



LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY (LPA) STAFF REPORT

Case Number: FLU-25-08

LPA Public Hearing: October 8, 2025

Applicant: Justin Gingerich, Ignite Academy, Inc

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

Subject Property: Approximately 5.23 acres located at 2271 Keystone Road in East Lake Tarpon.

Parcel ID(s): 08-27-16-89406-000-0110



REQUEST:

Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment from Residential Rural (RR) to Institutional (I). A companion Zoning Atlas amendment (Case No. ZON-25-07) is also proposed.

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 5-1, 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 September 8, 2025. The DRC Staff summary discussion and analysis follows:

The subject property is approximately 5.23 acres, located at 2271 Keystone Road in East Lake Tarpon, and is currently developed with a single-family home. The applicant is seeking to redevelop the property with a private school to accommodate approximately 300 students from grades Kindergarten through 8 (K-8). The applicant previously leased another north county location for their school operation with a church near the intersection of Trinity Boulevard and East Lake Road that has a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of Institutional (I) and is zoned R-A, Residential Agriculture. However, the church decided not to renew their lease, and the school is actively looking for a new location within proximity to their current location. The property is currently under contract to purchase, subject to this FLUM amendment request and a companion Zoning Atlas amendment request (Case no. ZON-25-07).

The subject property is designated Residential Rural (RR) on the FLUM and is proposed to be amended to Institutional (I). The RR category generally permits a K-8 private school; however, the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan, as required by the Countywide Rules, has an acreage threshold within the RR category that limits institutional-type uses (including schools) to a maximum of five acres. Otherwise, a FLUM amendment to a different category is necessary; thus, the reason for this FLUM amendment request to change the land use to "I".

The subject property is located within the East Lake Tarpon Community Overlay District, as designated on the FLUM. The Overlay District includes Objectives and Policies to guide the future development of the community.

The property is zoned R-A, which allows for single-family residential lots (2-acre minimum) and a range of agricultural activities. Educational uses, including public and private schools may be permitted as a Type-2 use in an R-A zone. The proposed zoning designation LI, Limited Institutional, would allow for the private school use by right. According to the County's Land Development Code, "The purpose of the LI, Limited Institutional District is to designate, develop and accommodate public uses that serve the needs and interests of the surrounding community."

Surrounding Uses

The subject property is directly adjacent to mostly single family residences and vacant lands. Within the vicinity of the property, there is a range of residential-type dwelling units, institutional uses, and some limited retail and professional service-type uses. To the north and east, the character is mostly large-lot suburban and rural; while to the west and south, the character is more suburban with a stronger mix of housing types and nonresidential use types. The property takes direct and sole access from Keystone Road, which is a four-lane divided arterial roadway.

FLUM designations adjacent to the property include RR directly to the north, east and partially to the south. Residential Low Medium (RLM) is also to the south, across Keystone Road. Property to the west and partially to the north is within the City of Tarpon Springs and classified as Residential Very Low on their city's FLUM. All properties surround the subject property, with the exception of properties within the City of Tarpon Springs, are also within the East Lake Tarpon Community Overlay District.

Scenic/Non-Commercial Corridor (SNCC)

The subject property fronts along Keystone Road, which is designated as a Scenic/Non-Commercial Corridor-Rural Open Space (SNCC-Rural Open Space) on the Countywide Plan Map and as recognized by the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan. 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. The County's Land Development Code generally requires additional landscaping as well along such corridors.

Flood Risk

The subject property has a low flood risk. It is neither within the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) nor the Coastal Storm Area (CSA). The subject property lies within Flood Zone X.

Conclusion

Staff is of the opinion that the proposed FLUM amendment is appropriate for the subject property and is generally compatible with the surrounding development pattern, allowing for limited institutional-type uses that can serve the needs of and support the surrounding community. Also, the property is located along and has access limited to Keystone Road, a four-lane divided arterial roadway. Such frontage and access characteristics support development other than residential. The proposed land use category is compatible with the East Lake Tarpon Community Overlay District as well as the SNCC-Rural Open Space policies and regulations. Finally, staff find the proposed amendment consistent with the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan. See specifically cited goals, objectives, and policies listed below.

SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USE FACTS:

	Land Use Category	Zoning District	Existing Use
Subject Property:	RR	R-A	Single-Family Residence
Adjacent Properties:			
North	RR / City of Tarpon Springs (RVL)	R-A / City of Tarpon Springs (A)	Single-Family Residence / Vacant
South	RR / RLM	R-A / RPD	Single-Family Residence / Vacant
East	RR	R-A	Single-Family Residence
West	RR / City of Tarpon Springs (RVL)	R-A / City of Tarpon Springs (A)	Vacant Residential

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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

FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT

Goal One: 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 Future 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.
- POLICY ELT 1.8: The County will strive to maintain the scenic corridor designation of East Lake Road (County Road 611) and Keystone Road (County Road 582), and consider this residential-oriented scenic corridor designation when evaluating land use and zoning changes within the corridors or expansion of commercial zones in the East Lake Tarpon area.

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: November 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED TO DATE: Seven letters of opposition, 26 “petition” signatures, photo exhibits presented to the LPA

PERSONS APPEARING AT THE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY HEARING: Four people appeared and spoke in favor of the request, five people appeared and spoke in opposition of the request.

ATTACHMENTS: Maps, Impact Assessment, Traffic Analysis