



CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH

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:

Agent: Jack Parker with Catalyst Design Group

Owner: Todd Maxwell with Savannah Health Services, LLC

Address: 4700 Waters Avenue & 68 Other Parcels in the Memorial Health PD

Alderman District: 3 – Linda Wilder-Bryan

County Commission District: 2 – Malinda Scott Hodge

Property Identification Number: 20105 10008, 20114 02017, 20105 10009, 20105 10011, 20115 05017, 20115 05016, 20114 05017, 20105 07016, and 20105 07008L, 20104 30035, 20105 05013, 20104 30026, 20104 22012, 20114 02009, 20114 02010, 20114 02011, 20114 02012, 20114 05007, 20114 04015, 20114 04003, 20114 04014, 20114 04013, 20114 04012, 20114 04005, 20114 04011, 20114 04006, 20114 04007, 20114 04010, 20114 04009, 20114 04008, 20125A 02025, 20104 08001, 20105 06007, 20105 06006, 20105 06005, 20105 06004, 20105 06003, 20105 06002, 20105 06001, 20104 27001, 20104 27002, 20104 27003, 20104 27004, 20104 27005, 20104 27006, 20104 28006, 20104 30001, 20104 30002, 20104 30003, 20104 30004, 20104 30005, 20104 30006, 20104 30007, 20104 30008, 20104 30009, 20104 22010, 20104 22008, 20104 22009, 20114 02004, 20105 05015, 20115 05016, 20105 10001, 20104 30029, 20104 30028, 20104 30034, 20104 30010, 20104 30011, 20104 27007, and 20104 22013

Petition File Number: 25-005241-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed *Planned Development* to align the zoning of the Memorial Hospital Campus with *NewZO*.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

MPC Staff recommends approval of the proposed *Planned Development* to align the zoning of the Memorial Hospital Campus with *NewZO*.

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: Jack Parker of Catalyst Design Group

for Todd Maxwell of Savannah Health Services, LLC

Address: 4700 Waters Avenue

PIN: 20105 10008 and 70 additional unique Parcel Identification Numbers

Site Area: 92.91 acres

Alderman District: 3 – Linda Wilder-Bryan

Chatham County Commission District: 2 – Malinda Scott Hodge

Request: Rezone from PD (Planned Development) to PD (Planned Development)

File Number: 25-005241-ZA-MAP

Request

The Petitioner requests amendment of the Zoning Map for the subject parcels from *Planned Development* to *Planned Development* to align the permissible uses and development standards with Savannah's new Zoning Ordinance adopted in 2019.

The property currently operates under a PD Master Plan tied to the previous zoning ordinance, which was in effect at the time of the last zoning action in 2013. The Plan is based on the following underlying base zoning districts: RIP (Residential-Institutional-Professional), PUD-IS (Planned Unit Development - Institutional), PUD-IS-B (Planned Unit Development - Institutional), and R-6 (Single-family dwelling).

The new PD text is structured upon the OI and OI-E zoning districts within the current Zoning Ordinance. Each area of the campus would be assigned to one of five distinct sub-districts assigned with either base or slightly modified bulk standards intended to modernize the regulatory document and streamline future expansion.

Facts and Findings

Zoning History

Staff identified several previous zoning actions for the subject parcels:

- In October 2000 the MPC approved a master Plan for Memorial Health University which provided a forecast of anticipated growth and renovation at the campus over the subsequent ten years.
- In 2004 an amended Master Plan was approved in conjunction with the development of several new buildings on site including the Heart and Vascular Institute and a parking garage. A parking master plan was also provided and approved during the 2004 amendment.
- 2012-2013 ([13-003997-PLAN](#)): The Hospital Authority requested an amendment of the Medical Center Master Plan to accommodate projected growth, including a 15,000-square-foot outpatient surgery center, a 14,000-square-foot emergency room expansion, and potential expansions to the cancer research building.
- 2013 (13-004068-ZA): A petition was filed to rezone a 0.6-acre portion of the campus from R-6 (Single Family Residential) to R-I-P (Residential – Institutional – Professional). Staff determined the R-6 zoning was "clearly incompatible" with the location and required rezoning to legally accommodate the emergency room expansion.
- 2024 ([24-004597-ZBA](#)) The 2013 Master Plan was amended to permit the construction of a sign in association with the Children's Hospital.



2013 Master Plan (Current at time of petition)

Site

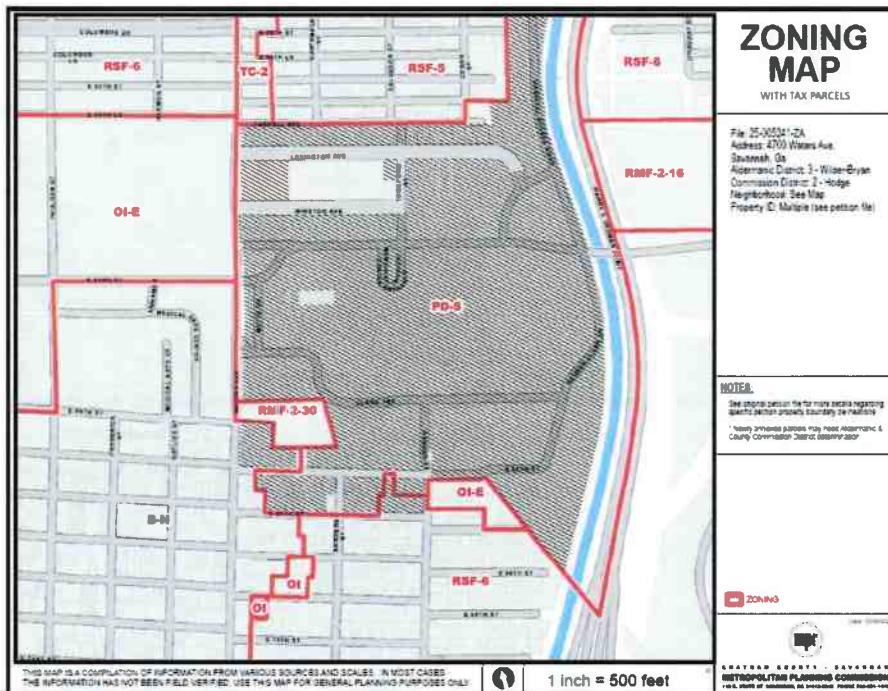
The subject property encompasses approximately 92 acres over at least 71 parcels. The primary parcel containing the core of the campus and main hospital buildings is approximately 52 acres, and includes private access roads extending north, parallel with the Truman Parkway, to connect with DeLesseps Ave and east to connect with DeRenne Ave to the south. The campus is surrounded by a host of flanking parcels containing associated administrative buildings, parking and ancillary medical service providers.

The site is located in an 'X' Flood Zone and adjoins the Casey Canal.

Existing Zoning and Development Pattern

The subject parcel is currently zoned PD and contains the Memorial Health Campus.

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Single-Family Residences	RSF-5
South	Single-family Residences Community Bible Church	RSF-6
East	Casey Canal Truman Parkway	PD-S, RSF-6, RMF-2-16
West	Calvary Baptist Temple Multi-tenant Commercial Structure	OI-E, B-N



Current Zoning Map

Public Notice

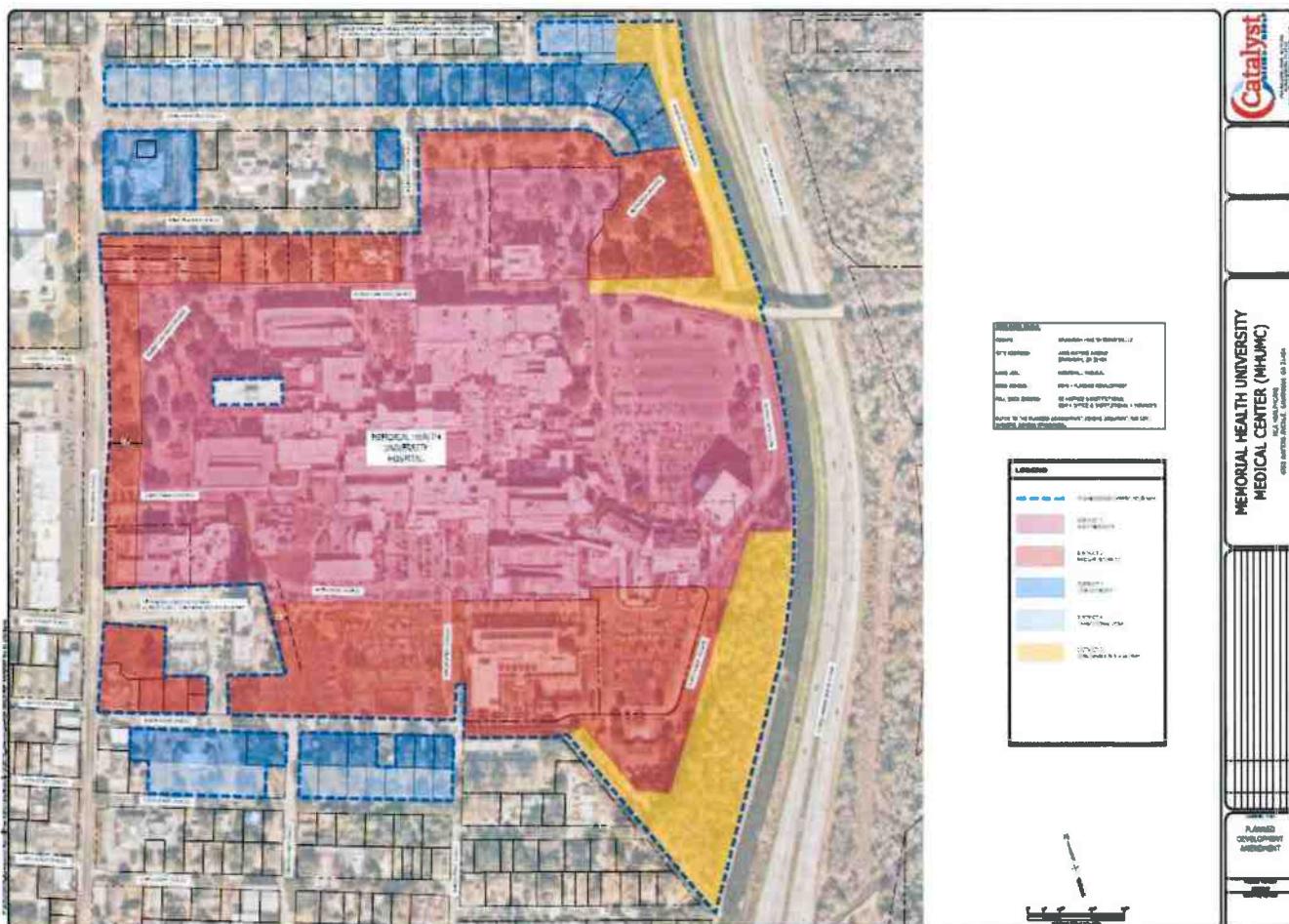
Mailed notice of the Planning Commission meeting was sent to all property owners within 300-feet of the subject property, signs were posted on site and required newspaper advertisements were run at least 15 days prior to the meeting. The mailed notice included instructions on how to access the public meeting via the internet.

Neighborhood Meetings

The subject parcels are within the Memorial Hospital/Fairfield neighborhood. There is no active neighborhood association per Savannah Open Neighborhoods.

MPC Staff is unaware of any neighborhood engagement on the part of the Applicant in the course of the requested zoning action.

Below is the proposed PD Plan designating the subject properties with an applicable intensity zone. Each district is aligned with either the *OI* (Office-Institutional) or *OI-E* (Office-Institutional Expanded) zoning district. Some intensity districts have slightly modified standards from the base zoning district related to height and internal setbacks to meet specifically identified future growth needs.



Yellow: District 5 (Conservation and Roadway) **Light Blue:** District 4 (Transitional Zone),
Blue: District 3 (Low Intensity), **Red:** District 2 (Medium Intensity). **Pink:** District 1 (High Intensity)

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 departments.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Element

As the subject parcels have been under a Master Plan since 2013, the FLUM designation is currently PD (Planned Development). Per Plan 2040, this designation is appropriate for *master planned areas accommodating cluster development, neo-traditional 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.*

Existing Zoning District(s)

- **Intent of the PD-S Zoning District:**

A Planned Development (PD) district allows projects that would not otherwise be permitted under this Ordinance because of the strict application of zoning district development standards or general site standards. Generally, the PD district is intended for sites where a developer proposes and the Mayor and Aldermen desire to achieve a certain mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility and/or apply special sensitivity to the character of the site surrounding area.

In return for greater flexibility in site design requirements, planned developments are expected to deliver innovative and exceptional quality community designs that preserve environmental, historic and cultural resources; incorporate creative design in the layout of buildings, open space and vehicular and pedestrian circulation; assure compatibility with surrounding land uses and area character; and, provide greater efficiency in the layout and provision of roads, utilities and other infrastructure that would not otherwise be possible within a base zoning district.

- **Allowed Uses:** The uses allowed in the current PD district are governed by the previously adopted Master Plan. The Plan permits uses specified within four base zoning districts under Savannah's old Zoning Ordinance: RIP (Residential-Institutional-Professional), PUD-IS (Planned Unit Development - Institutional), PUD-IS-B (Planned Unit Development - Institutional), and R-6 (Single-family dwelling).
- **Development Standards:** The development standards of these zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.

Proposed Zoning District

- Intent of the PD Zoning District:

A Planned Development (PD) district allows projects that would not otherwise be permitted under this Ordinance because of the strict application of zoning district development standards or general site standards. Generally, the PD district is intended for sites where a developer proposes and the Mayor and Aldermen desire to achieve a certain mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility and/or apply special sensitivity to the character of the site surrounding area.

In return for greater flexibility in site design requirements, planned developments are expected to deliver innovative and exceptional quality community designs that preserve environmental, historic and cultural resources; incorporate creative design in the layout of buildings, open space and vehicular and pedestrian circulation; assure compatibility with surrounding land uses and area character; and, provide greater efficiency in the layout and provision of roads, utilities and other infrastructure that would not otherwise be possible within a base zoning district.

- Allowed Uses: The modified PD would align development within the Campus with the OI (Office and Institutional) and OI-E (Office and Institutional – Expanded) base zoning districts of NewZO. A chart containing the permissible uses can be found appended to the end of this report.
- Development Standards: The development standards of the OI and OI-E zoning districts appear in charts appended to the end of this report. The proposed (modified) development standards are also included.

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 suitable for the subject property. The campus currently operates under a mix of obsolete zoning districts (PUD-IS, R-I-P, R-6) utilizing definitions from the previous zoning code. This creates regulatory irregularities; for example, previous expansions required piecemeal rezonings of small R-6 parcels to accommodate hospital functions. The proposed PD unifies the campus under current NewZO definitions (OI and OI-E base uses). Further, the specific addition of "Emergency Medical Services (EMS) substation" and "Ambulance Service" addresses a critical community need for responsive healthcare infrastructure that was not explicitly defined in the previous zoning districts.*

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

MPC Comment: *Memorial Hospital is a critical employer, regional healthcare provider and training facility. It is the 2nd largest non-manufacturing private employer in the Savannah Metro, employing more than 4,300 people. Additionally, it is a regional referral center for heart care, cancer care and high-risk pregnancies. It houses the region's only Level I trauma center, a Level III neonatal ICU, and the Children's Hospital of Savannah.*

The Master Plan amendment addresses the need to facilitate future buildings, structured parking and surface parking improvements within the campus. By updating the Master Plan to accommodate projected expansion and renovation, the proposal enhances the hospital's ability to serve the residents of Chatham County and the region.

Compatibility

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

MPC Comment: *The proposal introduces the potential for significantly higher density than the surrounding context but utilizes a "bullseye" or tiered intensity design to mitigate impacts, placing the tallest and highest intensity uses toward the center of the site and less intense uses near the periphery adjoining single-family residences, offices and general commercial uses.*

Height: *The proposal allows heights up to 200 feet in District 1 (Core) and 120 feet in District 2. This exceeds the standard OI-E height limit of 60 feet (or 75 feet with conditions) found in the base ordinance. However, the Master Plan transitions density downward at the edges: District 3 allows 75 feet, and District 4, which borders lower-intensity areas, is restricted to 50 feet.*

Buffers: *The proposal replaces fixed-width buffers (previously 25 or 50 feet) with the NewZO "Buffer Class" system. Districts 3 and 4, which are most likely to abut public rights-of-way or residential areas, require a Class 2 Buffer, ensuring visual screening compatible with modern standards.*

- 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: *A key benefit of the proposal is the alignment of the zoning regulations governing the campus with Savannah's new Zoning Ordinance. The proposed zoning change, which would continue to permit establishment of uses consistent with a medical campus, corrects existing inconsistencies where hospital surface parking and other uses were zoned for single-family homes. Further, the combination of a flexible underlying zoning class with internal 'intensity district' designations ensures future development will be compatible with lower intensity surroundings.*

- 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: *Memorial Health's merge with HCA Healthcare in 2018 has resulted in significant expansion plans. The hospital has aggressive plans for growth both at its 4700 Waters location and at other locations throughout the region.*

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 Future Land Use Map currently designates this area for "Planned Development." The proposed PD, which facilitates the expansion of a regional medical center, is consistent with this designation.*

Reasonable Use

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

MPC Comment: *While the hospital could continue to function under the current zoning, the "reasonable use" is hindered by the administrative burden of development under the old zoning code. The existing R-6 zoning on portions of the campus limits vertical expansion and modernization. The proposed PD ensures the property owner can utilize the land efficiently for its intended purpose as a medical center without seeking variances and other relief for standard, ordinarily anticipated operational improvements.*

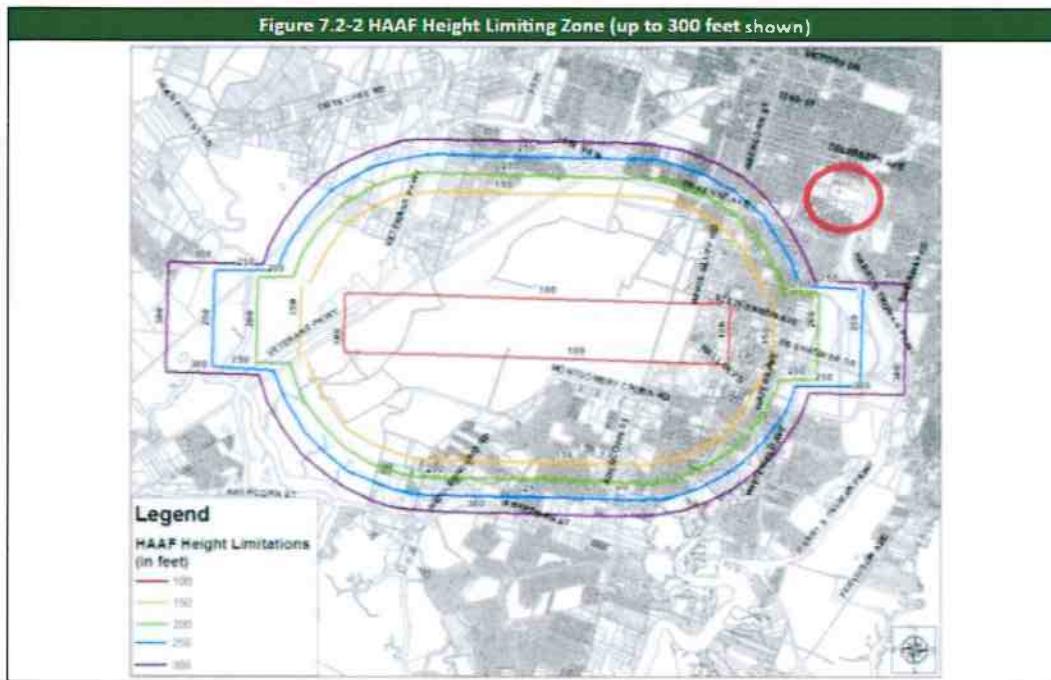
Adequate Public Services

- 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: *The site is an existing developed campus with established utility connections. Improvements of a scale requiring approval of a site development plan will ensure adequate facilities are in place to support any proposed expansion.*

Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: *The subject parcels are not within the 3,000 foot Clear Zone or Accident Prevention Zones I and II as prescribed in the Ordinance.*



Recommendation

The Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed *Planned Development* to align the zoning of the Memorial Hospital Campus with *NewZO*.