environmental

- *The closest surface water is Lost Lake within Saddle Creek Park over 6,000 feet to the west of the site.*
- *There are no 100-year-flood hazard areas on the site. There is a small wetland area in the northeast corner of the property that drains via a 24" culvert to the north under Saddle Creek Road.*
- *The site is comprised of soil that is considered to have "severe limitations" for septic tank absorption fields and dwellings without basements, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Polk County Survey.*
- *According to Polk County Endangered Habitat Maps, the property is not located within a one-mile radius of a past endangered species sighting. (Source: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 2021).*
- *The site is not shown as a potential network connection or existing natural area on the Polk Green District Map but is a quarter mile south on an existing natural area (Tenoroc State Preserve).*
- *There are no conservation easements within a mile 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 states that “land shall be developed so that adjacent uses are compatible with each other, pursuant to the requirements of other Policies in this Future Land Use Element, so that one or more of the following provisions are accomplished: a. there have been provisions made which buffer incompatible uses from dissimilar uses; b. incompatible uses are made to be more compatible to each other through limiting the intensity and scale of the more intense use; c. uses are transitioned through a gradual scaling of different land use activities through the use of innovative development techniques such as a Planned Unit Development.”*
- *POLICY 2.102-A3 Distribution states that “development shall be distributed throughout the County consistently with this Future Land Use Element so that the public utility, other community services, and public transit and transportation systems can be efficiently utilized; and compact, high-density and intensity development is located where urban services can be made available.”*
- *POLICY 2.102-A4 Timing states that “development of land shall be timed and staged in conjunction with the cost-effective and efficient provision of supporting community services which, at a minimum, shall require compliance with the Plan's Level of Service requirements and the County's concurrency management system.”*
- *POLICY 2.102-A10 Location Criteria states “the following factors shall be taken into consideration when determining the appropriateness of establishing or expanding any land use or development area:*
 - a. nearness to incompatible land uses and future land uses, unless adequate buffering is provided;*
 - b. nearness to agriculture-production areas;*
 - c. distance from populated areas;*
 - d. economic issues, such as minimum population support and market-area radius (where applicable);*
 - e. adequacy of support facilities or adequacy of proposed facilities to be provided by the time of development, including, but are not limited to:*
 - 1. transportation facilities, including but not limited to, mass transit, sidewalks, trails and bikeways;*
 - 2. sanitary sewer and potable water service;*
 - 3. storm-water management;*
 - 4. solid waste collection and disposal;*
 - 5. fire protection with adequate response times, properly trained personnel, and proper fire-fighting equipment;*
 - 6. emergency medical service (EMS) provisions; and*
 - 7. other public safety features such as law enforcement;*
 - 8. schools and other educational facilities*
 - 9. parks, open spaces, civic areas and other community facilities*
 - f. environmental factors, including, but not limited to:*
 - 1. environmental sensitivity of the property and adjacent property;*

2. *surface water features, including drainage patterns, basin characteristics, and flood hazards;*
 3. *wetlands and primary aquifer recharge areas;*
 4. *soil characteristics;*
 5. *location of potable water supplies, private wells, public well fields; and*
 6. *climatic conditions, including prevailing winds, when applicable.”*
- *The Comprehensive Plan defines Compatibility in Division 4.400 as “A condition in which land uses or conditions can coexist in relative proximity to each other in a stable fashion over time such that no use or condition is unduly negatively impacted directly or indirectly by another use or condition.”*
 - *Policy 2.106-A5 of the Comprehensive Plan states “in order to achieve higher densities and intensities allowed by each land use, development in the SDA shall be required to connect to centralized water system,”*
 - *Policy 2.106-A7 of the Comprehensive Plan states that “When evaluating non-residential projects within the Suburban Development Area the relative timeliness of the proposal shall be considered. The following factors shall indicate whether a project is premature:*
 - a. *there is not functional and proximate relationship between the proposed development and other development;*
 - b. *there is considerable displacement of ongoing economically viable agricultural activities;*
 - c. *there is a lack of urban services, including but not limited to police, fire, and EMS; and*
 - d. *the condition and adequacy of the collector and arterial road network is deficient.**If a project is determined to be premature it shall not be approved.”*

Development Review Committee Recommendation: Based on the information provided by the applicant, recent site visits, and the analysis conducted within this staff report, the Development Review Committee finds that with the proposed conditions, the proposed request **IS COMPATIBLE** with the surrounding land uses and general character of the area, **IS CONSISTENT** with the Polk County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, and therefore, the Development Review Committee (DRC) recommends **APPROVAL of LDCPAS 2025-34**.

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

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

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

Analysis

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

Surrounding Uses

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

Table 1

Northwest: Residential Suburban (RS) vacant	North: Residential Suburban (RS) vacant	Northeast: Residential Suburban (RS) Single-family detached homes
West: Institutional-2 (INST-2) Tenoroc High School	Subject Property: Agricultural/Residential Rural (A/RR) four dwelling units and five lots on 9.7 acres	East: Residential Suburban (RS) Single-family detached homes Tower Manor Mobile Home Park
Southwest: Residential Suburban (RS) Single-family detached homes	South: Residential Suburban (RS) Single-family detached homes	Southeast: Residential Suburban (RS) Single-family detached homes Midway Gardens Park

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

The subject property is a 9.7-acre island of Rural Development Area (RDA) and A/RR future land use surrounded by a sea of Suburban Development Area (SDA) and RS future land use (See Exhibit 2). There are some other areas nearby that are also mis-mapped that will be corrected in future County-initiated amendment requests based upon development priorities. The surrounding area is mostly developed with the exception of the RS district to the north whose owner is waiting for wastewater capacity improvements to Auburndale's service so that a more intense development can be permitted there.

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

While this request will triple the potential amount of development allowed on the property, it is merely recognizing existing uses and becoming more consistent with the surrounding uses and map designations. This request will correct what appears to be an error in mapping between generalized and more specific mapping systems. All of the urban services and more are available to justify Suburban Development Area (SDA) and the Residential Suburban (RS) designations.

A. Land Uses:

This Future Land Use Map and Development Area Map change request is primarily recognizing the existing development. It will enable the same capability for future growth as is currently allowed on neighboring properties. It is suspected that when the County transitioned from a more generalized Future Land Use Map to a more precise cadastral map, these properties were inadvertently placed in the wrong district on both maps (see Exhibits 2 and 6). Having the same development rights as all abutting properties is clearly meeting the Comprehensive Plan's definition of compatibility.

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

B. Infrastructure:

The site has ample water service, hydrants nearby, an excellent sidewalk network, and good access to major roadways. Wastewater connections are available but will probably never be needed for the most likely level of future development that may occur on this site. It is close to general mercantile stores, abuts a high school, and is across the street from a community park. There are also a number of different types of recreation available within close proximity. This checks all boxes for the Suburban Development Area.

C. Environmental:

The site has no apparent environmental limitations. But the soils are only good for the level of most likely development (2-3 more dwellings). There are no floodplains and only a small amount of wetlands onsite. The site is in an open drainage basin that feeds into Tenoroc Preserve and Saddle Creek. The area is well developed with residences, so it is not likely that endangered species exist, especially on such a small site. The distances from airports and well sites are suitable.

Nearest Schools

The property is zoned for the closest schools, which are Lena Vista Elementary, Stambaugh Middle School, and Tenoroc High School which is abutting the property. The student estimates for both the maximum possible buildout and the more likely case are listed in Table 2, to follow.

Table 2

Name of School	Annual Estimated Demand	Distance from subject site	School Capacity
Lena Vista Elementary	1-4 students	±2½ miles driving distance	79%
Jere L Stambaugh Middle	1-3 students	±4½ miles driving distance	85%
Tenoroc Senior High School	1-4 students	Next door	62%

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

The numbers shown include temporary classroom capacity (portables). Lena Vista Elementary currently has 25 portable classrooms while improvements are underway to upgrade existing classrooms and add more permanent capacity. Neither Stambaugh nor Tenoroc utilize portable classrooms at this time.

Nearest Sheriff, Fire, and EMS Station

Fire response to this project is from Fire Station 39, the East Main Station in between the cities of Lakeland and Auburndale. The travel distance is approximately four (4) miles and response times should average six (6) minutes. Ambulance response is from the same location. The Four Corners Station is staffed 24/7 with career personnel and augmented by response from other similarly staffed fire stations in the two cities. Response times can vary significantly based on many factors. The site has access to a 12-inch water line from the city of Auburndale and there is an existing fire hydrant meeting current fire flow requirements on Old Dixie Road within 100 feet of the property and a hydrant within the non-fenced portion of the school grounds near Saddle Creek Road.

Table 3

	Name of Station	Distance	Response Time*
Sheriff	Southwest District Command (4120 US 98N, Lakeland)	±8½ miles	7 minutes
Fire	Station #39 East Main (3325 E Main Street near Lakeland)	±4 miles	6 minutes
EMS	Station #39 East Main (3325 E Main Street near Lakeland)	±4 miles	6 minutes

Source: Polk County Sheriff's Office and Public Safety

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

The responding Sheriff's substation will be out of the Southwest District located at 4120 US Highway 98 near Polk State College and is over eight miles from the site. 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 district. The Southwest District has the second highest staffing level of the five District Stations in the County.

Water and Wastewater

The city of Auburndale has provided potable water service to this area since before the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. That is why it is suspected that this was a mapping error. It's difficult to tell because the Future Land Use Map at the time was very generalized (see Exhibit 6). Wastewater service has been available since 2008 that serves the high school and the Saddle Creek Preserve residential development.

A. Estimated Demand:

If you look at the absolute worst-case scenario of what can be constructed in the RS district you will see an outrageous discrepancy between the current permitted demand and proposed district demand for services. Table 4a, to follow, provides generalized estimates of the anticipated water and wastewater demands in the maximum scenario. However, it is not likely that the maximum will occur on this site.

Table 4a

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
±9.7 acres A/RR	Demand as Currently Permitted A/RR	Maximum Permitted on the property RS (SPD)	Percentage increase
Permitted Use	1 unit	29 dwelling units	
Potable Water Consumption (GPD)	360	10,440	2,800%
Wastewater Generation (GPD)	270	7,830	2,800%

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual & Polk County Utilities estimates

In reality, the existing four units may increase to seven units in the future most likely. One dwelling unit is estimated to consume an average of 360 gallons of potable water per day and 270 gallons of wastewater according to current Comprehensive Plan estimates. Table 4b, to follow, provides generalized estimates of the anticipated water and wastewater demands of the planned government facilities on the site. This more realistic comparison shows that the demand for water and wastewater will be marginal and well within the city's ability to serve in the future.

Table 4b

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
	Demand as Currently Permitted <i>A/RR</i>	Maximum Permitted on the property <i>RS (SPD)</i>	Future Plan
±9.7 acres <i>A/RR</i>			
Permitted Intensity	4 dwelling units (existing)	29 dwelling units	2-3 more additional homes
Potable Water Consumption (GPD)*	1,440	10,440	2,250 GPD 75%
Wastewater Generation (GPD)*	1,080	7,830	1,890 GPD 75%

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual & Polk County Utilities estimates, Single-family 360 gpd water, 270 wastewater,

B. Available Capacity:

There is a 12-inch potable water line along the property frontage on Saddle Creek Road (CR 546) and it loops along the western property line of this request within the high school property. It then runs east along the north side right-of-way on Old Dixie highway. Connection to this service enables further development within the request.

Three treatment plants are utilized to provide potable water the entire utility service area of Auburndale that derive the raw water from seven (7) different wells. These facilities distribute more than 1.6 billion gallons of water to our customers annually. The city is also a contributing member to the Polk Regional Water Commission (PRWC) which assures that there will be capacity for future growth of the system.

Wastewater service has been provided to the area since 2006 when the city extended service to serve the future high school which began construction that year. The lift station abutting the northwest corner of this land use request was operational in mid-2008. The city has two wastewater treatment plants that combine to provide 6.4 million gallons per day (MGD) of capacity to the service area. The high school is served by a plant located west of the Polk Parkway just north of Braddock Road. It is not likely that these properties will connect to wastewater service in the future.

C. Planned Improvements:

The city is actively pursuing improvements to existing lines and lift stations to connect more future growth to the existing wastewater treatment plants. The city is coordinating with the PRWC for an interconnect and mixing facility off of Derby Road. This will begin construction in late 2026 once approval is completed.

Roadways/Transportation Network

There are more than adequate transportation facilities to accommodate an RS district on this approximately 9.7 acres. The traffic generated by such a facility is low even if the development potential is maximized. The surrounding roadway network has ample capacity remaining. There is a complete sidewalk network for nearly the entire length of Saddle Creek (CR 546) that reaches schools, recreation facilities, and commerce.

A. Estimated Demand

Looking at the maximum buildout of the highest intensity use possible provides the analysis in Table 5 to follow:

Table 5

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
± 9.7 acres A/RR	Demand as Currently Permitted A/RR	Maximum Permitted on the property RS (SPD)	Percentage increase
Permitted Use	1 unit	29 dwelling units	
Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT)	8	227	2,800%
PM Peak Hour Trips	1	29	2,800%

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual rate of Single-family = 100% new trips 7.81 AADT, 1 PM Peak Hour

In reality, the proposed development will be a few homes. It is highly unlikely that it will develop at the maximum of three units per acre because of unfavorable soil conditions. The table to follow provides a more accurate comparison of the current entitlements to the intended use of the property.

Table 5a

Subject Property	Estimated Impact Analysis		
± 9.7 acres A/RR	Demand as Currently Permitted A/RR	Maximum Permitted on the property RS (SPD)	Future Plan
Permitted Intensity	4 dwelling units (existing)	29 dwelling units	2-3 more homes
Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT)	31	227	55
PM Peak Hour Trips	4	29	7

Source: Polk County Concurrency Manual rate of Single-family = 100% new trips 7.81 AADT, 1 PM Peak Hour

B. Available Capacity

There is available traffic capacity in the network to support more development at this location Table 6 provides a gauge of the area traffic at its peak hour, peak season level. In this location the major roads have ample capacity to support a few more homes easily and the maximum possible which would be 25 additional.

Table 6

Link #	Road Name	Current Level of Service (LOS)	Available PM Peak Hour Capacity	Minimum LOS Standard
4050E	CR 546 (Saddle Creek Road) From: Combee Road To: Ariana Boulevard	B	755	D
4050W	CR 546 (Saddle Creek Road) From: Ariana Boulevard To: Combee Road	B	736	D
7301N	SR 659 (Combee Road) From: U.S. 92 To: CR 546 (Saddle Creek Road)	C	159	D
7301S	SR 659 (Combee Road) From: CR 546 (Saddle Creek Road) To: U.S. 92	C	271	D
4072N	SR 559 (Berkley Road) From: U.S. 92 To: CR 546 (Old Dixie Highway)	C	882	E
4072N	SR 559 (Berkley Road) From: CR 546 (Old Dixie Highway) To: U.S. 92	C	844	E

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

** Indicates capacity after programmed improvements*

C. Roadway Conditions

Saddle Creek Road (CR 546) is an urban collector road but is substandard in right-of-way width by 10 feet. The pavement is 28 feet wide, but the right-of-way is 70 feet wide when 80 feet is needed. Old Dixie Highway is also an urban collector, but it is substandard in both right-of-way and pavement width. The right-of-way is only 50 feet wide, and the pavement width is only 20 feet. Both roads are in above average condition having been resurfaced in the last 10 years.

D. Planned Improvements:

There are no major roadway improvements in this area of the County. The closest major roadway improvement planned in the five-year Community Investment Program in this area is listed to follow.

Table 7

Location	Fiscal Year CIP (construction cost)	Project Description
CR 557 Widening	2026-2027 (\$150,000,000)	Widening of the existing two-lane CR 557 corridor to four lanes from US 17/92 (Shinn Blvd) to the I-4 Interchange, an approximate length of six (6) miles.

E. Mass Transit

The closest mass transit stop is approximately nearly four (4) miles walking distance from the site at the intersection of Combee Road and Idlewild Street. Even though the entire route has sidewalks, such a distance is impracticable for most individuals to use. This is no a transit oriented area.

F. Sidewalks

For what has been mapped as a rural area, there is quite an extensive sidewalk network in this area that connects this site to parks, schools, and commerce. All of Saddle Creek Road has sidewalks on at least one side. All of Old Dixie Highway has sidewalks to U.S. Highway 92.

Park Facilities and Environmental Lands

There are a number of recreational resources serving this area. Just across the street is a very good neighborhood park that serves multiple recreation needs for the community. There are many walking and hiking opportunities in the immediate area as well.

A. Location:

- Midway Gardens Park, 2487 Smoke Road (100 feet from the property)
- Saddle Creek Park, 3716 Morgan Combee Road, (3 miles driving distance from the property)
- Lake Myrtle Sports Complex (4 miles driving distance from the property)
- Tenoroc State Preserve, 3829 Tenoroc Mine Road (7 miles driving distance from the property)

B. Services:

- Midway Gardens Park - playground, picnic tables and shelters, baseball/softball field. There are also a basketball court and an athletic field.
- Saddle Creek Park – playground, picnic tables and shelters, baseball/softball field, walking paths/trails, campground, boat ramps, firearms range.
- Lake Myrtle Sports Complex – Nine (9) baseball fields, eight (8) batting cages, football stadium, 15 athletic fields, meeting facilities
- Tenoroc State Preserve – Archery range, firearms ranges, boat ramps, fishing dock, walking/hiking trails.

C. Environmental Lands:

Tenoroc State Preserve is the closest public environmental land holding. There is public access to Lost Lake just 1¼ miles to the west. This is good for a short day-hike or daily exercise. There is a sidewalk from the north of the property to the access. The Florida Trail passes through Tenoroc. There are many hiking trails throughout the state preserve. However, public access requires permits and is strictly regulated by the Florida Division of Forestry.

D. Planned Improvements:

There are no major projects planned in this area in the 2024-2028 Community Investment Program.

Environmental Conditions

The site has no significant environmental limitations to future development. But the soil conditions are a limitation to maximizing the amount of development enabled by approving this request. There are no floodplains and only a small amount of wetlands onsite. The site is in an open drainage basin that feeds into Tenoroc State Preserve that forms the headwaters of Saddle Creek which flows to the Peace River. The area to the east and south is well developed with residences and there is a high school abutting the west boundary, so it is not likely that endangered species exist, especially on such a small site. The distances from airports and well sites are suitable. There are four dwellings within the area requested and only likely to be a few more as a result of this amendment.

A. Surface Water

The highest elevation on the property is 127 feet above sea level on the south end. The lowest is 119' on the northeast corner. There is a drainage culvert that moves site runoff under Saddle Creek Road to an elevation of 117 feet. From there it enters what appears to be a closed wetlands system that slowly drains to a broader area within the Tenoroc State Preserve. This amendment request will not result in an amount of impervious surface coverage that could overburden this system. The most likely development scenario is a few more residences and a paved driveway. There is not enough undeveloped land to result in an intensity to the level of the Saddle Creek Preserve subdivision to the immediate west of the high school.

B. Wetlands/Floodplains

There are no areas within the 100-year floodplain on site, but there are flood hazard areas on the properties to the west abutting Tower Manor Mobile Home Park. There is a small wetland area in the northeast corner of the property that drains via a 24-inch culvert to the north under Saddle Creek Road. That area of the property can be easily avoided by any future development under the RS Future Land Use Map designation. This amendment will enable up to three dwelling units per acre. However, the most likely buildout is two or three more house lots through Residential Infill Development with access via easement. Such low-scale development will have very little impact on wetlands or floodplains.

C. Soils:

The site has severe soil conditions for development. The water table is often just below 18 inches of the surface in Pamona soils. Septic tanks usually are mounded. This will prevent the site from reaching its maximum density of three units to an acre under the proposed district.

Table 8

Soil Name	Septic Tank Absorption Field Limitations	Limitations to small commercial buildings	% of Site (approximate)
Pamona Fine Sand	Severe: wetness, perc slowly	Severe: wetness	97%
Kaliga Muck	Severe: ponding, poor filter	Severe: subsides, ponding, low strength	3%

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

A small portion of the northeast corner has some wetland conditions and mucky soils. This accounts for an insignificant amount of the property and can be easily avoided. There is a 24-inch culvert that drains this area under Saddle Creek Road into a larger wetland system on the north side of the street.

D. Protected Species

According to Polk County Endangered Habitat Maps, the property is not located within a one-mile radius of any known endangered species sightings. (Source: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 2021). Most of the area is built out and there are four residences on the five properties. There is a high school abutting the west side and major roadways on the north and south ends of the request. It is not likely that endangered species dwell onsite.

There are no conservation easements nearby. However, Tenoroc State Preserve is within 3,000 feet. Parts of Tenoroc State Reserve are identified as “Existing Network Connections” and “Potential Network Connections” on the Polk Green Map.

E. Historic and Archeological Resources

According to the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, there are no archeological sites listed in the Florida Master Site File for the property. However, there have been historical resources discovered in the area to the north where phosphate mining occurred. The Midway Gardens Subdivision was platted in 1926. George Mason sold 16 of the lots in the plat to the County for a park in 1983. It has no historical significance.

F. Wells (Public/Private)

City of Auburndale Utilities provides potable water and wastewater service to the area. The closest public wellfield is located in the city at their main water treatment plant on Atlantic Avenue which is over four miles away from the amendment site.

G. Airports

There are no airports near this area. Winter Haven Regional Airport is approximately seven (7) miles away and Lakeland-Linder International is over 11 miles away.

H. Conservation Lands

To the west, just past the High School and north of CR 546 is a portion of the Tenoroc State Reserve. There are no conservation easements nearby. Tenoroc State Reserve is a publicly funded effort to reverse the extensive environmental damage that was caused by the Coronet Phosphate Mine that operated on it in the 1950s and 1960s. The native and endangered plant and animal species that exist within the state reserve today are there as a result of the clean-up efforts.

Economic Factors:

This area is a pocket of unincorporated lands that are partially served by Polk County utilities and the cities of Lakeland and Auburndale. The County, cities, and the School Board have made substantial investments into promoting future growth in the area. This property has direct access to potable water and wastewater services; nearby schools and parks, abutting sidewalks, storm drainage network, and efficient delivery of public safety services. Such an area should have been designated Urban Growth Area by the plan given the amount of public expenditure. However, it was overlooked under the original mapping which continues today. This amendment request is one of many in the future to rectify the budgetary actions of the Community Investment Program (CIP) and the Future Land Use Map.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

There has been a significant amount of public investment in this area since before the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. However, the Future Land Use Map has not captured all of it. This amendment is one of many that will correct this shortcoming by accurately documenting the infrastructure and past development approvals.

Many policies within the Comprehensive Plan are reviewed for consistency with an application. The most relevant policies for the proposed request are included in this section. The policy is first stated and then an analysis of how the request is provided to state that it may or may not be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. How the request is **consistent or inconsistent** with the Comprehensive Plan is listed below:

- Section 2.102 – General Growth Management policies
- Section 2.106 – Suburban Development Area (SDA) policies
- Section 2.120 – Residential Suburban

The table to follow provides a brief breakdown of Section 2.102 policies that are most pertinent to this request.

Table 9

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
POLICY 2.102-A1: DEVELOPMENT LOCATION – Polk County shall promote contiguous and compact growth patterns through the development process to minimize energy costs, conserve land, water, and natural resources, minimize the cost of services, and prevent development patterns where tracts of land are by-passed in favor of development more distant from services and existing communities.	This amendment will promote contiguous and compact growth patterns by eliminating an isolated A/RR district surrounded by RS and INST.
POLICY 2.102-A2: COMPATIBILITY - Land shall be developed so that adjacent uses are compatible with each other, pursuant to the requirements of other Policies in this Future Land Use Element, so that one or more of the following provisions are accomplished: a. there have been provisions made which buffer incompatible uses from dissimilar uses; b. incompatible uses are made to be more compatible to each other through limiting the intensity and scale of the more intense use; c. uses are transitioned through a gradual scaling of different land use activities through the use of innovative development techniques such as a Planned Unit Development.	The RS land use designation is compatible with the abutting RS land use designation and does not conflict with the abutting INST-2 designation of Tenoroc High School.
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.	This amendment will contribute to a better distribution of land uses that recognize the investment in infrastructure.
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.	The time has passed for these properties to be within the SDA and RS district. It should be UGA. There is water, wastewater, nearby schools, public safety facilities, and multimodal transportation.
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).	The nearest Fire Rescue Station is within four miles. It is backed up by the cities of Lakeland and Auburndale Fire departments.

The table to follow provides a brief breakdown of Section 2.106 Suburban Development Area (SDA) policies that are most pertinent to this request.

Table 10

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p>POLICY 2.106-A1: DESCRIPTION – SDAs shall be those areas within the County which are, in most cases, located between municipalities, TSDA or UGA and the Rural Development Areas (RDAs). In the SDA, agricultural activities coexist alongside low density developed areas in the fringes of municipalities and other urban centers. These areas have developed predominately residential, in a suburban pattern with County-owned, municipal or County-franchised potable-water systems, but without centralized sewer facilities and very little, if any, supporting public facilities and non-residential uses. Other urban services typically found to accompany a suburban area include, but are not limited to multimodal transportation facilities, public safety, recreational and educational services.</p>	<p>This property is surrounded by SDA. It is in between the city limits of Lakeland and Auburndale. It has direct access to public water and wastewater services. It has sidewalk connections to the abutting High School. The area has many parks; both within short walking and driving distances.</p>
<p>POLICY 2.106-A5: DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA -- Development within the Suburban Development Areas shall conform to the following criteria as further specified in the Land Development Code:</p>	
<p>a. support continued agricultural activities by requiring the implementation of compatibility techniques to limit land use conflicts;</p>	<p>This area has very few bona fide agricultural uses, if there are any at all.</p>
<p>b. protect and preserve open space, agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands by implementing clustering and other conservation development strategies as established in Section 2.1251 of this element;</p>	<p>Tenoroc State Reserve is to the two tracts to the west and one tract to the north.</p>
<p>c. incorporate design features that promote healthy communities and green building practices, as established in Section 2.1251, Community Design, of this element;</p>	<p>This is recognizing existing development.</p>
<p>d. provide access to civic space, parks, green areas, and open space and other amenities;</p>	<p>Midway Gardens Park is across the street on Old Dixie Highway and Saddle Creek Park is 3½ miles driving distance.</p>
<p>e. be supported by public safety (i.e., fire, EMS and law enforcement);</p>	<p>The closest Fire Rescue Station is four miles away on County Rad 542 west of Reynolds Road.</p>
<p>f. have access to elementary schools;</p>	<p>The properties have direct sidewalk connections to Tenoroc High School. The closest elementary school is Lena Vista Elementary on Berkley Road over 2½ miles away, but it is connected by a sidewalk most of the way.</p>
<p>g. encourage connectivity between uses within the SDA, and between the SDA and other urban centers and the rural development areas; and</p>	<p>Three properties are connected via easement to CR 546. The two fronting Old Dixie Highway are not.</p>
<p>h. in order to achieve higher densities and intensities allowed by each land use, development in the SDA shall be required to connect to centralized water system and incorporate clustering and other low impact design criteria as established under the Residential Suburban (RS) land use criteria, the Conservation Development Section (Section 2.1251), the Residential Rural Development (RRD) or the Rural Mixed Used Development (RMD) sections (Section 2.1251) of this element.</p>	<p>There is a 12-inch potable city of Auburndale water line along the south side of County Road 546 that loops through the High School property and runs along the north side of Old Dixie Highway providing the availability of connection to these properties in the future.</p>

The table to follow provides a brief breakdown of Section 2.120 Residential Suburban policies that are most pertinent to this request.

Table 11 – Residential Suburban Policies

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
<p>POLICY 2.120-A1: CHARACTERISTICS - Densities up to, and including, 1 DU/5 AC, unless permitted through SPD, RRD, RMD or the criteria established within the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Provision of Section 2.124-H. The Residential-Suburban classification is characterized by single-family dwelling units and duplex units.</p>	<p>There are four single-family dwelling units on five lots.</p>
<p>POLICY 2.120-A3: LOCATION CRITERIA - Residential-Suburban areas shall be located only within the SDA and new Residential-Suburban development shall not be located within Activity Centers.</p>	<p>The amendment proposal includes a change in the Development Area designation from an isolated RDA to a more consistent SDA.</p>
<p>POLICY 2.120-A4: DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA - Development within designated RS areas shall be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Residential development containing single-family dwelling units, duplex units, and family-care homes, at a density of up to, and including, one dwelling unit per five acres (1 DU/5 AC). Density may be adjusted based on the actual size of the section. A property outside of the Green Swamp Area of Critical State of Concern, may be considered five acres if it is one one-hundred and twenty-eighth (1/128) the section size for sections less than six hundred forty acres (640 acres). This includes counting to the centerline of local and collector roads. b. The "permitted uses" of Suburban Planned Development (SPD), Rural-Residential Development (RRD), or Rural Mixed-Use Development (RMD). (See Sections 2.120-B, 2.121-B, and 2.121-C.) c. Properties adjacent to SR 17 shall be allowed densities and/or intensities up to the maximum allowed in this land use category (3 dwelling units per acre) as a permitted use without requiring a public hearing provided the development meets all the criteria established in Section 2.124-H for Scenic Highways and the Scenic Highway development regulations within the Land Development Code. At a minimum, all development shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect to a centralized potable water supply, and 2. Provide no less than 30% open space throughout the development with at least 70% of that open space dedicated to scenic vista preservation, either along the highway or through the property to a distant view beyond the property boundary. This open space shall be set aside as conservation in perpetuity via a binding legal instrument which prohibits future development within the established boundaries. 	<p>There are four dwellings and five residential lots within approximately 9.7 acres. Under the Residential Infill Development policies, one of the properties can be split into 0.93-acre properties.</p>

Table 11 – Residential Suburban Policies

Comprehensive Plan Policy	Consistency Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Community Facilities, in accordance with policies of this Plan and the provisions of the Land Development Code. e. Residential Infill Development (RID) that contains single-family or duplex-style development and is located amongst an existing residential community (See Section 2.125-N). f. Farmworker housing under specific design parameters listed in the Land Development Code not to exceed an intensity of sixteen (16) workers per acres. 	

Urban Sprawl Analysis

After analyzing the primary indicators of Urban Sprawl per *Policy 2.109-A10* of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan, it is apparent that the proposed request is not considered urban sprawl based on these criteria as this is a mapping error of a land use, and it is permitted in the designated area. Table 10 (below) depicts the Urban Sprawl Criteria used by staff as indicators of Urban Sprawl.

Urban Sprawl Criteria: The following table lists the criteria are the primary indicators of urban sprawl per Florida Statutes Policy 2.102-A11.

Table 12 Urban Sprawl Criteria

Urban Sprawl Criteria	Sections referenced in this report
a. <i>Promotes substantial amounts of low-density, low-intensity, or single use development in excess of demonstrated need.</i>	Summary of analysis
b. <i>Allows a significant amount of urban development to occur in rural areas.</i>	Summary of analysis
c. <i>Designates an urban development in radial, strip isolated, or ribbon patterns emanating from existing urban developments.</i>	Summary of analysis, surrounding Development, compatibility
d. <i>Fails to adequately protect and conserve natural resources and other significant natural systems.</i>	Summary of analysis, surrounding Development, compatibility
e. <i>Fails to adequately protect adjacent agricultural areas.</i>	Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses
f. <i>Fails to maximize existing public facilities and services.</i>	Summary of Analysis, Infrastructure
g. <i>Fails to minimize the need for future facilities and services.</i>	Summary of Analysis, Infrastructure
h. <i>Allows development patterns that will disproportionately increase the cost of providing public facilities and services.</i>	Summary of Analysis, Infrastructure
i. <i>Fails to provide a clear separation between urban and rural uses.</i>	Summary of Analysis, Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses
j. <i>Discourages infill development or redevelopment of existing neighborhoods.</i>	Summary of Analysis, Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses
k. <i>Fails to encourage an attractive and functional mixture of land uses.</i>	Summary of Analysis, Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses
l. <i>Will result in poor accessibility among linked or related land uses.</i>	Summary of Analysis, Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

Urban Sprawl Criteria: The following table lists the criteria are the primary indicators of urban sprawl per Florida Statutes Policy 2.102-A11.

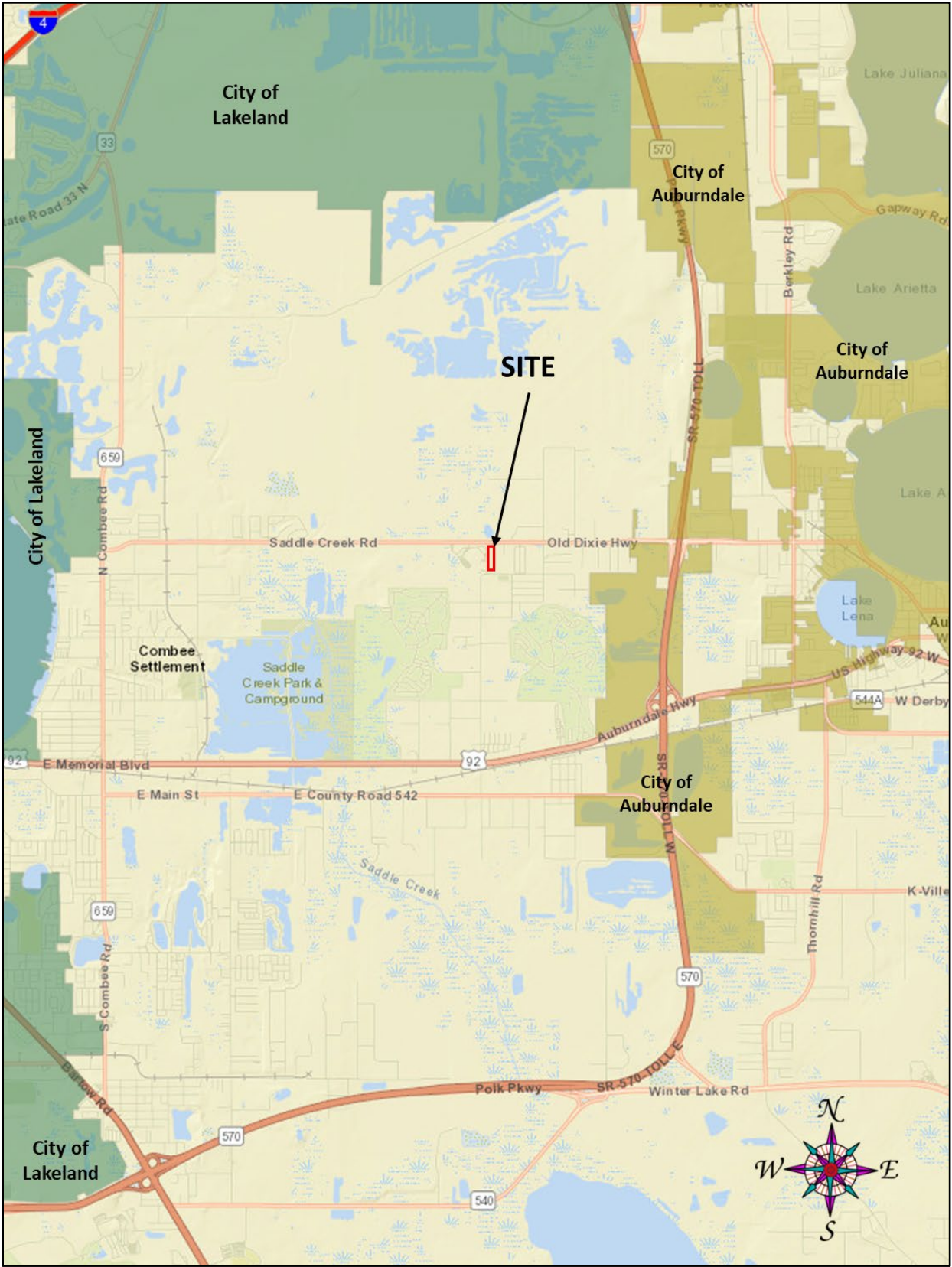
Table 12 Urban Sprawl Criteria

Urban Sprawl Criteria	Sections referenced in this report
m. <i>Results in the loss of a significant amount of open space.</i>	Summary of Analysis, Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses

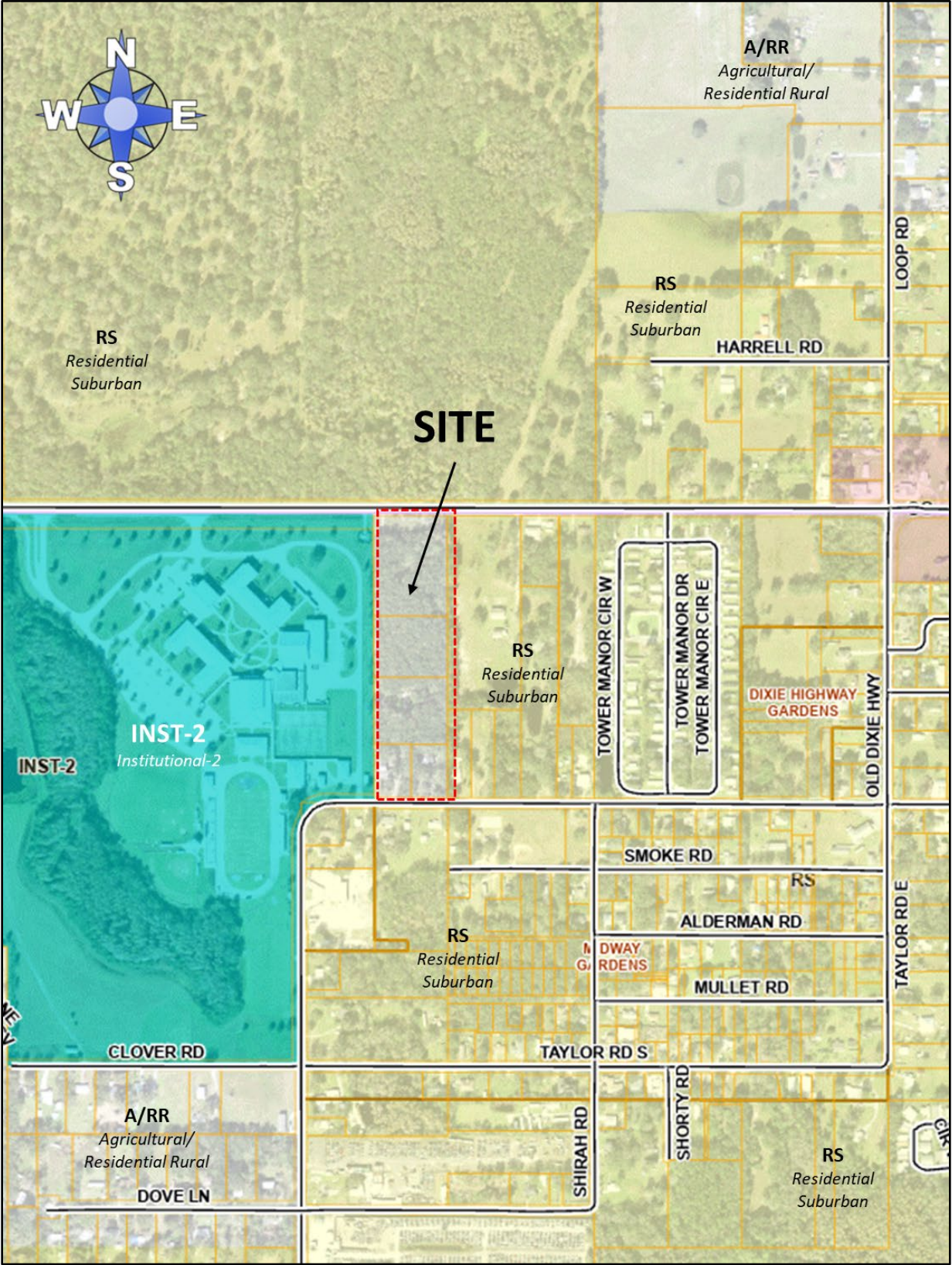
Comments from other Agencies: None.

Exhibits:

- Exhibit – 1 Location Map
- Exhibit – 2 Future Land Use Map
- Exhibit – 3 2025 Satellite Photo (Context)
- Exhibit – 4 2025 Satellite Photo (Close-up)
- Exhibit – 5 District Use Comparison Table
- Exhibit – 6 1992 Future Land Use Map



Location Map



Future Land Use Map



2025 Satellite Photo (Context)

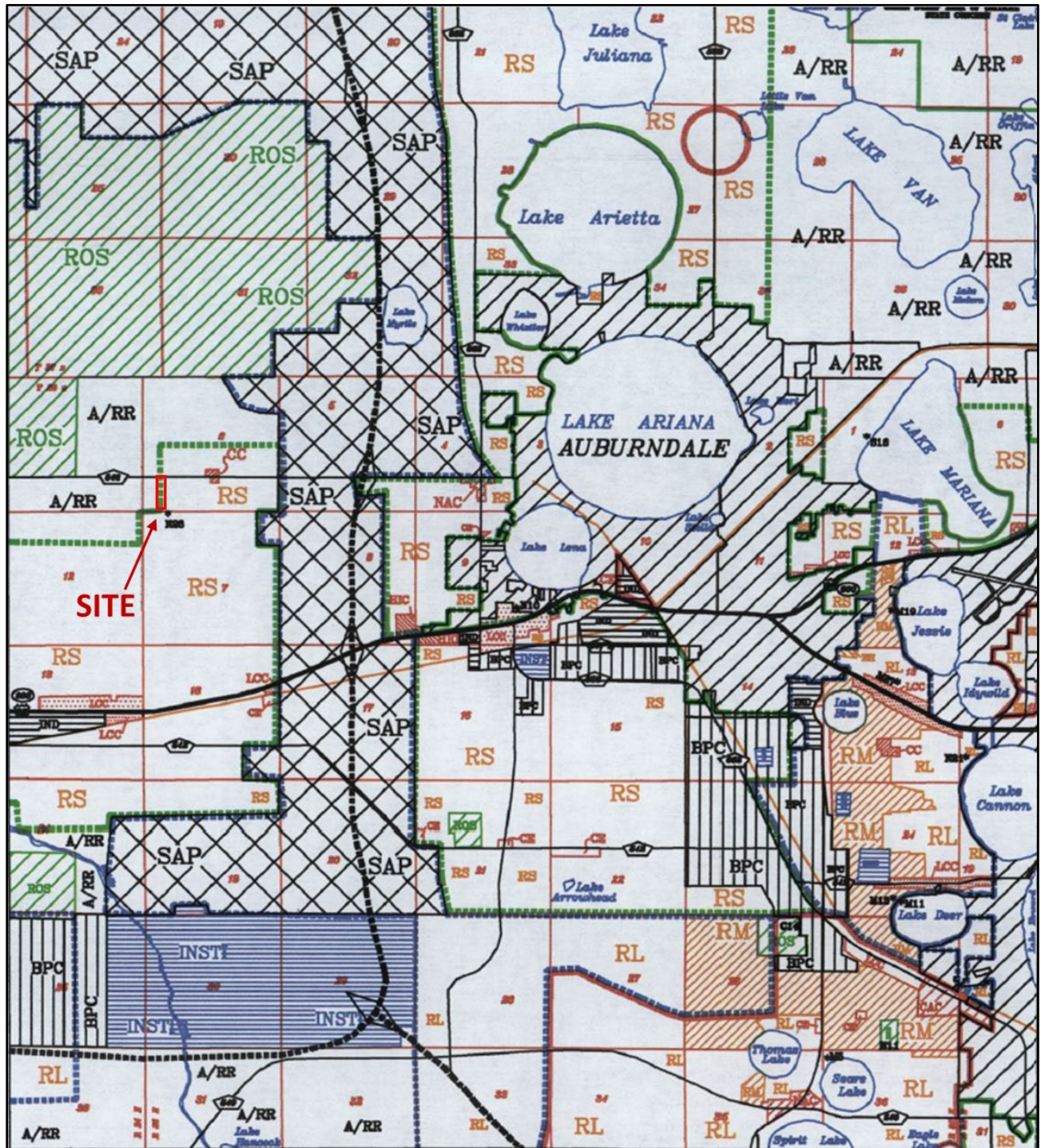


2022 Satellite Close-up

Comparison of Permitted and Conditional Uses*

District	Permitted Uses	Administrative Review	Public Hearing(s) Required
A/RR <i>Agricultural/ Residential Rural</i>	Single-family Residential Kennels, Boarding and Breeding Livestock Sale, Auction Nurseries and Greenhouses Veterinary Service	Group Living Facility (<7 clients) Adult Day Care Center (<7 clients) Cemetery Communication Towers Convenience Stores, Isolated Emergency Shelter Farm Worker Apartment Golf Course Heliports & Helistops Mobile Home Recreation, Passive Recreation, Low Intensity Riding Academies Solar Electric-Power Facilities	Fly-in Community, C3 Group Home, (>6), C3 Farm Worker Dorm, Barrack Style, C3 Mobile Home Park & subdivision, C3 Rural Mixed Development (RMD), C3 Airport, C4 Bed and Breakfast, C3 Breeding, Boarding, and Rehabilitation Facility Wild or Exotic, C3 Childcare Center, C3 Community Center, C3 Correctional Facility, C4 Cultural Facility, C3 Emergency Shelter, Medium (7-14 residents), C3 Emergency Shelter, (>6), C3 Event Facility, C3 Institutional Campground, C3 Lime Stabilization Facility, C3 Lodges and Retreats, Private, C3 Outdoor Concert Venue, C3 High Intensity Recreation, C3 Vehicle Oriented Recreation, C3 Religious Institution, C3 Residential Treatment Facility, C4 School, Elementary, C3 School, Leisure/Special Interest C3 School Technical/Vocational/Trade & Training, C3 Seaplane Base, C3
RS <i>Residential Suburban</i>	Single-family Residential Class I Utilities	Family Farm Small Group Homes (≤6 patients) Mobile Homes Residential Infill Development Golf Course Emergency Shelter (≤6 patients) Passive Recreation Low Intensity Recreation Elementary Schools Middle Schools Riding Academies Class II Utilities	Duplex Fly-in Community Group Living Facility (≥15 patients) Mobile Home Park Mobile Home Subdivision Rural Residential Development Suburban Planned Development Rural Mixed-Use Dev. Transitional Area Development Adult Day Care (≤6 patients) Bed and Breakfast Cemetery Childcare Center Communication Towers Community Center Cultural Facility Emergency Shelter (7-14 patients) Event Facility Helistop Kennels Lodges and Retreats Outdoor Concert Venue High Intensity Recreation Vehicle Oriented Recreation Religious Institution High School Leisure/Special Interest School

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



1992 Future Land Use Map