



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: April 30, 2024
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: Zoning Map Amendment

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petitioner: Josh Yellin

Property Owner: Asbury United Methodist Church

Address: 1201 Abercorn Street and 115 Duffy Street

Alderman: District - 2 – Detric Leggett

County Commission: District - 2– Malinda Hodge

Property Identification Number: 20053 03001 and 20053 03014

Petition File No.: 24-002007-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone to Traditional Commercial (TC-1) with the following conditions: 1) A recombination plat for the two subject parcels shall be submitted upon approval by Council. 2) Development shall be consistent with the GDP reviewed and approved in association with this rezoning petition. Future redevelopment shall require MPC approval of a new GDP.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the request to rezone to Traditional Commercial (TC-1) with the following conditions: 1) A recombination plat for the two subject parcels shall be submitted upon approval by Council. 2) Development shall be consistent with the GDP reviewed and approved in association with this rezoning petition. Future redevelopment shall require MPC approval of a new GDP.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

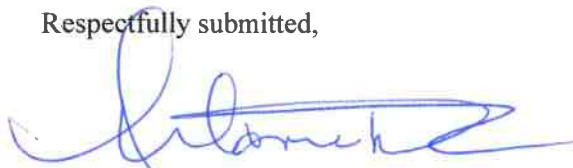
Traci Amick
Stephen Plunk
Travis Coles- Vice Chair
Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman
Laureen Boles
Dwayne Stephens
Tom Woiwode

Jeff Notrica
Joseph Welch - Online
Jay Melder
Michael Kaigler

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation with conditions.
(11-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 11	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Amick Coles Melder Notrica Plunk Welch Woiwode Boles Jarrett Kaigler Stephens		Ross Ervin Noha

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, Planning and Urban Design



CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

“Planning the Future, Respecting the Past”

STAFF REPORT

To: The City Council
From: The Planning Commission
Date: April 30, 2023
Subject: Zoning Map Amendment

Owner: Asbury United Methodist Church

Agent: Joshua Yellin, Hunter Maclean

Address: 1201 Abercorn Street and 115 East Duffy Street

PIN: 20053 03001 & 20053 03014

Alderman District: 2 – Alderman Detric Leggett

Chatham County Commission District: 2 – Commissioner Malinda Scott Hodge

File Number: 24-002007-ZA

Request

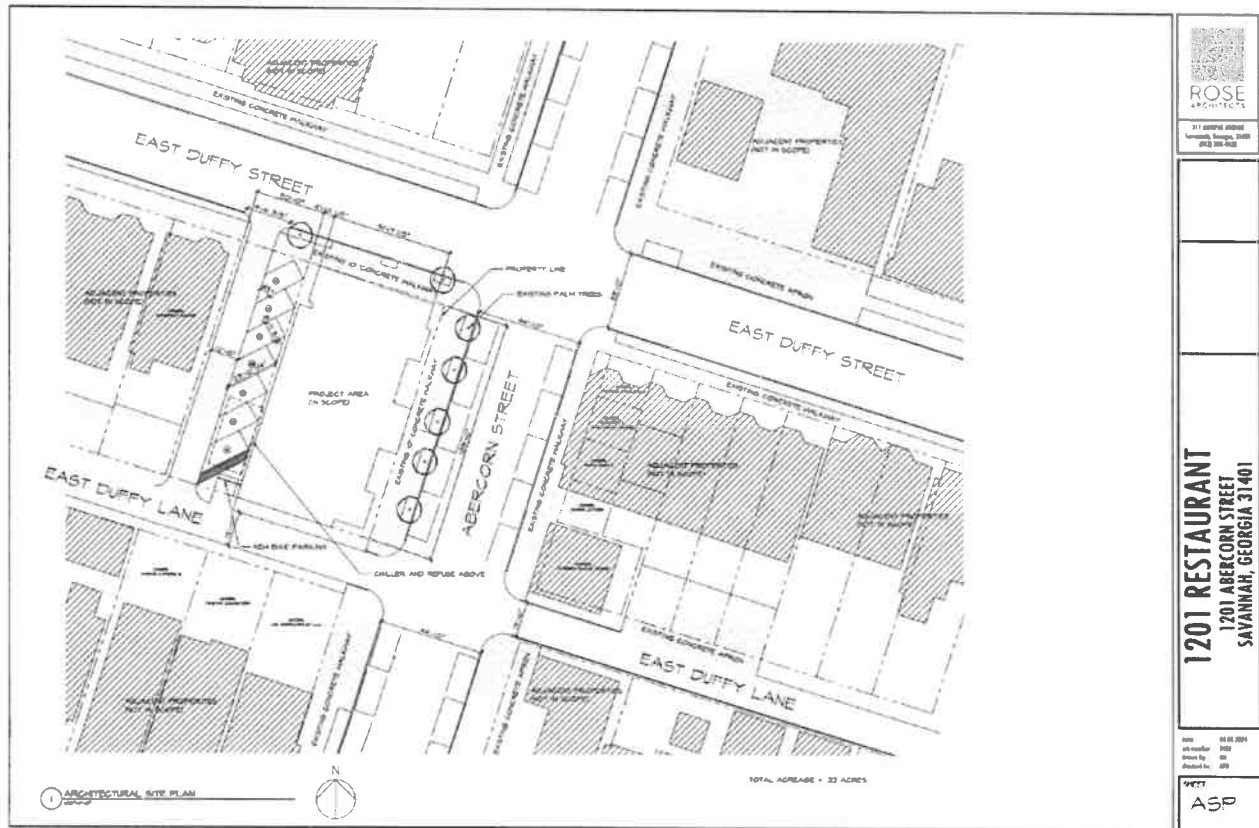
The Petitioner seeks to rezone the properties at 1201 Abercorn and 115 East Duffy Streets from TN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood-1) use to TC-1 (Traditional Commercial-1) to adaptively reuse the existing historic church on the parcel as a restaurant and event venue. The church is identified as a contributing resource in the Victorian Historic District. The adjoining parcel at 115 East Duffy is proposed to be developed as off-street parking in support of the use. Redevelopment of the site for this purpose requires a variance to the off-street parking requirements, which is also requested to be reviewed at this time.

- Permitted uses in the TC-1 (by right) which are not available in the TN-1:

Theatre/cinema/performing arts, Bank, Catering establishment, Instructional studio or classroom, Restaurant, Ancillary retail dealer.

- Permitted uses in TC-1 (limited use or special use approval required) which are not available in the TN-1:

Studio/multimedia production facility, Hall, bequest or reception, Distillery, craft, Bar, tavern, Package store



NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Proposed Site Plan

Facts and Findings

Site

The primary parcel, at 0.15 acres is covered 100% by the existing historic church. The adjoining parcel, at 0.07 acres is presently undeveloped. The subject parcels consist of 0.22 acres in total.

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. This parcel, though not zoned for the use, demonstrates evidence that it is or has been used in association with the Traditional Commercial-1-zoned (TC-1) property to the east. Further interior to the block in all other directions are residential uses of varying size, configuration and age.

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Dwellings/Convenience Store	TN-1/TC-1
South	Dwellings	TC-1

East	Dwellings/Restaurant	TN-1/TC-1
West	Dwellings	TN-1

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 presented the concept at a meeting of the Victorian Neighborhood Association on April 10, 2024. MPC Staff was present for the meeting. Despite concerns related to a lack of adequate parking, the proposal was generally well received. MPC Staff has also received one letter of support from a resident.

Impact and Suitability

Public Services and Facilities

The proposed apartments would be served by City water, sewer and stormwater systems. No significant adverse remarks were made by Engineering during the pre-development review of the project on August 3, 2023.

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 multi-tenant retail.’ Staff supports the FLUM amendment as the parcel is on a major thoroughfare, and in proximity of other parcels already zoned for traditional commercial use.

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.
- Development Standards: The development standards of the TN-1 zoning district appear in the attached chart.

Proposed Zoning District

- Intent of the TC-1 Zoning District: The Traditional Commercial (“TC-”) districts are established to allow commercial-oriented mixed-use development in areas that were developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Several factors, including location on higher classifications of streets, development standards that emphasize pedestrianism and the continuation of historic development patterns, combine to create a “Main Street” character within these districts. The TC districts are intended to be used in conjunction with nearby or adjacent TN and TR districts to create sustainable neighborhoods with convenient access to neighborhood-serving commercial uses. The intensity of uses allowed is indicated by the number following the district name, with the TC-1 being the most limited district and TC-2 the most intense.

The TC-1 district is established to ensure the vibrancy of historic mixed use neighborhoods with traditional development patterns characteristic of Savannah during the streetcar and early automobile eras. The district provides for commercial areas that are developed at a mass and scale harmonious with nearby residential neighborhoods.

- Allowed Uses: The uses allowed in the TC-1 zoning district appear in the attached chart.
- Development Standards: The development standards of the TC-1 zoning district appear in the attached chart.

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: *Although not impossible, it is unlikely the facility will be restored for the purpose for which it was originally constructed. The subject parcel has historically been used as a church. The requested zoning district and proposed use are a reasonable and appropriate incentive in support of the structure’s restoration.*

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

MPC Comment: *Preservation of socially and culturally significant resources as well as creative placemaking are noted priorities for the City of Savannah.*

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

MPC Comment: *Adverse traffic impacts in the immediate vicinity are to be expected as a result of establishment of this use – especially since the church has not been regular use recently; however, given the site’s location in the urban core, compact, walkable development with on street parking are appropriate and expected.*

Nonresidential uses in the Victorian and Streetcar historic districts are entitled to certain reductions in off street parking requirements. As redevelopment occurs, the City should continually evaluate parking solutions to encourage garage parking with convenient access to other transit and mobility options for navigation about downtown.

- 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 use will occur within the existing structure. The previous use was also assembly-like in nature, though peak use and traffic times will now shift from the prior use.*

- 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: *Preservation of the historic structure is the most compelling circumstance in support of the requested rezoning.*

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.

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 a legal nonconforming church in the present zoning 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 are available. A small amount of impervious surface will be added to the site to create 7 new off street parking spaces. Modifications for compliance with current stormwater and ROW encroachment requirements will be determined at the specific development plan phase of the project.*

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

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone to Traditional Commercial-1 (TC-1) with the following conditions:

1. A recombination plat for the two subject parcels shall be submitted upon approval by Council.
2. Development shall be consistent with the GDP reviewed and approved in association with this rezoning petition. Future redevelopment of the shall require MPC approval of a new General Development Plan.