



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: JUNE 29, 2021
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERENCED:

File No. 20-005235-ZA

Location: Little Neck Road

PIN(s): 21007 01001 and - 002

Acreage: 484.90

Agent: Harold Yellin

Owner: Alice Keller

Aldermanic District: Unclassified (recently annexed)

County Commission District: 5 - Milton

Current Zoning: R-A-CO (Residential Agriculture – Annexed)

Future Land Use: Planned Development

Requested Zoning: PD - Planned Development

MPC ACTION:

Approval of the request to rezone the subject property from R-A – CO to PD based on the Planned Development criteria with the **condition** that the applicant enter into an agreement with Chatham County regarding issues related to stormwater, traffic, and canal access.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the request to rezone the subject property from R-A – CO to PD based on the Planned Development criteria with the **condition** that the applicant enter into an agreement with Chatham County regarding issues related to stormwater, traffic, and canal access.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 9 + Chairman

Joseph Welch, Chairman
Laureen Boles
Travis Coles
Joseph Ervin
Karen Jarrett
Wayne Noha
Eula Parker

Dwayne Stephens
Malik Watkins
Tom Woiwode

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (8-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 8	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Welch Coles Ervin Jarrett Noha Stephens Watkins Woiwode		Boles Brown Epstein Joyner Parker Smith

Respectfully submitted,



Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

/jh

Enclosure

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



CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH
METROPLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future, Respecting the Past"

STAFF REPORT

File No. 20-005235-ZA

Meeting Date: 06/29/2021

Location: Little Neck Road

PIN(s): 21007 01001 and - 002

Acreage: 484.90



Marcus Lotson, Development Services Director

Agent: Harold Yellin

Owner: Alice Keller

Aldermanic District: Unclassified (recently annexed)

County Commission District: 5 - Milton

Current Zoning: R-A-CO (Residential Agriculture – Annexed)

Future Land Use: Planned Development

Requested Zoning: PD - Planned Development

Background:

The subject property consists of 484.90 acres northeast of Little Neck Road between Ogeechee Road and Interstate 95. The petitioner is proposing to rezone the property from R-A-CO (Residential – Agriculture - Annexed) to PD (Planned Development). The intent of the proposed PD is to develop a Master Plan to include single and multi-family residential uses, commercial, institutional, office uses and land set aside for future development. The proposed Master Plan identifies where each land use would be permitted, as well as the location of access points, amenity areas, use buffers, existing wetlands, and residential density for each proposed tract of land. The petition was continued from the February 2nd MPC meeting so that the applicant could address comments from MPC staff regarding the proposed Master Plan and PD text and the County Engineers office regarding traffic, stormwater, canal access and use and the widening of Little Neck Road. A comment response letter is attached.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:

Article 6 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance includes the Planned Development District. The purpose of the Planned Development District is to “allow projects that would not otherwise be permitted under this Ordinance because of the strict application of zoning district development standards or general site standards. Generally, the PD district is intended for sites where a developer proposes, and the Mayor and Aldermen desire, to achieve a certain mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility and/or apply special sensitivity to the character of the site and surrounding area.”

ANNEXATION:

On November 11, 2019, the City of Savannah annexed the subject properties from Unincorporated Chatham County into the corporate limits of the City (*see attached document*). All abutting properties however, as well as those on the south side of Little Neck Road, are a part of the Unincorporated County. This fact creates potential issues related to the possibility of impacts from a development within the City limits, affecting properties outside the City limits. Little Neck Road is currently maintained by Chatham County. Chatham County, therefore, has authority over connections to Little Neck Road and recommended changes from the previously submitted plan specific to curb cut locations which have been altered. The canal that bisects the two parcels is also County maintained. The County has indicated that any activity related to drainage, access or use as a stormwater facility will require concurrence from Chatham County Engineering. (*See attached comments from Chatham County Engineering and response from petitioner*).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

The subject property is approximately 485 acres in size. It is undeveloped and includes significant natural resources including freshwater wetlands, salt marsh, forested areas, and access to the Little Ogeechee River. A summary of the proposed land uses are identified in the chart below.

SUMMARY

<u>LAND USE</u>	<u>AREA (acres)</u>	<u>UNITS</u>
INSTITUTIONAL/ OFFICE COMMERCIAL	35.7	
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT	98.3	
MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	64.3	594
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	54.5	332
TOWNHOMES	17.5	140
AMENITY AREA AND PARK	2.3	
WETLAND - SALT MARSH	37.5	
WETLAND - FRESHWATER	147.9	
GREEN SPACE and SPINE ROAD ROW	10.3	
EX CEMETERY & EXPANSION	2.0	
R.O.W. DEDICATION	7.7	
TOTAL	478.0	1,066

RESIDENTIAL:

The residential density proposed for the single-family detached tracts is 4 dwelling units per acre except for Tract 5 which is a proposed townhome development at 8 units per acre. The petitioner is also proposing that one of the three single family tracts allow a 4,000 square foot lot area per unit minimum with the remaining two single family residential tracts allowing a 5,000 square foot lot area per unit minimum and with a minimum lot width of 50 feet. The intent of the varying lot sizes is to accommodate market demands and allow flexibility in housing types within the Master Plan boundaries.

FUTURE LAND USE:

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates the subject parcels as Planned Development. Planned Development is defined as “Areas accommodating cluster development, neotraditional development, or mixed use residential, commercial, or civic uses under a unified development plan. Such developments are characterized by internal or external linkages among residential, commercial, institutional, or recreational use components. This category includes Amenity Communities, Village Centers, Town Centers and existing residential Planned Unit Developments.” The proposed Master Plan does exhibit some of these characteristics and is generally consistent with the Future Land Use designation.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK:

The subject property abuts Little Neck Road, and the Master Plan proposes 4 curb cuts along the approximately 1.5 miles of frontage. This has been reduced by one, based on County Engineering comments related to plans for improvements on Little Neck Road. Currently, Little Neck Road experiences approximately 6,600 average daily vehicle trips. However, based on the likely development to continue in West Chatham, especially single family and multi family residential, that number is expected to increase. To that end,

additional right of way has been allocated for future improvements to Little Neck Road.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES:

The property is closest to the Savannah Police Department's Southside Precinct, which is approximately 14 miles from the subject property. City fire station #12 on Bradley Boulevard is approximately 1 mile from the subject property, and City water and sewer services are available. Chatham Area Transit serves the development via an existing bus stop on the corner of Little Neck Road and Silk Hope Road. The proposed plan exemplifies the continued need to extend services as development occurs in outlying areas.

ADDITIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA:

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.*

Staff Comment: The current zoning is Residential – Agriculture (Annexed). The R-A zoning district is intended “to protect those rural areas within the urban expansion areas of the county for future urban development, and to protect certain rural highway roadside areas against strip development, which can lead to traffic congestion, traffic hazards, and roadside blight.” The clear intent is that these properties would at some point be rezoned to a district that would permit appropriate development. Therefore, the range of uses under the proposed PD are more suitable than those permitted under R-A, which are rural in nature.

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

Staff Comment: Under the proposed PD, additional housing stock could be created that is not possible to the same extent under the current zoning. In addition, limited commercial and institutional uses would be permitted where there are currently few available. The demand for such uses is likely to increase in the area due to other residential development occurring.

b. Compatibility

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

Staff Comment: The use and usability of other nearby properties is not likely to be affected. However, the proposed development, once completed, will have an effect on the fabric of the area, as it is currently somewhat rural.

- 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.*

Staff Comment: The zoning proposal is different from a land use standpoint than conforming nearby properties and the surrounding area in general. The surrounding area currently is sparsely developed and has few examples of similar land use.

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

Staff Comment: The changing conditions include the imminent growth of West Chatham and the likely annexation of additional properties. This likely outcome will result in the need for additional services and infrastructure in the vicinity.

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.

Staff Comment: The proposed PD would allow a mixed-use development which is consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation that calls for a Planned Development. Although the proposed zoning designation and land use designation are compatible, consideration must be given as to whether the proposed densities and land uses are appropriate at the location.

d. Reasonable Use

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

Staff Comment: Under the current zoning, the petitioner could use the property for single family residential. However, multifamily, commercial, and office/institutional would be prohibited.

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.

Staff Comment: There appear to be significant questions regarding public services. A traffic study is underway for the purpose of understanding the impact of the proposed development and what changes may be necessary. Chatham County maintains the primary stormwater infrastructure in the region and have met with the applicant's engineer.

f. Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

In accordance with the O.C.G.A. §36-66-6, when a rezoning is proposed for property located within 3,000 feet of a military base, installation, or airport, or within the 3,000-foot Clear Zone and Accident Prevention Zones I and II as prescribed in the definition of an Air Installation Compatible Use Zone that is affiliated with such base.

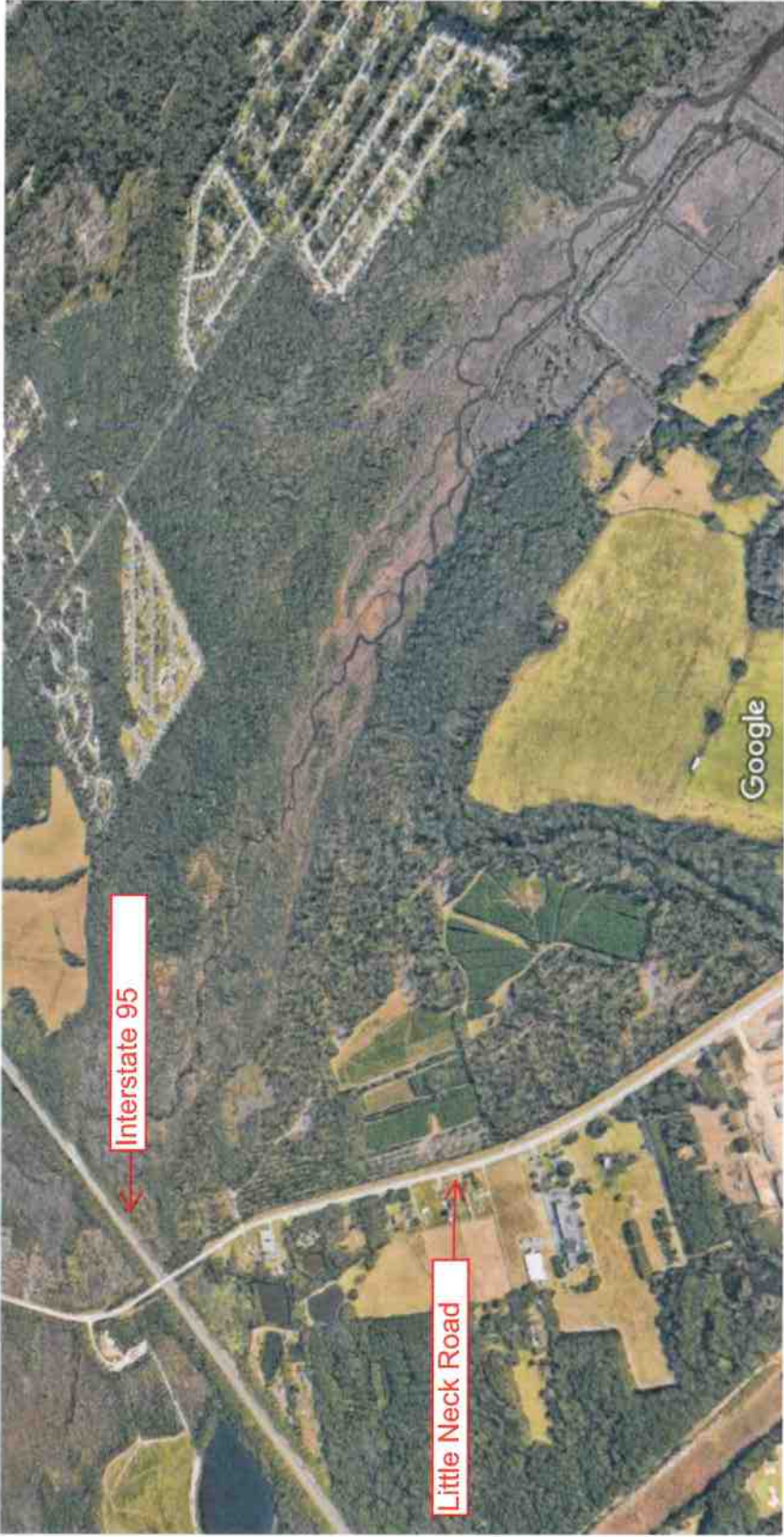
Staff Comment: The subject property is not within 3,000 feet of a military base or within the other listed zones.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The petitioner is requesting a Planned Development zoning classification for the purpose of developing a Master Plan to include single and multi-family residential uses, as well as commercial, institutional, and office uses. The petitioner and the County Engineers office have begun the process of addressing a number of concerns raised related to access, stormwater management and traffic. Although the approval of a Master Plan does not convey approval of any specific site development, staff finds that the unique circumstances of the property, its annexation into the City of Savannah and adjacency to County maintained properties, create a circumstance where an ongoing agreement is necessary to protect each stakeholder. As previously mentioned, the petitioner has met with County Engineering and responded to their list of comments. However, oftentimes a Master Plan is built out over a period of years and by developers who are not necessarily a part of the rezoning process. Because of this, staff finds that concurrent with the rezoning, if adopted, an agreement that runs with the land should be drafted between the applicant and Chatham County outlining terms as agreed upon related to identified issues including stormwater management, traffic and canal access.

Based on the amount of land disturbance, changes to transportation infrastructure and increases in residential density, the proposed Master Plan will have an impact on the larger community of West Chatham over a number of years. It is also likely that large tracts of adjacent and nearby underdeveloped land will begin to transition to more intense land uses. The changing conditions include the imminent growth of West Chatham and the likely annexation of additional properties. While providing additional housing opportunities and services is needed, this likely outcome will result in the need for additional services and infrastructure in the vicinity.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject property from R-A – CO to PD based on the Planned Development criteria with the **condition** that the applicant enter into an agreement with Chatham County regarding issues related to stormwater, traffic, and canal access.



Interstate 95

Little Neck Road

Google

