



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

MEMORANDUM-

DATE:

November 19, 2024

TO:

THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH

FROM:

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT:

Zoning Map Amendment

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petitioner: Jeff Jepson

Agent: Michael Garcia

Address: 1001 and 1015 Whitaker Street, and 120 and 124 West Park Street

Alderman: District - 2- Detric Leggett

County Commission: District – 2- Malinda Scott Hodge

Property Identification Number: 20044-25001, 25002, 24003, 24002

Petition File No.: 24-005815-ZA

MPC ACTION:

In the absence of a zoning district that adequately captures the characteristics and nuance of the increasingly commercial-dominant mixed-use nature of development along higher volume corridors in the Victorian District, the Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone to Traditional Commercial-2 (TC-2) with the following condition:

1) Permissible uses shall consist only of those permitted in the TN-1 zoning district and only in accordance with all applicable supplemental use standards.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

In the absence of a zoning district that adequately captures the characteristics and nuance of the increasingly commercial-dominant mixed-use nature of development along higher volume corridors in the Victorian District, MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the request to rezone to Traditional Commercial-2 (TC-2) with the following condition:

1) Permissible uses shall consist only of those permitted in the TN-1 zoning district and only in accordance with all applicable supplemental use standards.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Kaigler
Dwayne Stephens
Coren Ross
Tom Woiwode
Laureen Boles
Amanda Wilson
Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman
Joseph Ervin

<u>PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE</u>: Approve Staff Recommendation. (7-0)

8

APPROVAL	DENIAL	ABSENT	Abstain	Recused	Online
Votes: 7	Votes:				
Jarrett		Welch			Stephens
Boles		Notrica			
Woiwode		Amick			
Ervin		Coles			
Wilson		Ross			
Kaigler	,	Plunk			
Melder					

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: November 19, 2024

Subject: Zoning Map Amendment

Applicant/Agent: Jeff Jepson, Evans General Contractors

Michael Garcia, LS3P Associates, Ltd.

Address: 1001 and 1015 Whitaker Street, and 120, 124 West Park Street

PIN: 20044-25001, 20044-25002, 20044-240031 and 20044-24002

Alderman District: 2 – Alderman Detric Leggett

Chatham County Commission District: 2 - Malinda Scott Hodge

Request: Rezone from TN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood-1) to TC-2

(Traditional Commercial-2)

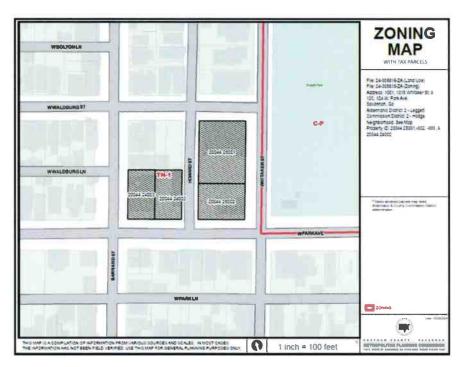
File Number: 24-005815-ZA

Request

The Petitioner requests amendment of the Zoning Map from *Traditional Neighborhood-1 (TN-1)* to *Traditional Commercial-2 (TC-2)* in association with a proposed office building and retail use with accessory underground parking facility. The request is contingent upon approval of a concurrent request to amend the FLUM for 'Traditional Commercial' use (24-005816-ZA-FLUM). **Only the rezoning of the subject parcels is under consideration at present.** Variances to development standards of the requested zoning district cannot be considered until a decision is made for the rezoning by City Council.

The amendment is requested to enable utilization of four existing parcels to construct 3 office buildings with an underground parking facility that is intended to serve both the proposed structures and the general public for off-street parking needs in the vicinity of Historic Forsyth Park.

On <u>March 28, 2024</u> Savannah's City Council endorsed a development agreement with *Forsyth Park Commons, LLC* for an underground public parking garage. Per the agreement, the partnership would result in the construction of a 2-story underground parking garage with 450 spaces to support the estimated 115,000 square foot office use. One hundred of the spaces are to be made available to the public during business hours and all spaces made available to the public after business hours and on the weekend.



Current Zoning Map



Subject Parcels

Facts and Findings

Site

The four subject parcels consist of approximately 0.966 acres (42,114 square feet) in total across two blocks. The development will effectuate the recombination of two parcels fronting Whitaker Street, which will result in *parcel 1* having 236 feet of frontage with 113 feet in depth (26,668 square feet). The remaining two parcels fronting West Park Avenue will be recombined (*parcel 2*) resulting in a parcel 118 feet wide by 130.9 feet deep (15,446 square feet).

Existing Zoning and Development Pattern

The subject parcel is currently zoned TN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood-1). This zoning district permits the development of the full spectrum of residential uses up to office and neighborhood-scale commercial uses.

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Dwellings	TN-1
South	Dwellings, Commercial (Office, Fitness Studio)	TN-1
East	Parks and Recreation (Forsyth Park)	C-P
West	Dwellings	TN-1

Each of the subject parcels presently contains principal use nonresidential structures: two mid-century office buildings and a mortuary formed from the merging of two historic residences. According to the District Resource Map, none of the structures in question were designated as 'contributing' to the character of the District. Demolition of all three structures is proposed contingent upon approval of a COA for the proposed office building. The structures to be demolished are not characteristic of the District's period of significance, neither are they conforming with regard to the current development standards of the District, which were adopted well after their construction.

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 has presented the concept both at a general meeting of the Victorian Neighborhood Association (VNA) and with its leadership at critical intervals in the project's development. Several meetings were held with leadership of the Historic Savannah Foundation, the Downtown Neighborhood Association, and other concerned residents and neighborhood groups.

Impact and Suitability

Public Servies and Facilities

The proposed developments would be served by City water, sewer and stormwater systems. Preliminary discussions have taken place with all plan reviewing departments to discuss potential on and off-site infrastructure improvements. The Plan must ultimately receive site plan approval of all departments following any zoning-related approvals by City Council and the MPC.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Element

The rezoning request was filed concurrently with a request to amend the Future Land Use Map to reflect Traditional Commercial use on the subject parcel. At the time of the request, the parcel was designated for Traditional Neighborhood Character. As the name suggests, this Character Area would permit rezoning only to a Traditional Neighborhood (TN) zoning district. Traditional Commercial is described as 'Business areas in close proximity to Downtown Savannah or in outlying historically settled areas. This category includes commercial uses that should be compatible with the character and scale of adjacent neighborhoods, most often found along collectors and arterials. Characteristics include walkability, limited or on street parking, and multitenant retail.' Staff supports the FLUM amendment as the parcel is on a major thoroughfare, and in proximity of other parcels already functioning in a principally commercial capacity.

The proposal would not introduce new or inconsistent principal uses but would introduce structures larger in scale and increased in intensity. The requested amendment is arguably more akin to a correction of the future land use map to reflect uses already in place for several decades than introduction of something wholly new. The requested FLUM designation more closely represents the Plan 2040 Character Area designation of existing and proposed uses of the arterial-fronting site.

Existing Zoning District

- Intent of the TN Zoning District: The Traditional Neighborhood ("TN-") districts are established to allow residential-oriented mixed-use development in areas that were established in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Residential uses are the foundation of the TN- districts, but each TN- district also allows a mix of non-residential uses. It is this mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses that distinguishes TN- districts from Residential Single Family (RSF) and Traditional Residential (TR) districts. The TN- districts are listed below.
- Allowed Uses: The uses allowed in the zoning district appear in the attached chart.
- <u>Development Standards</u>: The development standards of the TN-1 zoning district appear in the attached chart.

5.12.5 Development Standards for Permitted Uses

Development in any TN- district shall meet the development standards as set forth below.

5.12.5 Develo	pment Standards for Perr	nitted Uses	
Standards	TN-1	TN-2	TN-3
Lot Dimensions (min)			
Single-family Detached	AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSON	THE RESERVE	THE RESERVE AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TWO IS NOT THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TWO IS NAMED I
Lot area (sq ft)	2,100	3,000	0.0
Lot width (ft)	30	30	
Single-family Attached			
Lot area per unit (sq ft)	1,375	1,750	40
Lot width per unit (ft)	25	20	***
Two-family (side-by-side)			
Lot area per unit (sq ft)	1,375	1,750	**
Lot width per unit (ft)	25	20	***
Two-family (over-under)	- S. P. P. L. S. E. I.		TO THE OWNER OF THE OWNER OWNER OF THE OWNER OWN
Lot area per unit (sq.ft)	1,050	1,750	44
Lot width (ft)	30	30	**
Three-Four Family and Apartments		1,000	DOM: NOT THE
Lot area per unit (sq.ft)	1,050	1,750	00
Lot width (ft)	30	30	
Townhomes	STATUTE OF THE REAL PROPERTY.		
Lot area per unit (sq.ft)	1,050	1,750	**
Lot width per unit (ft)	18	18	
Upper Story Residential			W-1
Lot area per unit (sq ft)	No min	No min.	No min
Lot width per unit (ft)	No min	No min.	No mín.
Vonresidential	The same of the sa	THE STREET	No time
Lot area (sq ft)	41	4.	4.5
Lot width (ft)	20	20	20
Building	20		20
Building Coverage (max)	60%	60%	60%
Building Frontage (min)	70%	70%	70%
Nonresidential building footprint (max so ft)	2,500		2,500
Building Setbacks (ft)	2,500	2,500 [1]	2,300
For blocks without contributing structures*			
Front yard (Interior lot)	O (min le 10 (may)	E (min): 10 (mail	O (min): C (may)
Front yard (corner lot)	0 (min); 10 (max) 0 (min); 10 (max)	5 (min); 10 (max) 5 (max)	0 (min); 5 (max)
The state of the s	3 (min)		0 (min); 5 (max)
Side yard (interior) Side yard (corner)		3 (min)	3 (min)
Rear yard [2]	5 (max)	5 (max)	5 (max)
	30 (min)	20 (min)	20 (min)
or blocks with contributing structures*	10000	A Chief Con	
Front yard	Avg of block face	Avg of block face	Avg of block face
Side yard (interior)	3 (min)	3 (min)	3 (min)
Side yard (corner)	Avg of block face	Avg of block face	Avg of block face
Rear yard [2]	30 (min)	20 (min)	20 (min)
Building separation	See Fire Code	See Fire Code	See Fire Code
leight (max)	Avg of block face, not to exceed 40 ft. 40 ft if no contributing buildings on block	3 stories, not to exceed 45 ft [1]	2 stories, not to exceed 30 ft
Accessory Structure Setbacks	See Sec. 8.7	See Sec. 8.7	See Sec. 8.7

Proposed Zoning District

- Intent of the TC-2 Zoning District: The Traditional Commercial (TC) districts support mixed-use, commercially oriented development in areas dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries, emphasizing a "Main Street" character with pedestrian-friendly design and historic continuity. These districts, often adjacent to Traditional Neighborhood (TN) and Traditional Residential (TR) zones, foster sustainable neighborhoods with convenient local commercial access. The TC districts vary in intensity, with TC-1 being the least intense and TC-2 the most, aimed at supporting vibrant, historically patterned commercial corridors in historic neighborhoods, especially those from Savannah's streetcar and early automobile periods.
- Allowed Uses: The uses allowed in the TC-2 zoning district appear in the attached chart.
- <u>Development Standards</u>: The development standards of the TC-2 zoning district appear in the attached chart.

5.13.5 Development Standards for Permitted Uses

Development in any TC- district shall meet the development standards as set forth below.

Standards	it Standards for Permitted Uses TC-1	TC-2
Dimensions (min)	101	10-7
ngle-family Detached Lot area (so ft)	3,000	3,000
Lot width (ft)	3,000	
	30	30
ingle-family attached & Two-family (side-by-side)	110	4.000
Lot area per unit (sq ft)	1.450	1,200
Lot width per unit (ft)	18	18
wo-family (over-under)		
Lot area per unit (sq ft)	1,500	1,500
Lot width (ft)	30	30
hree- & Four-Family		
Lot area per unit (sq. ft)	1,450	1,200
Lot width (ft)	30	30
ownhomes		
Lot area per unit (sq ft)	1,450	1,200
Lot width per unit (ft)	18	18
Ipper Story Residential		
Lot area per unit (sq ft)	No min.	No min
Lot width per unit (ft)	No min.	No min
partments		
Lot area per unit (sq ft)	435	435
Lot width (ft)	30	30
lonresidential		
Lot area (sq ft)		**
Lot width (ft)	20	20
uilding		
Building Coverage (max)		
Building Frontage (min)	70%	70%
uilding Footprint (max sq ft) [1]	5,500	10,000
wilding Setbacks (ft)		
or blocks without contributing structures*	The second second second	
Front yard	5 (max)	5 (max)
Side yard (interior) [2]	10 (min)	10 (min)
Side yard (corner)	5 (max)	5 (max)
Rear yard	10 (min)	10 (min)
or blocks with contributing structures*		
Front yard	Avg of block face	Avg of block face
Side yard (interior) [2]	10 (min)	10 (min)
Side yard (corner)	Avg of block face	Avg of block face
Rear yard	10 (min)	10 (min)
suilding separation	See Fire Code	See Fire Code
ieight (max) [1]	3 stories up to 45 ft	3 stories up to 45 ft
kcessory Structure Setback	See Sec 847	See Set Set 1

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 anticipated use intensity at this location is more consistent with the requested zoning district than the present. The "traditional" character areas (and associated zoning districts) are closely related by design and cumulative in nature, with each higher classification representing a slight increase in density and/or use intensity. Regardless of the use the intent of the District is that development be compact and walkable in its form, contributing to the relatively dense, historic urban context in which it is situated.

As the intended use of the site is known, restriction of uses permissible in the requested district deemed inappropriate as well as restrictions on issuance of permits for redevelopment may be reasonable considerations in conditioning approval of the requested rezoning.

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

MPC Comment: While dated, the Parking Matters study conducted in 2016 offers valuable recommendations related to the strategic development of public parking assets in key redevelopment areas. The Victorian and Mid-City districts contain several parcels that are 1) already approved for new development, 2) presently developed as noncontributing structures, or 3) vacant, which will introduce significant new developments requiring off-street parking for which provision has not yet been made. The location of the proposed asset within this general area could be seen as consistent with the findings of this study.

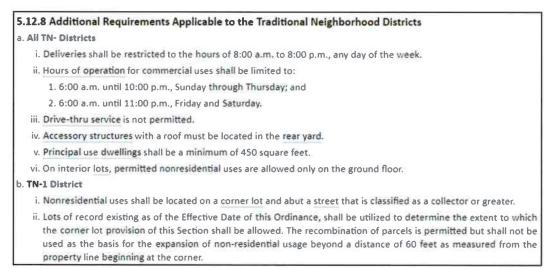
Serious consideration should be given to implementation of other associated Study recommendations such as the adjustment of parking pricing policies and strategic expansion of mobility options. Extension of fixed-route circulator services, in particular, along with thoughtful planning for accessibility of key neighborhood activity centers could encourage parking garage use among visitors, stabilizing circulation through the City's growing urbanized neighborhoods.



Excerpts from 2016 Parking Matters study

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

MPC Comment: The request is not likely to adversely affect existing use or usability of adjacent properties. Given that the site is arterial fronting on a corner, use intensification at this particular location is consistent with the intent of the <u>existing</u> and <u>proposed</u> zoning districts and the intent of the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.



'TN' Standards currently favor use intensification on corner lots

• 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 proposed uses are permitted within the present zoning district and office use has been the principal use of the majority of the site for several decades.

The "traditional" character areas (and associated zoning districts) are closely related by design and cumulative in nature, with each higher classification representing a slight increase in density and/or use intensity. The TC district is often placed adjacent to Traditional Neighborhood (TN) and Traditional Residential (TR) zones to foster sustainable neighborhoods with convenient local commercial access. The present request is made to permit intensification of use consistent with the parcels' location on a corner and adjacent to a high-volume thoroughfare.

 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 request represents a response to the changing and growing nature of the local real estate market. Protective measures are in place to ensure preservation of historic structures; the traditional districts with the Zoning Ordinance permit growth in a form that enhances and extends the existing development pattern, allowing it to be responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

The proposal also represents the opportunity to secure a parking asset the City has identified as a priority in advance of significant development/redevelopment. Adequacy of underground parking can ensure the continued integrity of the historic development pattern even as the District develops and redevelops.

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 zoning designation more closely represents the *Plan 2040* Character Area designation of existing and proposed uses of the site.

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 and developed; though, it should be noted some aspects of the existing structures and configuration are legal nonconforming. The site could reasonably be redeveloped under the development standards of the TN-1 district.

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 Developer is aware that satisfaction of all current development standards and approval of all reviewing departments will be required for issuance of site development permits.

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

In the absence of a zoning district that adequately captures the characteristics and nuance of the increasingly commercial-dominant mixed-use nature of development along higher volume corridors in the Victorian District, the Planning Commission recommends approval of the request to rezone to Traditional Commercial-2 (TC-2) with the following condition:

1) Permissible uses shall consist only of those permitted in the TN-1 zoning district and only in accordance with all applicable supplemental use standards.

Note: The above represents MPC Staff's recommendation of approval only for the requested rezoning. Variances to development standards shall only be considered upon a final determination of the requested rezoning by City Council.

5.12.5 Development Standards for Permitted Uses
Evelopment in any TN- district shall meet the development standards as set forth below.

Standards	181	1N.2	1N 3
Lot Demensions (min)			
Single family Detached			
sot area (soft)	2,100	3,000	
Soft width (It)	30	30	-
Single family Attached		N. T. C.	
sosarea persunit (se fil)	1335	1,750	*
Lot width per unit (R)	25	20	
(wo family (side by side)			
Lot sives per uma (sp. M)	1,375	1,750	
Lot midth per unit (ft)	12	22	£
wo family (over-under)			
Lottares per unit (sq.fg.	1,050	1,750	
Lot's ath (#)	30	30	-
e-Tour Tamily and Apartments			
Lot area ber unit (sp.ft)	1,050	1,750	
Lot whoth the	30	30	9
obomes	The second second	-	
Lot area per unit (soft)	1,050	1,750	
Lot undth per unit (R)	18	11	×
Upper Story Residential			THE REAL PROPERTY.
Lot area per unit (sq. ft)	Nomió.	Nomin	Nomin
Cot width per unit (#)	No min.	No min.	No mon.
Monrosidential			
Lot avea (12) ft)	*	51	1
Lest unidets (M)	25	30	22
Building			
Section Coverage (max)	6010	1409	109
Suiding Frontage (mini)	20%	20%	3000
Nonresidential building footsint (max sq ft)	2,500	2,500[1]	2.500
Building Setbacks (R)			
Acces without contributing structures.			
Front Yard (Interior lot)	Q (MINITED (MINIT	S (mint) 10 (max)	0 (ming: 5 (max)
Frant yard (opmer lot)	0 [min], 10 [max]	Simaci	Openic Simsel
Side yand (Intercard)	5 [min]	3 (min)	(4) (4) (4)
Side yard (corner)	\$ (19.94)	. S (910m)	5 (0.00)
Sear yard [2]	(O) (MINO)	20 (min)	20 (mm)
or blocks with confelluting structures?			
Fototyand	Aug of block face	Aug of triock face	Aug of block face
Side yard (interior)	\$ (mm)	1(000)	\$ (min)
Side yard (comer)	Aug of Sinch Sets	Avg of black face	Ang of block face
Real yand (2)	(0.0mm)	20 (min)	20 (min)
Building separation	See Five Oode	See fire Code	See Pire Code
Height (max)	Avg of block face, not to exceed 40 ft. 40 ft if no contributing	3 stories, not to exceed 45 ft [1]	2 stories, not to emerced 30 ft.

5.13.5 Development Standards for Permitted Uses

Development in any TC. district shall meet the development standards as set forth below.

~ 2			
	Standards	10.1	10.2
	Lot Dimensions (min)		
	Single-family Detached		
	Lot area (10 ft)	3,000	1,000
	Lot width (ft)	30	30
1	Single family attached & Two family (side-by side)		
-	Lot area per unit (sq ft)	1,455	1,200
	Suctionatily ples unit (6)	18	35
	Two-family (over-under)		
E	Lot area per unit (sq.ft)	1,500	1,500
	Lot width (#)	30	90
2	Three- & Four-family		
£	Lot area per unit (sig ft)	1,450	1,200
	Lot width (%)	30	30
	Iownhomes		
,	Lot area per unit so ft?	1,450	1,200
	Lot in deh per unit (t)	18	18
	Upper Story Residential		
	Lot area per unit (sp.ft)	- 150 revin	No min
Memory	Lot width per unit (ft)	No strine	No min.
No mile	Apartments		
	LOS area per unit top file	435	435
1	Lat wath (ft)	30	30
92	Monresidential		
	100 8198 (50 ft)	7	
60%	Sot width (ft)	20	20
30%	Building		
2.500	Eucling Coverage (max)		
	Building Frontage (min)	70%	70%
	Building Footprint (Hrax sq ft) [1]	\$.300	10,000
O (min): 5 (max)	Building Serbecks (ft)		
Commit 5 (max)	For blocks without contributing structures*		
S. Tomber I.	Frontward	Strac	\$ (max)
Street Street	Side yard (interior) [2]	10 (wis)	10 (min)
	Side yard (comer)	\$ (max)	5 (miss)
Ave of block face	Rear yard	\$0.0mm)	10 (mor)
Steins	For Mochs with contributing structures*		
Avg of triock face	Frührt yand	Avg of those face	Aug of block face
20 (min)	Side vard linterant [3]	10 (min)	10 (min)
See Fire Code	Side-yard (corner)	Avg of place face	Avg of block face
1000	Rearyand	10 (mim)	10 (min)
2 stories,	Building separation	See Five Code	See Fire Code
not to careed 30 K	Height (max) [1]	3 stories up to 45 ft	3 stories up to 45 ft
	Accessory Structure Selback	2%	111 100 25