



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: March 11, 2025
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: Zoning Map Amendment

PETITION REFERENCED:

Owner: SRL Land Venture, LLC

Agent: Josh Yellin, Hunter Maclean

Address: E President St

Alderman District: 2 – Detric Leggett

County Commission District: 3 – Bobby Lockett

Property Identification Number: 20006 03002

Petition File Number: 25-000899-ZA

MPC ACTION:

Based upon findings and evaluation, the Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject property from I-L to PD.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based upon findings and evaluation, MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject property from I-L to PD.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 11

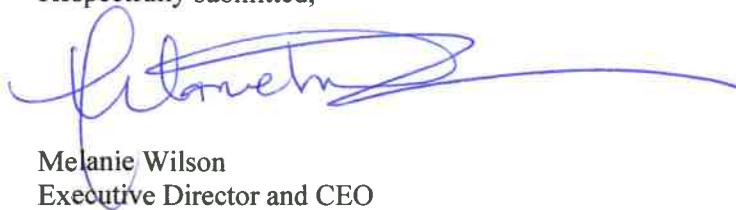
Laureen Boles
Tom Woiwode
Joseph B. Ervin
Amanda Wilson
Michael Kaigler
Jay Melder
Jeff Notrica
Travis Coles
Stephen Plunk
Coren Ross – ONLINE
Dwayne Stephens - ONLINE

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

APPROVAL Votes: 11	DENIAL Votes:	ABSENT	Abstain	Recused
Boles Woiwode Ervin Wilson Kaigler Melder Notrica Coles Plunk Stephens Ross		Welch Jarrett Amick		



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: March 11, 2025

Subject: Zoning Map Amendment

Agent: Josh Yellin, Hunter Maclean

Address: East President Street

PIN's: 20006 03002

Site Area: 1.95 acres

Aldermanic District: 2, Alderman Detric Leggett

Chatham County Commission District: 3, Commissioner Bobby Lockett

File Number: 25-000899-ZA

Neighborhood/Subdivision: Hitch Village/Fred Wessels Homes

Current Zoning District: Light Industrial (I-L)

Future Land Use (FLU) Category: Downtown Expansion

Request: The Petitioner requests to rezone the subject property for its inclusion and future development as a part of the Eastern Wharf (Savannah River Landing) Planned Development. The property is currently zoned I-L (light industrial). The Petitioner requests to rezone to PD (Planned Development). This request is made concurrently with Master Plan Amendment request 25-000900-ZA.

Facts and Findings

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 also posted on site.

Neighborhood meeting: The subject property is within the Hitch Village/Fred Wessels Homes neighborhood per Savannah Open Neighborhoods. There is no active neighborhood organization.

Zoning History: The Savannah River Landing/Eastern Wharf PD was adopted in its current form in [April 2017](#) (17-000452-ZA). The stated intent of the PD was to redevelop the approximately 56 acre site in a manner that more closely resembles and extends the Landmark Historic District just to the west. The original petition included the adoption of PD text which was appended to the City's Zoning Ordinance and a Master Plan which established a grid framework for development and designated each block as 'Open Space,' 'Mixed-Use Residential,' or 'Mixed-Use Commercial.'

Impact and Suitability

- 1. Transportation Network:** The SRL/Eastern Wharf Master Plan includes planned designated rights of way. The subject parcel will be recombined for inclusion in the planned road network with both internal connections to the development and external connections to President Street and General McIntosh Blvd.
- 2. Public Services and Facilities:** Adequacy of public facilities will be evaluated and requirements established at the time of site development permitting.
- 3. Chatham Area Transit (CAT):** Based on data obtainable through SAGIS, Eastern Wharf is not present served by CAT.



- 4. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element:** The Chatham County-Savannah Comprehensive Plan indicates the subject property as part of the 'Urban Core' Character Area with a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of Downtown Expansion. These are "areas in close proximity to the Central Business District that are identified for growth of retail, office, entertainment, open spaces, institutional, civic, and residential uses. This area is intended to be compatible and interconnected with the Downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods, while also accommodating new forms of urban development."

5. Existing I-L Zoning District:

- a. **Intent of the I-L District:** The IL district is established to provide for a wide range of research and development, light manufacturing and assembly, warehousing, and wholesaling activities as well as some support services. These uses are subject to standards intended to ensure such development is compatible with adjacent and nearby non-industrial areas. Development must be operated in a clean and quiet manner, with most activities occurring indoors, and should not be a nuisance to nearby non-industrial uses.
- b. **Allowed Uses:** For permissible uses please refer [Sec. 5.4 Principal Use Table](#) of City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance.
- c. **Development Standards:** The development standards for the I-L district have been appended to the end of this report.

6. Proposed PD Zoning District:

- a. **Intent of the PD 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.

- b. **Allowed Uses:** A planned development may contain any or all of the uses specified in the approved PD General Master Plan. A wide range of uses is possible in a PD district, and the specific uses allowed may be different in each PD district, therefore the use table in [Sec. 5.4. Principal Use Table](#) does not include the PD district. All uses that are identified in an approved General Master Plan shall be permitted uses within the planned development. Any uses not identified in the General Master Plan shall not be permitted. The Mayor and Aldermen have the discretion to require that certain uses be classified as limited uses or special uses.

Mixed use developments are strongly encouraged in Planned Developments including the mixing of principal residential uses with principal nonresidential uses. Mixed use development may occur by having two (2) or more different principal uses located in the same building or by having two (2) or more different principal uses located in different buildings sited on the same lot or parcel.

- c. **Development Standards:** The PD district encourages innovative land planning and design concepts by:
- i. Reducing or eliminating the inflexibility that sometimes results from strict application of zoning and development standards that were designed primarily for individual lots or developments;
 - ii. Encouraging the assembly of properties that might otherwise be developed in unrelated increments;
 - iii. Ensuring orderly and thorough planning and review procedures that will result in a cohesive development;
 - iv. Allowing greater freedom in providing a mix of land uses in the same development, including a mix of housing types, lot sizes, densities and nonresidential uses to encourage variety and to avoid monotony;
 - v. Allowing development to take advantage of special site characteristics, locations and land uses to protect environmentally sensitive areas and to promote better design; and
 - vi. Encouraging allocation and improvement of common open and recreational space in residential areas as well as providing for the maintenance of the open and recreational space.

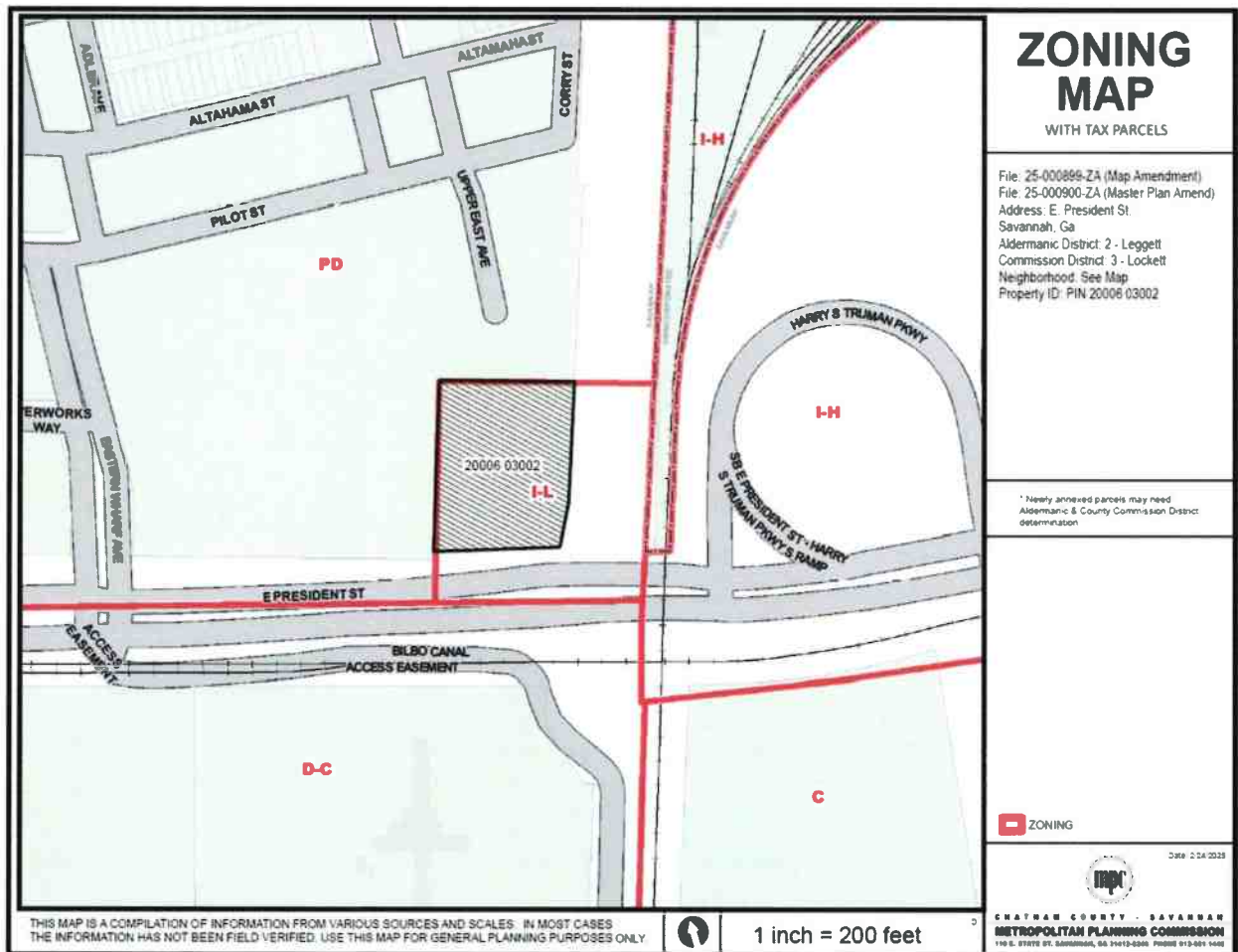
7. **Development Pattern:** The 2004-2006 adoption of the *Savannah River Landing* (now Eastern Wharf) PD included a conceptual Civic Master Plan that was deeply inspired by Savannah's historic and renowned block pattern. According the plan, *"[t]he single most important defining element of the Civic Master Plan is the street and block plan, connecting the large open property to the historic patterns of the City of Savannah. The street and block plan organizes the site, provides public access to the waterfront, respects view corridors, improves circulation, and creates small blocks to accommodate a range of uses and open spaces. It is the bases for the official mapping of streets, parks and other public spaces that will shape the future of the public realm."*



Savannah River Landing Civic Master Plan - 2006

The land uses and zoning districts surrounding the subject site include the following:

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Vacant (Mixed Use Commercial)	PD
South	Vacant (Mixed Use)	D-C
East	Bilbo Canal Truman Parkway	I-L, I-H
West	Savannah Marriot Riverfront General McIntosh Blvd	D-W, D-C



Zoning Map

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

- 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 range of uses proposed within the Eastern Wharf PD are more suitable than those permitted in the current I-L zoning district.

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

MPC Comment: The proposed zoning furthers an ongoing downtown revitalization initiative aimed at integrating the east riverfront more closely with the pedestrian-oriented, grid pattern of the Landmark District.

b. Compatibility

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

MPC Comment: The property is more likely to be a detriment if developed in accordance with its current zoning 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 requested rezoning would permit the inclusion and development of the subject property in accordance with the adjoining Planned Development district.

- 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: Based on available information about the project's history, the improvements of the adjoining Bilbo Canal are likely the factor that now permit the inclusion of the subject parcel in the Eastern Wharf PD. The parcel was originally slated to host a pump station.

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 zoning is consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans and policies.

d. Reasonable Use

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

MPC Comment: The small size and location of the property make establishment of an industrial use on the site unlikely.

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: Adequacy of public facilities will be evaluated at the time of site development permitting.

f. Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: The site is not in proximity of a military base.

In addition to the standards above, the following review criteria of [Sec 6.1.12](#) apply to applications for the establishment of Planned Development districts:

b. Compatibility

The rezoning proposal will be constructed, arranged and operated so as to be compatible with the immediate vicinity and not to interfere with the development and [use](#) of adjacent property in accordance with the applicable district regulations.

MPC Comment: The site will be recombined with adjoining property once rezoned and the Master Plan amended to provide additional development area for mixed commercial uses.

c. Resource Protection

The rezoning proposal will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any resource determined by the Mayor and Aldermen to be of significant natural, scenic or historic importance. Such historic resource shall be listed or eligible to be listed on the local or National Register of Historic Places.

MPC Comment: The proposal will not result in the loss or destruction of any resources of natural, scenic or historic significance.

d. Design Review

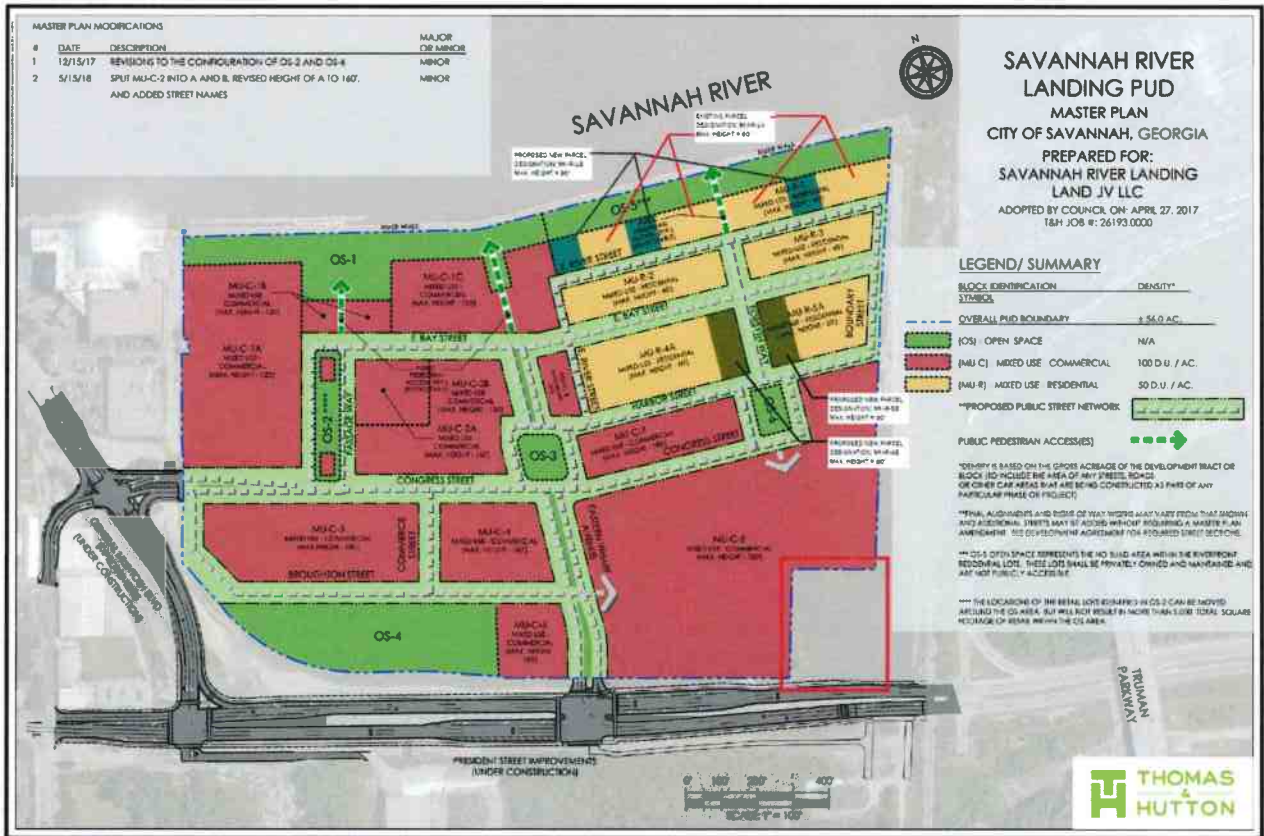
The rezoning proposal will be compatible or complimentary with the adjacent properties. The architectural style, materials, other treatments, etc., to be utilized within a Planned

Development shall be considered by the Planning Commission and Mayor and Aldermen as part of the overall review process.

MPC Comment: Design standards regarding permissible exterior finishing materials, minimization of the visual impact of excessively long building faces and regulation of the placement of entrances were proposed to be enforced through covenants and restrictions placed by the master developer. Upon inclusion, development on the present site will be subject to the same design review process previously established for Eastern Wharf.

Recommendation

Based upon findings and evaluation, the Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject property from I-L to PD.



Current Master Plan at time of request (adopted 9 July 2020)
 Subject parcel of present request identified in red square