



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: Zoning 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: 25-005811-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject properties from *RSF-5, I-L, and C-P* to *Planned Development*.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject properties from *RSF-5, I-L, and C-P* to *Planned 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: Zoning 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

Request: Rezone from RSF-5, I-L and C-P to Planned Development

File Number: 25-005811-ZA-MAP

Request

The Petitioner requests amendment of the zoning map from Residential Single-Family (RSF-5), Light Industrial (I-L), and Conservation-Park (C-P) to **Planned Development (PD)** to permit the construction of 32 single-family dwellings, a mixed-use community support building, and dedicated community garden/park space on approximately 9.99 acres.

A Master Plan has been submitted in support of the requested PD zoning. The purpose of this rezoning is to facilitate the development of affordable housing, specifically intended to support individuals exiting homelessness or those in transitional phases of housing instability. This petition was filed concurrently with a request to amend the Future Land Use Map (File No. 25-005810-ZA-FLUM).

Facts and Findings

Zoning History

Staff identified at least 4 previous rezoning requests related to the parcel, noting that the overall area was annexed into the City of Savannah in order to move forward with intended community improvements. Historically, the neighborhood was analyzed in the *Dawes Avenue Study (1997)*

and the *Dawes Avenue Real Estate Development Study* (2006). The current proposal is the first action to unify the fragmented land uses under a cohesive planning framework.

Site

The subject property encompasses approximately 9.99 acres and is indicated as impacted according to the City's 100-Year storm hydraulic model. The site includes areas designated as natural habitats. The proposal addresses historical drainage deficiencies as the neighborhood was not previously built to City drainage standards. The Master Plan includes significant infrastructural improvements, including the installation of new drainage pipes, inlets, and enhanced swales to improve stormwater runoff management. Proposed housing slabs will be elevated 18–24 inches above surrounding grade to address flood risk.

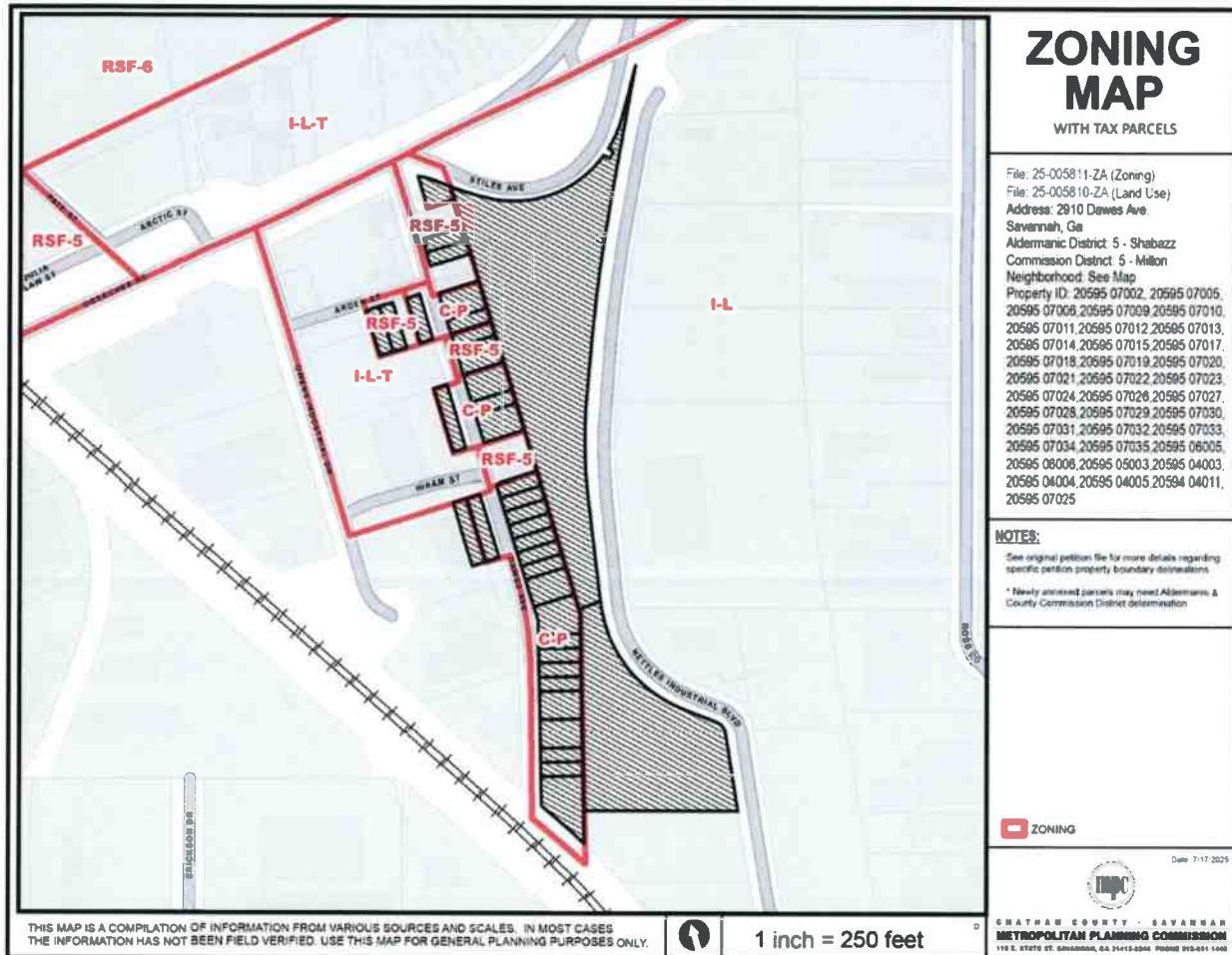


Wetlands (NWI) and 100-Year Storm Hydraulic Model (City of Savannah) via SAGIS

Existing Zoning and Development Pattern

The subject parcels are currently zoned *RSF-5*, *C-P*, and *I-L*. The surrounding area is characterized by heavy industrial operations that border the eastern and western edges of the Dawes Avenue corridor.

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Commercial uses (e.g., HVAC wholesale), Funeral Home	Light Industrial-Transition (I-L-T)
South	Heavy Equipment Sales/Service	Light Industrial
East	Industrial services along Nettles Industrial Blvd, Stormwater Detention Pond	Light Industrial
West	Industrial uses (e.g., parts/machinery purchasing) along Owens Industrial Dr	Light industrial – Transition (I-L-T)



Current Zoning Map

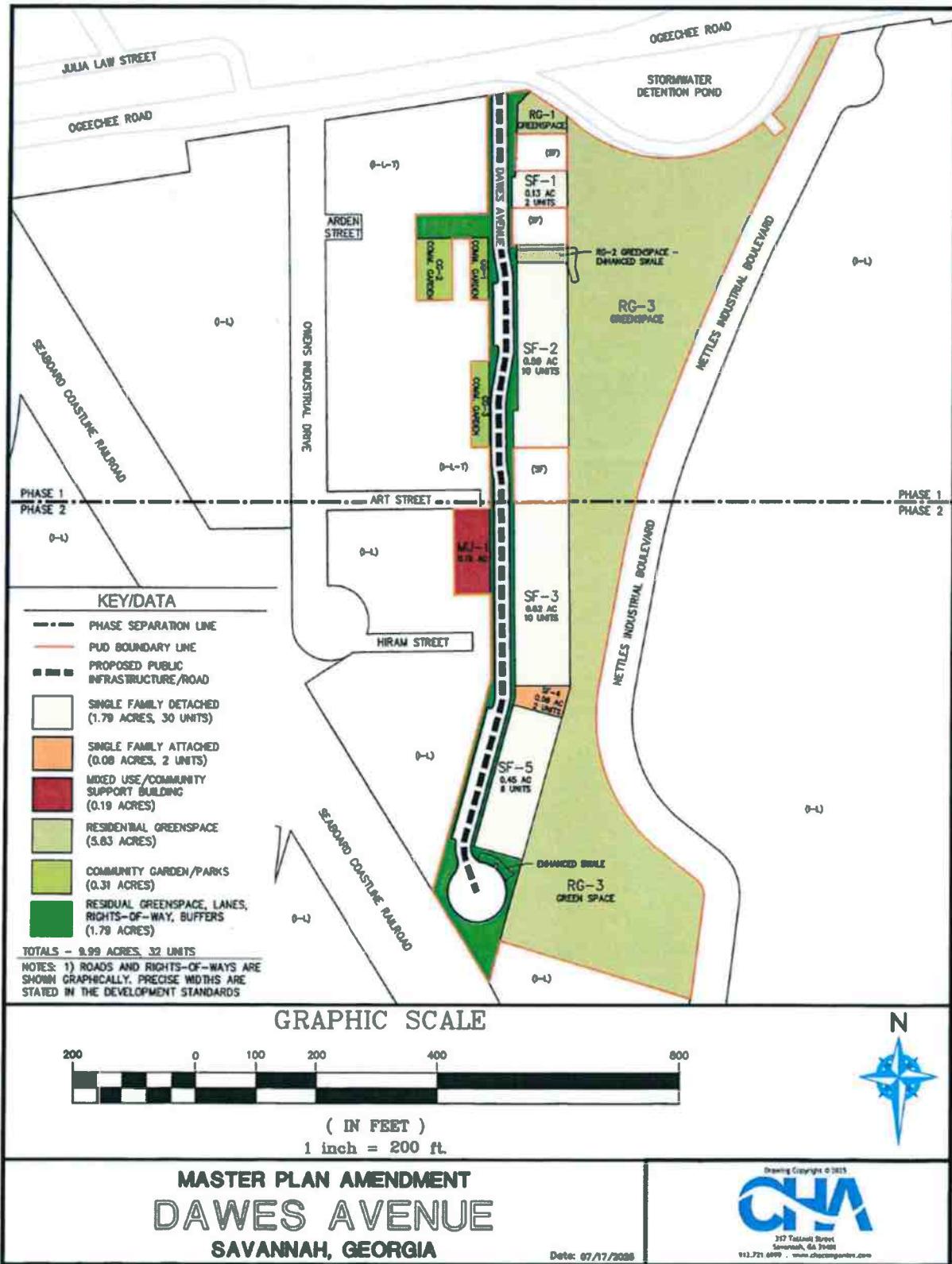
Public Notice

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 required newspaper advertisements were run at least 15 days prior to the meeting. The mailed notice included instructions on how to access the public meeting via the internet.

Neighborhood Meetings

The Petitioner organized a number of meetings with residents in preparation for the requested rezoning: they occurred on 12/7/24, 1/24/25, 2/23/25, and 11/9/25 in various locations (Dawes Ave. and Adams Complex).

The proposal was developed in response to and with consideration of long-standing community feedback regarding housing needs and land use incompatibility in the Ogeecheeton area, specifically concerning industrial encroachment.



Impact and Suitability

Public Services and Facilities

The site is served by City water, sewer and stormwater systems. Modifications requiring the issuance of a site development permit will go through the Site Plan Review process, which includes approval of all applicable Engineering departments.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Element

The rezoning request was filed concurrently with a request to amend the Future Land Use Map. The requested modification, to designate the area as Planned Development, effectively resolves the fragmented and discordant Future Land Use Map (FLUM), which currently depicts the site with a mix of Residential-Single Family, Industry-Light, and Commercial-Neighborhood categories. This correction unifies the parcels under a single designation, reflecting the proposed master-planned housing development.

The various current FLUM designations are:

- **Residential Single-Family:** Areas identified for single-family detached residential dwellings at a density not to exceed eight (8) units per gross acre.
- **Industry-Light:** Areas supporting warehouses, wholesale facilities, and the manufacturing, assembly, or production of parts and products, which may require intensive truck traffic and outdoor storage but do not produce noise, odor, dust, or contaminants above ambient levels.
- **Conservation:** Land that is publicly or privately held and designated for preservation in a natural state or for use for passive recreation (e.g., fishing, hiking, camping). This category also includes all back barrier islands consisting of less than two acres of contiguous uplands.

Existing Zoning District

The existing zoning districts (RSF-5, C-P, I-L) present significant conflicts and limitations for the desired redevelopment:

- Intent of the RSF-5 Zoning District: The Residential Single-Family districts are established primarily to preserve and create areas of single-family detached development, allowing only limited nonresidential uses compatible with residential areas. This base zoning district requires residential lots not less than 5,000 square feet in area and not less than 50 feet wide.

Intent of the I-L Zoning District: The IL district is established to provide for a wide range of research and development, light manufacturing and assembly, warehousing, and wholesaling activities as well as some support services. These uses are subject to standards intended to ensure such development is compatible with adjacent and nearby non-industrial areas. Development must be operated in a clean and quiet manner, with most activities occurring indoors, and should not be a nuisance to nearby non-industrial uses.

Intent of the C-P Zoning 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. Permitted uses are limited to parks and recreation, cemeteries and other uses that promote open space and preservation of resources.

- **Allowed Uses:** The uses allowed in the RSF-5, I-L, and C-P zoning districts appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.
- **Development Standards:** The development standards of the RSF-5, I-L, and C-P zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.

Proposed Zoning District

- **Intent of the Planned Development (PD) Zoning District:** A Planned Development (PD) district allows projects that would not otherwise be permitted under the Ordinance because of the strict application of zoning district development standards or general site standards. It is intended for sites where the Mayor and Aldermen desire to achieve a certain mix of uses and secure land use compatibility with surrounding areas. The flexibility offered by the PD is expected to deliver innovative and exceptional quality community designs that preserve resources, incorporate creative design (including circulation and open space), and assure compatibility with surrounding character.
- **Allowed Uses:** The uses allowed in the proposed PD zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.
- **Development Standards:** The development standards of the proposed PD zoning district appear in a chart 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 proposed PD zoning is highly suitable as it facilitates the development of affordable housing and supportive housing for individuals exiting homelessness, addressing a critical community shortage. The PD structure allows the necessary flexibility in density, lot configuration, particularly by reducing lot sizes down to 2,400 sf, and design standards that are essential for the viability of this infill affordable housing project, which would be fundamentally restricted under the current RSF-5 zoning limitations.*

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

MPC Comment: *The rezoning directly addresses specific goals within the Comprehensive Plan, including Housing Goal 2 (increase supportive housing for special needs populations) and Housing Goal 3 (increase affordable housing stock), while contributing to Plan 2040 Natural Resources Goal 10 (stormwater management) through essential infrastructure upgrades. This proactively meets the Savannah GPS Goal 2 objective to address homelessness and invest in equitable community development.*

Compatibility:

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

MPC Comment: *The zoning proposal explicitly mitigates the adverse effects of the adjacent industrial corridors (I-L and I-L-T zoning) on the residential area. The PD Master Plan establishes a mandated transition zone and buffer, ensuring that the new residential units are correctly sited and screened to protect residents from industrial nuisances (noise, traffic, and visibility).*

- 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 PD zoning enhances compatibility by providing a cohesive residential and mixed-use plan that replaces the inconsistent mixture of RSF-5, C-P, and I-L designations on the site. This designation ensures the development maintains the historic single-family character of the surrounding Ogeecheeton neighborhood while creating a necessary, well-buffered edge against the industrial operations, promoting long-term neighborhood stability.*

- 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 amendment addresses critical environmental justice concerns raised by the community regarding industrial encroachment. By removing the conflicting Industry-Light designation and replacing it with a PD focused on residential and community amenities, the proposal promotes the principle of "distributional justice," rectifying the historical allocation of environmental burdens on this vulnerable community, aligning with Savannah GPS Goal 2*

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 requested PD zoning is in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan and Savannah GPS. The development aligns with the preferred "Strong Corridors" growth strategy emphasizing infill, multi-modal connectivity (sidewalks), and density. Further, the dedicated*

effort to improve stormwater management through green infrastructure (enhanced swales and pervious pavement) supports the Natural Resources element of the plan.

Reasonable Use

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

MPC Comment: *The property does not have a reasonable use as currently zoned due to the mixture of conflicting zoning classifications (RSF-5, C-P, I-L) which fail to address the current development vision or adequately safeguard residential uses from industrial encroachment. The rezoning to PD is essential to achieve a viable, supportive housing development that serves an urgent, established community need.*

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 City services will be available to serve the proposed use. The project enhances inadequate existing infrastructure by installing new drainage pipes, inlets, and enhanced swales, proactively addressing historical drainage deficits, and providing new pedestrian sidewalks where none existed. The proposal will require site development permits, which will ensure utility adequacy via the standard development review process.*

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 approval of the request to rezone the subject properties from RSF-5, I-L, and C-P to Planned Development.