



**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**

*"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"*

M E M O R A N D U M

**DATE:** August 16, 2022  
**TO:** THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH  
**FROM:** METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
**SUBJECT:** MPC RECOMMENDATION

**PETITION REFERENCED:**

**Petitioner:** Carol Anne Higgins, Agent for Hearse Tours Inc, Agent  
**Owner:** Joseph & Sabrina Wenum  
**Aldermanic District:** - 2, Detric Leggett  
**County Commission District:** 2, Larry Rivers  
**Current Zoning District:** Traditional-Commercial-1 (TC-1)  
**Future Land Use (FLU) Category:** Traditional Commercial  
**File No.** 22-003392-ZA  
**Location:** 1501 East Broad Street  
**PIN(s):** 2053 28001 **Acreage:** .20

**MPC ACTION:**

**Approval** of the request with the following conditions applied to the Special Use Permit: (1) The Special Use permit shall be nontransferable; and (2) There shall be no vehicular cleaning (washing) and/or repairs on premises.

**MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approval** of the request with the following conditions applied to the Special Use Permit: (1) The Special Use permit shall be nontransferable.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** 9 + Chairman

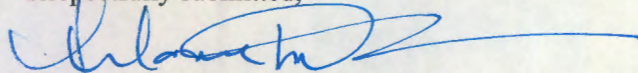
Joseph Welch, Chairman  
Laureen Boles  
Travis Coles  
Shedrick Coleman  
Joseph Ervin  
Karen Jarrett  
Jay Melder

Wayne Noha  
Jeff Notrica  
Dwayne Stephens

**PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:** Approve Staff Recommendation (10-0)

<b>APPROVAL</b> Votes: 10	<b>DENIAL</b> Votes: 0	<b>ABSENT</b>
Welch Boles Coles Coleman Ervin Jarrett Melder Noha Notrica Stephens		Epstein Kaigler, Interim Watkins Woiwode

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  
Zarina Davis, Department of Inspections  
Bridget Lidy, Department of Inspections  
Candra Teshome, Department of Inspections





C H A T H A M   C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H  
**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**

*Planning the Future - Respecting the Past*

**To: The Metropolitan Planning Commission**

**From: MPC Staff**

**Date: August 16, 2022**

**Subject: Special Use Request – Parking facility**

**Petitioner: Carol Anne Higgins, Agent for Hearse Tours Inc.**

**Property Owner: Joseph & Sabrina Wenum**

**Address: 1501 East Broad Street**

**Zoning District: Traditional Commercial -1 (TC-1)**

**Alderman: District - 2 – Detric Leggett**

**County Commission: District - 2 – Larry Rivers**

**Property Identification Number: 2053 28001**

**Petition File No.: 22-003392-ZA**

**Prepared by: Melissa Paul-Leto, MPC Staff**

**Request:** The petitioner is requesting approval of a Special Use pursuant to Section 3.10 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance to establish a parking facility for Hearse Tours Inc. The Special Use process includes review by the Planning Commission and the Savannah City Council. Should the use be approved by Council, a permit will be granted by the City of Savannah which will be governed by the permit enforcement criteria outlined in Article 3 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance.

**Location:** The parcel fronts approximately 90-feet on the south side of East 31<sup>st</sup> Street and begins 100-feet from the southwest side of East Broad Street. It is located in the Streetcar Historic Overlay District, and the Traditional-Commercial-1 zoning district, Council District 2.

**Description:** The petitioned site is located near the southwest corner of East Broad Street and East 31<sup>st</sup> Street and is developed with a one-story commercial building. It appears that the building was last used as a storage warehouse but is currently vacant and boarded. The applicant seeks to repair the contributing building and utilize it as an indoor garage to house the applicant's tour vehicles

(hearses). The applicant's drivers will continue parking across the street at 1410 East Broad Street, which is the current parking facility for the business.

**Public Notice:** Mailed notice of the Planning Commission meeting was sent to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property, signs were posted on site and required newspaper advertisements were run. The notice included instructions on how to access the meeting over the internet.

**Existing Development Pattern:** The land uses and zoning districts surrounding the subject property include:

Location	Land Use	Designation
North	Three vacant properties across the street from subject parcel: PIN# 20053 21002, 20053 21004, 547 E Anderson Lane PIN# 20053 21003	Traditional Commercial-1 (TC-1)
East	A small wooded vacant lot: East Broad Street, PIN# 20054 16003: & 1410 East Broad Street: Outdoor parking lot for the Hearse Tour Vehicle Company	Traditional Commercial-1 (TC-1)
South	Three Single-family dwellings: 550 East 32 <sup>nd</sup> Street & 548 East 32 <sup>nd</sup> Street A side-by-side Duplex: 535 Unit 1 & 2 & 546 East 32 <sup>nd</sup> Street	Traditional Neighborhood-2 (TN-2)
West	East 31 <sup>st</sup> Street, Fenced vacant lot: Pin#: 20053 28034	Traditional Neighborhood-2 (TN-2)

The petitioned site is located within a small portion (243,531.3 square feet or approximately 5.6 acres) of a Traditional Commercial -1 (TC-1) zoned area. The predominate use in this early 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century neighborhood is single, two-family, multifamily residential with some commercial and institutional uses off East Broad Street (Shop n Go 2, gas station - convenience store, Mt. Tabor Baptist Church). The 1916 and 1955 Sanborn Maps indicate the Shop n Go 2, gas station - convenience store parcel, and Mt. Tabor Baptist Church are featured as commercial and institutional uses since 1916 with residential adjacent. The subject parcel was a frozen food lockers facility from 1916 past 1955. The building's architecture is clearly indicative of a commercial use.

**FIGURE 1 – VICINITY MAP**

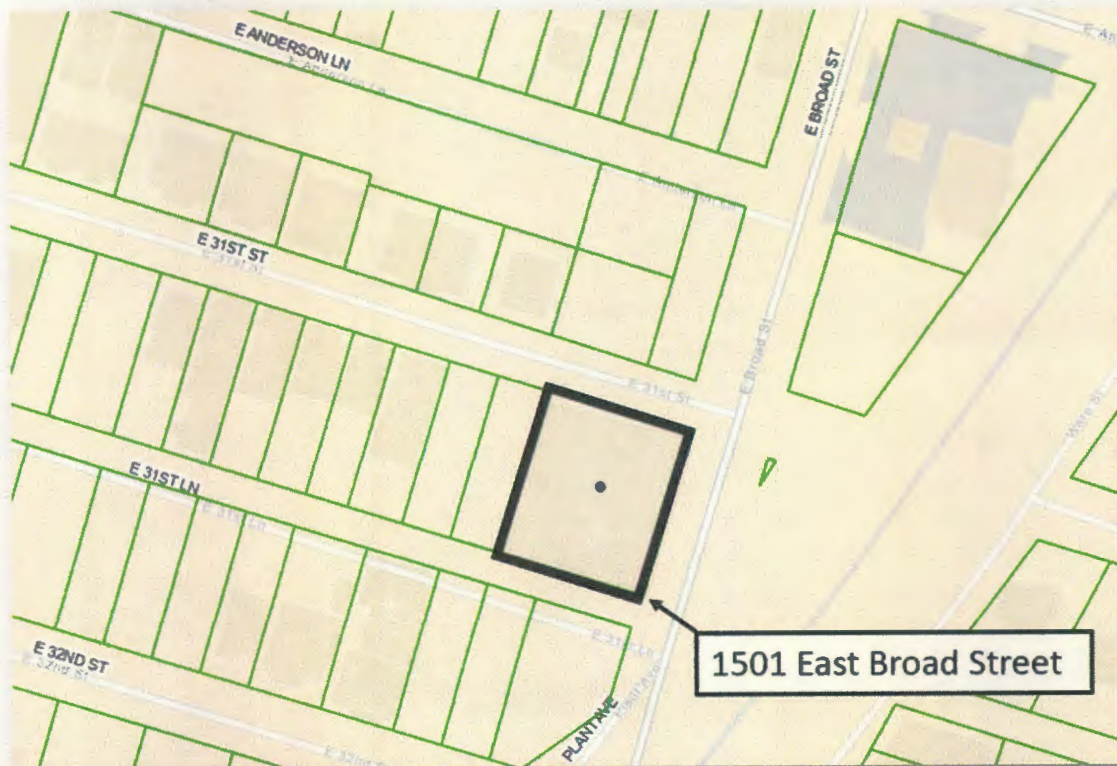
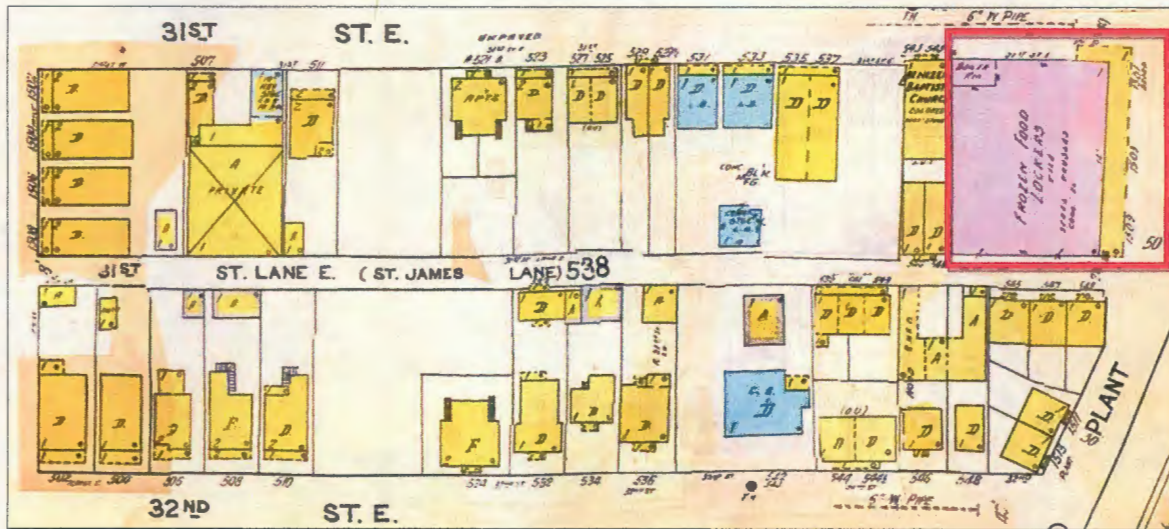


FIGURE 2 – ZONING MAP (WIDER AREA)

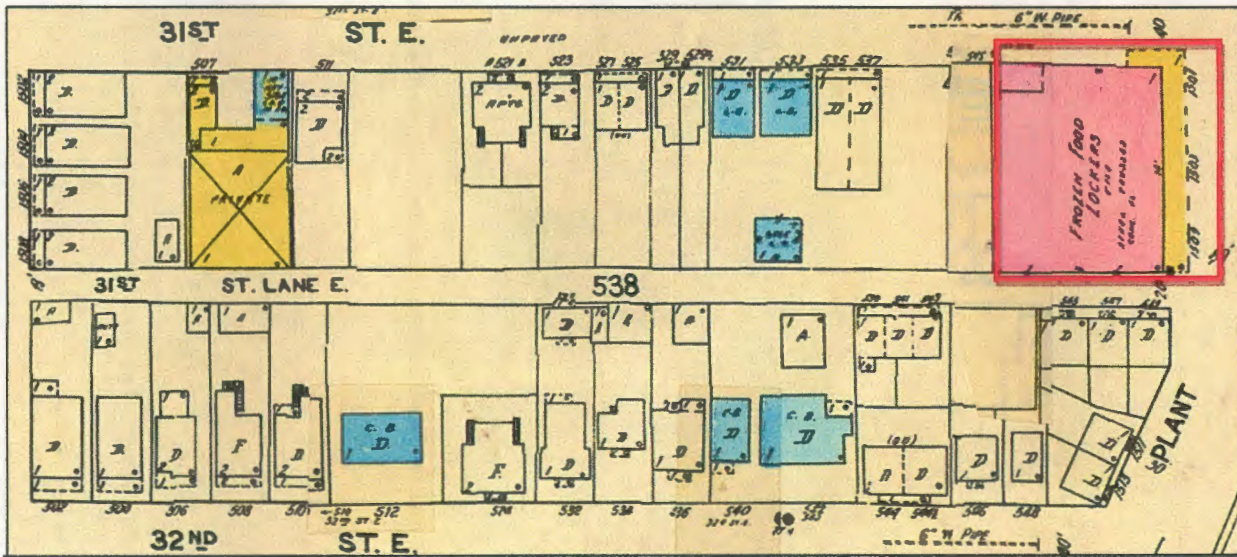


FIGURE 3 – SANBORN MAP DETAILS

1916



1955



1. **General Provisions 3.10.2**

The General Provisions for Special Uses identify the purpose of the process and are as follows:

- Special uses within each zoning district are uses that would not be appropriate generally or without restriction but which, if controlled as to number, area, location or relation to other uses may be appropriate in a particular zoning district.
- A special use permit shall be required for all special uses (identified with an “S” designation) as set forth in the permitted use table in Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table or as part of a use condition in Article 8.0, Use Standards.
- Specific use standards may be applicable to the approved special use.
- Any use or activity on the property not specifically permitted by Article 5.0, Base Zoning Districts, or the special use permit as modified, shall be deemed unlawful and subject to Article 12.0.

2. **Review Criteria for Special Use Permits Section 3.10.8**

When reviewing a special use permit request, the review authority shall consider the following criteria:

- a) Whether the special use is consistent with the intent, goals, strategies, policies, guiding principles and programs of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans.

**Staff Comment:** The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates the subject property as Traditional Commercial. The Comprehensive Plan defines the Traditional Commercial land use category as “Business areas in close proximity to Downtown Savannah or in outlying historically settled areas. This category includes commercial uses that should be compatible with the character and scale of adjacent neighborhoods, most often found along collectors and arterials. Characteristics include walkability, limited or on street parking, and multi-tenant retail.”

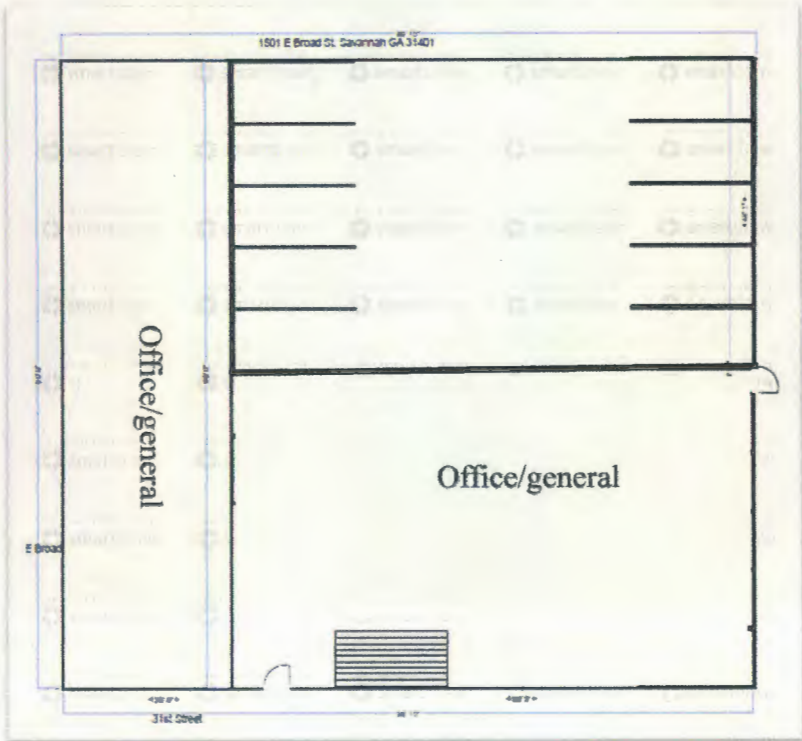
The Special Use request is for a parking facility use. Staff finds the use and the goals and intentions of the Comprehensive Plan to be compatible with the character and scale of the adjacent neighborhoods and is located along a corridor that offers a range of commercial and institutional uses. The proposed parking facility use at this location is consistent with the Future Land Use designation.

#### 1501 EAST BROAD STREET – PROPOSED PARKING FACILITY





1501 EAST BROAD STREET – PROPOSED PARKING FACILITY FLOOR PLAN



1410 EAST BROAD STREET – EXISTING PARKING FACILITY



arrives at 4:00 p.m. every day.

- The drivers arrive 30 minutes prior to their scheduled tour to park their personal vehicles at 1410 East Broad Street and would walk to 1501 East Broad Street to drive the tour vehicle out of 1501 East Broad Street's parking facility.
- Drivers pick up and drop off customers at two locations:
  - Savannah Visitor Center – 301 Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
  - The Trolley stop at Owens-Thomas House & Slave Quarters – 124 Abercorn Street.
- The tours are 45 minutes in length.
- Once customers are dropped off at either of the two locations, the driver would return the ghost tour vehicle at 1501 East Broad Street and walk to 1410 East Broad Street to pick up the driver's personal vehicle.

Trash pick-up: Carol Anne Higgins, the owner of Hearse Tours Inc., will pick trash up weekly and transport to Chatham County Resource Conservation & Recycling Education Center. The non-recyclable trash will be transported off the facility by the owner as well.

- d) Whether the subject property is adequate in shape and size to accommodate the special use;

**Staff Comment:** The structure has sufficient interior square footage to accommodate the proposed parking facility use. The building will be used exclusively to store the ghost tour vehicles which consist of nine (9) hearses and one (1) limousine, and to drive them out for the scheduled evening ghost tours. The building has an existing garage door facing East 31<sup>st</sup> Street. All mechanical repairs and washing of the vehicles will be off site.

- e) Whether adequate public facilities are available to serve the proposed use, including, but not limited to: water; sanitary sewer; stormwater drainage facilities; public safety and emergency facilities; roadway capacity; vehicular ingress and egress; or, that the applicant will provide adequately for such services and for placement in an appropriate location.

**Staff Comment:** Adequate public facilities are available to support the proposed use.

- f) Whether the special use will result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any feature determined by the review authority to be of natural, cultural, scenic, or historic importance.

**Staff Comment:** There will be no loss, destruction, or damage to any item of historic importance. The building is a contributing building, as such, any exterior work or signage shall be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

**Policy Analysis:**

The special use provisions of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance are designed to allow the reviewing authorities to consider the establishment of uses in zoning districts, where the use may be appropriate but should not be allowed by right. The review criteria outlined in Section 3.10.8 are the standards for considering a special use.

This Special Use request is for a parking facility use. Staff has found that the use and location are compatible with the character and scale of the adjacent neighborhoods and is located along a corridor that offers a range of commercial and institutional uses. The building will be used to store and retrieve the ghost tour vehicles for their evening ghost tours. The customers are picked up at the Savannah Visitor Center and the trolley stop at the Owen-Thomas House & Slave Quarters. Once customers are dropped off at either of the two locations, the driver would return the ghost tour vehicle at 1501 East Broad Street and walk to 1410 East Broad Street to pick up the driver's personal vehicle. In review of the standards, it appears that the subject property and proposed use meet the requirements.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the petitioner's request as presented or with conditions.
2. Deny the petitioner's request.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Based upon the criteria for a Special Use permit; Planning Commission recommends **approval of the request with the following conditions** at 1501 East Broad Street.

1. The Special Use permit shall be nontransferable.
2. There shall be no vehicular cleaning (washing) and/or repairs on premises.

Note: Staff recommendation could change based on information gathered during the public hearing.