

Proposed Text Amendment: Housing Toolkit & Next Steps

Council Workshop
Thursday, August 27, 2026

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Housing Toolkit: GPS Alignment

- **Goal 3: Expand Economic Access, Opportunity & Vitality for All**

- **Objective III, Strategy 1**

Advance strategic community-based initiatives that enhance public spaces, improve neighborhood corridors, and boost local quality of life through sustainable development.

- **Objective III, Strategy 3**

Use place-based planning and land-use policies, like neighborhood and small area plans, to drive development efforts that prioritize equity, sustainability, and the preservation of historic neighborhoods.

- **Objective I, Strategy 3**

Collaborate with partners and local businesses to foster economic opportunities by implementing effective economic development, incentive programs, streamlining permit and licenses processes, and building needed infrastructure to support local economic growth.

- **Objective IV, Strategy 4**

Promote the development of housing and commercial spaces near transit hubs.



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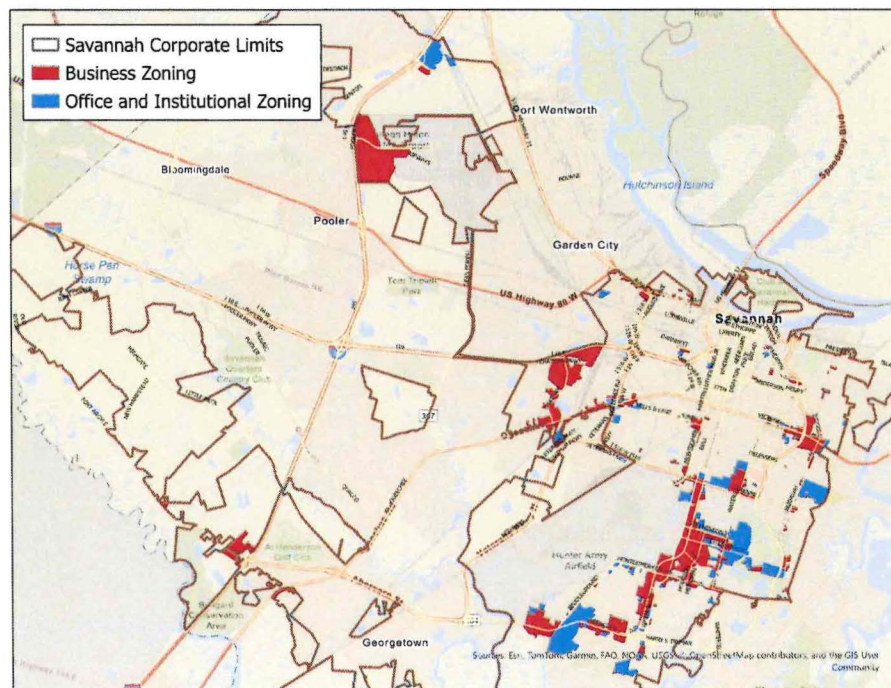
Housing Toolkit Amendment

- Allow stand-alone housing development in OI and B- zoning districts (instead of requiring vertical mixed-use)
- Establish density and dimensional standards
- Reduce buffers for small multi-family developments
- Require architectural design standards
- Incentivize affordable housing and mixed-use development thru parking reduction and height bonus
- Enable parking reduction near transit service and multi-modal trails
- Enhance requirements for transit improvements



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1900 E. Victory Drive: Shopping Centers in Transition

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- **Permit apartments in the B- zoning districts** to allow for new housing options **in transit-accessible areas** while supporting the adaptive reuse of older shopping centers and **retaining primary tenants like groceries**

HOUSING TOOLS AMENDMENT

- Permits apartments in the B- zoning districts
- Most B- districts are in transit-accessible areas
- B-C and B-N, the most common B- districts, continue to allow and support shopping centers and groceries



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2840 Wicklow Street: Infill Apartments

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Amend the zoning ordinance to allow and incentivize in-lieu fee contributions to the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund, require **stronger standards** for pedestrian connectivity and **transit-oriented development (TOD)**, including sidewalks, paths, and **direct links to transit**, parks, and nearby services

HOUSING TOOLS AMENDMENT

- Allows stand-alone apartments in OI and B- districts which are usually near transit routes
- Allows parking reduction near transit service and multi-modal trails
- Provides a height bonus for inclusion of affordable housing units



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2822 Bee Road: Permit Multifamily on Smaller Lots

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Update the Future Land Use Map and zoning ordinance to **encourage smaller-lot multifamily development**, horizontal or vertical mixed-use, and **stronger pedestrian and transit connections**

HOUSING TOOLS AMENDMENT

- Reduces buffer width for small multi-family developments
- Allows parking reduction near transit service and multi-modal trails
- Enhances requirements for transit improvements



STOP 5

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310 E. Montgomery Crossroad: Multifamily Buffers

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Rezone the property or update B-C standards to **allow smaller-lot multifamily development**, promoting a mix of housing types that complements commercial uses and **leverages** the emerging **multimodal trail network**
- Consider form-based standards to **encourage walkability** and **reduce** the need for extensive **buffering**

HOUSING TOOLS AMENDMENT

- Allows stand-alone apartments in OI and B- districts
- Reduces buffer width for small multi-family developments
- Supports parking located behind buildings
- Allows parking reduction near transit service and multi-modal trails



STOP 6

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33 W. Montgomery Crossroad: Multifamily in Commercial Districts

STOP 7

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Revise the B-C zoning standards to **allow apartments by right** to support a transition from underused retail to housing
- Encourage development that **leverages proximity to transit** and **multimodal transportation** network, **promoting walkability** and connectivity while diversifying housing options.



HOUSING TOOLS AMENDMENT

- Permits apartments in the B- zoning districts
- Allows parking reduction near transit service and multi-modal trails
- Most B- districts are in transit-accessible areas
- B-C and B-N, the most common B- districts, continue to allow and support shopping centers

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7804 Abercorn Street: Infill Apartments

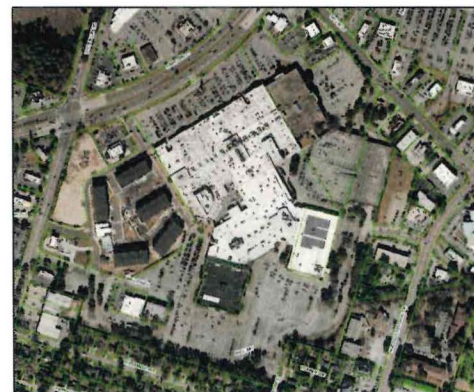
STOP 12

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Revise the zoning ordinance to **allow multifamily infill** development, **leveraging transit access** and nearby amenities
- Encourage site planning that revitalizes underused parcels, supports walkability, and **integrates residential uses** with the surrounding corridor

HOUSING TOOLS AMENDMENT

- Under the proposed amendment, this project would not have required rezoning
- Amendment includes architectural design standards to improve visual quality

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5820 White Bluff Road: Reinventing Hotels as Housing

STOP 13

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Revise the zoning ordinance to **allow multifamily conversions** in B-C and OI- districts by right
- Support **adaptive reuse** of underutilized commercial or hotel properties to expand **housing options near transit, employment, and educational centers**



HOUSING TOOLS AMENDMENT

- Under proposed amendment, this project would not have required rezoning
- Small units support affordability
- OI- and B- districts are often located near major employers

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Next Steps: 1132 Mohawk Street Housing Diversity

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Encourage zoning ordinance revisions to the RSF- districts to allow additional density and diverse housing types while preserving low-scale, detached character
- Focus standards on building form, connectivity, and compatibility with surrounding uses to support walkable, mixed-density neighborhoods.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

- Develop zoning standards for RSF- and RTF- districts near transit routes; overlay zoning may also be considered
- Use area planning to identify suitable locations and gather community input
- Review nearby commercial districts for compatibility as part of area planning

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Next Steps: Grey Oak Court Cottage Courts

STOP 11

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Revise the zoning ordinance to allow cottage court developments by right on smaller infill sites
- Focus on form and shared open space rather than strict density limits to support compact, community-oriented housing that fits within existing neighborhoods

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

- Develop zoning standards for cottage court development option in RSF-, RTF, and RMF- districts
- Create conceptual developments to test standards in a variety of neighborhood contexts

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Inclusionary Zoning: What We've Done So Far

PREVIOUS EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF INCLUSION OF AFFORDABLE UNITS

- **Housing Overlay District.** Provided density bonus and alternative design standards in return for inclusion of affordable units
- **Housing Tools Text Amendment (pending).** Allow greater building height and parking reduction to incentivize for inclusion of affordable units
- **Impact fees.** Reduction of impact fee rates for affordable units
- **Permitting fees.** Waiver of zoning application and permitting fees for affordable housing

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Inclusionary Zoning: Going Foward

HOW TO APPROACH TO AN INCLUSIONARY ZONING ORDINANCE

- Adoption soon after changes to OI- and B- zoning districts can make it difficult to measure the impacts of that amendment
- Increasing market rate housing supply has proven effective at slowing or halting growth in rental rates
- Previous market study is approaching five years old; may need to be updated



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Questions & Discussion

Thank you

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City Council Housing Toolkit Tour

CITY OF SAVANNAH
APRIL 9, 2026

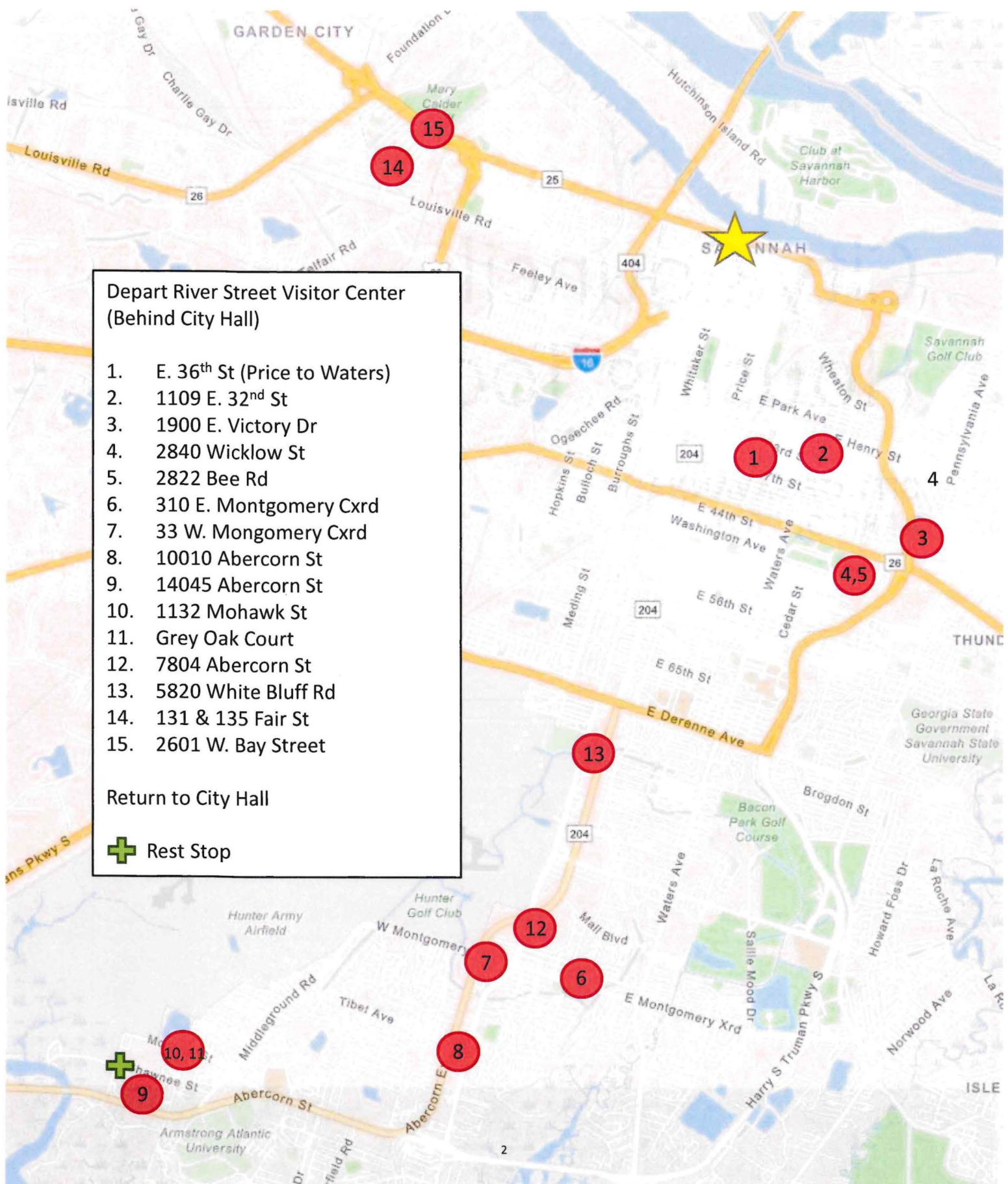
Tour Stops

Depart River Street Visitor Center
(Behind City Hall)

1. E. 36th St (Price to Waters)
2. 1109 E. 32nd St
3. 1900 E. Victory Dr
4. 2840 Wicklow St
5. 2822 Bee Rd
6. 310 E. Montgomery Cxrd
7. 33 W. Montgomery Cxrd
8. 10010 Abercorn St
9. 14045 Abercorn St
10. 1132 Mohawk St
11. Grey Oak Court
12. 7804 Abercorn St
13. 5820 White Bluff Rd
14. 131 & 135 Fair St
15. 2601 W. Bay Street

Return to City Hall

 Rest Stop



E. 36th Street (Price to Waters): ^{STOP 1} Missing Middle

WHAT IS MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING?

Missing Middle Housing refers to a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types that are compatible in scale with single-family homes and fit seamlessly into walkable neighborhoods. These include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, carriage houses, and cottage courts that are designed to:

- Blend into existing residential areas
- Support walkability and neighborhood-scale retail
- Provide a range of housing options at varying price points

Missing Middle Housing is not new to Savannah; it is a defining feature of many of the city's historic neighborhoods. Areas north of Victory Drive from Waters Avenue to west Savannah and portions of Ardsley Park already include a mix of diverse housing types. These neighborhoods demonstrate that a mix of housing types can coexist while maintaining a cohesive residential character.

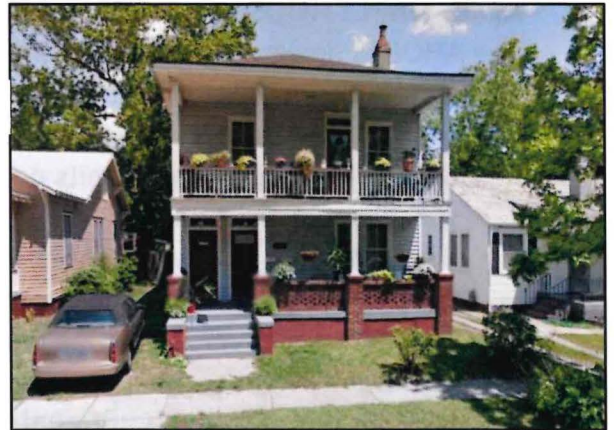
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

This corridor reflects how a variety of housing types can:

- Maintain a consistent, low-scale residential form
- Provide a mix of housing options
- Be detached in form and low scale
- Reach 20 units per acre in density
- Allow more residents in walkable neighborhoods
- Increase activity at small, local businesses
- Benefit from safety improvements to 37th Street

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Update zoning ordinance to allow Missing Middle housing by right; standards should focus on building form and neighborhood compatibility.



1109 E. 32nd Street: Affordable Housing Overlay District

AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY DISTRICT (AHOD)

The AHOD is designed to increase the availability/affordability of housing while respecting neighborhood character. The program allows:

- Density increases (more units per lot) in specific neighborhoods
- Flexibility in zoning regulations, including reduced minimum lot sizes per unit
- Promotion of diverse housing types to meet community needs.

The program ensures that additional housing opportunities are tied to affordable housing, providing a practical tool to encourage development that is accessible to a wider range of residents.

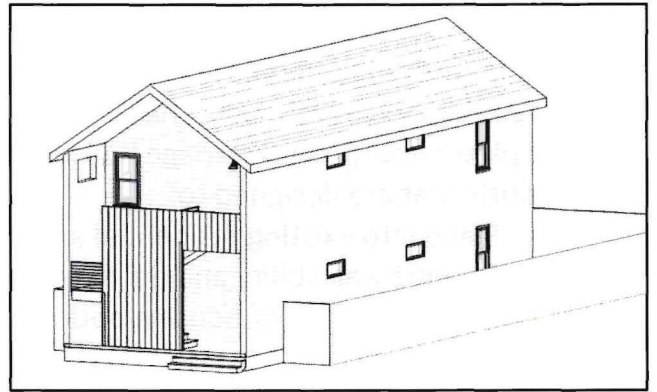
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

This site represents the first use of the AHOD program:

- One additional unit permitted (duplex)
- One required affordable unit
- Similar scale of house to historical precedent
- Proof of concept for AHOD demonstrating that AHOD can expand housing opportunities without compromising neighborhood character

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Expand the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHOD) Program into additional neighborhoods including Cuyler Brownville, Cann Park/Jackson Park, Historic Carver Village, and Midtown to provide a flexible, neighborhood-sensitive tool that supports housing growth, enhances affordability, and preserves historic and walkable character.



1900 E. Victory Drive: Shopping Centers in Transition

OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOUSING IN OLDER SHOPPING CENTERS

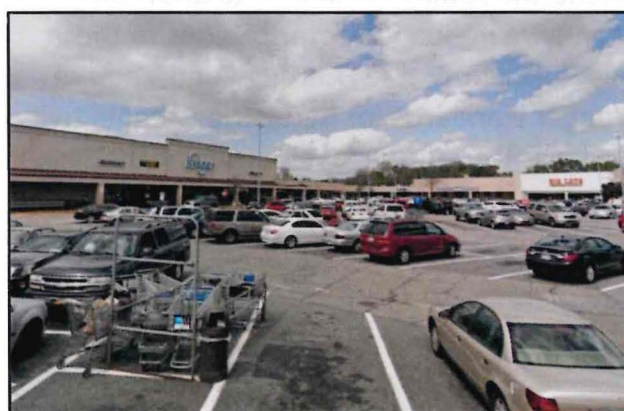
Older shopping centers are seeing tenant turnover and changing uses. While retail demand is met, these centers need flexible zoning to adapt. Conveniently located near grocery, banks, and public transit, they offer opportunities for redevelopment or infill that strengthens neighborhood connectivity.

MCALPIN SQUARE

Open in 1981, McAlpin Square is a neighborhood shopping center and has long served as a grocery-anchored retail destination. The facility is ~169,000SF and is anchored by Kroger, one of its original tenants. The center continues to evolve, with recent changes in its tenant mix and efforts to maintain occupancy.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Permit apartments in the B- zoning districts to allow for new housing options in transit-accessible areas while supporting the adaptive reuse of older shopping centers while retaining primary tenants like groceries.



2840 Wicklow Street: Infill Apartments

AVENTON APARTMENTS OVERVIEW

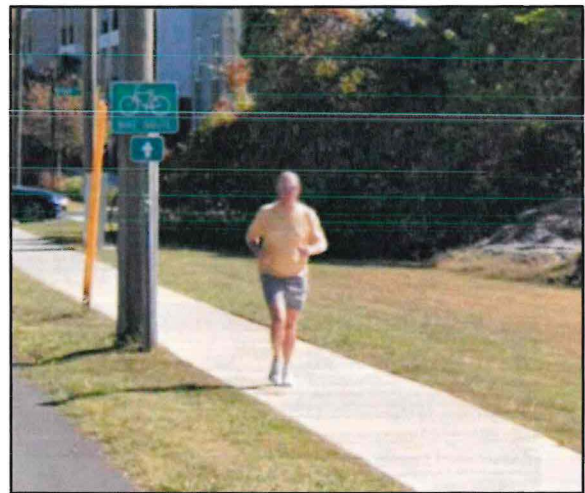
The Avention apartments represent a 280-unit development supported by a new grocery, bank, and dental office. In 2021, the project was rezoned from B-C and RSF-E to RMF-3-25.

Although no on-site affordable units were approved, the project contributed to the housing supply. The developer also provided an in-lieu contribution rather than providing income-restricted units in the amount of \$400,000 to the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF).

A condition of the rezoning was included a requirement for the developer to construct a pedestrian path along the south side of Kerry Street connecting Tide to Town (Police Memorial Trail) to Daffin Park. This improves walkability and connectivity for apartment dwellers as well as the surrounding neighborhood access to recreation and commercial establishments.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Amend the zoning ordinance to allow and incentivize in-lieu fee contributions to the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund, require stronger standards for pedestrian connectivity and transit-oriented development (TOD), including sidewalks, paths, and direct links to transit, parks, and nearby services.



2822 Bee Road: Permit Multifamily on Smaller Lots

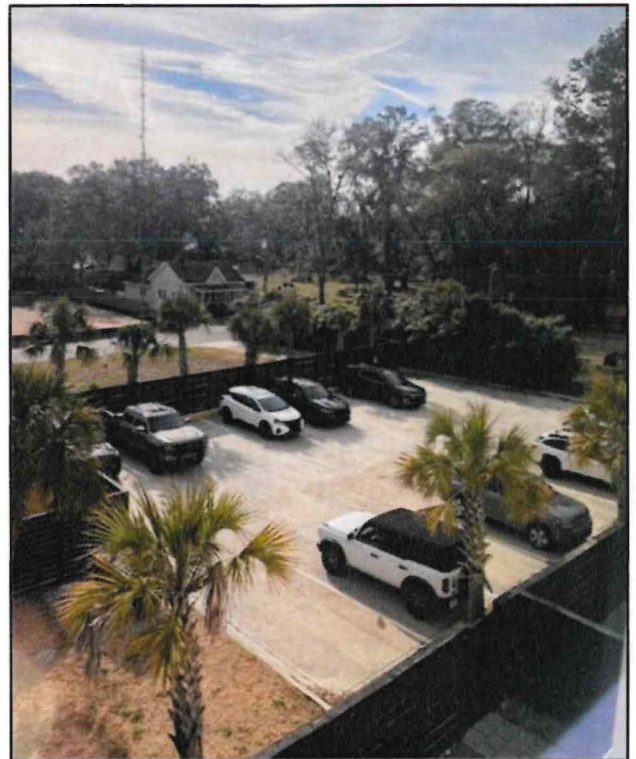
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

In 2022, the property owner rezoned ~0.26 acres from B-N to TC-1 to permit a new multifamily development. The TC-1 zoning district is intended to preserve and encourage the historic scale, walkability, and mixed-use character of Savannah's older urban neighborhoods, supporting both multifamily and neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Horizontal mixed-use, such as townhomes with street-level access, can be as beneficial as vertical mixed-use.

The site is served by transit on Victory Drive and Bee Road, near Tide to Town (Police Memorial Trail), walkable to Daffin Park, and provides access to nearby commercial destinations, including the new grocer and future bank.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Update the Future Land Use Map and zoning ordinance to encourage smaller-lot multifamily development, horizontal or vertical mixed-use, and stronger pedestrian and transit connections.



310 E. Montgomery Cxrd: Buffering & Multifamily in Commercial Districts

STOP 6

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Developed in 1986, the Crosspointe Shopping Center is a two-story commercial development with abundant parking on a relatively small, shallow lot. Single-family homes are located immediately behind the property. Current occupancy rates are low, and with bike and pedestrian trails under development, the corridor is poised for transformation. The current B-C zoning does not permit stand-alone multifamily development. Allowing apartments could help transition the area from light industrial uses, support smaller buffers, and provide housing opportunities along the future trail.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Rezone the property or update B-C standards to allow smaller-lot multifamily development, promoting a mix of housing types that complements commercial uses and leverages the emerging multimodal trail network. Consider form-based standards to encourage walkability and reduce the need for extensive buffering.



33 W. Montgomery Xrd: Multifamily in Commercial Districts

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Stop N Stor site (former Kmart) was developed in 1967. It currently serves as a self-service storage facility with a separate self-service storage business behind the building. Retail demand in the area appears saturated, and older shopping centers along this corridor are in transition. The site is adjacent to existing transit service and future multimodal trail network. Under current B-C zoning, stand-alone apartments are not permitted.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Revise the B-C zoning standards to allow apartments by right to support a transition from underused retail to housing. Encourage development that leverages proximity to transit and multimodal transportation network, promoting walkability and connectivity while diversifying housing options.



10010 Abercorn Street: Multifamily in Commercial Districts

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Picadilly Plaza, developed in 1973, is an older shopping center in a corridor where retail demand is largely met, and many similar centers are in transition. The site is adjacent to existing transit service and close to key destinations, including a grocery, bank, and pharmacy.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Amend the zoning ordinance to update the B-C standards to allow multifamily development to support a mix of housing and adaptive reuse of underutilized retail space. This will help to encourage development that leverages transit access and nearby amenities to enhance walkability and neighborhood connectivity.



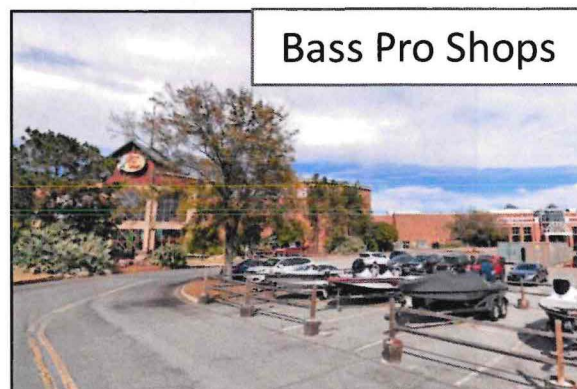
14045 Abercorn Street: Multifamily in Commercial Districts

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 1990, Savannah Mall opened with ~1M square feet of retail space on a large parcel with a small number of owners. At the time, it was one of the largest shopping centers in the region. The facility is underused and the land is owned by few parties. Retail demand is largely met, and the site is near transit, the future Tide to Town trail (Middleground Road), and destinations like grocery, bank, hospital, and university making it suitable for mixed-use redevelopment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Amend the zoning ordinance to allow infill residential and mixed-use development, leveraging transit and trail access, and nearby amenities to create walkable, connected neighborhoods.





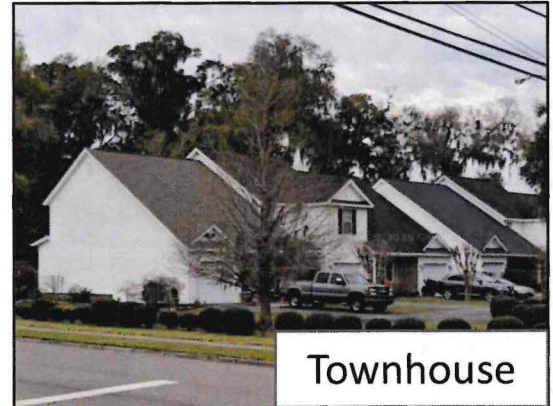
1132 Mohawk Street: Housing Diversity

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Mohawk Avenue corridor includes apartments, townhouses, and single-family homes, generally low-scale and detached, with densities up to 17 units/acre. The area supports diverse housing types, emphasizing form over density, with nearby parks, the future multimodal trail, and commercial destinations. Cottage court is a compatible model.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Encourage zoning ordinance revisions to the RSF-districts to allow additional density and diverse housing types while preserving low-scale, detached character. Focus standards on building form, connectivity, and compatibility with surrounding uses to support walkable, mixed-density neighborhoods.



Grey Oak Court: Cottage Courts

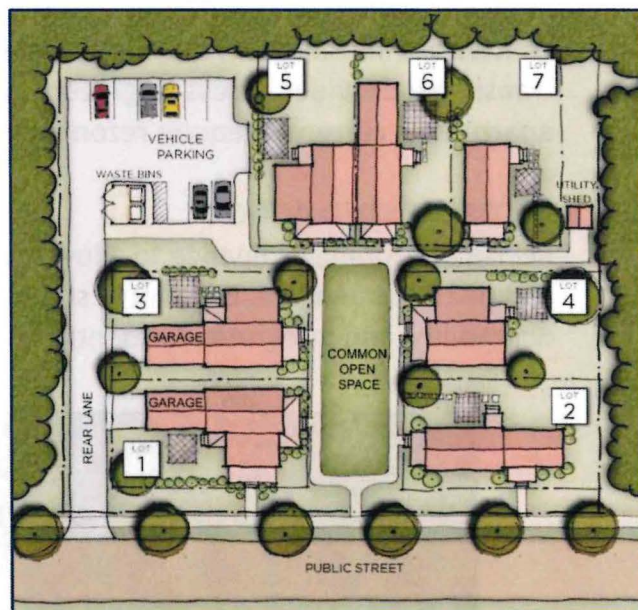
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Grey Oak Court is a small-scale residential development featuring eight two-story townhomes, each with a one-car garage and two reserved parking spaces. The homes are arranged around a shared common area owned and maintained by the Grey Oak Townhomes Owners Association.

This layout reflects a cottage court model where clustered housing is organized around a shared open space and designed to create a more connected, neighborhood-oriented environment at a modest scale.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Revise the zoning ordinance to allow cottage court developments by right on smaller infill sites. Focus on form and shared open space rather than strict density limits to support compact, community-oriented housing that fits within existing neighborhoods.



7804 Abercorn Street: Infill Apartments

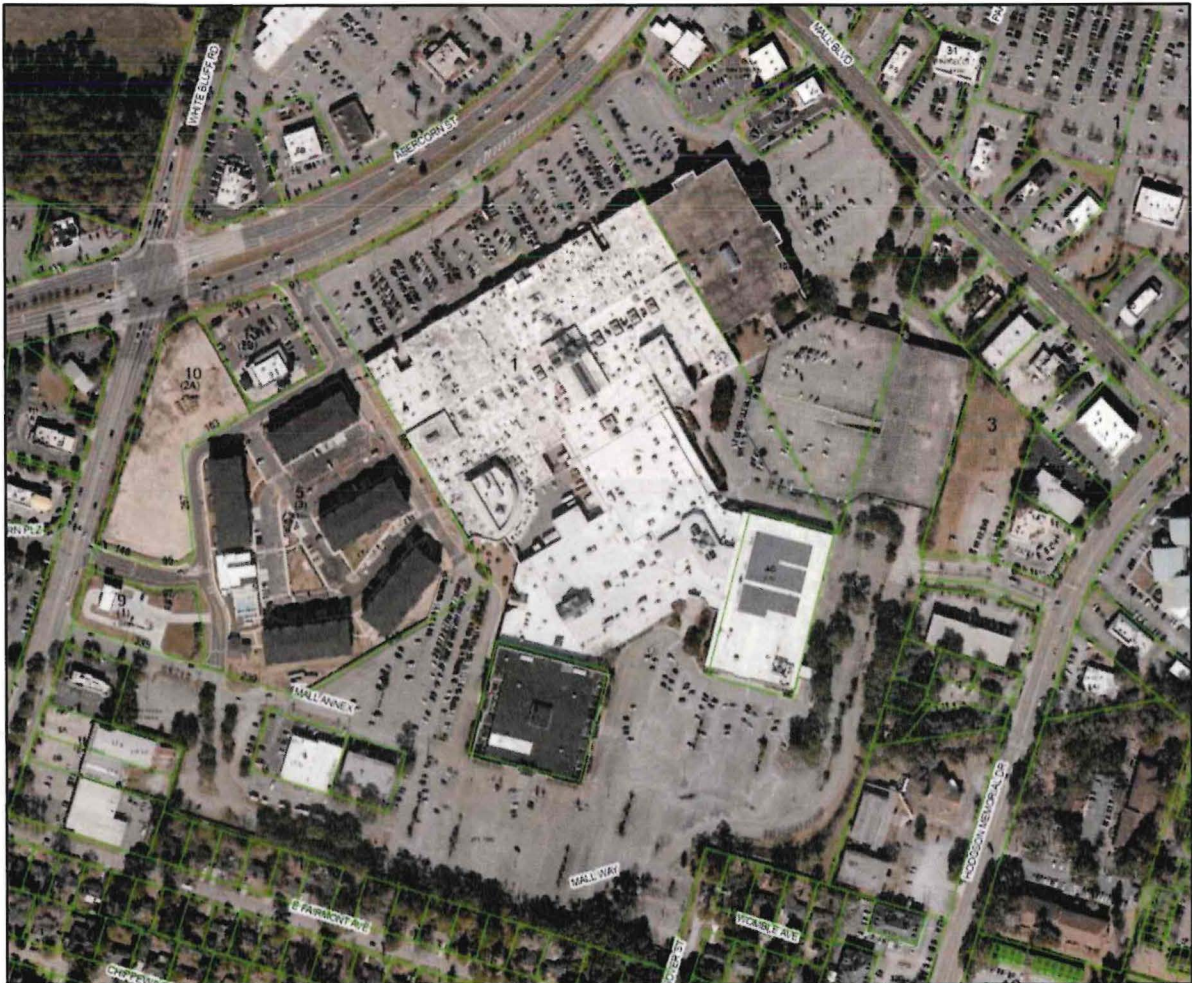
STOP 12

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject property at 7804 Abercorn Street, part of the Oglethorpe Mall, includes the former Sears store, auto service center, restaurant outparcel, and parking. Opened in 1969, Oglethorpe Mall has operated continuously with expansions and renovations. The parcel is underused, with large lots owned by few parties. Retail demand in the area is largely met, and older shopping centers are in transition, making the site suitable for residential infill. The property is near transit and provides access to grocery, bank, and employment destinations. Stand-alone apartments currently require rezoning from B-C to RMF-2-25 (25 units per acre).

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Revise the zoning ordinance to allow multifamily infill development, leveraging transit access and nearby amenities. Encourage site planning that revitalizes underused parcels, supports walkability, and integrates residential uses with the surrounding corridor.



5820 White Bluff Road: Reinventing Hotels as Housing

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2023, the former Homewood Suites Hotel was rezoned from B-C to RMF-2-30 to convert 102 hotel suites into apartments. The 3.5 acre property fronts White Bluff Road with access to Abercorn Street and is near Hunter Army Airfield and Savannah Technical College with access to public transit and grocery stores. The site supports 30 units per acre, with sufficient parking for one space per unit.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Revise the zoning ordinance to allow multifamily conversions in B-C and OI- districts by right. Support adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial or hotel properties to expand housing options near transit, employment, and educational centers.



131 & 135 Fair Street: Accessory Dwelling Units

STOP 14

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

At 131 and 135 Fair Street, two new homes were built alongside accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Previously, these ADUs would have required a variance, but updates to the City's ADU ordinance in 2023 and 2025 now allow them on standard lot sizes. This represents the "new wave" of ADUs, expanding housing options in established neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Continue supporting ADU development by maintaining flexible lot standards and streamlining permitting. Encourage ADUs as a tool for adding attainable, smaller-scale housing in single-family neighborhoods while preserving neighborhood character.



2601 W. Bay Street: Housing on Underutilized Lots

STOP 15

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 2601 W Bay Street area contains underutilized small lots with B-C and some I-L zoning, adjacent to single-family homes. Current B-C districts do not allow multifamily development. The site is near transit and could benefit from smaller buffers. These lots present opportunities for redevelopment and a transition away from light industrial uses.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identify the area as a proactive rezoning focus to allow smaller-lot multifamily development, improve buffers, and encourage a transition from light industrial to residential uses while leveraging transit access.



