



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: December 16, 2025

TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH

FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Future Land Use Map Amendment

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petitioner: Bridget Lidy for the City of Savannah

Address: 2910 Dawes Avenue and 35 additional unique addresses

Alderman District: 5 – Dr. Estella Shabazz

County Commission District: 5 – Tanya Milton

Property Identification Number: 20595 07005 and 35 additional unique PINs

Petition File Number: 25-005810-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to amend the FLUM to reflect *Planned Development* in support of the proposed housing development.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the request to amend the FLUM to reflect *Planned Development* in support of the proposed housing development.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 11

Traci Amick
Laureen Boles
Travis Coles – Chairman
Karen Jarrett
Michael Kaigler
Jay Melder
Jeff Notrica
Stephen Plunk
Dwayne Stephens
Amanda Wilson
Tom Woiwode – Vice Chair

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation. (11-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 11	DENIAL Votes:	ABSENT	Abstain	Recused
Amick Boles Coles Jarrett Kaigler Melder Notrica Plunk Stephens Wilson Woiwode		Ervin Ross 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: City Council

From: Planning Commission

Date: December 16, 2025

Subject: Comprehensive Plan - Future Land Use Map Amendment

Applicant/Agent: Bridget Lidy for the City of Savannah

Address: 2910 Dawes Avenue and 35 additional unique addresses

PIN: 20595 07005 and 35 additional unique PINs

Site Area: 9.99 acres

Alderman District: 5 – Dr. Estella Shabazz

Chatham County Commission District: 5 – Tanya Milton

File Number: 25-005810-ZA-FLUM

Request:

The Petitioner requests amendment of the Future Land Use Map in support of a mixed single-family housing development consisting of thirty-two dwelling units, a mixed-use community support building, and dedicated community garden/park space. The 36 parcels are currently indicated for a mixture of *Residential-Single Family, Industry-Light and Commercial-Neighborhood* use. The parcels are proposed to be designated for Planned Development. This Petition was filed concurrently with a request to amend the zoning map to Planned Development (25-005811-ZA-MAP).

Evaluation:

Within the City of Savannah, the Zoning Ordinance requires amendments to the zoning map to be consistent with the FLUM. In essence, amendment of the FLUM very technically signals appropriateness of only specifically identified zoning districts. *NewZO* requires a Future Land Use

designation of 'Planned Development' for property to be rezoned to the Planned Development zoning district.

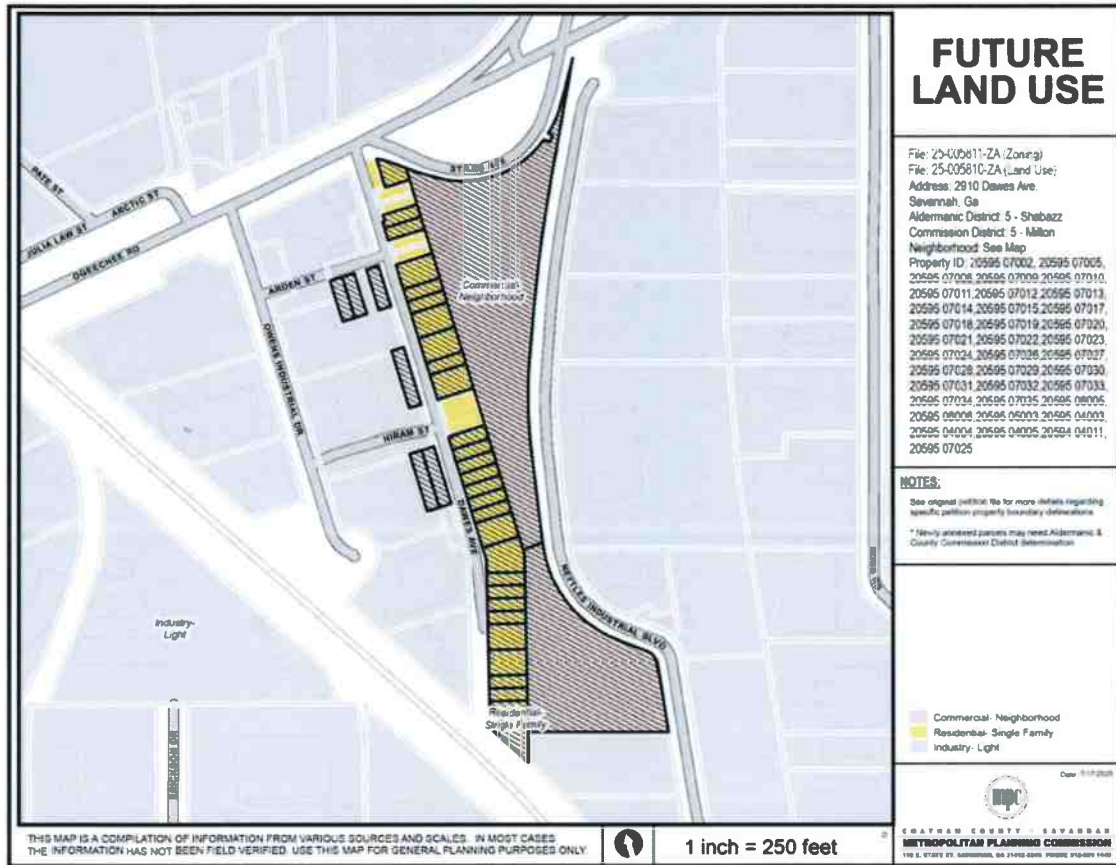
Consideration of the following points may serve to elucidate whether the proposed amendment meets the intent of published policy documents:

1. The relationship of the proposed amendment to the existing and future land uses depicted in the Future Land Use Map.

MPC Comment: The proposed amendment corrects a highly fragmented and discordant Future Land Use Map that currently designates the subject properties with conflicting categories: *Residential-Single Family, Industry-Light, and Commercial-Neighborhood*. This historical pattern creates an incoherent development framework where residential use would abut industrial operations without the benefit of maximal and coordinated buffering. By amending the entire 9.99-acre site to Planned Development, the City, as a common owner and developer, will establish a unified plan and approach that resolves these inconsistencies and creates a more thoughtful housing development. This modification offers the opportunity for adoption of a cohesive Master Plan that harmonizes the site's design, ensuring the FLUM reflects a singular, integrated vision.

Given the unique constraints of the site, transitioning to a Planned Development designation offers critical regulatory flexibility that standard base zoning districts cannot provide. Dawes Avenue's lack of infrastructure and narrow lot configurations require customized development standards to make the project viable. A PD designation allows the City and developer to negotiate specific site regulations, such as reduced lot widths (30 feet) and minimum lot areas (2,400 sf) for detached units, which are necessary to achieve the density required. This flexibility also permits the integration of unique site features, such as the proposed Mixed-use Community Support Building and enhanced drainage swales, ensuring that the development can overcome physical constraints while delivering essential community amenities.

Finally, the Planned Development designation structures a necessary transition zone that protects the historic integrity of the Ogeecheeton and Dawes Avenue neighborhoods. By legally mandating a specific site layout through the Master Plan, the PD orients residential cottages away from adjacent industrial uses like equipment sales and HVAC wholesale operations, creating a comfortable buffer that standard residential zoning cannot guarantee. This approach addresses long-standing environmental justice concerns regarding industrial encroachment on this historic community. The PD ensures that the new housing complements the existing single-family character while utilizing green space and community facilities to shield residents from the intense traffic along Ogeechee Road and Nettles Industrial Boulevard. This approach preserves and extends the neighborhood's proud heritage, ensuring its sustainability well into the future.



2. The relationship of the proposed amendment to any applicable goals, objectives, policies, criteria, and standards adopted in the Comprehensive Plan.

MPC Comment: *The proposed Dawes Avenue redevelopment project directly operationalizes several of the highest priority goals of Plan 2040 and the newly adopted Savannah GPS Strategic Plan regarding housing equity and neighborhood resiliency.*

By converting fragmented, vacant, and industrially-zoned parcels into a cohesive, master-planned community, the City is actively addressing the critical shortage of available housing for vulnerable populations while remediating historical infrastructure deficits.

The request advances the following specific goals and strategies identified in the City's primary policy documents:

- **Plan 2040 Housing Goal 2 (Supportive Housing):** *The project creates a stable residential environment for individuals exiting homelessness, directly fulfilling the goal to "increase supportive housing for special needs populations," including those who are homeless.*

- **Plan 2040 Housing Goal 3 (Affordable Housing Stock):** By leveraging City-owned land and public-private partnerships with the Land Bank Authority and CHSA to reduce costs, this project implements the goal to "increase affordable housing stock." It specifically targets households earning significantly below the Area Median Income (AMI), addressing a critical gap where demand far outpaces affordability.
- **Plan 2040 Housing Strategy H.3.4 (Infill & Housing Types):** The proposed Master Plan utilizes a cluster configuration of small-lot single-family homes. This aligns with the strategy to "allow infill development using unconventional housing styles" to maximize land utility.
- **Plan 2040 Land Use Goal 1 (Responsible Growth):** The PD designation facilitates "compact development, walkable neighborhoods, increased connectivity, and open space preservation" by introducing sidewalks and community greenspace to an area where neither currently exists.
- **Plan 2040 Natural Resources Goal 10 (Stormwater Management):** The Master Plan includes the installation of new drainage pipes, inlets, and enhanced swales in a neighborhood that historically lacked established drainage infrastructure. This directly supports the goal to "proactively manage stormwater runoff" and upgrade systems to manage heavier storm flows.
- **Savannah GPS Goal 2 (Equitable Community Development):** The project reflects the strategic objective to "work with local partners to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring by developing an effective crisis response system" and improving connections to permanent housing.



100-Year Storm Hydraulic Model (City of Savannah via SAGIS)

3. Other professional planning principles, standards, information and more detailed plans and studies considered relevant.

MPC Comment: From the perspective of land use compatibility standards, the proposed amendment is necessary to remediate and mitigate a precarious interface between residential and industrial uses. The subject property sits immediately adjacent to active light industrial operations, creating a conflict zone where noise, traffic, and intensity of use combine to diminish residential quality of life. Base zoning districts lack the nuance to accommodate the complex, site-specific allowances required to efficiently produce a cohesive development. By amending the FLUM to Planned Development, the City can successfully establish a transition zone that shields the Ogeecheeton neighborhood from the more intense uses that surround it.

Regarding infrastructure and resiliency standards, the amendment facilitates the correction of long-standing deficiencies characteristic of the site's history under County jurisdiction. Increased density must be supported by adequate infrastructure; currently, Dawes Avenue lacks the drainage and pedestrian facilities required for urban residential use. The proposed Master Plan tied to this PD designation operationalizes *Plan 2040* Natural Resource Goal 10 by integrating "green infrastructure" solutions—such as enhanced swales and pervious pavement—to manage stormwater runoff where no formal system currently exists. This approach ensures that the introduction of affordable housing supports and enhances the area's hydrological resilience, aligning with the *Savannah GPS* goal to invest in advanced infrastructure that mitigates the impacts of extreme weather.

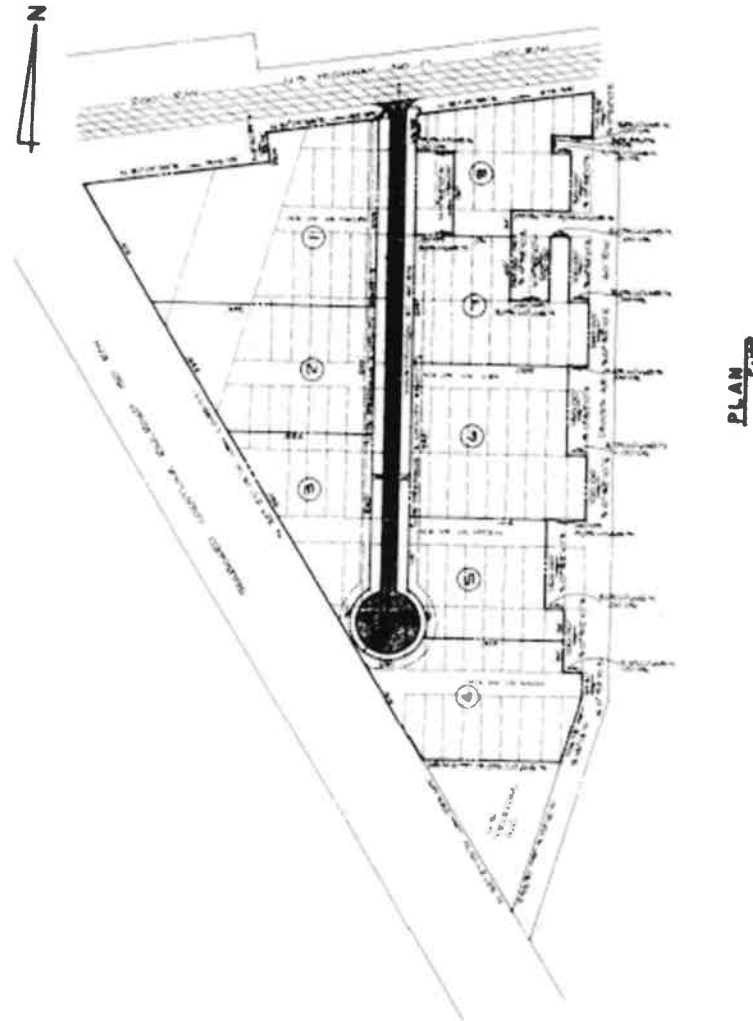
Most significantly, the request is supported by the principle of "*distributional justice*" as conceptualized by scholar David Scholsberg in his work in the areas of Environmental Justice and Environmental Politics. By offering redress where there has been a disproportionate share of environmental burden, distributional justice seeks to rectify the exposure of this vulnerable community to significant environmental hazards and nuisances.

By removing the "Industry-Light" designation from these parcels and replacing it with a residential PD, the City actively reverses a land use pattern that prioritized industrial expansion over neighborhood health. This amendment directly advances *Savannah GPS* Goal 2 by investing in equitable community development that protects housing availability while preventing displacement and environmental degradation.

4. Written comments, evidence, and testimony of the public.

MPC Comment: Public testimony from the Ogeecheeton neighborhood in recent years has highlighted significant concern regarding the encroachment of industrial uses, such as waste transfer stations and heavy equipment operations, into residential areas. Residents have in recent requests appealed to the Planning Commission in opposition Special Use Permits that would intensify industrial impacts near their homes. This amendment is responsive to those specific community grievances by removing the "Industry-Light"

designation from the subject parcels and establishing a residential/mixed-use buffer, thereby legally preventing future industrial encroachment on this corridor.



Mini's Industrial Park (west of Dawes Ave) - 1987

Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to amend the FLUM to reflect *Planned Development* in support of the proposed housing development.