

FORWARD PINELLAS STAFF ANALYSIS



APPLICATION NO.: Case CW 25-07

STAFF: Emma Wennick, Program Planner

APPLICANT: Pinellas County

PROPERTY SIZE: 1.16 acres m.o.l.

**CURRENT COUNTYWIDE
PLAN MAP CATEGORY:** Office

**PROPOSED COUNTYWIDE
PLAN MAP CATEGORY:** Retail & Services

**CURRENT LOCAL
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN
MAP CATEGORY:** Pinellas County – Residential/Office General

**PROPOSED LOCAL
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN
MAP CATEGORY:** Pinellas County – Commercial Neighborhood

LOCATION / PARCEL ID: 2551 Tarpon Woods/33-27-16-00000-410-0100

BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

The County has applied to amend the Countywide Plan Map from Office to Retail & Services for a 1.16-acre parcel at 2551 Tarpon Woods Boulevard in unincorporated East Lake. The property, formerly a bank and vacant for over three years, is part of the Tarpon Woods community and is currently designated Residential/Office General on the local Future Land Use Map. The proposed amendment would allow redevelopment with a commercial use, such as a car wash, and aligns with the surrounding neighborhood commercial node. The change supports neighborhood-serving commercial uses while maintaining compatibility with the Coastal High Hazard Area and the Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor along East Lake Road.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of an amendment to the Countywide Plan Map from Office to Retail & Services.

PLANNERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The Planners Advisory Committee met on September 2, 2025 and voted unanimously (15-0) to recommend approval.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL/COMMISSION ACTION:

The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing on the local future land use map amendment for the Tarpon Woods parcel on July 22, 2025. The Board approved the ordinance with a 6-0 vote. Public comments were received, primarily expressing concerns about traffic, the number of car washes in the area, and potential floodplain impacts.

CURRENT PROPERTY INFORMATION:

Property Use(s):	Vacant former bank
Site Features:	Developed commercial site at East Lake Road and Tarpon Woods Boulevard within a Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor– Mixed Use node and Coastal High Hazard Area.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

When considering this application, the following general site conditions, planning concepts, and other facts should be noted:

1. The amendment supports the existing commercial node at the intersection of East Lake Road and Tarpon Woods Boulevard, aligning with adjacent Retail & Services properties while reducing potential conflicts with nearby residential areas.
2. The change helps manage growth within the Coastal High Hazard Area.
3. The amendment maintains the visual quality and traffic function of East Lake Road by following SNCC objectives and applicable Countywide Rules, while future development will meet updated landscape, signage, and pedestrian standards.

RELEVANT COUNTYWIDE CONSIDERATIONS:

The proposed amendment to the Countywide Plan Map is a legislative decision. The standards for the current and proposed Countywide Plan Map categories are summarized below:

	Current Countywide Plan Map Category: Office	Proposed Countywide Plan Map Category: Retail & Services
Purpose:	Intended accommodate areas developed, or appropriate to be developed, with office uses, low-impact employment uses, and residential uses (subject to an acreage threshold), in areas characterized by a transition between residential and commercial uses and in areas well-suited for community-scale residential/office mixed-use development.	Intended to depict areas developed with, or appropriate to be developed with, a mix of businesses that provide for the shopping and personal service needs of the community or region, provide for employment opportunities and accommodate target employment uses, and may include residential uses as part of the mix of uses.
Permitted Uses:	<p>Office; Personal Service/Office Support; Residential Equivalent; Research/Development-Light; Public Educational Facility; Recreation/Open Space; Community Garden; Agricultural-Light.</p> <p>Ancillary Nonresidential; Transportation/Utility; Manufacturing-Light are subject to a three-acre maximum.</p> <p>Residential; Vacation Rental pursuant to the provisions of Section 509.242(1)(c), Florida Statutes; Institutional (except Public Educational Facilities which are not subject to this threshold, pursuant to the provisions of Section 6.5.4.2). are subject to a five-acre maximum.</p>	<p>Office; Personal Service/Office Support; Retail Commercial; Commercial/Business Service; Commercial Recreation, Residential; Residential Equivalent; Vacation Rental pursuant to the provisions of Section 509.242(1)(c), Florida Statutes; Recreational Vehicle Park; Temporary Lodging; Research/Development- Light; Storage/Warehouse/Distribution-Light; Manufacturing-Light; Recreation/Open Space; Community Garden; Agricultural-Light.</p> <p>Manufacturing-Medium is subject to a three-acre maximum.</p> <p>Institutional; Transportation/Utility; Agricultural; Ancillary Nonresidential are subject to a five-acre maximum.</p>
Max. Density:	15 units per acre	24 units per acre
Max. Floor Area Ratio (FAR):	0.50	0.55
Max. Impervious Surface Ratio (ISR):	0.75	0.90

Section 6.5.3. of the Countywide Rules provides the review criteria for amendments to the Countywide Plan Map. An analysis of these criteria are provided below:

- 1. The manner in, and extent to, which the amendment is consistent with the Countywide Rules and with the Countywide Plan Strategies as implemented through the Countywide Rules.**

Staff Analysis: The proposed amendment from Office to Retail & Services is consistent with the Countywide Rules and Countywide Plan Strategies because it represents a logical extension of existing nonresidential uses along East Lake Road, a designated Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor. The amendment maintains the corridor's visual and functional character by avoiding increases in density or intensity, reducing residential development potential, and aligning with the established mixed-use node in the Tarpon Woods community. Additionally, the amendment supports Countywide Plan objectives for neighborhood-serving commercial activity, multimodal access, and compatibility with surrounding land uses, ensuring that the site's redevelopment adheres to both the letter and intent of the Countywide Rules.

- 2. Forward Pinellas has developed a multimodal accessibility index (MAX index). Proposed amendments increasing density/intensity will need to maintain a MAX score equal to or better than the Countywide Average MAX score. The Current Countywide Average MAX score: 7.1; if that score is not reached, balancing criteria will be required. An amendment adopting or amending the Activity Center (AC), Multimodal Corridor (MMC) and Planned Redevelopment District (PRD) categories and affecting fewer than 10 acres shall be subject to the Multimodal Accessibility Index (MAX Index).**

Staff Analysis: For this case, the MAX Index for the subject parcel is 4, which is below the current Countywide Average MAX score of 7.1. However, the proposed local Commercial Neighborhood classification reduces the non-residential FAR to up to 0.3. Furthermore, the classification does not permit residential land uses. Because the proposed amendment is decreasing local density and intensity, eliminating residential uses and lowering the nonresidential floor area ratio, the amendment does not increase potential development intensity. As such, the amendment does not trigger a requirement to meet or exceed the Countywide Average MAX score or to apply balancing criteria.

- 3. If located within a Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor, the manner in, and extent to, which the amendment conforms to the criteria and standards contained in Section 6.5.4.1 of these Countywide Rules.**

Staff Analysis: The subject property is located within the Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor (SNCC) along East Lake Road, a corridor of countywide significance under Section 6.5.4.1 of the Countywide Rules. The proposed amendment from Office to Retail & Services fits the SNCC criteria because it extends an existing nonresidential use pattern and does not introduce incompatible development. Similar Retail & Services uses already exist nearby, and the change aligns with the established character of this corridor.

The amendment also supports SNCC goals by preserving the visual quality and traffic operations of East Lake Road. Although the change allows a wider range of commercial uses, it does not increase overall development intensity. The permitted floor area ratio under Retail & Services is comparable to the existing Office designation, and residential density is eliminated. By staying within the established nonresidential pattern and avoiding increased intensity, the amendment meets the objectives of the Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor Plan Element.

4. If located within a Coastal High Hazard Area, the manner in, and extent to, which the amendment conforms to the terms set forth in Section 4.2.7.

Staff Analysis: The subject property lies within the Coastal High Hazard Area, but the proposed amendment conforms to the requirements of Section 4.2.7 of the Countywide Rules. The amendment changes the designation from Office to Retail & Services, with a corresponding local designation of Commercial Neighborhood, which does not allow residential uses. This change reduces potential population exposure within the evacuation zone and supports the Countywide Plan's goal of limiting growth in high-risk coastal areas.

Any future redevelopment on the site must comply with applicable floodplain management regulations, building codes, and emergency management standards to ensure safety and resiliency. Overall, the amendment is consistent with Section 4.2.7 because it avoids adding residential density and aligns with countywide strategies for managing development in vulnerable coastal areas.

5. If the amendment involves the creation, expansion, contraction of, or substantive change to the Activity Center, Multimodal Corridor, or Planned Redevelopment District category, the manner in, and extent to, which the amendment conforms to the purpose and requirements of the applicable category, and addresses the relevant Planning and Urban Design Principles described in Section 6.2.6 and Land Use Goal 16.0 of the Countywide Plan Strategies.

Staff Analysis: The amendment area does not involve the creation, expansion, contraction of, or substantive change to the Activity Center, Multimodal Corridor, or Planned Redevelopment District category.

6. The manner in, and extent to, which the amendment significantly impacts a public educational facility or an adjoining jurisdiction.

Staff Analysis: The amendment area is not located adjacent to an adjoining jurisdiction and if approved, the amendment would not significantly impact a public educational facility.

7. If the amendment involves the conversion from the Employment (E), Industrial (I), or Target Employment Center (TEC) category, the extent to which the amendment area can continue to provide for target employment opportunities as evaluated and set forth in Section 6.5.4.5.

Staff Analysis: The amendment area does not involve the conversion of Employment, Industrial, or Target Employment Center designated land.

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

The proposed Countywide Plan Map amendment was publicly advertised as required by Section 7.8.4. of the Countywide Rules. No public correspondence has been received to date.

CONCLUSION

Staff finds the proposed amendment is consistent with the Relevant Countywide Considerations found in Section 6.5.3.1 of the Countywide Rules.