

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

MEMORANDUM=

DATE:

July 15, 2025

TO:

THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH

FROM:

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT:

Zoning Map Amendment

PETITION REFERENCED:

Owner: Progressive One Realty/Sweet Spice Restaurant

Agent: P. Bart Smith

Address: 1103 E 69th St

Alderman District: 3 - Linda Wilder-Bryan

County Commission District: 2 - Malinda Scott Hodge

Property Identification Number: 20114 19002

Petition File Number: 25-003170-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends <u>approval</u> of the request to rezone the subject parcel from OI (Office-Institutional) to BN (Neighborhood Business), subject to the following conditions:

- 1. That the drive-thru component be removed from the development plan, as the proposed stacking length does not meet the minimum 160-foot requirement and is anticipated to create traffic congestion that may negatively affect circulation on adjacent neighborhood streets.
- 2. That the rezoning be tied to the conceptual site configuration reviewed through the zoning process.
- 3. That the site plan must come back to the MPC for the review process.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

MPC Staff recommends <u>approval</u> of the request to rezone the subject parcel from OI (Office-Institutional) to BN (Neighborhood Business), subject to the following conditions:

- 1. That the drive-thru component be removed from the development plan, as the proposed stacking length does not meet the minimum 160-foot requirement and is anticipated to create traffic congestion that may negatively affect circulation on adjacent neighborhood streets.
- 2. That the rezoning be tied to the conceptual site configuration reviewed through the zoning process.
- 3. That the site plan must come back to the MPC for the review process.

Zoning Map Amendment File No. 25-003170-ZA MPC Page 2 of 2 July 15, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: 9

Traci Amick
Laureen Boles
Travis Coles – Vice Chair
Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman
Jeff Notrica
Stephen Plunk
Joseph Welch
Amanda Wilson
Tom Woiwode

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation with a condition. (9-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 9	DENIAL Votes:	ABSENT	Abstain	Recused	
	votes.	E-i-			
Amick		Ervin			
Boles		Kaigler			
Coles		Melder			
Jarrett		Ross			///
Notrica		Stephens			
Plunk					//
Welch					
Wilson					
Woiwode					

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



CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future, Respecting the Past"

Council Report

To:

City Council

From:

Planning Commission

Date:

July 15, 2025

Subject:

Zoning Map Amendment

Applicant/Agent: P. Bart Smith

Address: 1103 E. 69th Street, Savannah, GA 31404

PIN: 20114 19002

Site Area: 0.2 acres (+/- 9000 sf)

Alderman District: SAV 3

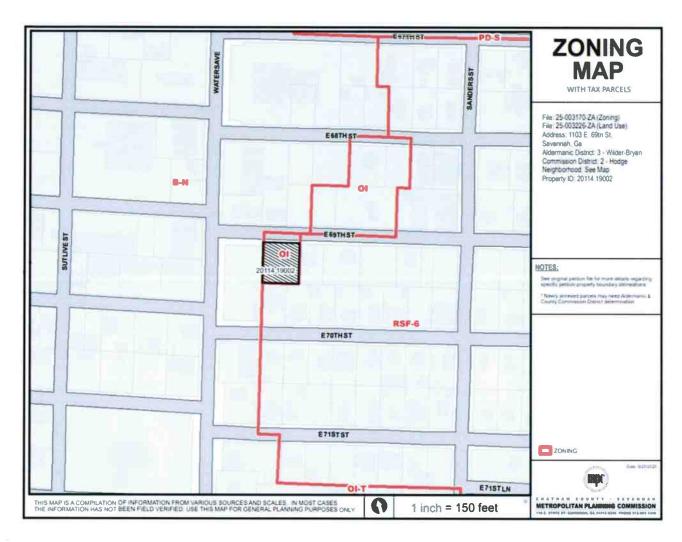
Request: Rezone from OI (Office-Institutional) to B-N (Neighborhood Business)

File Number: 25-003170-ZA

Request

The Petitioner requests amendment of the Zoning Map from OI (Office-Institutional) to BN (Neighborhood Business) in association with a proposal to establish a small restaurant with a drive-thru and two neighborhood-scale retail units. The site is currently vacant and under common ownership with the adjacent parcel to the north, which is already zoned BN. The proposed development will combine both parcels into a unified site plan for commercial use fronting Waters Avenue.

The rezoning request is accompanied by a related Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment request to align both parcels under the Commercial - Neighborhood designation. At the time of this request, the subject parcel is designated Residential Suburban - Single Family and lies within the Urban Transitional character area in the Comprehensive Plan 2040.



Current Zoning Map

Facts and Findings

Site

The subject parcel measures approximately 90 feet by 100 feet and is currently undeveloped. It is located within the South Garden neighborhood at the edge of Waters Avenue and adjoins an existing commercial parcel under the same ownership.

The adjacent B-N zoned parcel to the north is located within an Alcohol Density Overlay District, which may affect alcohol-related uses on the combined site. While the subject parcel itself does not fall within the overlay, the owner's intent to recombine the parcels and develop a unified commercial restaurant may trigger review under the overlay clauses and regulations. Staff recommends that any site plan or business license application clarify compliance with applicable overlay district requirements.



Site street view

Proposed Development

A total of 26 parking spaces is proposed, with vehicle access from East 69th Street and exit circulation to East 70th Street.

The applicant intends to develop the combined site with a single structure containing a restaurant with a drive-thru and two additional ±600 SF retail spaces, The building will be new construction and will serve as the relocated and updated home of Sweet Spice restaurant, which currently operates across the street. The development is intended to serve the immediate neighborhood and broader Midtown area, contributing to the growing walkable commercial corridor envisioned along Waters Avenue.

The use falls under the permitted by right category of:

<u>Restaurant:</u> An establishment that prepares and serves food and beverages to the public. This use may include table, counter, drive-thru, drive-in, take-away and delivery services either individually or some combination thereof. This term includes ice cream, yogurt, gelato and smoothie shops; bakeries; bagelries; doughnut shops; coffee shops; and, similar establishments. Accessory beer, wine and liquor sales may or may not be permitted as provided in Sec. 8.7.24, Accessory Alcohol Sales. Restaurants deriving more than 50% of its annual gross food and beverage sales from the sale of alcoholic beverages shall be considered a bar, tavern, or nightclub, as applicable. This term does not include catering establishments. **Sec. 13.2 Defined Terms, General**

<u>Retail. General:</u> An establishment that sales, leases, or rents new or used products, including wholesaling. This shall not include any other use identified in Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table.

Existing Zoning and Development Pattern

The subject parcel is currently zoned OI (Office-Institutional). This zoning district permits civic, medical, and office-related uses but limits commercial activity and does not support restaurant or drive-thru development. The OI designation was likely applied as a transitional buffer between residential uses to the east and south, and more intense commercial zoning along Waters Avenue.

The adjacent parcel to the north is zoned B-N (Neighborhood Business), and the parcels west of Waters Avenue are primarily zoned for commercial uses. Residential zoning districts RSF-6 and R-6 directly abut the subject site to the east and south, maintaining the established single-family character of the South Garden neighborhood interior.

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Retail	B-N
South	Dwelling	RSF-6
East	Dwelling	RSF-6
West	Vacant	B-N

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 the required public hearing advertisement was placed in the newspaper at least 15 days prior to the scheduled meeting. The mailed notice included instructions for accessing the meeting virtually.

Neighborhood Meetings

As of the drafting of this report, no formal neighborhood association meeting has been held, the petitioner however, has submitted letters and signatures from residents, patrons, and nearby community members in support of the project. This outreach reflects efforts to engage with the surrounding neighborhood and demonstrates a measure of public awareness and approval ahead of the public hearing.

Impact and Suitability

Public Servies and Facilities

The proposed development would be served by City of Savannah infrastructure, including water, sewer, and stormwater systems. Final development plans must receive Site Plan approval from all applicable reviewing departments, including the City's Development Services, Traffic Engineering, and Stormwater divisions, following any zoning-related approvals by the MPC and City Council.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Element

This rezoning request is submitted alongside a petition to amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) from Residential Suburban - Single Family to Commercial - Neighborhood. At the time of submission, the subject parcel was designated for low-density residential use within the Urban Transitional Character Area of the City of Savannah's 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Urban Transitional areas are defined as neighborhoods and corridors experiencing change in development intensity and land use mix, often positioned between stable residential communities and active commercial nodes. These areas are considered ripe for reinvestment, adaptive reuse, and context-sensitive infill development. Waters Avenue is explicitly identified as a key transitional corridor in the Comprehensive Plan, with a vision for neighborhood-scale commercial activity that complements adjacent housing and strengthens pedestrian connectivity.

The Commercial - Neighborhood designation supports compact, walkable business uses such as food service, convenience retail, and professional services, uses that are intended to reinforce corridor character while remaining compatible with nearby residential blocks. Given the site's strategic location, the shared ownership with the adjacent BN-zoned parcel, and the unified site development plan, staff finds the proposed rezoning to be consistent with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan goals for both land use and character area alignment.

Existing Zoning District

• Intent of the OI (Office-Institutional) Zoning District:

The Office-Institutional (OI) district is established to accommodate low-intensity civic, institutional, and office-related uses that serve as transitional zones between residential and more intense commercial districts. These areas are generally located near major corridors or at the edges of residential neighborhoods where office or public uses are appropriate but higher-impact commercial activity may be incompatible.

The OI district permits uses such as government offices, medical clinics, and educational institutions, but restricts retail, food service, and drive-thru operations. As such, it provides limited opportunities for commercial reinvestment and walkable neighborhood-serving businesses, particularly along evolving corridors like Waters Avenue.

While OI zoning is appropriate to buffer residential areas, in this case, its constraints have the potential to decelerate commercial growth along corridors and eventually impact the 2040 Comprehensive Plan's vision for mixed-use reinvestment along transitional corridors.

- <u>Allowed Uses</u>: The uses allowed in the zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.
- <u>Development Standards</u>: The development standards of the OI zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.

Intent of the BN Zoning District:

The Neighborhood Business (BN) district is established to accommodate small-scale commercial uses that directly serve nearby residential areas. These uses are generally low-intensity, walkable, and compatible in scale with adjacent neighborhoods. The district is intended to provide access to essential goods and services, such as food establishments, convenience retail, and personal services, within a short distance from surrounding homes, thereby promoting neighborhood vitality and reducing reliance on automobile travel for daily needs.

BN zoning is particularly suited to transitional corridors and neighborhood edges, where small commercial developments can coexist with residential uses without significant land use conflict. The district prioritizes pedestrian-friendly site design, buffered transitions, and appropriate building placement to support both commercial activity and neighborhood character.

At 1103 E. 69th Street, the BN district would enable the establishment of a neighborhood-oriented restaurant with drive-thru service and two small-scale retail units, reflecting the intent of the district and the broader reinvestment goals of the Waters Avenue corridor.

- Allowed Uses: The uses allowed in the BN zoning districts appear in a chart appended to the end
 of this report.
- <u>Development Standards</u>: The development standards of the BN zoning districts appear in charts appended to the end of this report.

Zoning Ordinance Review

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

Suitability and Community Need

• 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.

MPC Comment: The existing OI zoning permits a stable mix of civic and office uses, and functions effectively as a buffer between commercial and residential areas. The proposed BN district introduces a broader range of active, neighborhood-serving commercial uses that can enhance corridor vibrancy. However, this also reduces the buffering effect of the current zoning and introduces a higher intensity of use, which will require thoughtful site design and operational oversight to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential properties.

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

MPC Comment: The requested zoning does not address any specific need in the City or County but it does align with the general direction intended for the corridor.

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

MPC Comment: The requested zoning district (BN) is contextually appropriate for the site given its prominent corner location at East 69th Street and Waters Avenue, a corridor identified for neighborhood-scale commercial reinvestment. The district supports a range of

uses that can contribute positively to corridor activation. However, certain permitted uses, particularly those involving drive-thru circulation or high turnover, may increase vehicular density and congestion if not carefully managed. Site layout, access, and traffic flow will need to be addressed with particular attention during development review to avoid negative spillover into the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Residential use adjoins the property to the South and East, and would require all the development standards to be met to ensure reduced impact to the residential surroundings.

• 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 requested BN zoning is generally compatible with the evolving zoning pattern along Waters Avenue, which includes a growing number of commercially zoned parcels and mixed-use developments. The subject parcel adjoins an existing BN-zoned lot under common ownership and sits at a key corner along the corridor, making it a logical candidate for neighborhood-scale commercial use. However, portions of the surrounding area remain residential in character, and certain BN-permitted uses, if not carefully planned, could introduce operational impacts not currently present. Compatibility with the area will ultimately depend on how site access, building scale, and traffic circulation are managed.

 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: Recent reinvestment trends along Waters Avenue, coupled with broader efforts to revitalize transitional corridors in Midtown Savannah, have created a climate of increased interest in small-scale commercial redevelopment. The subject site, positioned at a corner and adjacent to an existing BN-zoned parcel, reflects a logical opportunity for such infill. While the request is consistent with the general direction of corridor evolution, the intensity and configuration of proposed uses , particularly the drive-thru component , will require careful review to ensure the site is capable of accommodating both operational demands and neighborhood-scale compatibility.

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 proposed zoning change to BN is consistent with the intent and policy framework of the Comprehensive Plan, particularly within the Urban Transitional character area where corridor-based commercial infill is encouraged. The requested FLUM amendment to Commercial - Neighborhood aligns with this vision and mirrors the designation already applied to the adjacent parcel.

Reasonable Use

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

MPC Comment: The subject parcel has reasonable use as presently zoned.

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: City services and infrastructure, including water, sewer, stormwater, and emergency access, are available to serve the site under the proposed BN zoning. However, the current conceptual site plan proposes a drive-thru stacking length of approximately 115 feet, which falls short of the 160 feet minimum required by ordinance. This shortfall raises potential concerns about on-site traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours, and could affect circulation, ingress, and egress.

Vehicle Stacking Requirements Table 9.3-9

Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: The subject parcel is not within an installation AICUZ or APZ, nor is it in proximity of an airport.

Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommends <u>approval</u> of the request to rezone the subject parcel from OI (Office-Institutional) to BN (Neighborhood Business), subject to the following conditions:

- That the drive-thru component be removed from the development plan, as the proposed stacking length does not meet the minimum 160-foot requirement and is anticipated to create traffic congestion that may negatively affect circulation on adjacent neighborhood streets.
- 2. That the rezoning be tied to the conceptual site configuration reviewed through the zoning process.
- 3. That the site plan must come back to the MPC for the review process.

5.15.6 Development Standards for Permitted Nonresidential Uses

Nonresidential uses in any Oi district shall meet the development standards as set forth below.

Standards	OI-T	OI	OI-E
Dimensions (min)			
Lot area per unit for Upper Story			
Residential use (sq ft)		2,170	1,740
Lot area for all other uses	000	••	840
Lot width (ft)		**	00
ding (max)			
Building Coverage	50%	80%	80%
Height (ft)	36	40	75 [1]
Ground floor area (sq ft)	3,000	0.0	
ding Setback (min ft)			
Front yard	20	15	15
Side (street) yard	15	15	15
Side (interior) yard	5	10	10
Rear yard	20	-	**
Rear Yard (adjacent to street/lane)	20	15	15
From access easement	5	5	5
Building separation	See Fire Code	See Fire Code	See Fire Code
essory Structure Setback	See Sec. 8.7	See Sec. B.7	See Sec. 8/7.
ting Area Setback (min ft)			
From collector or arterial street rights-of-way	15	15	15
From local street rights-of-way	10	10	10
From lane, property line or access easement	5	5	5

^{() -} Not permitted or not applicable

⁽¹⁾ Buildings proposed within 50 feet of a Residential zoning district shall be subject to the height restrictions established in such Residential zoning district and then may increase in height one (1) foot for every one (1) foot of distance from the Residential zoning district. For example, the portion of the building that is 65 feet from a Residential zoning district with a 36 foot height limit cannot exceed 51 feet in height.

	ment Standards for F			The second second
Standards	B-L	B-N	B-C	B-M
t Dimensions (min)				
Lot width (ft)			940	
Lot area per unit for Upper Story				
Residential use (sq ft)	2,170	1,815	1,815	
Lot area (sq ft)	66	***		
ilding (max)				
Building Coverage	**		0.0	
Height (ft)	36	40	75 [1]	36
Ground floor area (sq ft)	10,000	50,000	99	
ilding Setback (min ft)				
Front yard	15	15	15	15
Side (street) yard	15	15	15	15
Side (interior) yard	0.0		**	
Rear yard		-	**	-
Rear Yard (adjacent to street/lane)	15	15	15	15
From access easement	5	5	5	. 5
Building separation	See Fire Code	See Fire Code	See Fire Code	See Fire Code
cessory Structure Setback	See Sec. 8/7	See Sec. 6.7	See Sec. 8/7	See Sec. 8.7
rking Area Setback (min ft)				
From collector and arterial street rights-of-way	15	15	15	15
From local street rights-of-way	10	10	10	10
Abutting lane or access easement	5	5	5	5

⁽¹⁾ Buildings proposed within 50 feet of a Residential zoning district shall be subject to the height restrictions established in such Residential zoning district and then may increase in height one (1) foot for every one (1) foot of distance from the Residential zoning district. For example, the pertion of the building that is 65 feet from a Residential zoning district with a 36 foot height limit cannot exceed 51 feet in height.

OI Uses

0	√= Permitted Use L= Limited Use S=Special Use	Use Standards
Continuing care retirement community	L	Sec. 8.1.2
Upper story residential	V	
Agriculture, personal		
Community Garden	1	
Park, general	✓	
Library/community center	1	
Museum	4	Sec. 8.7.24
Post office	1	
Police/fire station or substation	✓	
Child/adult day care center	L	Sec. 8.3.10 or Sec. 8.7.11
Child/adult care center, 24 hour	L	Sec. 8.3.12 or Sec. 8.7.11
School, public or private (K-12)	√	Sec. 8.3.14 and Sec. 8.7.14
All places of worship	ý	Sec. 8.3.15, Sec. 8.7.13, and Sec. 8.8.3(d)
Office, general	✓	Sec. 8.4.1
Office, medical	- ✓	Sec. 8.4.3
Office, utility/contractor	L	Sec. 8.4.4
Art/photo studio; gallery	✓.	
Pharmacy	L	Sec. 8.4.21
Pharmacy for Medical Cannabis Dispensary or Medical Marijuana Dispensary	L	Sec. 8.4.51
Services, general	✓	
Animal services, indoor	L	Sec. 8.4.24
Bank	V	
Business support services	✓	
Catering establishment	✓-	
Funeral home; mortuary (not including crematorium)	✓	
Event Venue	S	
Instructional studio or classroom	√	
Personal service shop	✓.	Sec. 8.4.28
Repair-oriented services	V	
Restaurant	L	Sec. 8.4.32, Sec. 8.7.24, and Sec. 7.14
Retail consumption dealer (on premise consumption of alcohol)	S	Sec. 8.7.24 and Sec. 7.14
Utilities, major	S	
Utilities, minor	J	

(Ord. of 11-22-2022(10), § 1, Ord. of 5-25-2023(9), § 1)

Effective on: 5/25/2023

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B-N Uses				V= Permitted	THE PARTY
	V= Permitted Use			Use L= Limited Use S=Special Use	Use Standards
	L= Limited Use	Ose Standards	Pawmshop	7	Sec. 8.4.20
	S-Special Use	A COUNTY OF THE PARTY OF THE PA	Pharmacy	7	Sec. 8.4.21
Upper story residents		4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4	Pharmacy for Medical Cannabia Dispensary or Medical Mariyana Dispensary	4	Sec. 8.4.51
Application parents		245. 8.3.3	Service Servic	5	
Section of the section	, ,		Animal services, indoor	1	Sec. 8.4.24
Dark seneral			Bank	5	
THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY O			Body art services	,	
Magan		Car 8 7 73	Business support services	7	
			Catering establishment	>	
Police fire station or substation	,		Check Cashing, Title Pawn,	7	Sec. 8.4.26
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) substation, Ambulance Service		3	Funeral home; mortuary (not including crematenum)	>	
Shelter, transformal		2000	Mail, banquet or reception		
Company day one conter		Sec. 83 10 oc Sec. 8 7 11	Event Venue	7	
Chi diadult care center, 24 hour		Sec. 8.3.12 or Sec. 8.7.11	Instructional studio or classroom		
College, unversity, seminary	>	Sec. 83 13 and Sec. 8.7 15	Usundromat,	7	
Secretary of Statement of the second of the		Certification of the party of	Dry Cleanar/Laundry, Neighborhood		
School explic or private (K-12)		Car as 14 and Car a 7 th	Personal service shop	1	Sec. 8.4.28
School trace special of provinces	-		Psychic, palmist, medium, fortune teller	-	
		Ser Ma 15 Car B 7 13 and Car	Repain-on-ented services		
All places of worship	4	3.8.3(a)	Self-service storage facility	3	Sec. 8.4.29
Private dub/Lodge	5	Sec. 8.346	Distillery, craft,	5	Sec. 7.14
MOSDICE	7		Bar tavern	S	Sec. 8.4.30 and Sec. 7.14
No. 25.00	,		Restaurant	1	Sec. 8.4.32, Sec. 8.7.24 and Sec.
Application of the second participation of the second part	75		Pood Truck Park	T.	Sec. 8.4.50
		4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4	Retail consumption dealer (on premise consumption of alcohol)	\$	Sec. 8.7.24 and Sec. 7.14
Personal Care nome, registered	,	Sec. 8.3.19	Ancillary retail dealer (off-premite consumption of alcohol)	s	Sec. 8.7.24 and Sec. 7.14
Personal care home, family	,	Sec. 8.3.19	Package store (not including wine specialty shops)	S	Sec. 7.14
Office, general	,	Sec 8.4.1	Wine Specialty Shop (not including peckage stones)	S	Sec. 7.14
Call center	,		Winery, Meadeny, Cidery	S	Sec. 7.34
Office, medical	,	Sec. 8.4.3	Brewery, Micro	s	Sec. 7.14
Office, utility/contractor	,	Sec. 8.4.4	Bed and Breakfast Homestay	7	Sec 8 4.33
Studio/multimada production facility	-	Sec 8.4.5	見	1	Sec. 8.4.35 and Sec. 8.7.24
Indoor amusement	*		Short-term vacation rental		Sec 8.4.37 and Sec. 7.5
indoor sports facility			vehicle sales rentals and leasing	ي	Sec. 8.4.39 and Sec. 8.7.25
Teen Club	-	Sec. 8.4.7	Mapacimator scooter sales, rentals and leasing	_	SAC. 8.4.40
Thesiar/chamal performing arts	>		Vehicle service, minor	2	Sec. 8.4.42
Retail, general	/-		vehicle service, major	8	Sec. 8.4.43
Art/photo studio, gallery	,		vehicle wash, full or self-service	3	Sec. 8.4.45
Convenience store		Sec. 8.4.14	Manufacturing, Artistal Craft	1	Sec. 8.5.4
Fuel/gas station	-	Sec. 8.4.14	Parking facility	7	Sec. 8.6.2
Food-oriented retail	,	Sec. 8.4.16	Utilities, major	\$	
Garden center	-1	Sec 8.4.22	Uppres, minor	×	