



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: July 6, 2023
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petitioner: Bryan Wardlaw, Agent

Owner: William Fawcett

Aldermanic District: 6, Purtee

County Commission District: 6, Whitely

Neighborhood/Subdivision: Georgetown

Current Zoning District: A-1 (Agriculture)

Future Land Use (FLU) Category: Planned Development

File No. 22-002692-ZA

Location: Fawcett Tract Wild Heron Road

PIN: 21003-03001 **Acreage:** +/- 105 acres

MPC ACTION:

Approval of the request to rezone the subject property from A-1 to RSF-5 and RMF-1 with the following conditions:

1. Total dwelling units do not exceed 350.
2. 40' R/W Dedication for widening of Wild Heron Road.
3. Install sidewalk along project frontage.
4. Provide connectivity through development.
5. Contribution to Chatham County for Wild Heron and King George Intersection Improvements.
6. Minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet.
7. A 6-foot fence built to the frontage of Wild Heron Road, (be built at the beginning of the development and maintained by the HOA).

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the request to rezone the subject property from A-1 to RSF-5 and RMF-1 with the following conditions:

1. Total dwelling units do not exceed 350.
2. 40' R/W Dedication for widening of Wild Heron Road.
3. Install sidewalk along project frontage.
4. Provide connectivity through development.
5. Contribution to Chatham County for Wild Heron and King George Intersection Improvements.
6. Minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 10 + Chairman

Dwayne Stephens, Chairman Joseph Welch
Laureen Boles Michael Kaigler
Travis Coles
Tom Woiwode
Joseph Ervin
Karen Jarrett
Jay Melder
Wayne Noha
Jeff Notrica

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (8-2)

APPROVAL Votes: 8	DENIAL Votes: 2	ABSENT	ABSTAINED
Boles Coles Jarrett Melder Noha Notrica Kaigler Woiwode	Ervin Welch	Coleman Epstein Watkins	Stephens

Respectfully submitted,



Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

MW/sh

Enclosure

cc: Mark Massey, Clerk of Council
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney
Zarina Davis, Department of Inspections
Bridget Lidy, Department of Inspections



CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future, Respecting the Past"

STAFF REPORT

File No. 22-002692-ZA

Location: Fawcett Tract Wild Heron Road

PIN: 21003-03001 Acreage: +/- 105 Acres

Prepared by Marcus Lotson, Director



Petitioner: Bryan Wardlaw, Landmark 24

Owner: William Fawcett

Aldermanic District: District 6, (Purtee)

County Commission District: 6, Commissioner (Whitely)

Neighborhood/Subdivision: Georgetown

Current Zoning District: A-1 (Agriculture)

Future Land Use (FLU) Category: Planned Development

Issue

The petitioner is requesting to rezone the subject property from A-1 (Agriculture) to RSF-5 (Single family residential) and RMF-1 (Multifamily Residential) with the following conditions offered by the applicant:

- 1.) Total dwelling units not to exceed 350.
- 2.) 40' R/W Dedication for widening of Wild Heron Road.
- 3.) Install sidewalk along project frontage.
- 4.) Provide connectivity through development.
- 5.) Contribution to Chatham County for Wild Heron and King George Intersection Improvements.
- 6.) Minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet.

The property is a part of the Georgetown subdivision, a single-family residential subdivision between King George Boulevard and Chevis Road. The petitioner is requesting rezoning for the purpose of developing the property with single family detached residential homes and attached townhomes.

Public Notice

As required by the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance, all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property were sent notices of the proposed rezoning. Public notice was posted on site and the applicant met with members of the Georgetown community and others on 6/30/22. In addition, a meeting was held on 1/25/23. The most recent public hearing was held on February 7, 2023. Written public comments are attached to the agenda.

Existing Development Pattern

The land uses and zoning districts surrounding the subject property include:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Designation</u>
North	Single Family Residential	PUD-C /R-A
East	Single-Family Residences	A-1
South	Single-Family Residences	A-1
West	Single-Family Residences	R-A

The subject property is a portion of an undeveloped tract of land on the south side of Wild Heron Road between King George Boulevard and Chevis Road. It was annexed into the City of Savannah in 2005 but all adjoining properties north, east, and west are in Unincorporated Chatham County. The overall tract, known as the Fawcett Tract, is a total of 227 acres in size. The portion proposed to be rezoned is 105 acres. The property is former farmland and is essentially cleared of significant vegetation and trees.

The development pattern on the north side of Wild Heron Road includes primarily suburban style single-family residences. It also includes attached single family residential uses. These patterns are the norm within the Georgetown and Southern Woods neighborhoods. The area also includes townhome developments such as Wild Heron Villas and Trellis Way. West of the subject property residential lots are rural in nature and generally larger, 2+ acres in size.

Impact and Suitability

Public Utilities

The area has access to the City’s public water, sewer, and stormwater systems.

Transportation and Transit

A Traffic Impact Analysis was completed in August of 2022. One of the prevailing issues is the road network and the capacity, over time, to manage the increase in residential density. Wild Heron Road extends from Grove Point Road to Chevis Road and also intersects with King George

Boulevard. These are the north / south access points for Georgetown, Southern Woods, and the other neighborhoods in the vicinity. Currently, traffic patterns include commuters using these roads to avoid slow downs on Highway 17. In terms of current volume, the TIA indicates that at AM/PM peak hours, intersections function at acceptable levels. It further indicates that when considering a no build scenario, the only significant change in delay by 2025 would be at the Wild Heron & King George intersection. However, in a build out scenario, the delay at that intersection would be increased significantly and create a failure at that location and at Wild Heron and Cherryfield Lane. To address this eventuality, the applicant has submitted potential intersection improvements to Chatham County for consideration and will participate financially in these improvements.

Table 3
LEVEL-OF-SERVICE SUMMARY¹
Fawcett Tract- Wild Heron Road
Chatham County, GA

<u>Unsignalized Intersections</u>	Time Period	Existing		2025 No-Build		2025 Build	
		Delay ^a	LOS ^b	Delay	LOS	Delay	LOS
Wild Heron Road at Chevis Road	AM	9.3	A	9.8	A	10.5	B
	PM	10.5	B	11.1	B	11.3	B
Wild Heron Road at Trellis Way ²	AM	16.4	C	18.7	C	26.4	D
	PM	Entering & Exiting Volumes are Insignificant				16.5	C
Wild Heron Road at Cherryfield Lane ²	AM	15.2	C	17.4	C	57.5	F ←
	PM	12.6	B	13.5	B	31.1	D
Wild Heron Road at Lions Gate Road	AM	19.2	C	23.4	C	35.5	E
	PM	13.3	B	14.5	B	19.9	C
Wild Heron Road at King George Boulevard	AM	23.7	C	45.4	E	242.2	F ←
	PM	11.1	A	11.9	B	16.3	C

a. Delay in seconds-per-vehicle.

b. LOS = Level of Service.

The concept provided is a roundabout. As proposed, the roundabout would be situated partially on land dedicated from the Fawcett Tract, the remainder would be within existing right of way. While the roundabout has not been modeled to determine what impact it would have on delays, the County Engineers office has indicated that this type of improvement could be beneficial, but the details need to be worked out. In addition, the issue of impacts on nearby residences would need to be addressed between the developer and Chatham County.

Chatham County Engineering has also concluded that any development of the subject property would need to include the dedication of additional right of way to allow for future improvements. Along Wild Heron Road. The applicant has committed to providing the additional right of way.

Transit is available along Wild Heron Road, Chevis Road and King George Boulevard.

Community Development

The subdivision is proposed to include single family detached and single family attached residences. The proposed lot sizes are similar to those that are generally found in the surrounding neighborhoods. The applicant has proposed that all lots will be at least 6,000 square feet in size. Large single family lots have become less common in the years since Georgetown was developed. The proposed lots, however, are generally compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Future Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map designates the subject property as Planned Development. This designation is defined as master planned areas accommodating cluster development, neotraditional 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. This category includes Amenity Communities, Village Centers, Town Centers, and existing PUDs. The proposed development is consistent with this designation as a mixed residential development.

Existing Agriculture (A-1) District:

The A-1 district is established to allow agricultural areas to be developed in a manner consistent with the retention of agriculture and forestry and the preservation of rural character. This district may also include certain non-agricultural uses that are customarily found in rural areas.

Proposed Residential Single Family (RSF-5) District:

- ***Intent of the RSF-5 District:*** “The Residential Single-family-4 district is established to allow single-family detached development on 50-foot-wide lots with a minimum area of 5,000 square feet. A limited number of nonresidential uses are allowed that are compatible with single-family residential uses.”
- ***Allowed Uses:*** Allowed uses in the RSF-5 district are listed in Table 1 of this report.
- ***Development Standards:*** The development standards are listed in Table 2 of this report.

Proposed Multifamily Residential (RMF-1) District:

- ***Intent of the RMF-1 District:*** “The Residential Multi-family (“RMF-”) districts are established to allow multi-family development in addition to other types of residential development. The districts (RMF-1, RMF-2 and RMF-3) within the RMF- designation provide for varying development standards and generally the same uses with a few exceptions. The specific density (a whole number) shall be established at the time of rezoning. Such density shall be represented as a numeric suffix after the zoning district (e.g., RMF-3-14). With the exception of RMF-1, the RMF- districts are intended to be placed on higher classifications of streets and in close proximity to mass transit corridors, retail services and employment opportunities...”
- ***Allowed Uses:*** Allowed uses in the RMF-1 district are listed in Table 1 of this report.
- ***Development Standards:*** The development standards are listed in Table 2 of this report.

Zoning Ordinance Review

The following review criteria for rezoning are prescribed in the Savannah Zoning Ordinance Sec. 3.5.8.

- a. Suitability and Community Need

- Whether the range of uses permitted by the proposed zoning district is more suitable than the range of uses that is permitted by the current zoning district.

MPC Comment: The range of uses permitted under the current and proposed zoning are both primarily residential. The current zoning allows single family residential at 2-acre lot minimums. The applicant is also proposing attached residential which is not permitted under the current zoning but exists immediately across Wild Heron Road.

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

MPC Comment: The proposed housing type is similar to what exists within the larger neighborhood. The proposed zoning would allow residential development at a higher density than the current zoning, but it would be in keeping with nearby subdivisions. This addresses the specific need of housing inventory.

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

MPC Comment: The proposed zoning is not likely to adversely affect existing uses. The number of units proposed at buildout has been decreased by the applicant. At buildout, the number of residences may impact infrastructure and services if mitigating improvements are not put in place.

- 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 zoning proposal is compatible with the present zoning pattern which is primarily single family. The proposed lot sizes are generally in keeping with the nearby properties.

- 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 ongoing growth in West Chatham is likely to continue to stress traffic and services in the area. Usage of Wild Heron Road, King George Boulevard and Chevis Road will likely continue as an alternative to Highway 17. The applicant has committed to providing additional right of way and to contribute financially to needed improvements.

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: Since the land is undeveloped and designated as Planned Development the zoning districts could conform with the Comprehensive Plan. The revised concept plan includes single family lots which are more compatible than the previous iteration and townhomes that are in keeping with the area.

b. Reasonable Use

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

MPC Comment: Land uses under the current zoning include large lot single family residential, cluster development, campgrounds and RV parks, agriculture, animal services and others. *Permitted Uses Attached.*

c. 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: Over time, the proposed development at buildout, combined with expected growth, could have impacts on public services in the vicinity if the growth is unaccounted for. This could include transportation infrastructure, schools, and emergency services. The applicant has committed to assisting in addressing the transportation issue.

Analysis

The subject property is the largest remaining tract within the Georgetown neighborhood. It is a mature single-family neighborhood with a development pattern that consists primarily of single-family residential uses both attached and detached. With a minimum 6,000 square foot single family lot, the pattern would be consistent with Georgetown at large.

The proposed RMF-1 zoning classification is also requested to accommodate townhomes. There are examples of semi-attached townhome developments in the vicinity, including Wild Heron Villas.

The impact of the proposed development will not be fully realized for years to come. We can make certain assumptions, however, about increases in traffic volumes and the need for public services. Because it is likely that growth in West Chatham will outpace infrastructure and service improvements, it is necessary to consider how quality of life may be affected by zoning and development changes. The staff finds that the existing zoning is probably not the highest and best use for the property, the proposed development pattern is more suited from a compatibility standpoint.

Recommendation

Based upon the existing zoning pattern and character of the area, as well as the review criteria, MPC recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject property from A-1 to RSF-5 and RMF-1 with the following conditions:

- 1.) Total dwelling units not to exceed 350.
- 2.) 40' R/W Dedication for widening of Wild Heron Road.
- 3.) Install sidewalk along project frontage.
- 4.) Provide connectivity through development.
- 5.) Contribution to Chatham County for Wild Heron and King George Intersection Improvements.
- 6.) Minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet.
- 7.) A 6-foot fence built to the frontage of Wild Heron Road, (be built at the beginning of the development and maintained by the HOA).

Note: Staff's recommendation is based upon information contained in the application and discussions with the applicant. This recommendation could change based on information gathered during the public hearing.

5.10.5 Development Standards for Permitted Housing Types			
Standards	RMF-1	RMF-2	RMF-3
Townhouse unit width	20	20	20
Lot width (min ft)			
Three-Four Family	--	50	50
Apartment	--	55	55
Building Setbacks (2)(3) (min ft)			
Street Access			
Front Yard			
Single-family detached	20	20	--
Single-family attached	20	20	20
Two-family	20	20	20
Townhouse/Stacked Townhouse	20	20	20
Three-Four Family	--	20	20
Apartment	--	25	25
Side (interior) Yard			
Single-family detached	5	5	--
Single-family attached	5	5	5
Two-family	5	5	5
Townhouse inc. Stacked (end unit)	5	5	5
Three-Four Family	--	7	7
Apartment	--	10	10
Side (street) Yard			
Apartments	--	15	15
All other housing types	10	10	10
Rear Yard			
Single-family detached	20	20	20
All other housing types	25	25	25
From access easement	5	5	5
Lane Access			
Front Yard			
Apartment	--	20	20
All other housing types	15	15	15
Side (interior) Yard	5	5	5
Side (street) Yard	5	5	5
From access easement	20	20	20
Rear Yard	5	5	5
Building separation	See Fire Code	See Fire Code	See Fire Code
Building Coverage (max)			
Street Access			
Single-family detached	40%	40%	--
All other housing types	50%	50%	50%
Lane Access			
Single-family detached	40%	45%	--

All other housing types	50%	50%	50%
Height (max ft) (4)	50	50	50
Accessory Structure Setback	See Sec. 5.7	See Sec. 5.7	See Sec. 5.7
Parking Area Setback (min ft) (Apartments Only)			
From collector and arterial street rights-of-way	--	15	15
From local street rights-of-way	--	10	10
From lane, property line or access easement	--	5	5

-- = not applicable

(1) The site standards (minimum lot area per unit) for the RMF districts may not be used to exceed the maximum density of the district. Common area and proposed right-of-way area may be used in the calculation of density.

(2) Where a residence is proposed to be served by private water and/or sewer, additional lot area and/or setbacks may be required by the Chatham County Health Department.

(3) When access is obtained only from the street, the street access standards shall apply. When access is obtained only from the lane, the lane access standards shall apply. When access is obtained from both the street and the lane, the street access standards shall apply.

(4) Buildings proposed within 50 feet of an RSF, RTP or TR- district shall be subject to the height restrictions established in such district.

AERIAL MAP

File: 22-002692-ZA
 Address: Wild Heron Rd
 Savannah, Ga
 Aldermanic District: 6 - Purtee
 Commission District: 6 - Whitely
 Neighborhood: Wild Heron Area
 Property ID: 21003 03001 (Portion)



THIS MAP IS A COMPILATION OF INFORMATION FROM VARIOUS SOURCES AND SCALES. IN MOST CASES THE INFORMATION HAS NOT BEEN FIELD VERIFIED. USE THIS MAP FOR GENERAL PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY.



1 inch = 700 feet

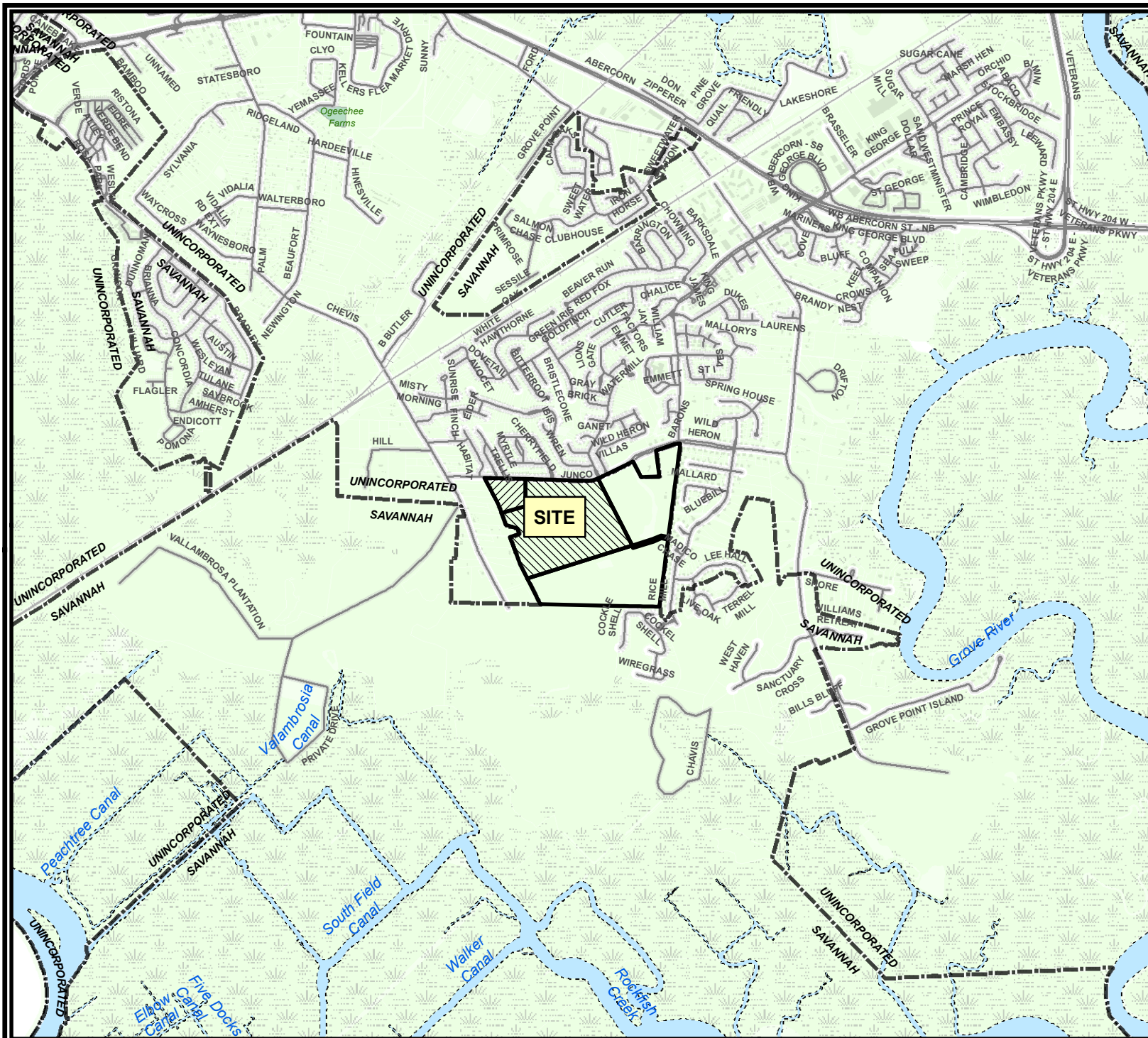


Date: 6/13/2022

CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
 110 E. STATE ST. SAVANNAH, GA 31412-8246 PHONE 912-651-1440

VICINITY MAP

File: 22-002692-ZA
 Address: Wild Heron Rd
 Savannah, Ga
 Aldermanic District: 6 - Purtee
 Commission District: 6 - Whitely
 Neighborhood: Wild Heron Area
 Property ID: 21003 03001 (Portion)



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1 inch = 3,000 feet



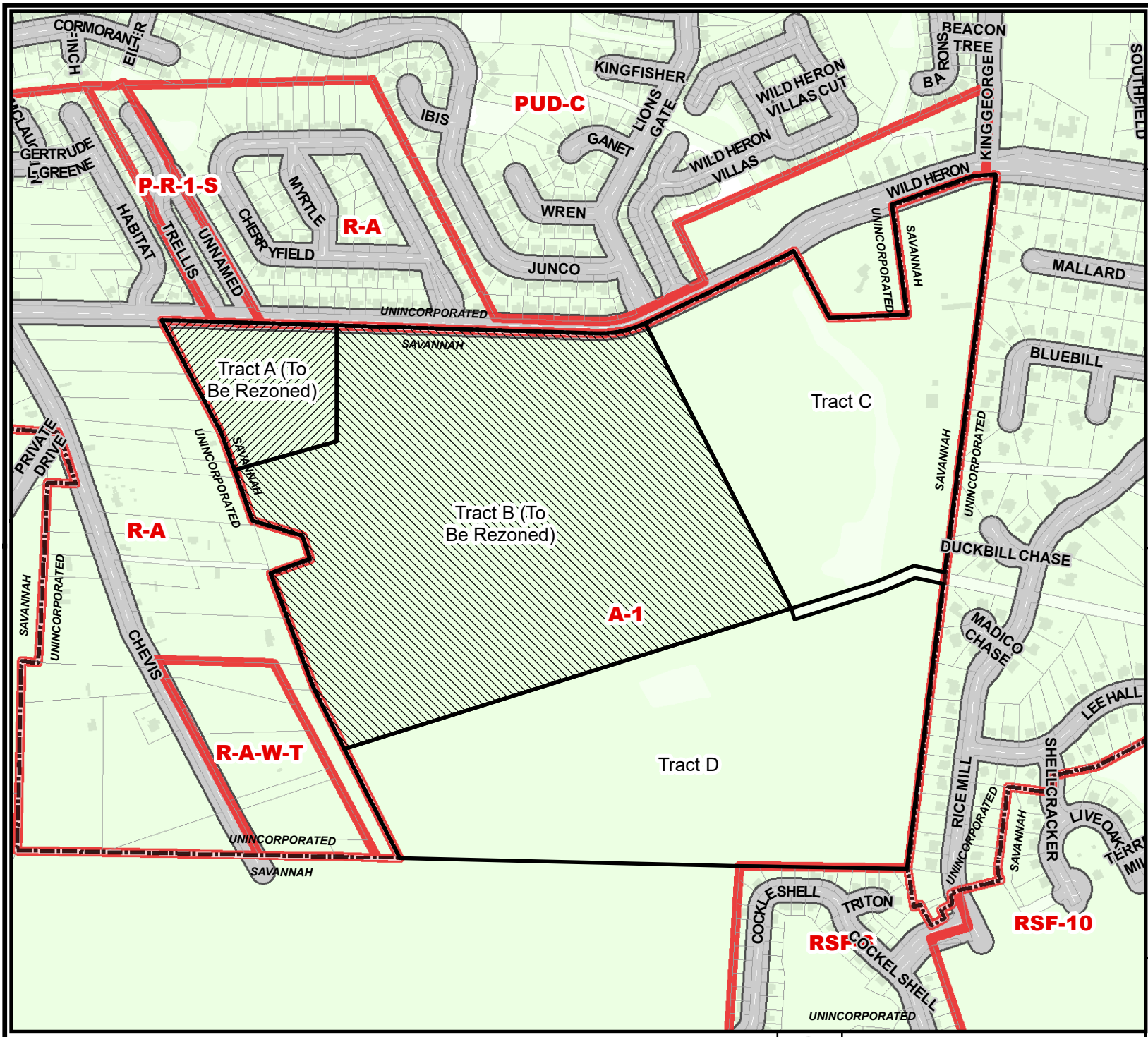
Date: 6/13/2022

CHATHAM COUNTY - SAVANNAH
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
 110 E. STATE ST. SAVANNAH, GA 31412-8246 PHONE 912-651-1440

ZONING MAP

File: 22-002692-ZA
 Address: Wild Heron Rd
 Savannah, Ga
 Aldermanic District: 6 - Purtee
 Commission District: 6 - Whitely
 Neighborhood: Wild Heron Area
 Property ID: 21003 03001 (Portion)

Current Property Zoning
 is Primarily
 A-1
 Proposed Property Zoning:
 Tract A: RMF-1-X
 Tract B: RSF-4



ZONING

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