



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 & Text Amendment

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petitioner: Pamela Miller for Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood.

Property Owner: N/A

Address: N/A

Alderman: District – N/A

County Commission: District – N/A

Property Identification Number: N/A

Petition File No.: 24-004607-ZA-TEXT and 24-004608-ZA-MAP

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood Overlay Conservation District as requested below;

1. 24-004607-TEXT - Text Amendment | Zoning Ordinance- Article 7.15 | Conservation Overlay- Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood
2. 24-004608-ZA-MAP - MAP Amendment |Kensington Park/Groveland Conservation Overlay District (Zoning Map Overlay Adoption)

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood Overlay Conservation District as requested below;

1. 24-004607-TEXT - Text Amendment | Zoning Ordinance- Article 7.15 | Conservation Overlay- Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood

2. 24-004608-ZA-MAP - MAP Amendment [Kensington Park/Groveland
Conservation Overlay District (Zoning Map Overlay Adoption)

MEMBERS PRESENT: 10

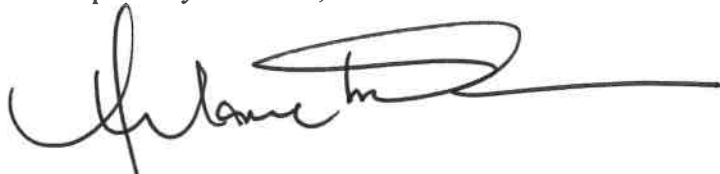
Traci Amick
Dwayne Stephens
Coren Ross
Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman
Laureen Boles
Amanda Wilson
Jay Melder
Travis Coles – Vice Chair
Jeff Notrica
Tom Woiwode

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



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

TO: City Council

FROM: The Planning Commission

DATE: September 24, 2024

SUBJECT: Map Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance Article 7.15 and Zoning Map: Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District

APPLICANT: Pamela Miller for Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood

MPC FILE NO: 24-004607-TEXT and 24-004608-ZA-MAP

REQUEST:

Pamela Miller, on behalf of the Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood Association, has filed a petition to designate the area roughly bounded DeRenne and Waters avenues and Abercorn and Johnston streets as marked on the map below (Figure 1) as the “Kensington Park/Groveland Conservation Overlay District (CD-5)” by amending Article 7.15 of the Zoning Ordinance.



Figure 1: Proposed Kensington Park/Groveland Conservation Overlay District (CD-5)

BACKGROUND:

The purpose and intent of the Conservation Overlay District (CD) is to preserve the character of Savannah’s older and historic neighborhoods which lack the protection of a local historic district overlay. The CD establishes a public process and standards to evaluate demolition of contributing buildings to ensure historic buildings are preserved and the character of the district is maintained.

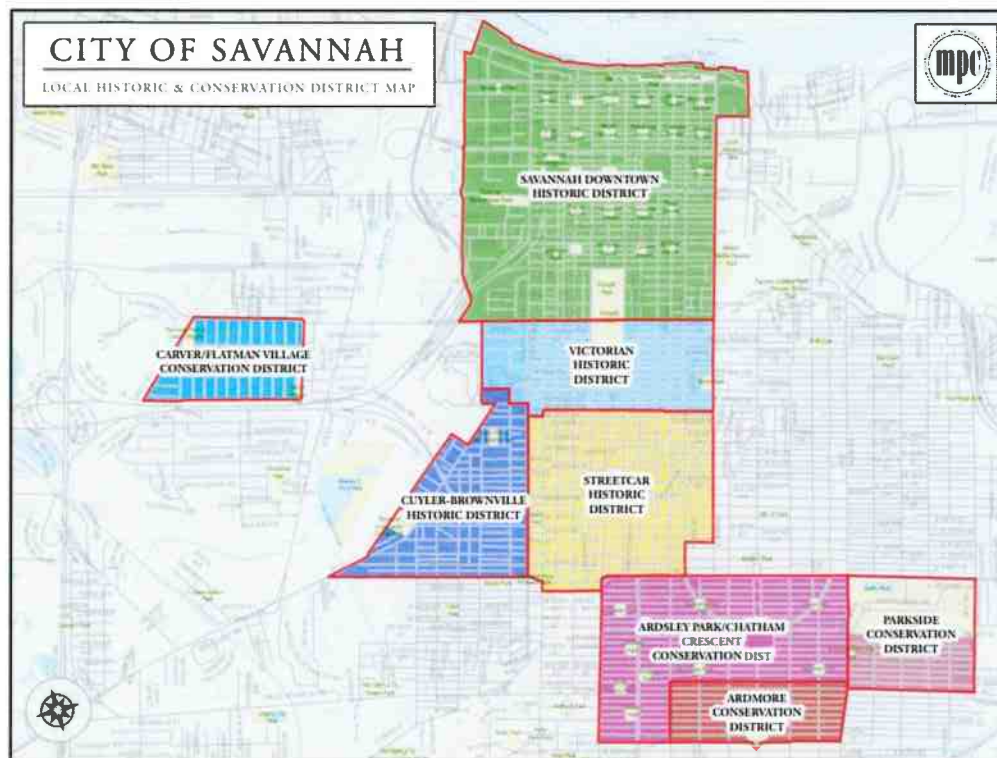


Figure 2: Local Historic and Overlay District Map

Currently the Savannah Zoning Ordinance has identified four Conservation District Overlays (Section 7.15.3) as shown in the map above (Figure 2). They are labeled CD followed by a number as follows:

- i. CD-1 District
This boundary includes portions of the Ardsley Park-Chatham Crescent neighborhood, and the boundaries are shown on Figure 7.15-1.
- ii. CD-2 District
This district includes portions of the Ardmore and Chatham Terrace neighborhoods, and the boundaries are shown on Figure 7.15-2.
- iii. CD-3 District
This district includes Daffin Park and portions of the Parkside neighborhood and the boundaries are shown on Figure 7.15-3.
- iv. CD-4 District
This district includes the Historic Carver Village neighborhood, and the Flatman Village neighborhood and boundaries are shown on Figure 7.15-4.

The proposed CD, if approved will be added to the Zoning Ordinance as Sec 7.15.3.a.v as CD-5 District.

Kensington Park/Groveland Historic District

Kensington Park/Groveland neighborhood is a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places since 2014. The national historic boundary for this neighborhood is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Kensington Park/Groveland neighborhood is a historic district from the National Register of Historic Places

Kensington Park-Groveland is a post-World War II residential area situated along DeRenne Avenue, just south of downtown Savannah. Kensington Park was established in 1950, followed by the planning of the neighboring Groveland community in the same year. The layout of both neighborhoods is interconnected, featuring broad, winding streets, many shaded by live oak trees. Althea Parkway has sections with a landscaped median, and Reynolds Circle is home to a small park. Recreational spaces are also present, with Kensington Park boasting a pool and bathhouse, built in 1960.

The combined neighborhood, developed between 1950 and 1968, primarily consists of Ranch-style homes in various designs, including Colonial Revival and Contemporary styles, the latter reflecting influences from West Coast Eichler homes. The Ranch houses, common across both developments, range from long, linear designs and L-shaped structures to more compact, courtyard, and bungalow-like homes. Most homes are wood-framed with brick veneer, some using Savannah Grey brick. Common features include low-pitched hip or gable roofs, garages or carports, and large picture windows.

The neighborhood also features some American Small Houses from its early development phase, as well as later Split-Level homes. These houses are set back uniformly from the streets, with front lawns and diverse ornamental landscaping. The area has retained much of its original character and integrity over time.



Figure 4: Streetscape of the Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Public Notice: As required by the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance, all property owners within 300 feet of the subject properties were sent notices of the proposed Overlay adoption. Public notice was also posted on site.

Neighborhood meeting: Multiple neighborhood meetings have been conducted to inform the neighbors about adopting the CD. The latest neighborhood meeting was conducted virtually on 11 June 2024 by Pamela Miller, the President of the Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood Association.

Existing Development Pattern: The area within the Conservation Overlay District is generally characterized as predominantly single-family. Existing civic uses include two parks.

Overlay Boundaries: The overlay applies to a defined geographic area delineated in the associated map illustrated on Figure 1.

Transportation Network: CAT bus routes serve the neighborhood, running along Waters Avenue, East DeRenne Avenue, and Abercorn Street. Additionally, the *Tide to Town* Trail follows Habersham Street, passing directly through the area.

Public Services and Facilities: The properties identified on the corresponding map are served by the Savannah Police Department, City fire protection and by City water and sewer.

Land Use Element: The adopted Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map will not be amended as a result of the proposed overlay. Both the base zoning district (RSF-10 – Residential Single Family-10) and existing land use categories (Residential- Suburban Single Family, Conservation, and Parks/Recreation) will remain unchanged for properties within the overlay.

Zoning: Although the base zoning district will not be changed for any property in the overlay, the corresponding text amendment, which establishes the overlay, states that in the event of any conflict between the base district and the overlay the more restrictive standards shall apply.

ORDINANCE ANALYSIS:

Per Section 3.7.7 of Article 3, Savannah’s Zoning Ordinance offers four (4) review criteria for proposed text amendments:

- a. **Consistency** – The extent to which the proposed text amendment is consistent with the remainder of the Zoning Ordinance, including any purpose and intent statements.

MPC Comment: *Staff found no conflicts or inconsistencies that are created by the requested amendment.*

- b. **New or Changing Circumstances** – The extent to which the proposed text amendment represents a new idea not considered in the existing Zoning Ordinance, or represents a revision necessitated by changing circumstances over time.

MPC Comment: *The proposed amendment represents the extension and application of an existing preservation mechanism already present within the Ordinance. Adoption is necessitated by the current rapidly changing local real estate market as the City seeks to ensure the integrity of its historic neighborhoods into the future.*

- c. **Error or Inappropriate Standard** – Whether or not the proposed text amendment corrects an error in the Zoning Ordinance, or otherwise improves upon existing requirements or standards.

MPC Comment: *The proposed amendment does not correct any error in the Zoning Ordinance or improve upon existing requirements or standards.*

- d. **Compliance with Higher Law** – Whether or not the proposed text amendment revises the Zoning Ordinance to comply with state or federal statutes.

MPC Comment: *The proposed amendment is not a revision to bring a local ordinance into conformance with state or federal law.*

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: *The uses permitted within the existing base zoning district will not change as a result of approval of the requested overlay adoption. Approval will chiefly establish the requirement of Historic Preservation Commission approval for any proposed demolition of a contributing historic resource.*

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

MPC Comment: *Historic preservation is a stated priority for the City of Savannah. Adoption of the proposed Overlay is in keeping with preservation of the City's established neighborhoods which display its rich architectural history and legacy.*

b. Compatibility

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

MPC Comment: *Adoption of the Overlay will not adversely impact any existing use or usability of property within the proposed District.*

- 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 proposed Overlay seeks to ensure the present development pattern within the identified District is maintained into the future.*

- 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: *Adoption of the Overlay is necessitated by the current rapidly changing local real estate market as the City seeks to ensure the integrity of its historic neighborhoods into the future.*

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 proposed Overlay is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the subject properties.*

d. Reasonable Use

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

MPC Comment: *The uses permitted within the existing base zoning district will not change as a result of approval of the requested overlay adoption.*

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: *Existing public services will not be impacted by the proposed Overlay.*

f. Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: *The subject properties are within 3,000 feet of a military installation; however, they are fully developed at present and neither new development nor increased intensity of development will result from approval of the proposed Overlay adoption.*

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood is an established, intact historic neighborhood with a high level of both historical significance and integrity. The proposed Conservation Overlay District will ensure that unnecessary lot subdivisions/recombinations and demolitions are avoided and that a public hearing is provided.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Recommend approval of the request or an alternate amendment.
2. Recommend denial of the request.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood Overlay Conservation District as requested below;

1. 24-004607-TEXT - Text Amendment | Zoning Ordinance- Article 7.15 | Conservation Overlay- Kensington Park/Groveland Neighborhood
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