



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"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: November 7, 2023
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: Rezoning Request

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petitioner: Robert L. McCorkle, III, Agent Forum Development, LLC

Property Owner: 621 Gwinnett, LLC

Address: 810 East Broad Street, 613-623 East Gwinnett Street, 610-614 East Bolton Street

Alderman: District - 2 – Detric Legget

County Commission: District - 2– Malinda Scott Hodge

Property Identification Number: 20043 07001, 04, 05, 06, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20

Petition File No.: 23-001408-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends **denial** of the request to rezone from TC-2 to S-PD.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends **denial** of the request to rezone from TC-2 to S-PD.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 12

Traci Amick
Shedrick Coleman
Travis Coles- Vice Chair
Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman
Laureen Boles
Wayne Noha
Dwayne Stephens
Tom Woiwode

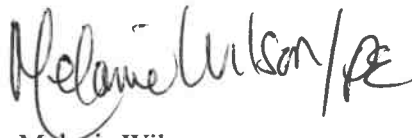
Jeff Notrica
Joseph Welch
Jay Melder
Michael Kaigler

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation for denial.
(12-1)

APPROVAL Votes: 12	DENIAL Votes: 1	ABSENT
Amick Boles Coles Coleman Epstein Jarrett Kaigler Melder Noha Notrica Stephens Woiwode	Welch	Ervin



Respectfully submitted,



Melanie Wilson
Executive Director and CEO

MW/sh

Enclosure

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



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METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning the Future - Respecting the Past

To: The Mayor and Aldermen, City of Savannah

From: The Planning Commission

Date: November 7, 2023

Subject: Rezoning Request

Petitioner: Robert L. McCorkle, III, Agent Foram Development

Property Owner: 621 Gwinnett, LLC

Address: 810 Broad Street, 613-623 East Gwinnet Street, and 610-614 East Bolton Street.

Alderman: District 2 – Alderman Detric Leggett

County Commission: District 2 – Commissioner Malinda Scott Hodge

Property Identification Number: 20043 07001, 04, 05, 06, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20

Petition File No.: 23-001408-ZA

REQUEST: The Petitioner, Robert L. McCorkle, III, Agent Foram Development, LLC, is requesting a rezoning of nine (9) parcels from a TC-2 (Traditional Commercial-2) district to a S-PD (Small-Planned Development). The nine parcels are between East Gwinnett Street and East Bolton Street. The Petitioner’s intent is to develop two (2) buildings that will include mixed use apartments with upper story residential and retail/restaurant on the ground floor.

Background: The subject property is located in a neighborhood that exhibits the ward structure of the Savannah Town Plan. The neighborhood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Eastside-Meadows-Collinsville Historic District. The National Register (NR) nomination from 2002 states, “The Eastside Historic District is a large, residential neighborhood in the City of Savannah. Eastside developed as a series of subdivisions following the establishment of streetcar lines through the area in 1891. The district was first developed in the northwest corner, adjacent to the Savannah Victorian Historic District, which had been established three decades earlier. Development proceeded along the rail line with the largest houses built in the Queen Anne and Italianate

styles at the north end in the late 1890's. Subsequent development proceeded south and east through the 1920s with equally large houses but smaller Craftsman-style bungalows. Eastside, like other historic residential neighborhoods in Savannah, follows the city-established gridiron plan with streets shaded by a canopy of mature live oak trees.

The Eastside streets were laid out by 1900 and mostly continue the City's 19th-century gridiron pattern of streets. East Broad, Paulsen, Harmon, Ott, Live Oak, and Cedar streets, and Atlantic and Waters Avenues comprise the major north-south streets. Park Avenue, Gwinnett, Bolton, Waldburg, Duffy, Henry, and Anderson streets are the major east-west corridors. Narrow service lanes run east-west through each block. Eastside's nearly flat topography was drained by the 19th-century Bilbo Canal, which runs below ground between Waters and East Broad streets. The historic rail line that extends north through the neighborhood features a plate-girder railroad bridge supported by steel lattice posts."

No local historic overlay district has been formed within the boundaries of Eastside-Meadows-Collinsville. The NR district provides federal tax incentives for rehabilitation of historic properties. No local regulations prevent the removal of historic structures in Eastside-Meadows-Collinsville.

Of the seven structures within the subject property, five (5) of them were identified as contributing to the historic character of the Eastside district in the NR nomination.

- PIN 20043 07018, 621 East Gwinnett Street
- PIN 20043 07005, 610-612 East Bolton & 611-613 East Gwinnett Lane
- PIN 20043 07004, 614-616 East Bolton Street & 615-617 East Gwinnett Lane

The buildings at 610-12 and 614-16 Bolton Street and 611-613 and 615-617 Bolton Lane are all one-story, side-by-side duplexes. The National Register nomination notes this housing type as exemplary of the Eastside neighborhood: Eastside also includes a variety of multi-family dwellings, most of which do not include elements of an academic style. These include one-story frame duplexes with units set side-by-side.

East Bolton Lane is included in the nomination and shows structures at 610, 614, and 622. It is not clear if the buildings have been modified since the survey that was done for the nomination. One of the parcels owned by 621 Gwinnett LLC is 810 East Broad Street. Faith on the Move Ministries was present at this location until it was demolished in 2021. The Eastside nomination listed 810 East Broad Street as a contributing structure.

The developer could preserve the historic structures surrounding the subject property, relocate them, salvage materials if they are demolished, or conduct an archeological survey of the site.

One of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan's Historic Preservation goals is to "Broaden historic preservation efforts to highlight and include historically underrepresented stories, sites, and communities."

Facts and Findings:

The Petitioner submittal timeline based on working with Staff includes the following:

- The Petitioner submitted their original application on March 3, 2023, with a proposed map amendment from TC-2 to D-X.

- Staff met with the Petitioner to change the D-X proposed zoning classification to a Small Planned Development as it would be more appropriate zoning for the proposed development.
- On June 16, 2023, the Applicant submitted a revised application for a Small Planned Development and included the Code of Ordinances & Design Standards (included in the revised application attached) which staff did not deem complete.
- On June 28, 2023, the Applicant submitted a redlined proposed ordinance that shows strike throughs and mark ups they believe were applicable to the site.
- After a meeting with Staff and the City's Traffic Engineer, on June 30th the Applicant submitted a current site plan and underground parking layout inclusive of the turning radius. They are widening the lane to 24-feet which includes two 12-foot lanes.

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. Public notice was also posted on site.

Neighborhood meeting:

On June 30th the Petitioner conducted a neighborhood meeting at the W.W. Law Center. The Petitioner proposed 180 to 200 residential units with a mix of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartment units. They are proposing to have a robotic car park for stacking the cars as there are limited parking spaces underground in their proposal. At this meeting residents requested something to prevent stopping/parking on Gwinnett such as service vehicles, Uber, and Door Dash.

There were several Eastside residents that raised concerns regarding encroaching onto the church and cutting off the church's access via the lane.

Existing tenants of older homes located on the subject site also indicated that they were unaware of any intent to sell the site and demolish the homes. One gentleman stated he found out about the project via a door hanger posted by the Neighborhood Association.

Existing Zoning and Development Pattern: The existing zoning is TC-2 (Traditional Commercial-2). The TC-2 district was established to ensure the vibrancy of historic mixed-use neighborhoods with traditional development patterns characteristic of Savannah during the streetcar and early automobile eras. The district provides for the creation of commercial corridors along higher classifications of streets that traverse historic neighborhoods.

Site: The subject property consists of nine (9) parcels, together they make up

approximately 1.25 acres in the subject area.

The land uses and zoning districts surrounding the subject site include the following:

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Residential housing & a commercial building	TC-2
South	A church and residential housing	TC-2
East	Single-family and duplexes	TN-1
West	Residential housing mixed with commercial manufacturing.	Manufacturing & residential housing

Impact and Suitability

- 1. Transportation Network:** The site has frontage access onto East Gwinnett and East Broad Streets, both two-lane roads
- 2. Public Services and Facilities:** The subject parcel has access to the City's public water, sewer, and stormwater systems.
- 3. Chatham Area Transit (CAT):** There are three (3) bus stops across E. Broad Street on East Gwinnett Street. There is one bus stop 17 feet away on East Broad Street across from East Gwinnett Street.
- 4. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element:** The Chatham County-Savannah Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designated the subject property as a mix of Residential Single-Family and Traditional Commercial. The proposed Small Planned Development is compatible with both residential and commercial uses as the proposed use would be mixed use upper story residential with

commercial uses on the ground floor.

In context, the TC-2 zone permits upper story residential use with no corresponding minimum land area per unit, but the height of the structures is capped at 3 stories or 45-feet. Alternatively, the D-X zone, which was initially requested by the Petitioner, allows development up to 8 stories. The Petitioner's current proposed building height is approximately 65-feet or 5 stories.

5. Existing TC-2 Zoning District:

- a. **Intent of the TC-2 District:** The intent of the TC-2 zoning district is to allow historic mixed-use neighborhoods with traditional development patterns characteristic of Savannah during the streetcar and early automobile eras. The district provides for the creation of commercial corridors along higher classifications of streets that traverse historic neighborhoods.
- b. **Allowed Uses:** The TC-2 zoning district allows for a variety of housing types, commercial uses, community-based uses, and institutional uses.
- c. **Development Standards:** The development standards for the TC-2 district appear and are attached in the agenda file for this item.

6. Proposed S-PD Zoning District:

- a. **Intent of the S-PD District:** The Applicant has provided the purpose of this S-PD District is to encourage mixed-use development consisting of Commercial and Residential uses that serves a large area or produce intensive activities not readily assimilated into other districts.
- b. **Allowed Uses:** The Applicant has provided principal uses. All principal uses, ground, and upper floor, within the TC-2 Zoning Ordinance and shown within the principal use table under Sec. 5.4 of the City of Savannah Code of Ordinances are permitted by right or permitted as a Special Use by the Board of Appeals in accordance with the Special Use Review.
- c. **Development Standards:** The Petitioner has not included Development Standards for the S-PD district. Staff finds the Petitioner's proposed Ordinance is incomplete and lacking required certain elements.

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 are permitted by the current zoning district.

ii.

MPC Comment: The range of uses permitted under the current and proposed zoning classifications are similar such as residential and commercial retail and restaurants. However, the intensity of the density proposed for 200 apartment units and the lack of parking for the proposed for the commercial and residential uses are not sufficient to number of units they are proposing for. The proposed height of 5 floors is not consistent with the Eastside area, and the TC-2 neighborhoods within the subject property and adjacent to the subject area with one and two-story structures.

- iii. Whether the proposed zoning district addresses a specific need in the County or City.

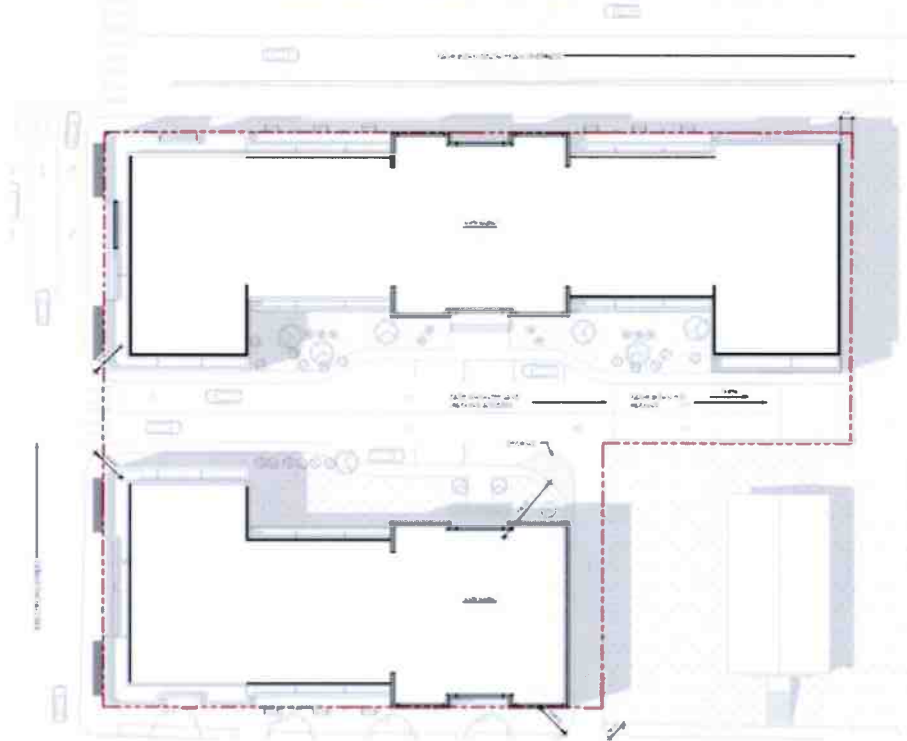
MPC Comment: The Small Planned Development zoning district would address the need for additional housing which the City has placed as a high priority. However, there is currently housing, specifically affordable housing that is being utilized on the subject site that would be demolished if the map amendment is approved. The Petitioner has mentioned that the City's inclusionary housing ordinance would most likely be in play for this project as it is triggered during the permitting process.

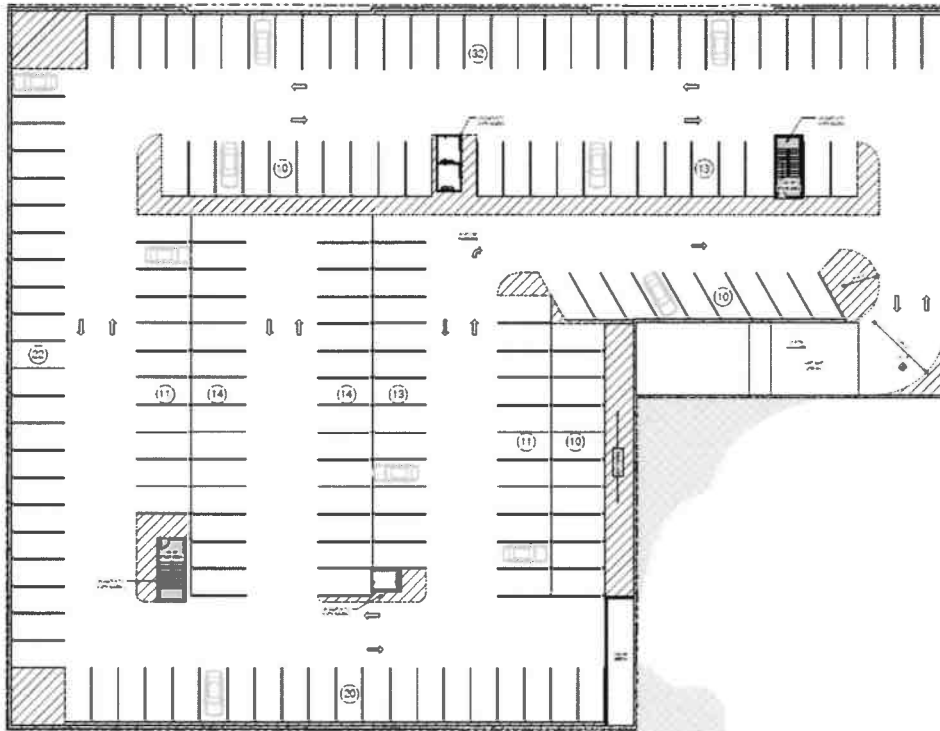
- iii. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

MPC Comment: There is a concern as to the standing traffic that would come from loading trucks, Uber, and Door Dash type services that may stop traffic on E. Gwinnett Street and East Broad Street. In addition, the amount of parking available for the intensity of the proposed density and the commercial uses themselves is lacking.

The City's Traffic Engineer has provided the following comments:

1. The current dirt path is on the property owned by CSX Railroad, not the City right-of-way.
2. The plan submitted by Mr. Stringer shows a ramp down to parking. His project is zero lot line. How and where does he propose to ramp back up to access the CSX railroad property, and ultimately, East Bolton Street?





Proposed underground garage.

- b. 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: The zoning proposal is not compatible with the present zoning pattern and character of the surrounding area. The proposed site plan indicated the Applicant is proposing 5 stories where the adjacent buildings and neighborhood are one and two-story heights. The proposed density of 200 units for the upper story residential is too intense for the neighborhood and there are insufficient parking spaces being proposed. There is no consideration for visitors that would like to participate in the commercial ground floor experiences because there is no parking being proposed. Loading trucks, mail trucks, and moving trucks would need to take up any side parking on the lane that visitors may have been able to use.

- c. 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: There is a condition that support the grounds for disapproval of the zoning approval at present are the following:

- The proposed density is inconsistent with that anticipated by the FLUM.
- The Petitioner has not identified commercial uses and associated parking ratios in sufficient detail to establish an off-street parking requirement.
- The Petitioner does not control, either by ownership or agreement, all the parcels which are currently served by impacted public rights-of-way.
- The proposed Code of Ordinances & Design Standards General Development Master Plan do not meet the requirements for completeness or evaluation of a Small Planned Development established by the Zoning Ordinance.

iv. **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 Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designated the subject property as a mix of Residential Single-Family and Traditional Commercial uses. The proposed Small Planned Development is consistent with the FLUM regarding anticipated intensification of residential and commercial use on the subject parcels. However, the proposal, which seeks downtown-scale density, is over and above that conveyed by the FLUM.

v. **Reasonable Use:**

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

MPC Comment: The current TC-2 zoning classification has a reasonable use for this subject property. However, the proposed height and density would not be available in the TC-2 zoning classification.

vi. **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.

vii. Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: The subject property is not in proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport.

Review of the Applicant's proposed Code of Ordinances & Design Standards is based upon what is required per Sec. 6.1 Planned Development District of the Zoning Ordinance. This section sets forth two basic requirements for a Small PD: 1) the approval of a General and Final Master Plan, per Sec 6.1.7, and 2) a list of permitted uses, per Sec. 6.1.8.

6.1.7 General Master Plan and Final Master Plan

Planned Developments shall require the submittal and approval of General Master Plans and Final Master Plans. Concurrent General Plan and Final Master Plan approval shall be permitted for Small-Scale PDs as outlined in Sec. 6.1.11.

- a. General Master Plans shall be defined as plans that convey the overall concept for the entire development and guide and coordinate any phased development. General Master Plans shall include drawings and documentation illustrating the general layout of proposed uses, identify development conditions, and document impacts that the proposed development will have on public facilities and services. Submittal requirements for General Master Plans are provided in Sec. 6.1.17.
- b. Final Master Plans shall be defined as plans that provide additional details regarding dimensions, building and structure locations, roads, utilities, parks, open spaces and other infrastructures, enhancements to public services, and principal site development features. Submittal requirements for Final Master Plans are provided in Sec. 6.1.18.

6.1.8 Permitted Uses

- a. A planned development may contain any or all of the uses specified in the approved PD General Master Plan. A wide range of uses is possible in a PD district, and the specific uses allowed may be different in each PD district, therefore the use table in Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table does not include the PD district. All uses that are identified in an approved General Master Plan shall be permitted uses within the planned development. Any uses not identified in the General Master Plan shall not be permitted. The Mayor and Aldermen have the discretion to require that certain uses be classified as limited uses or special uses.

Commentary: *If all uses within a specific base zoning district are desired, the approved General Master Plan must reference the zoning district rather than listing all the uses within that zoning district. If a use is proposed to change in type (i.e., permitted, limited or special) from its listed type in the base district, the use should be identified by its "new" type in the PD district. Similarly, any use conditions that are proposed to change should also be identified in the approved General Master Plan.*

- b. Mixed use developments are strongly encouraged in Planned Developments including the mixing of principal residential uses with principal nonresidential uses. Mixed use development may occur by having two (2) or more different principal uses located in the same building or by having two (2) or more different principal uses

located in different buildings sited on the same lot or parcel.

- c. A single use residential development is not permitted unless there are at least three (3) housing types as identified in Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table.

Section 6.1.17 identifies the review criteria for evaluation of a General Master Plan:

6.1.17 Items to be Provided on General Master Plan

The City Manager of his or her designee may eliminate those requirements that do not apply, but only those requirements that are under the purview of the respective department or agency for each team member. The following shall also be included on the General Master Plan:

- a. A proposed narrative discussing the market concept of the project, explaining the manner in which the criteria of Sec. 6.1.12 have been satisfied, and providing evidence of compatibility with the Future Land Use Plan and adjacent land uses;
- b. All proposed land use classifications;
- c. Total acreage of the overall development and for each land use classification;
- d. Total number of dwelling units and density for the overall development and for each phase;
- e. Proposed square footages of nonresidential uses, if applicable;
- f. Existing conditions, including the existing zoning districts, locations of existing buildings, streets, alleys driveways, parking areas, etc.;
- g. Proposed buffers, perimeter and internal, if applicable;
- h. Curb cut locations on primary roads, internal road system (if applicable) and connectivity to adjacent tracts (if applicable);
- i. Locations of sidewalks or trails adjacent to roadways or within buffers, including width, if applicable;
- j. Open space, including identification of passive and active recreational areas, including wetlands;
- k. Plans to protect or alter wetlands, if applicable;
- l. Maximum number of trips to be generated by the development;
- m. Any development condition(s) that may be part of a development agreement;
- n. General utility plan;
- o. Phasing plan, in accordance with Sec. 6.1.20;
- p. Delineation of any tree preservation areas to be set aside for Tree Quality Point and Landscape Quality Point credit as noted in the City Code Part 4, Chapter 10, Landscape and Tree Protection Ordinance; and
- q. General Location of new buildings and structures, streets, alleys, driveways, parking areas, etc.
- r. At the discretion of the applicant, any items that would be required in 6.1.18.

Evaluation:

In the Code of Ordinances provided, the Petitioner indicates an intent to allow any and all uses permitted by right or as a Special Use in the TC-2 Zoning district. In meetings with the

MPC, the applicant has expressed an intent to have ground floor retail and restaurant uses, and 180 to as many as 220 residences on upper floors of the proposed 5-story structure. However, no specific combination of non-residential uses or distribution of residential unit types has been provided.

Applying the review criteria established in Section 6.1.17 for General Development Master Plans, the applicant's submission is evaluated as either complete C for having provided sufficient detail or deficient D if details are insufficiently clear or missing.

C – Complete

D – Deficient

N/A – Not Applicable

General Development Master Plan Review

D A proposed narrative discussing the market concept of the project, explaining the manner in which the criteria of Sec. 6.1.12 have been satisfied, and providing evidence of compatibility with the Future Land Use Plan and adjacent land uses;

D All proposed land use classifications;

D Total acreage of the overall development and for each land use classification;

D Total number of dwelling units and density for the overall development and for each phase;

D Proposed square footages of nonresidential uses, if applicable;

D Existing conditions, including the existing zoning districts, locations of existing buildings, streets, alleys driveways, parking areas, etc.;

D Proposed buffers, perimeter and internal, if applicable;

C Curb cut locations on primary roads, internal road system (if applicable) and connectivity to adjacent tracts (if applicable);

C Locations of sidewalks or trails adjacent to roadways or within buffers, including width, if applicable;

D Open space, including identification of passive and active recreational areas, including wetlands;

D Plans to protect or alter wetlands, if applicable;

- D** Maximum number of trips to be generated by the development;
- D** Any development condition(s) that may be part of a development agreement;
- D** General utility plan;
- NA** Phasing plan, in accordance with Sec. 6.1.20;
- D** Delineation of any tree preservation areas to be set aside for Tree Quality Point and Landscape Quality Point credit as noted in the City Code Part 4, Chapter 10, Landscape and Tree Protection Ordinance; and
- C** General Location of new buildings and structures, streets, alleys, driveways, parking areas, etc.
- NA** At the discretion of the Petitioner, any items that would be required in 6.1.18.

Though discussed in meetings with the Petitioner, the Site Plan provided also does not provide the location of a dumpster pad and compactor.

Recommendation:

The Planning Commission recommends **denial** of the request to rezone from TC-2 to S-PD.