



STAFF REPORT

HEARINGS: Planning & Zoning Commission: May 11, 2026

APPLICANT: ATA Career Education on behalf of Spring Hill Associates LTD

FILE NUMBER: SE-26-05

REQUEST: Special Exception Use Permit for an expansion of an existing Education Facility

GENERAL LOCATION: North side of Spring Hill Drive, west and east of Kass Circle

PARCEL KEY NUMBER(S): 412084

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

The petitioner is requesting a Special Exception Use Permit to expand an existing Educational Facility (vocational school).

The school currently operates in an approximately 18,000 sq. ft. facility at 7351 Spring Hill Dr, Unit 11, Spring Hill, FL 34606, which includes Units 7351-11, 7353-55, 7357-61, and 7365. The facility currently offers healthcare training programs including medical assisting, dental assisting, practical nursing, and medical coding.

The proposed expansion includes adding 7379 and 7381 Spring Hill Drive within the same plaza, totaling approximately 3,227 sq. ft. This space, previously occupied by Major Toys (retail use), will be converted into an electrical technology training program, including classrooms, office space, storage, a breakroom, and restrooms.

The addition of the 3,227 square feet to the existing facility will increase the total building area to approximately 21,227 square feet.

The petitioner is also requesting to extend operating hours from 8:00 AM–9:00 PM to 8:00 AM–10:00 PM to accommodate additional class offerings.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Site Size	21,227-square-foot plaza situated on a 15.50-acre parcel.
Surrounding Zoning; Land Uses	North: PDP(GHC); Commercial Uses & Undeveloped
	South: PDP(SF), (OP) & (MF); Single Family, Multifamily and Office Professional
	East: PDP(GHC); Commercial Uses
	West: PDP(GHC); Commercial Uses

Current Zoning: Commercial

**Future Land Use
Map Designation:** Commercial

FIRE REVIEW

Hernando County Fire Rescue (HCFR) advises that the petitioner must work closely with HCFR to ensure compliance with all applicable fire codes. This includes requirements for fire alarms, building size considerations, and ensuring that educational occupancy areas are protected throughout by an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system in accordance with fire code requirements.

UTILITIES REVIEW

Hernando County Utilities Department (HCUD) currently supplies water and wastewater service to this parcel. HCUD has no objection to the special exemption to allow an expansion of an existing educational facility to operate a vocational school.

ENGINEERING REVIEW

The subject site is located on Northeast corner of the intersection of Spring Hill Drive and Kass Circle. The Hernando County Engineer has reviewed the petitioner’s request and has no objections to the proposed Special Exception Use Permit.

LAND USE REVIEW

The petitioner has indicated that currently the shopping center has a total of 583 parking spaces plus 25 ADA compliant spaces, serving a total square footage of 116,609 square feet, or a parking ratio of 5.23:1,000 square feet. The existing site has adequate parking spaces for the proposed use.

An Educational Facility is an allowable Special Exception Use in any zoning category provided the appropriate land use approvals are obtained. A Special Exception Use Permit shall be granted only for those buildings, uses, and accessory buildings specifically indicated by the Commission.

A Special Exception Use Permit is an additional use which may be granted by the Planning & Zoning Commission in accordance with the LDRs. As part of the review, the Planning & Zoning Commission must determine that the tract of land is suitable for the type of special exception proposed by virtue of its location, shape, topography and nature of surrounding development. The Planning & Zoning Commission has the ability to assign reasonable conditions to the approval.

A Special Exception Use Permit is a use which is appropriate in a zoning district if safeguards are imposed but which would impair the integrity and character of the district in which it is located, or in adjoining districts unless restrictions or conditions on location, size, extent and character of performance are imposed in addition to those imposed in the ordinance.

Setbacks:**Minimum setbacks:**

- Front : 35'
- Sides: 20'
- Rear: 35'

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

An Educational Facility is an allowable Special Exception Use in any zoning category, provided the appropriate land use approvals are obtained. A special exception use permit may only be granted for the specific buildings, uses, and accessory structures indicated by the Commission. It is an additional use that may be approved by the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission in accordance with the Land Development Regulations (LDRs).

As part of the review, the Planning & Zoning Commission must determine that the tract of land is suitable for the proposed special exception use based on its location, shape, topography, and the nature of surrounding development. The Planning & Zoning Commission also has the authority to assign reasonable conditions to the approval.

A Special Exception Use Permit allows a use that is appropriate in a zoning district if safeguards are imposed, but which could otherwise impair the integrity or character of the district or adjacent districts unless restrictions or conditions on location, size, extent, and performance are applied. It is important to note that the special exception use permit is a land use determination only. All other applicable development regulations must be met if the permit is approved.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The proposed Special Exception Use Permit for an Educational Facility is appropriate based on the following conclusion:

1. The request is compatible with the surrounding land uses and is not adverse to the public interest subject to compliance with all recommended performance conditions.

NOTICE OF APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITY

The special exception process is a land use determination and does not constitute a permit for either construction on, or use of, the property, or a Certificate of Concurrency. Prior to use of, or construction on, the property, the petitioner must receive approval from the appropriate County department(s) for the proposed use.

The granting of this land use determination does not protect the owner from civil liability for recorded deed restrictions which may exceed any county land use ordinances. Homeowners associations or architectural review committees require submission of plans for review and approval. The applicant for this land use request should contact the local association or the Public Records for all restrictions applicable to this property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve the petitioner's request for a Special Exception Use Permit for an Educational Facility with the following performance conditions:

1. The petitioner must obtain all permits from Hernando County and other applicable agencies and meet all applicable land development regulations, for either construction or use of the property, and complete all applicable development review processes.
2. The petitioner shall meet the requirements of the Hernando County Fire Rescue Department.
3. The petitioner shall apply for remodeling permits and meet the minimum requirements of the Hernando County Building Department.
4. The hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM.
5. The Educational facility will be limited to 21,227 square feet.