



# METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

*"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"*

M E M O R A N D U M

**DATE:** January 18, 2022  
**TO:** THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH  
**FROM:** METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
**SUBJECT:** MPC RECOMMENDATION

**PETITION REFERENCED:**

**Petitioner:** Robert McCorkle, for  
**Owner:** MCG Savannah Owners, LLC.  
**Aldermanic District:** 4, Alderman Nick Palumbo  
**County Commission District:** 1, Commissioner Helen L. Stone  
**Neighborhood/Subdivision:** Oglethorpe Mall  
**Current Zoning District:** B-C (Community Business)  
**Future Land Use (FLU) Category:** Commercial Suburban  
**File No.** 21-005936-ZA  
**Location:** 7810 Abercorn Street  
**PIN:** 20559 01005 **Acreage:** 9.85

**MPC ACTION:**

**Approval** of the request to rezone the subject property from B-C to RMF-2-25 with the condition that the site plan be reviewed by MPC.

**MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approval** of the request to rezone the subject property from B-C to RMF-2-25 with the following condition: (1) Site plan and design will be approved by the MPC.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** 10 + Chairman

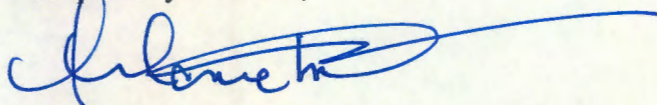
Joseph Welch, Chairman  
Karen Jarrett  
Travis Coles  
Malik Watkins  
Laureen Boles  
Elizabeth Epstein  
Joseph Ervin  
Jay Melder  
Wayne Noha  
Jeff Notrica

Tom Woiwode

**PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:** Approve Staff Recommendation as amended  
(11-0)

<b>APPROVAL</b> Votes: 11	<b>DENIAL</b> Votes: 0	<b>ABSENT</b>
Welch Jarrett Coles Watkins Boles Epstein Ervin Melder Noha Notrica Woiwode		Lee Smith Dwayne Stephens

Respectfully submitted,

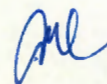


Melanie Wilson  
Executive Director

/ca

Enclosure

cc Mark Massey, Clerk of Council  
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney  
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney  
Bridget Lidy, Department of Inspections







# CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH METROPLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

*"Planning the Future, Respecting the Past"*

## STAFF REPORT



Figure 1 Location Map

File No. 21-005936-ZA

Location: 7810 Abercorn Street

PIN: 20559 01005 Acreage: 9.85 acres

Prepared by Marcus Lotson, Director

**Petitioner:** Robert McCorkle for

**Owner:** MCG Savannah Owners, LLC.

**Aldermanic District:** 4, Palumbo

**County Commission District:** 1, Stone

**Neighborhood/Subdivision:** Oglethorpe Mall

**Current Zoning District:** B-C (Community Business)

**Future Land Use (FLU) Category:** Commercial Suburban

### **Background**

The petitioner is requesting to rezone the subject property from B-C (Community – Business) to RMF-2-25 (Multifamily residential – 25 dwelling units per acre). The property is a portion of the Oglethorpe Mall. It consists of the former Sears department store, auto service center, a restaurant out parcel and associated parking. The Oglethorpe Mall opened as a regional shopping center in 1969 and has operated continuously since that time to include various expansions and renovations. The subject property is a separate parcel from the overall mall development.

### **Public Notice**

As required by the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance, all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property were sent notices of the proposed rezoning. Information describing the request including the application, maps and other exhibits were forwarded to Hunter Army Airfield for review and public notice was posted on site. Officials at Hunter reviewed the proposal and determined it was not likely to create impacts on their operations. A document with their comments is attached. The nearest residences are in the Chippewa



Terrace neighborhood, south of the mall property. Any public comment will be provided to the Planning Commission with this report.

### **Existing Development Pattern**

The land uses and zoning districts surrounding the subject property include:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Designation</u>
North	Commercial	B-C
East	Commercial	B-C
South	Commercial / Institutional	B-C
West	Commercial	B-C

The subject property is currently developed with retail spaces which are vacant. The property is accessed via an internal road network, Mall Way, which intersects with White Bluff Road, Abercorn Street and Mall Boulevard at different locations. Nearby developed properties include the balance of the Oglethorpe Mall, shopping centers and neighborhood retail east and north of the property, as well as a residential subdivision south of the subject property. The proposed rezoning would change a portion of the subject property to multifamily but maintain the commercial zoning adjacent to White Bluff Road and Abercorn Street for future commercial uses.

### **Impact and Suitability**

#### *Public Utilities*

The area has access to the City's public water, sewer, and stormwater systems. The proposed development may require improvements to the facilities which will be the responsibility of the developer.

#### *Transportation and Transit*

Transit is available at five locations in the vicinity, including approximately 200 feet south of the subject property along Mall Way. The applicant intends to revise the internal road network for more efficient vehicular movement. Final traffic improvements will require approval by City of Savannah Traffic Engineering.

#### *Community Development*

The proposed zoning would allow new multifamily residential in a part of the city that has not seen new construction in the multifamily housing sector in some time. Within a one-mile radius of the subject property, there are 19 apartment complexes (see attached exhibit) most of which were built in the 1970s and 1980s. Only two of the nineteen have been built since 1993.



## **Future Land Use**

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates the subject property as Suburban Commercial. Currently, Phase 2 of the Comprehensive Plan update is underway, which includes a review of land use designations in growth areas and major corridors throughout the city.

## **Existing Community Business (B-C) District**

- ***Intent of the B-C District:*** “The B-C district is established to accommodate a range of nonresidential uses that serve a community-wide market area and upper story residences. Uses in this district are intended to be located primarily on collector or arterial streets.”
- ***Allowed Uses:*** Allowed uses in the B-C district are listed in Table 1 of this report.
- ***Development Standards:*** The development standards are listed in Table 2 of this report.

## **Proposed Residential Multifamily (RMF-2-25) District:**

- ***Intent of the RMF-2-25 District:*** “The Residential Multi-family (“RMF-”) districts are established to allow multi-family development in addition to other types of residential development. The districts (RMF-1, RMF-2, and RMF-3) within the RMF- designation provide for varying development standards and generally the same uses with a few exceptions.”
- ***Allowed Uses:*** Allowed uses in the RMF-2-25 district are listed in Table 1 of this report.
- ***Development Standards:*** The development standards are listed in Table 2 of this report.

## **Zoning Ordinance Review**

The following review criteria for rezoning are prescribed in the Savannah Zoning Ordinance Sec. 3.5.8

### a. Suitability and Community Need

- i. Whether the range of uses permitted by the proposed zoning district is more suitable than the range of uses that is permitted by the current zoning district.

**MPC Comment:** The range of uses permitted under the current zoning are consistent with the existing development pattern. However, as retail trends are moving away from large footprint structures, retrofit and redevelopment of these spaces, where compatible, should be considered.



Whether the proposed zoning district addresses a specific need in the county or city.

**MPC Comment:** The proposed zoning addresses a need to provide housing inventory within close proximity to jobs and transit. As previously mentioned, there are few examples of new housing inventory in this section of the city, primarily due to the lack of available large tracts of land.

b. Compatibility

- i. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

**MPC Comment:** The proposed zoning is not likely to affect the use or usability of adjacent or nearby properties. Staff finds that an influx of dwelling units within walking distance of major retail sites will likely have a positive impact on those retailers.

- ii. Whether the zoning proposal is compatible with the present zoning pattern and conforming uses of nearby property and the character of the surrounding area.

**MPC Comment:** Multifamily residential can be compatible with commercial uses. Many find the availability of services, retail and transit a desirable option as it relates to housing choice.

- iii. Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal.

**MPC Comment:** The changing landscape of regional scale retail is likely to result in the repurposing of these spaces, particularly in urban areas. The former Sears closed in 2018 and has gone unused since that time. These changing conditions give supporting grounds for rezoning the property to a more active and beneficial use.

c. Consistency

Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans, such as a redevelopment plan or small area plan.

**MPC Comment:** The current Comprehensive Plan designation conforms with the existing zoning. The corridor, however, is under review, from a land use designation standpoint, for the purpose of updating the Future Land Use Map. Staff does find that the proposed land use can coexist with the existing retail.

d. Reasonable Use

Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable use as currently zoned.

**MPC Comment:** Many of the allowed uses under the current zoning are similar to other development in the area. The size of the property and the investment necessary to repurpose it, however, are significant. The property could be redeveloped as commercial, or any other uses allowed under the current B-C zoning.

e. Adequate Public Services

Whether adequate school, public safety and emergency facilities, road, ingress and egress, parks, wastewater treatment, water supply and stormwater drainage facilities are available for the uses and densities that are permitted in the proposed zoning district.

**MPC Comment:** Adequate services are available.

**Analysis**

Strictly as a zoning matter, the proposed zoning should not negatively impact adjacent property and the uses allowed in the district can be compatible with existing uses in the vicinity. The current zoning allows a wide array of commercial uses including upper story residential, hotels, office buildings, grocery stores and other retail and service-oriented business. The proposed zoning would allow an infusion of residential density in an area that is equipped to handle it and allow new multifamily development where current inventory is aging. With access to arterial roadways, the development of the property should not negatively impact traffic or congestion in the area and should complement the existing development.

**Recommendation**

Based upon the existing character of the area, as well as the review criteria, the Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject property from B-C to RMF-2-25 with the following condition:

1. Site plan will be approved by the MPC.



**Table 1: Comparison of Development Standards for the  
Existing B-C and Proposed RMF-2 Zoning Districts**

	Existing District	Proposed District
	B-C District	RMF-2 District
<b>Minimum Lot Area (Each unit unless otherwise specified)</b>	Residential: Upper Story - 1,850 sf per unit Non-residential: n/a	n/a
<b>Minimum Lot Width</b>	n/a	n/a
<b>Front Yard Setback</b>	n/a	20
<b>Minimum Side Yard Setback</b>	15 ft adjacent to street Interior: n/a	15 ft adjacent to street Interior: n/a
<b>Minimum Rear Yard Setback</b>	n/a	25 ft
<b>Maximum Height</b>	75 ft	50 ft
<b>Maximum Building Coverage</b>	n/a	50 %
<b>Maximum Density</b>	n/a	25 DU/A



<b>B-C – List of Uses</b>
Upper story residential
Child caring institution
Single room occupancy
Agriculture, personal
Community Garden
Park, general
Library/community center
Museum
Post office
Police/fire station or substation
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) substation/ Ambulance Service
Shelter, emergency
Shelter, transitional
Soup kitchen
Child/adult day care center
Child/adult care center, 24 hours
College, university, seminary
Educational building used by a college, university or seminary
School, public or private (K-12)
School, trade, vocational or business
All places of worship
Private club/Lodge
Correctional transition facility
Hospice
Hospital
Intermediate care facility
Nursing home
Assisted living facility
Personal care home, registered
Personal care home, family
Substance recovery facility
Office, general
Call center
Day labor employment center
Office, medical
Office, utility/contractor
Studio/multimedia production facility
Arena; convention center
Indoor amusement
Indoor firearm range
Indoor sports facility

Indoor archery range/paintball facility
Teen Club
Theater/cinema/
Drive-in theater
Golf course
Outdoor amusement
Stadium or outdoor arena; Amphitheater; Outdoor sports facility or complex
Retail, general
Art/photo studio; gallery
Consumer Fireworks Retail Sales Facility
Convenience store
Fuel/gas station
Flea market; Farmer's market; Open air market
Food-oriented retail
Garden center
Manufactured/modular home sales
Outdoor sales
Pawnshop
Pharmacy
Truck Stop
Warehouse or Office Showroom / Flex Space
Services, general
Animal services, indoor
Animal services, outdoor
Bank
Body art services
Business support services
Catering establishment
Check Cashing; Title Pawn;
Crematorium
Funeral home: mortuary (not including crematorium)
Hall, banquet or reception
Event Venue
Instructional studio or classroom
Laundromat;
Dry Cleaner/Laundry, Neighborhood
Personal service shop
Psychic; palmist; medium; fortune teller
Repair-oriented services
Self-service storage facility
Tour company terminal
Distillery, craft,
Bar; tavern
Nightclub



Restaurant
Food Truck Park
Retail consumption dealer (on premise consumption of alcohol)
Ancillary retail dealer (off-premise consumption of alcohol)
Package store (not including wine specialty shops)
Wine Specialty Shop (not including package stores)
Winery; Meadery; Cidery
Brewery, Micro
Bed and Breakfast Homestay
Inn
Hotel/motel, 16-74 rooms
Hotel/motel, 75 or more rooms
Short-term vacation rental
Heavy equipment/Heavy vehicle sales, rentals and leasing
Vehicle sales, rentals and leasing
Moped/motor scooter sales, rentals and leasing
Vehicle Service, Heavy equipment/Heavy vehicle
Vehicle service, minor
Vehicle service, major
Vehicle wash, full or self-service
Watercraft sales, repair and service
Artisan/Craft
Parking facility
Passenger terminal
Transportation dispatch and storage
Broadcast transmission tower
Utilities, major
Utilities, minor

**RMF – List of Uses**

single-family detached
Single-family attached
Two-family
Three-family / Four-family
Townhouse
Stacked townhouse
Apartment
Cluster Development
Child caring institution
Monastery/convent
Agriculture, personal
Community Garden
Park, general
Library/community center
Police/fire station or substation
Child/adult day care home
Child/adult day care center
School, public or private (K-12)
All places of worship
Assisted living facility
Personal care home, registered
Personal care home, family
Personal care home, group
Personal care home, congregate
Community living arrangement
Golf course
Retail consumption dealer (on premise consumption of alcohol)
Dock, private
Dock, Residential Community















# VICINITY MAP

FILE # 21-005936-ZA  
 Address: Oglethorpe Mall Lot  
 Savannah, Ga  
 Aldermanic District: 4 - Palumbo  
 Commission District: 1 - Stone  
 Neighborhood: See Map  
 Property ID: See Map



THIS MAP IS A COMPILATION OF INFORMATION FROM VARIOUS SOURCES AND SCALES. IN MOST CASES THE INFORMATION HAS NOT BEEN FIELD VERIFIED. USE THIS MAP FOR GENERAL PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY.



1 inch = 1,000 feet



Date: 11/1/2021

CHATHAM COUNTY · SAVANNAH  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**  
 110 E. STATE ST. SAVANNAH, GA 31412-8246 PHONE 912-651-1440

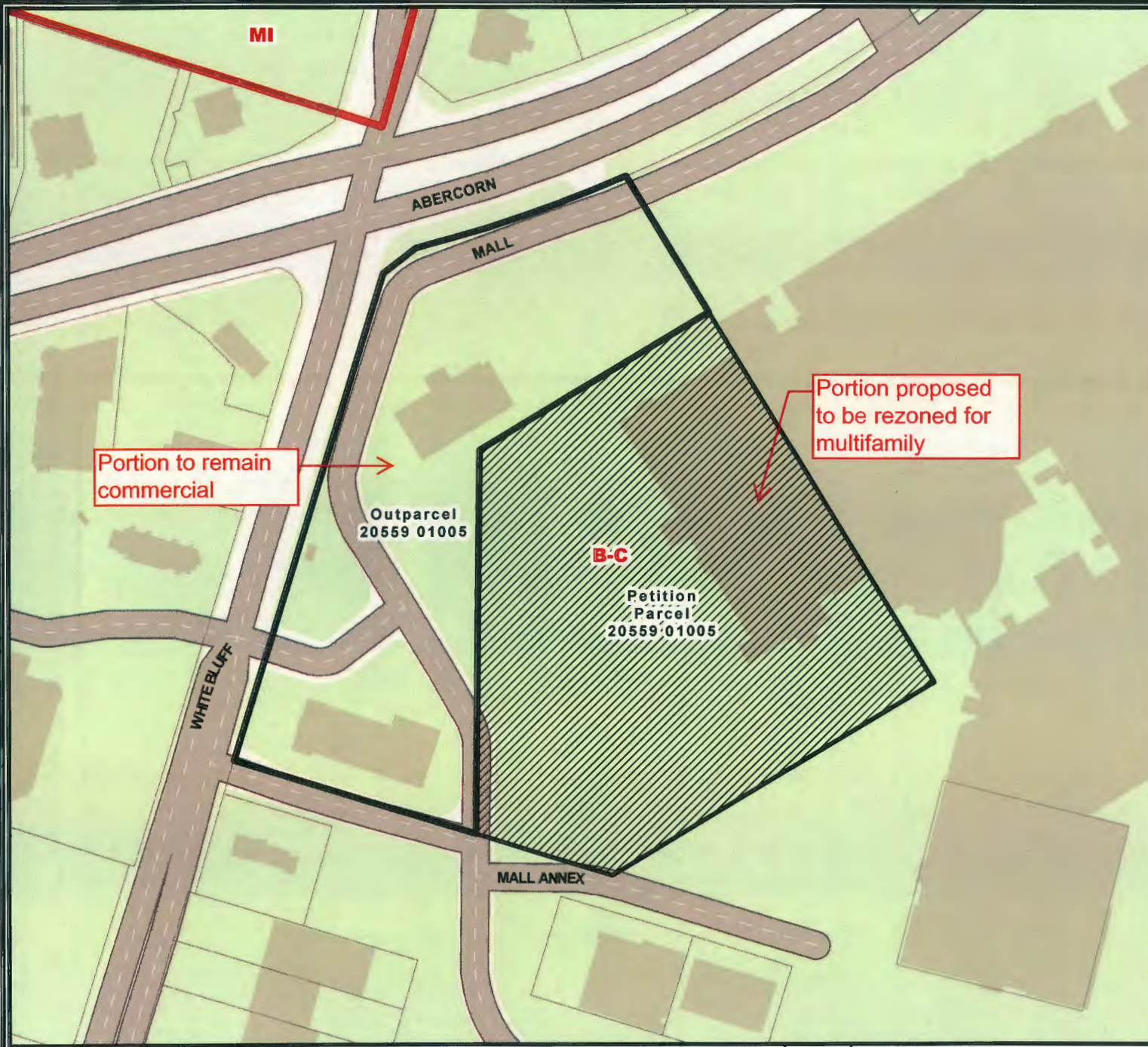


# ZONING MAP

FILE # 21-005936-ZA  
Address: Oglthorpe Mall Lot  
Savannah, Ga  
Aldermanic District: 4 - Palumbo  
Commission District: 1 - Stone  
Neighborhood: See Map  
Property ID: See Map

Current property zoning(s) is primarily  
B-C  
Proposed property zoning:  
RMF-2-25

City of Savannah NewZo Zoning When Applicable




Portion to remain commercial

Outparcel  
20559 01005

**B-C**

Petition  
Parcel  
20559 01005

Portion proposed to be rezoned for multifamily

 ZONING

Date: 11/1/2021



CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**  
110 E. STATE ST. SAVANNAH, GA 31412-8248 PHONE 912-851-1440

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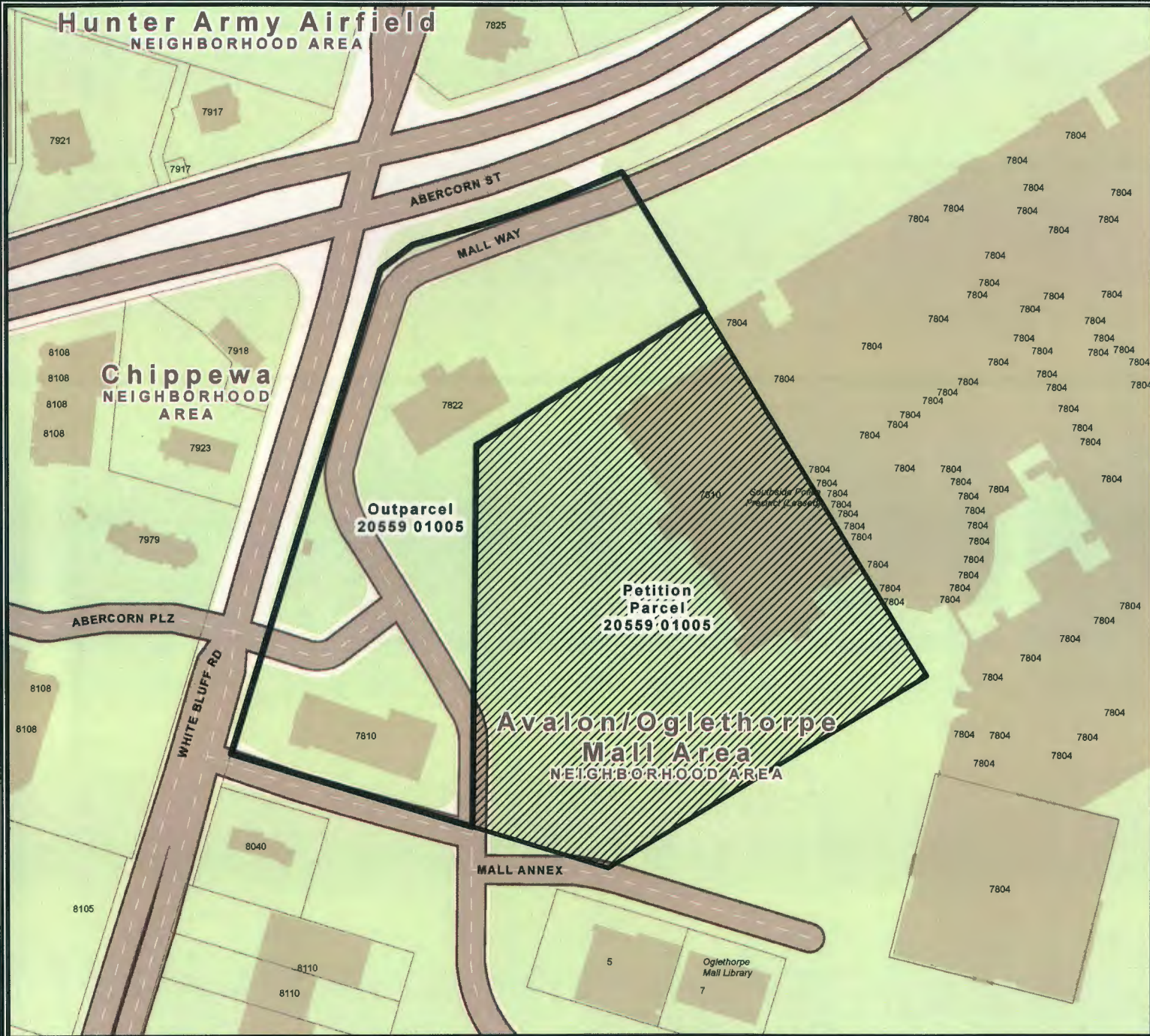


1 inch = 200 feet



# TAX MAP

FILE # 21-005936-ZA  
Address: Oglethorpe Mall Lot  
Savannah, Ga  
Aldermanic District: 4 - Palumbo  
Commission District: 1 - Stone  
Neighborhood: See Map  
Property ID: See Map



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1 inch = 200 feet

CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
110 E. STATE ST. SAVANNAH, GA 31412-8246 PHONE 912-651-1440



Date: 11/1/2021



# AERIAL MAP

FILE # 21-005936-ZA  
Address: Oglthorpe Mall Lot  
Savannah, Ga  
Aldermanic District: 4 - Palumbo  
Commission District: 1 - Stone  
Neighborhood: See Map  
Property ID: See Map



Outparcel  
20559 01005

Petition  
Parcel  
20559 01005

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1 inch = 200 feet



Date: 11/1/2021

CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
110 E. STATE ST. SAVANNAH, GA 31412-8266 PHONE 912-661-1440





# FUTURE LAND USE

FILE # 21-005936-ZA  
 Address: Oglthorpe Mall Lot  
 Savannah, Ga  
 Aldermanic District: 4 - Palumbo  
 Commission District: 1 - Stone  
 Neighborhood: See Map  
 Property ID: See Map

■ Commercial- Regional  
 ■ Civic/Institutional

Date: 11/1/2021



CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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1 inch = 200 feet

D



# LABEL MAP

FILE # 21-005936-ZA  
Address: Oglethorpe Mall Lot  
Savannah, Ga  
Aldermanic District: 4 - Palumbo  
Commission District: 1 - Stone  
Neighborhood: See Map  
Property ID: See Map



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**USE THIS MAP FOR GENERAL PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY.**



Date: 11/1/2021

1 inch = 400 feet



CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**  
110 E. STATE ST. SAVANNAH, GA 31412-8246 PHONE 912-651-1440