



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: September 26, 2024
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: Zoning Map Amendment

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petitioner: Bridget Lidy, Senior Director Planning and Urban Design on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah.

Property Owner: Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah

Address: 4801 Meding Street

Alderman: District – 5- Dr Estella Shabazz

County Commission: District – 5- Tanya Milton

Property Identification Number: 20108 01001

Petition File No.: 24-004493-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request rezoning request from C-P and RMF 2-25 to PD (Planned Development)

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the request rezoning request from C-P and RMF 2-25 to PD (Planned Development).

MEMBERS PRESENT: 10

- Traci Amick
- Dwayne Stephens
- Coren Ross
- Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman
- Laureen Boles
- Amanda Wilson
- Jay Melder
- Travis Coles – Vice Chair
- Jeff Notrica
- Tom Woiwode

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

APPROVAL Votes: 10	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Amick Boles Wilson Stephens Jarrett Woiwode Ross Melder Coles Notrica		Ervin Kaigler Plunk Welch



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: The City Council
FROM: The Planning Commission
Date: September 24, 2024
Subject: Zoning Map Amendment

Agent: Bridget Lidy, Senior Director Planning and Urban Design on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah

Address: 4801 Meding Street

PIN's: 20108 01001

Site Area: 66.5 acres

Aldermanic District: 5 – Alderman Dr. Estella Shabazz

Chatham County Commission District: 5 – Commissioner Tanya Milton

File Number: 24-004493-ZA

Neighborhood/Subdivision: Tatemville

Current Zoning District: C-P, RMF-2-25

Future Land Use (FLU) Category: Planned Development

Request: The Petitioner requests to rezone the subject parcel from Conservation – Park and Residential Multifamily 2-25 to Planned Development. The subject parcel was previously used as a fairground. The Petitioner's intent is to develop the parcel as a mixed-use but principally residential development consisting of affordable single-family, multifamily and senior residences. Also proposed are retail, recreation and community development uses.

Facts and Findings

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(s): Following are the neighborhood meetings conducted to inform the public about the project.

1. April 25, 2017, District 5 Town Hall Meeting
2. May 15, 2017, District 5 Town Hall Meeting
3. June 7, 2018, District 5 Town Hall Meeting
4. February 26, 2019, District 5 Town Hall Meeting
5. February 21, 2020, District 5 Town Hall Meeting
6. July 13, 2021, Open House Public Meeting to explore 3 proposals
7. July 14, 2021, Open House Public Meeting to explore 3 proposals
8. October 21, 2021, Community Meeting at Liberty City Community Center
9. January 5, 2022, Meeting with 5th District Coalition
10. January 12, 2022, Public meeting at Savannah Civic Center to review P3 Venture Group Concept
11. February 24, 2022, Meeting with 5th District Coalition
12. April 12, 2022, Feiler Park Neighborhood Meeting
13. May 2, 2022, Tour of Senior Housing developed by WH Gross Construction
14. October 17, 2022, Tatemville Neighborhood Meeting
15. July 7, 2023, Town Hall Meeting at Liberty City Community Center
16. April 2, 2024, Meeting with 5th District Coalition
17. April 29, 2024, Community Meeting at Liberty City Community Center
18. September 19, 2024, Feiler Park Virtual Neighborhood Meeting

Background: The proposed development lies approximately one mile north of Hunter Army Airfield and approximately 1.5 miles west of the Medical Center. The historic Tatemville neighborhood forms the eastern border of the and a portion of the southern border. The property includes several large, abandoned buildings and several aged roadways. The buildings were built before 1986. Part of the property is delineated as wetlands and a direct tributary of the Little Ogeechee River.

Planning for the site began as early as Summer 2020 with the City's open request for design proposals from entities interested in working toward the site's redevelopment. In December 2020, MPC issued a technical memorandum offering perspective on an appropriate course for site planning, future uses and other design considerations. The memo also included brief reviews of the proposals of three finalists selected (Exhibit: MPC 2020 Technical Review).

At that time, Staff expressed support for expansion of the existing historic development pattern, significant permanent green space preservation as active and passive recreation uses, and development of mixed residential and commercial uses at appropriate scale to enable a comfortable and seamless transition into existing adjoining neighborhoods.

In March 2022, the petitioner requested to rezone a 3.85-acre portion of a 66.5-acre tract of land on the west side of Meding Street between W. 62nd and W. 63rd. streets. The rezoning request only applied to the 3.85-acre portion. The proposed rezoning was approved and changed the zoning of the 3.85-acre portion from C-P (Conservation Park) to RMF-2 (Multifamily Residential). The zoning of the remainder of the parcel was unchanged (22-000531-ZA).

On April 30, 2024, the applicant requested amendment of the Future Land Use map from Parks and Recreation to Planned Development for the subject parcel (24-000287-ZA). This request was

approved making the FLUM designation for the site Planned Development, consistent with its intended use.

Illustrated below in Figure 1 is the general concept plan and phasing of the proposed development. The phases of the proposed development are listed in the table below.

Phase	Development
Phase 1	~30 Single family house units, ~20 attached townhomes
Phase 2	≥70 LIHTC senior housing apartment units
Phase 3	Sound/film studio buildings, creative innovation workforce center, two recreation fields and two basketball courts
Phase 4	~60 attached townhomes, two recreation fields, nature preserve, commercial retail facility (convenience store/food market, barbershop/hair stylist, restaurant, cleaners/laundry, doctor/dentist office, package pick-up, shipping and delivery, package pick-up, shipping and service, and pharmacy
Phase 5	Indoor recreation buildings, rental apartment ~220 units (2 and 3 bedrooms)

Impact and Suitability

1. **Transportation Network:** The site has ~970 feet of frontage on Meding Street towards the east. The site also has Kimball Avenue in the south which turns into the lot northwards and connects with 62nd Street through the middle of the lot. The street network in the vicinity includes Meding Street and Montgomery Street. West 61st, 62nd and 63rd streets terminate at Meding Street at the entrance to the subject property.
2. **Public Services and Facilities:** Tatemville Community Center is located in the adjacent lot to the south. Haven Elementary School and Staley Heights Park is located about 2000 feet south of the subject parcel. In general community service facilities are not located in the vicinity of the site.
3. **Chatham Area Transit (CAT):** CAT bus routes run through Montgomery Street (~700 feet to the east from site) and Staley Ave (~1500 feet south of the site).
4. **Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element:** The Chatham County-Savannah Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as Planned Development. These areas encompass master planned areas accommodating cluster development, neotraditional development, or mixed residential, commercial, or civic uses. 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 PUDs.

The proposed rezoning of PD is allowed in FLUM designation of Planned Development.

5. Existing C-P and RMF 2-25 Zoning District:

- a. **Intent of the C-P District:** The Conservation-Park (C-P) district is established to preserve and enhance parkland as permanent open space to meet the active and passive recreational needs of residents and to also protect cultural and historic resources.
- b. **Allowed Uses:** Permitted uses are limited to parks and recreation, cemeteries and other uses that promote open space and preservation of resources. For other uses please refer Sec. 8.3.5.4. Principal Use Table of City of Savannah Code of Ordinances.
- c. **Development Standards:** There are no development standards for C-P residential uses. The development standards for the C-P district for nonresidential uses have been appended to the end of this report.
- d. **Intent of the RMF 2-25 District:** The Residential Multi-family ("RMF-") districts are established to allow multi-family development in addition to other types of residential development. The RMF- districts are intended to be placed on higher classifications of streets and in close proximity to mass transit corridors, retail services and employment opportunities. The specific density (a whole number) shall be established at the time of rezoning. Such density shall be represented as a numeric suffix after the zoning district (e.g. RMF-3-14). In this instance the density applied was 25 units per acre.
- e. **Allowed Uses:** All residential housing types are allowed uses in RMF-2. For other uses please refer Sec. 8.3.5.4. Principal Use Table of City of Savannah Code of Ordinances.

- f. **Development Standards:** The development standards for the RMF-2-25 district have been appended to the end of this report.

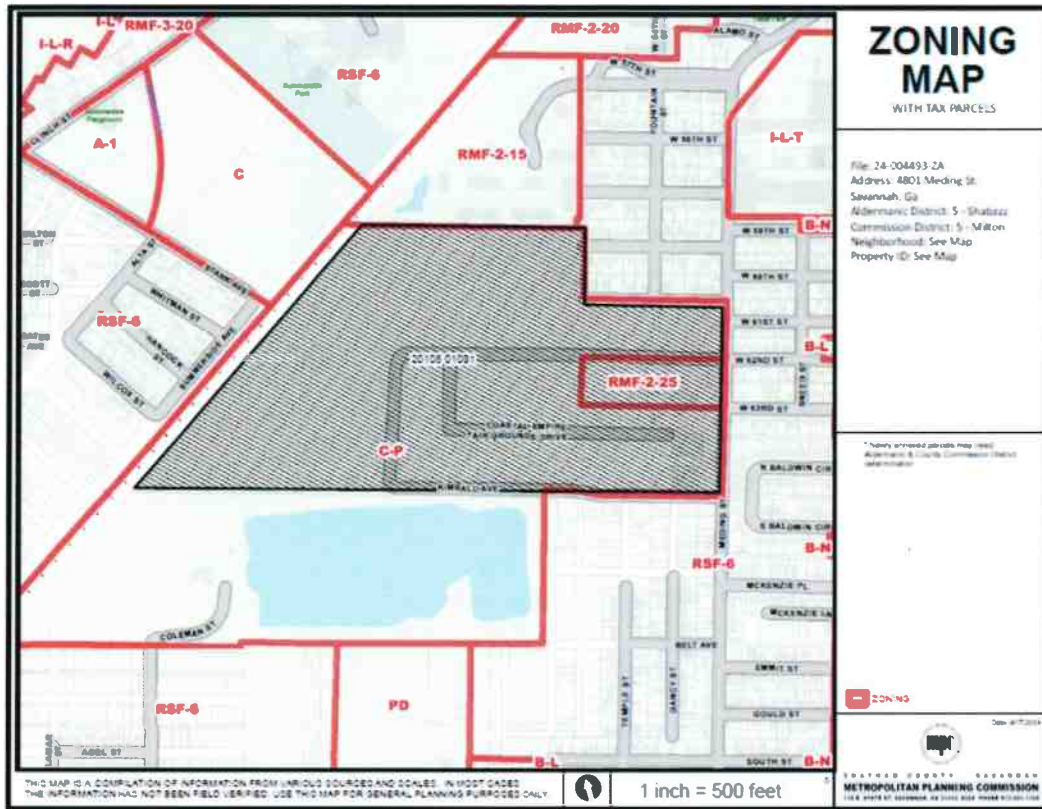
6. Proposed PD Zoning District:

- a. **Intent of the PD District:** PD district allows projects that wouldn't normally be permitted under standard zoning rules, offering flexibility in site design. It is typically used for sites where a specific mix of land uses, aesthetics, and compatibility with the surrounding area is desired. In exchange for this flexibility, developers are expected to create high-quality, innovative designs that preserve environmental, historic, and cultural resources, ensure compatibility with neighboring areas, and improve infrastructure efficiency beyond what standard zoning would allow. Because each planned development is unique, it is therefore governed by its approved General Master Plan. The PD district shall not be used as a means of circumventing adopted land development regulations for routine developments.
- b. **Allowed Uses:** 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.
- c. **Development Standards:** The development standards for the proposed PD district have been appended to the agenda under this item.

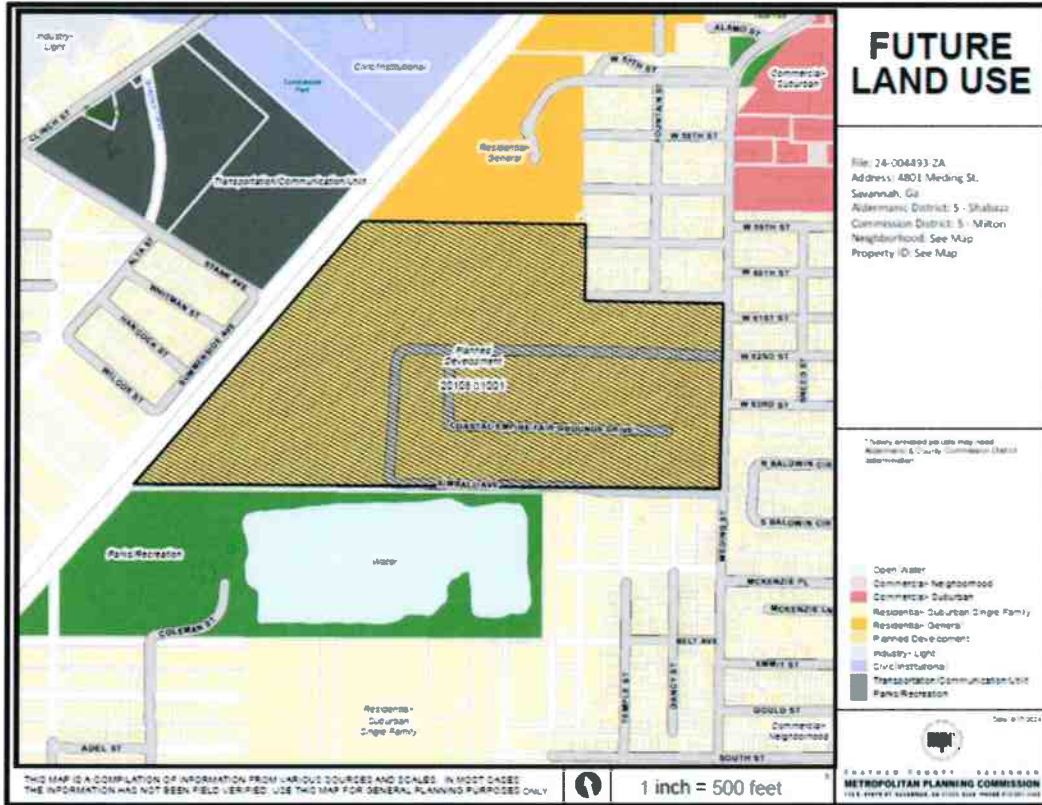
7. Development Pattern: The development pattern in the area is characterized as Urban Transitional. Urban Transitional areas feature suburban-style, automobile-oriented residential neighborhoods that still maintain access to urban amenities and public transit. These neighborhoods are often pedestrian-friendly, with well-used sidewalks, parks, and open spaces. Redevelopment and infill opportunities are common, with particular focus on corridors suitable for transit-oriented development (TOD).

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

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Residential General and Residential – Suburban Single Family	RMF 2-15 and RMF-6
South	Park/Recreation and Residential – Suburban Single Family	C-P and RMF-6
East	Residential – Suburban Single Family	RMF-6
West	Transportation/Communication/Utility and Residential – Suburban Single Family	C and RMF-6



Zoning Map



Future Land Use Map

Zoning Ordinance Review

6.1.12 Review Standards for Planned Development Applications

When reviewing any application for rezoning to a Planned Development district, all of the criteria listed below shall be considered.

a. Rezoning Standards Applicable

All the standards from Sec. 3.5.8, Review Standards for Rezoning Applications, shall be considered. The staff review is attached below.

b. Compatibility

- i. Whether the rezoning proposal will be constructed, arranged and operated so as to be compatible with the immediate vicinity and not to interfere with the development and use of adjacent property in accordance with the applicable district regulations.

MPC comment: The development was designed to be contextually sensitive to the receiving neighborhood while working toward provision of needed affordable housing units. The development can be expected to enhance the area, spurring both new development and revitalization of existing homes and businesses in the area.

c. Resource Protection

- i. Whether the rezoning proposal will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any resource determined by the Mayor and Aldermen to be of significant natural, scenic or historic importance. Such historic resources shall be listed or eligible to be listed on the local or National Register of Historic Places.

MPC comment: The proposed rezoning will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any identified resources. One or more historic structures on the property are proposed for adaptive reuse.

d. Design Review

- i. Whether the rezoning proposal will be compatible or complimentary with the adjacent properties. The architectural style, materials, other treatments, etc., to be utilized within a Planned Development shall be considered by the Planning Commission and Mayor and Aldermen as part of the overall review process.

MPC comment: This Master Plan was designed with existing neighborhood context in mind. The proposal connects with and maintains the area's gridded street network and general parcel configuration, though it makes accommodation for historic structures, some of which are proposed for adaptive reuse.

The parcels are not within a protected local overlay district and design standards are not required or anticipated.

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.

MPC Comment: Yes, the current C-P zoning district permits only parks, recreation, cemeteries, and other uses that prioritize open space and resource preservation. The RMF-2-25 district, on the other hand, allows a range of residential uses. However, there is limited cohesion between the existing allowed uses and the surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, the area lacks retail and commercial options, and the current zoning does not adequately address the need for these uses or provide a balanced integration. Introducing PD zoning would allow for a more cohesive mix of proposed uses, creating stronger connections and compatibility with the surrounding neighborhoods.

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

MPC Comment: Yes, the proposed development is consistent with several PLAN 2040 Goals regarding 1) creation of unique educational and economic development opportunities, 2) creation of compact, walkable, economically vibrant neighborhoods, and 3) flood hazard prevention.

Further, the selected concept and resulting preliminary engineering report, which was provided as the basis of the request, were the result of a public selection process. The selected concept was chosen by the Council due to belief that it best achieved particular City policy objectives and concerns identified through community feedback. The concept was presented in a Council Work Session on July 15, 2021 ([Council Work Session 7/15/21 \(viebit.com\)](#)).

Allowance of PD on the parcel could support the revitalization of the neighborhood through development of new commercial and residential use. Also, the proposed use can be expected to support residential growth in the area contributing to the City's need for more housing.

The proposed development is intended to provide the City with approximately 400 additional homes after its completion, supporting workforce expansion. According to submissions from the Petitioner, the future mixed-use development will feature recreation, housing, film studios, and commercial uses, including: 30 single-family homes, 80 townhouses, 220 apartment units, and 70 senior housing units. Additionally, there will be 40,000 square feet of neighborhood storefronts with a mix of retail, offices, non-profits (such as day care and child development centers), and a police substation.

b. Compatibility

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

MPC Comment: The proposed addition of residential units, recreational facilities, and the Creative Exchange Building may place significant strain on the existing road network. To address this, the applicant has proposed improvements, including widening roads, constructing multipurpose streets, and adding new street connections around the site.

- 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.

MPC Comment: The zoning proposal is compatible with the present zoning pattern and conforming uses

- iii. 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: The subject parcel is vacant and was previously used as a fairground, primarily for recreational purposes. The proposed development will enhance the recreational facilities and introduce residential uses, aligning with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

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.

MPC Comment: The FLUM designates the site for Planned Development, and it falls within the Urban Transitional character area. Therefore, the zoning proposal aligns with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

d. Reasonable Use

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

MPC Comment: The current use of the site as fairgrounds does not fully utilize the land's potential. The proposed zoning change for the new development represents a more efficient and improved use of the property.

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.

MPC Comment: Currently, there are insufficient public facilities in the surrounding area to adequately support the project. The project proposal includes the construction of essential infrastructure, such as roads, water systems, and stormwater facilities.

f. Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: The project site is not within 3000 ft from the Military Zone of Hunter Army Airfield. And the site is not in the Hunter Army Airfield Height Limiting Zones or Noise Zones and Accident Potential Zones.

Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request rezoning request from C-P and RMF 2-25 to PD (Planned Development).