



## LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA) STAFF REPORT

**Case Number:** FLU-25-02

**LPA Public Hearing:** May 14, 2025

**Applicant:** St. Philopateer Mercurius  
Coptic Orthodox Church

**Representative:** Brian J. Aungst, Jr.,  
Macfarlane, Ferguson, &  
McMullen, P.A.

**Subject Property:** Approximately 4.0 acres  
located at 2261 Tampa  
Road in Palm Harbor

**Parcel ID(s):** 07-28-16-00000-220-1100



### **REQUEST:**

Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment from Residential Suburban (RS) to Institutional (I).

### **LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA) RECOMMENDATION:**

The LPA finds the proposed Future Land Use Map amendment consistent with the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan and recommends approval by the Board of County Commissioners. (The vote was 4-0 in favor.)

### **Development Review Committee (DRC) RECOMMENDATION:**

- **Staff recommends** that the LPA find the proposed Future Land Use Map amendment **consistent** with the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan, based on this report.
  - **Staff further recommends** that the LPA recommend **approval** of the proposed Future Land Use Map amendment to the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners.
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## **SUMMARY REPORT**

The Development Review Committee (DRC) reviewed this application on April 14, 2025. The DRC Staff summary discussion and analysis follows:

The subject property consists of approximately 4.0 acres located at 2261 Tampa Road in Palm Harbor. The site is currently developed with a small religious institution (church) and two single-family homes. According to the submitted application, the applicant intends to improve the property with new expanded church facilities to meet the demand from a growing congregation.

The current Residential Suburban (RS) land use designation allows for primarily residential and agricultural development as well as limited, secondary uses including, for example, institutional, transportation/utility, and other nonresidential where certain property size and location criteria are met. Up to 2.5 dwelling units per acre are permitted in the RS land use designation. Furthermore, the RS designation allows for a non-residential use Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of up to 0.3 and an Impervious Surface Ratio (ISR) of up to 0.6.

The proposed Institutional (I) land use designation allows, for example, schools, hospitals, medical clinics, community assembly facilities (e.g., religious institutions), libraries, and government offices. Permitted secondary uses include residential and recreation/open space. Up to 12.5 dwelling units per acre are permitted in the "I" land use designation. Furthermore, the "I" designation allows for a non-residential use FAR of up to 0.65 and an ISR of up to 0.85.

The property in its current state received a zoning atlas amendment (Z-17-10-19) from R-A, Residential Agriculture to LI, Limited Institutional in 2019 to establish a religious institution (church). The current LI zoning classification generally permits uses similar to the "I" land use designation; however, important to note, the LI zoning classification does not permit residential dwelling units. Therefore, the property as zoned today could not be developed as residential. There is no companion zoning atlas amendment application with this land use change request.

### **Surrounding Uses, Land Use Designations and Zoning Districts**

The subject property is located along Tampa Road at the northwest corner of Riviere Road in Palm Harbor. Tampa Road is a four-lane arterial roadway and furthermore has a Scenic Non-Commercial Corridor-Residential (SNCC-Residential) designation on the Countywide Plan Map. Such designation places restrictions on the types of Countywide Plan Map land use designations permitted along the corridor as well as a restriction on office, personal service/office support, and retail commercial uses. U.S. Highway 19 is approximately one-quarter mile directly east; and Belcher Road is approximately 800-feet directly west.

The majority of properties in the area are single family residential, with some institutional uses and limited professional service uses nearby. Retail businesses increase as U.S. Highway 19 approaches to the east.

Properties directly adjacent to the subject property are primarily designated as RS on the FLUM, with the exception of properties directly across Riviere Road which are designated Residential Low (RL). The closest "I" designation is approximately 370 feet to the north along Riviere Road. The U.S. Highway 19 corridor is primarily designated Residential Office Retail (ROR). Such property designations begin approximately 570 feet to the east.

While the subject property is zoned LI, all surrounding property to the west, north and east are zoned R-R, Rural Residential. Property to the south across Tampa Road are zoned R-1, Single Family Residential. The U.S. Highway 19 corridor is primarily zoned Commercial Parkway (CP). Such property designations begin approximately 570 feet to the east.

The Countywide Land Use designated on the subject property and all adjacent properties is Residential Low Medium on the Countywide Plan Map. If this FLUM amendment proposal were to be approved, a subsequent Countywide Plan Map amendment to Public/Semi-Public would also be required through Forward Pinellas, the Countywide Planning Authority.

### Flood Risk

The subject property is neither within the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) nor the Coastal Storm Area (CSA). The subject property is not within a Flood Zone and is out of the 500-year floodplain. The subject property is not within an Evacuation Zone.

### Conclusion

The DRC staff believe that the proposed land use amendment from Residential Suburban (RS) to Institutional (I) is appropriate for the subject property and general area. The subject property is currently approved as a religious institution which is already a permitted use under the current RS FLUM category as well as the current LI. Limited Institutional zoning designation. A change to "I" would allow the applicant to seek redevelopment and improvements to the property as a religious institution with a higher Floor Area Ratio (FAR) than currently permitted under the RS land use category. An institutional use (private school) exists across Riviere Road to the east and there are other religious institutions in the area. Finally, Tampa Road is a four-lane divided major arterial roadway as well as a Scenic Non-Commercial Corridor-Residential (SNCC-Residential), limiting properties to certain non-commercial uses such as institutional-type and residential uses. The current use of the property and desired future improvements are supported by this SNCC-Residential designation along Tampa Road.

The DRC also finds the amendment consistent with the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan (see specifically cited goals, objectives and policies listed below).

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### **SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USE FACTS:**

	Land Use Category	Zoning District	Existing Use
<b>Subject Property:</b>	Residential Suburban (RS)	LI, Limited Institutional	Church
<b>Adjacent Properties:</b>			
<b>North</b>	Residential Suburban (RS)	R-R, Rural Residential	Single-Family Residential
<b>South</b>	Residential Suburban (RS)	R-1, Single Family Residential	Single-Family Residential
<b>East</b>	Residential Suburban (RS) Residential Low (RL)	R-R, Rural Residential R-R, Rural Residential	Single-Family Residential Private School
<b>West</b>	Residential Suburban (RS)	R-R, Rural Residential	Single-Family Residential

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## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Staff finds that the proposed amendment is consistent with the following adopted goals, objectives, policies, and strategies of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan:

### **FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT**

Goal 1:	Provide a variety of land use character areas to meet the needs of a diverse population and support thriving, resilient, quality communities.
Objective 1.1	Establish Land Use Categories that respond to the unique challenges of infill and (re)development within Unincorporated Pinellas County.
Objective 1.2	Maintain a Land Development Code that responds to the unique challenges of infill and (re)development within Unincorporated Pinellas County.
Policy 1.2.1	Utilize the Land Development Code to regulate the use, intensity and design of (re)development in a manner consistent with the Future Land Use Categories and FLUM.
Strategy 1.2.1.1	The Local Planning Agency and the Board of County Commissioners will ensure that use, density, intensity, and other relevant standards of the Land Development Code are consistent with the Future Land Use Chapter.

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## **COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Approval of this request does not ensure that the site can meet County development regulations, including concurrency management regulations, which apply at the time of site plan review.

**PROPOSED BCC HEARING DATE:** Jun 17th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED TO DATE:** None.

**PERSONS APPEARING AT THE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY HEARING:** N/A

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Case Maps  
Impacts Analysis  
Traffic Impacts  
Amendment Application