



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah

FROM: Bridget Lidy, Director

DATE: December 19, 2024

SUBJECT: Petition of Robert McCorkle on behalf of Speir Property, LLC, to zone approximately 667.9 acres located at 302 Bush Rd (PIN 11026 01017) and 420 Bush Rd (PIN 11026 01002C) from R-A (Residential Agriculture) and PDR-SM (Planned Development Reclamation-Surface Mining) to PD (Planned Development) to support the annexation of this parcel into the City of Savannah.
File No. 24-006311-ZA


The Petitioner is requesting to zone 667.9 acres at 302 Bush Road and 420 Bush Road from the R-A (Residential-Agriculture) and PDR-SM (Planned Development Reclamation-Surface Mining) zoning designations from Unincorporated Chatham County to the PD (Planned Development) zoning designation of the City of Savannah. If approved, the petition will be consistent with the City's Zoning Ordinance. This request is part of an annexation petition.

Sec. 1.6 Zoning of Property Relating to New Service Delivery states: *"All property annexed into the City boundaries may by adoption by the Mayor and Aldermen retain and be incorporated into the City's zoning ordinance and official zoning map under the County's zoning district applicable to the property at the time of annexation. The "Zoning Ordinance of Chatham County, Georgia," is hereby adopted and made a part of this ordinance for this purpose. The County's zoning restrictions applicable to the said zoning district shall be incorporated into this ordinance and applied to the annexed property. In such case the suffix "CO" (for County) shall be added to the zoning district to show that the County's zoning district shall apply to the annexed property. All other provisions of this ordinance shall apply to the annexed property. Such use of the annexed property under the County's zoning district shall not be deemed nonconforming as that term is used in this ordinance but may be considered after annexation for an amendment to rezone the subject property to a zoning district in conformity with this zoning ordinance."*

Zoning Districts: The zoning action taken for this annexation is required to allow the subject property to be annexed to the City of Savannah. The City may not annex property unless it is also zoned with City zoning. The general intent of the City's PD district is described in Sec. 6.1.1.a:

"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.”


The City of Savannah, Chatham County, the owner of the annexation property, and the intended developer of the property have entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that establishes certain responsibilities for each party in relation to rezoning and development of the annexation property. The initial zoning of PD that is proposed in this application does not include a corresponding master plan that specifies permitted land uses and development standards. The IGA requires the property owner to pursue a subsequent zoning approval within 180 days of annexation to create a master plan that would be attached to the PD district. This master plan will require City Council approval. The IGA sets a maximum of 1,500 residential units for the annexation property and prohibits industrial zoning. The City Council approved the IGA on November 26, 2024, followed by approval from the Chatham County Commissioners on December 6, 2024.

The Future Land Use Map designates the annexation property primarily for “Planned Development” with an area of “Surface Mine” mapped on a portion of the existing borrow pit at the north end of 420 Bush Road. The proposed zoning of PD is consistent with the Planned Development Future Land Use category. The forthcoming master plan should provide requirements and standards for decommissioning of the borrow pit in order to be consistent with the Surface Mine designation. Alternatively, the property owner may request a Future Land Use Map amendment in conjunction with the master plan approval process to designate the property uniformly as Planned Development. This amendment would enable a wider range of development options in the area around the borrow pit and would still require provisions for stabilization of the mining site. Overall, the IGA provides an enforceable framework for the property to be zoned in a way that is consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map.

Surrounding Properties:

These zoning districts surround the property.

- North:
 - Four properties in the City of Savannah totaling 1,038 acres are zoned New Hampstead PD.
 - One property partially located in the County and partially located in the City of Pooler totaling 169 acres is zoned Savannah R-A and Pooler PUD
- East:
 - One property partially located in the County and partially located in the City of Pooler totaling 200.72 acres is zoned Savannah R-A and Pooler PUD.
 - Five properties in the City of Pooler totaling 129 acres are zoned R-A
- South:
 - Eight properties in the County totaling 15 acres are zoned R-A.
- West:
 - Two properties in the City of Savannah totaling 178 acres are zoned New

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- Hampstead PD.
 - Eight properties in the City of Savannah totaling 8.04 acres is zoned RSF-6. These properties are part of the Cobblestone subdivision which is under construction.

Transportation Network: Little Neck Road passes between the two parcels that make up the property. The property has access to Little Neck Road from the east and west. The property at 420 Bush Road has frontage on the north side of Bush Road. 302 Bush Road does not have access to Bush Road and is solely accessible from Little Neck Road. The IGA includes requirements for each of the involved parties to construct or support construction of transportation improvements to Little Neck Road.

Public Services and Facilities: The property has access to City of Savannah water service in its northwest corner. A water line extending towards the northwest from the current northern terminus of Walden Pond Road crosses the western edge of 420 Bush Road. A sewer line is collocated with the water line. Another sewer line is available in Little Neck Road. After annexation, the assemblage will be served by the Savannah Police Department, Savannah Fire Rescue, and by the City of Savannah water and sanitary sewer. The IGA includes a requirement for the City of Savannah to provide an easement for water and sewer access to Scott Stell Park on the south side of Bush Road. This access will enable Chatham County to make improvements to the park.

Military Base, Installation or Airport: The property is not located in the Airport, Airfield Overlay.

Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the request to zone ~668 acres located at 302 Bush Rd (PIN 11026 01017) and 420 Bush Rd (PIN 11026 01002C) from Chatham County R-A (Residential-Agriculture) and PDR-SM (Planned Development Reclamation-Surface Mining) zoning designations to the City of Savannah PD (Planned Development) zoning to support the annexation of this parcel into the City of Savannah.

Note: This recommendation was determined from the information contained in the petitioner's application and other information available to staff at the time. This recommendation may be subject to change based on information provided at the public hearing.