



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

MEMORANDUM-

DATE: June 3, 2025

TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH

FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Zoning Map Amendment

PETITION REFERENCED:

Owner: Speir Property, LLC

Agent: Robert McCorkle

Address: 420 & 302 Bush Rd

Alderman District: Unassigned (Likely 5 – Dr. Estella Shabazz)

County Commission District: 7 – Dean Kicklighter

Property Identification Number: 11026 01017, 11026 01002C

Petition File Number: 25-001709-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends <u>approval</u> of the proposed rezoning of the subject properties from PD (Planned Development) to PD (Planned Development) with the following conditions:

- 1) Prior to MPC approval of any final master plans:
 - a. the Petitioner shall provide a 'Wetland Plan' identifying wetlands present on the site and identifying areas proposed to be filled and preserved.
 - b. the Petitioner shall provide an updated General Master Plan reflecting the required Wetland Plan.
- 2) The site shall not be cleared or graded until all wetland-related permitting is finalized.
- Specific Development Plans for pods within the parcel presently identified as 302 Bush Road shall be forwarded by MPC Staff to the Planning Commission for review and approval.
- 4) No vehicular access onto Bush Rd.
- Development of the Multi-Family Tract requiring the following stipulations: 100' Undisturbed Buffer from the Property Boundary, Supplemental landscape plantings occurring within the last 25' of the Undisturbed Buffer interior to the Property (75'-100' from the Property Boundary), 8' Fence installed along the Property Boundary, 40' Building Setback from the 100' Undisturbed Buffer, and

no 4-story Multi-Family buildings.

In evaluation of subsequent final master plans, MPC further recommends Planning Commission consideration of specific conditions regarding:

- Minimum Open/Green Space required;
- Floodplain avoidance; and
- Minimum design standards for stormwater ponds to address quantity and quality.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

MPC Staff recommends <u>approval</u> of the proposed rezoning of the subject properties from PD (Planned Development) to PD (Planned Development) with the following conditions:

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 - a. the Petitioner shall provide a 'Wetland Plan' identifying wetlands present on the site and identifying areas proposed to be filled and preserved.
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In evaluation of subsequent final master plans, MPC further recommends Planning Commission consideration of specific conditions regarding:

- Minimum Open/Green Space required;
- Floodplain avoidance; and
- Minimum design standards for stormwater ponds to address quantity and quality.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 10

Traci Amick
Laureen Boles
Travis Coles – Vice Chair
Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman
Michael Kaigler
Jeff Notrica
Stephen Plunk
Joseph Welch
Amanda Wilson
Tom Woiwode

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:

Approve Staff Recommendation with conditions. (9-1)

APPROVAL	DENIAL	ABSENT	Abstain	Recused
Votes: 9	Votes: 1			
Amick	Jarrett	Ervin		
Boles		Melder		
Coles		Ross		
Kaigler		Stephens		
Notrica		_		
Plunk				
Welch				
Wilson				
Woiwode				

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:

June 3, 2025

Subject:

Zoning Map Amendment

Applicant/Agent: Robert McCorkle III, Agent for Northpoint Industrial XVI, LLC

Address: 302 Bush Road, 420 Bush Road

PIN: 11026 01017, 11026 01002C

Area: 671.53 acres

Alderman District: Unassigned (Likely 5 – Dr. Estella Shabazz)

Chatham County Commission District: 7 – Dean Kicklighter

Request: Rezone from PD (Planned Development) to

PD (Planned Development) to apply PD Text and Master Plan

File Number: 25-001709-ZA-MAP

Request

The Petitioner requests MPC consideration of a request to rezone the subject properties from PD (Planned Development) to PD (Planned Development) designation within the City of Savannah to adopt and apply new development standards to the subject property, identified as the "McLendon Tract" or "Speir Property." Proposed is a 682 acre mixed use residential and neighborhood-scale commercial development. Upon completion, the project could see the construction of up to 1,500 dwelling units with recreational amenities and the potential for up to 30,000 square feet of neighborhood-scale commercial uses.

Background

Public Notice

A request for evaluation of a Development of Regional Impact (DRI - #4421) was submitted to the Coastal Regional Commission and Georgia Department of Community Affairs on March 13, 2025. A final report was issued on May 2, 2025. The DRI review included distribution of data about the development proposal to adjoining local governments and impacted parties to permit review and comment regarding potential impacts. Departments within the local government of the City of Savannah, the Ogeechee Riverkeeper and several private citizens submitted comments that are included in the final report.

As with all zoning actions, prior to the MPC public hearing, an advertisement was run in the Savannah Morning News, signs were posted on site and mailed notices were sent to adjoining property owners in accordance with notification procedures established in the Zoning Ordinance. Subsequent notice will occur prior to City Council hearings rezoning.

Zoning History

The City of Savannah, Chatham County, the owner of the annexed property, and the intended developer entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) that was approved by the City on November 26, 2024. The initial Planned Development (PD) zoning approved in January 2025 did not include a corresponding Master Plan that specifies permitted land uses and development standards. The IGA required the property owner to pursue a subsequent zoning approval within 180 days of annexation to establish a Master Plan and development standards that would be attached to the PD district. The present request represents the fulfillment of this requirement.

The IGA sets a maximum of 1,500 residential units for the property and prohibits industrial zoning. It also establishes cost sharing arrangements for associated road improvements to Little Neck Road in support of the development.

Community Engagement

The Petitioner has provided the following list of meetings that have occurred regarding the proposal since annexation:

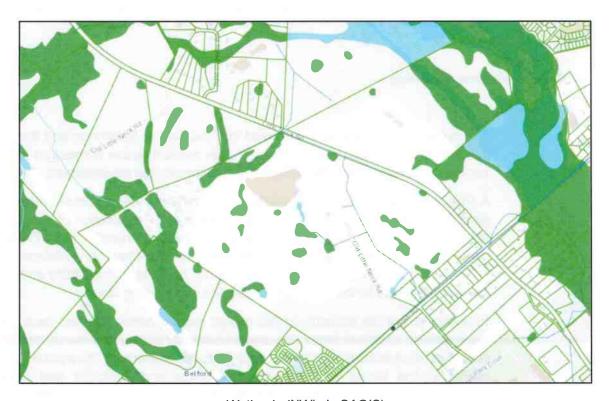
- January 6th, 2025 Large Neighborhood Group Meeting
- February 24th Large Group Public Meeting at Compassion Church Auditorium
- March 18th Meeting with Focus Group of Neighborhood Leaders
- April 2nd Large Group Public Meeting at Compassion Church Auditorium
- April 15th. Site Walk with Neighbors along shared Boundary line
- April 30th Conference Call with Focus Group of Neighborhood Leaders

Existing Zoning and Development Pattern

Site

The site currently consists of 2 parcels totaling approximately 671.53 acres, per data available via SAGIS. The parcel identified as 420 Bush Road has greater than 4,000 feet of frontage on Little Neck, while 302 Bush Road has greater than 2,700 feet of frontage on Little Neck. While 420 Bush Road has nearly 2,000 feet of frontage on Bush Road, access to this road by future residents and visitors has been requested to be closed in favor of directing traffic to Little Neck where significant improvements are planned. The parcel at 302 Bush Road has no Bush Road frontage or access.

Both parcels are encumbered by wetlands (238.4 acres total) and have portions within the 100-year floodplain as indicated by the City of Savannah's updated model.



Wetlands (NWI via SAGIS)



100-year Flood Plain (City of Savannah Flood Model via SAGIS)

Existing & Proposed Zoning

Intent

The subject properties were annexed into the City of Savannah and the existing PD zoning applied on <u>January 9, 2025</u>. The present action is required to adopt a zoning framework (Text and Master Plan) to govern the development of the tracts.

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 PD district encourages innovative land planning and design concepts by:

- 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, <u>densities</u> 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.

As proposed, the PD would permit 4 use categories: Residential (R), Multifamily (MF), Mixed-Use Commercial (MU-C) and Private Recreation (P).

Residential (R)	•	Single-family detached	357.5 ac
	•	Single-family attached	
Multifamily (MF)	•	Single-family detached	44.1 ac
	•	Single-family attached	
	•	Multifamily Dwellings	
Mixed-Use Commercial (MU-C)	•	Neighborhood	8.9 ac
		Commercial and	
		Convenience	
	•	Office and Professional	
	•	Childcare Centers	
	•	Upper-story residential	
Private Recreation (P)	•	Community Recreation	274.2 ac
			682.9 ac

Impact and Suitability

Comprehensive Plan/FLUM Consistency

The predominate future land use designation on the subject properties is 'Planned Development." These areas are described 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."

Transportation Network and Transit

The subject properties flank Little Neck Road, which will serve as the principal means of ingress and egress to all development pods on either side. The property at 420 Bush Road also has frontage on the north side of Bush Road, which has been requested to remain unused in association with the improvements out of concern for potential impacts to rural residential character and stormwater conveyance. This determination will ultimately be made during the site permitting process upon evaluation by Traffic Engineering and Fire. Five access points (including one full-movement) are currently shown along Little Neck Road, but number and placement may change slightly through the development of final master plans.

The executed IGA between the City, County, property owner and intended developer includes agreements for each of the involved parties to construct or support construction of transportation improvements to Little Neck Road. The chart below represents preliminary trip generation data, but a full Traffic Impact Analysis is underway.

Overall Trip Totals				
ITE Category	Daily	Daily		
210 - Single Family Detached	5,837			
215 - Single Family Attached	2,743			
220 - Multi Low-Rise	3,316			
822 - Shopping Center		1,307		
851 - Convience Store		3,049		
936 - Coffee/Donut no Drive Thru		109		
Total:	11,896	4,465		

Preliminary Trip Generation Data

Chatham Area Transit (CAT) Service is not presently available to serve the subject properties.

Public Services and Facilities

The development is proposed to be served by City of Savannah Water and Sewer, Savannah Police Department and Savannah Fire Rescue.

Per the applicant, development of dwelling units is planned in accordance with the following schedule, which has been developed in correspondence with City of Savannah Engineering Staff.

Delivery Schedule						
2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2032	Total
300	300	300	300	110	132*	1310

^{*} An additional 58 ERUs are expected in 2032 for a total of 190 in 2032

Zoning Ordinance Review

A. Rezoning Standards Applicable (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 is permitted by the current zoning district. MPC Comment: The property is currently zoned PD (Planned Development) with no associated master plan or governing PD ordinance. Regardless of whether the proposed master plan and text are regarded favorably, City Council must adopt standards to guide development of the property before permits may be issued for any construction.

Coordinated development of the entire parcel is more desirable, however, than continued incremental subdivision for single-family home development. The proposal would increase the intensity of uses on the parcels and volume of traffic on adjoining thoroughfares considerably, but roadway improvements and buffering are required which will mitigate some impacts to adjoining property owners.

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

MPC Comment: Essentially, the proposal does address an urgent need in the region for additional housing units. Additionally, Staff has recommended the inclusion of neighborhood-scale commercial uses into the development to reduce trips to more distant retail and service outlets for new and existing residents.

b. Compatibility

- i. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property:
 - **MPC Comment:** The proposed uses are not of a nature that will devalue adjoining properties for ordinarily anticipated residential purposes. The proposal would increase the intensity of uses on the parcels and volume of traffic on adjoining thoroughfares, but coordinated development of the entire vacant parcel is more desirable than continued fragmented subdivision without proper infrastructure installation.
- 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 development proposal is both compatible and preferential to the pattern seen along Little Neck Road, which consists of single homesteads with direct road frontage and flag-lot subdivisions.

The proposal offers the ability to develop a large, contiguous parcel with planned circulation via rights-of-way meeting current standards, utilities, and

neighborhood-scale commercial uses that should have the effect of reducing nearby resident trips to more distant locations for convenience commercial needs.

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: Principally, the urgent regional need for additional housing units to support economic growth is likely the most significant factor favoring approval of the proposal. Secondarily, any commitments to innovative site design that may be achieved and the potential to set precedent for more contextually sensitive development in the interest of ecological balance is also a compelling opportunity in consideration of this project.

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 present request is substantially consistent with the Plan 2024 Future Land Use Map and associated goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

d. Reasonable Use

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

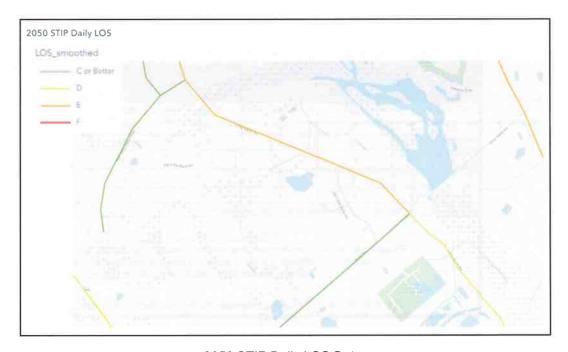
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e. Adequate Public facilities

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 water, sewer and stormwater utilities or required system improvements will be determined at the time development permits are sought. However, an anticipated delivery schedule has been developed in cooperation with City Staff. Additionally, Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools will be notified of the proposed development to account for future enrollment growth in their facilities planning efforts.

Preliminary 2050 STIP data currently evaluates the daily level of service (LOS) for this segment of Little Neck Road as 'E.' This rating indicates that the segment is operating at its capacity and that any disruption to flow has the potential to create substantial delays and queuing. Continued interjurisdictional efforts should be encouraged to promote coordination in development phasing and upgrade of our transportation network. The potential for Chatham Area Transit service should also be explored.



2050 STIP Daily LOS Data

f. Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: The subject property is not within a airport or airfield overlay, or within proximity of a military installation.

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 City of Savannah's Zoning Ordinance establishes regulations for buffering both from existing less-intense residential uses and sensitive environmental areas that adjoin the development. The PD shall incorporate development standards that

meet or exceed current NewZO minimums for ensuring compatibility of adjoining dissimilar uses.

BUFFERS	
PRIMARY ROAD BUFFER - RESIDENTIAL	50-FT
PRIMARY ROAD BUFFER- MULTIFAMILY	25-FT
PERIMETER BUFFER	40-FT

Proposed buffers per submitted General Master Plan

(Proposed buffer exhibit appended to the end of this report)

N/A	3		5	
N/A				6
14/7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
В	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
С	B [1]	N/A	N/A	N/A
D	C [1]	N/A	N/A	N/A
E	D	С	В	N/A
	B C D	B N/A C B[1] D C[1]	B N/A N/A C B[1] N/A D C[1] N/A E D C	B N/A N/A N/A C B[1] N/A N/A D C[1] N/A N/A E D C B

(Type A, B, and C Buffer Standards Appended to the end of this report)

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 subject parcels contain significant wetlands which must be protected through buffering in accordance with <u>local</u>, <u>state</u> and federal regulations. The Petitioner has provided a determination of 238.4 acres of wetlands on the parcels which is said to be based on an approved 2024 USACE jurisdictional determination. However, as details are not disclosed on the submitted exhibits, it would be prudent at this stage to inquire of the developer the extent of wetlands impacts anticipated, and, if necessary, to recommend conditions for minimum wetland preservation and enhanced stormwater management.

Relevant to note is that general open space standards are provided which make reference to retained wetlands, but the full extent of wetland preservation is not specified.

Section 4.3 Open Space

The PD shall not have less than 20% community open space (136 acres) based on gross acreage of the PD). Community open space includes primary road buffers, perimeter buffers, parks, wetlands and wetland buffers, the utility corridor transecting the PD, and upland wooded preserves and shall be based on gross acreage.

4.3.1 Neighborhood Standards

Open space shall be provided as follows:

- a. Single Family Residential: 10% of the total single family residential development areas (only 5% of which can be a detention pond (excluding existing lakes resulting from the borrow pits) and a maximum of 50% of which can be retained wetlands).
- b. Multi-Family Residential: 20% (only 10% of which can be a detention pond and a maximum of 50% of which can be retained wetlands).

4.3.2 Nonresidential Standards

- a. Open Space shall be provided as follows:
 - i. Mixed-Use Commercial: 20% (only 5% of which can be a detention pond and a maximum of 50% of which can be retained wetlands).

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: The subject properties are not within or in proximity of any nationally or locally designated historic district or identified assets of historic significance. Per submitted documents, the master developer may establish an Architectural Review Board or other design committee to exercise internal design controls.

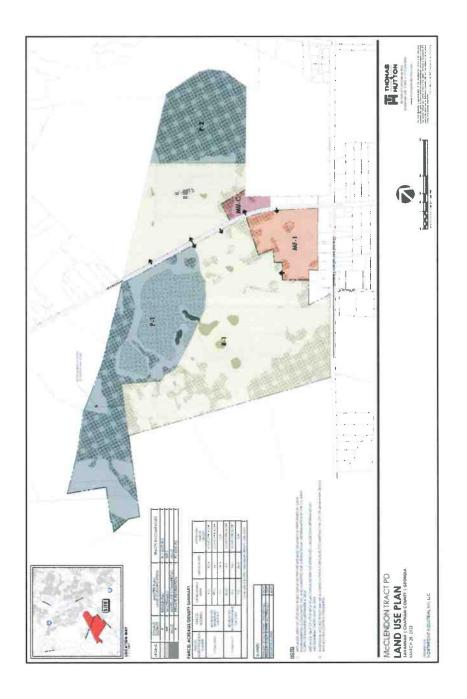
Recommendation

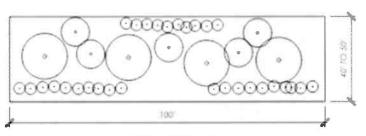
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- 5) Development of the Multi-Family Tract requiring the following stipulations: 100' Undisturbed Buffer from the Property Boundary, Supplemental landscape plantings occurring within the last 25' of the Undisturbed Buffer interior to the Property (75'-100' from the Property Boundary), 8' Fence installed along the Property Boundary, 40' Building Setback from the 100' Undisturbed Buffer, and no 4-story Multi-Family buildings.

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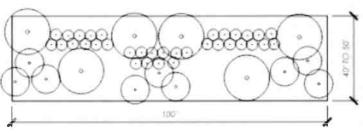
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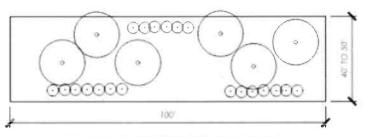
SINGLE FAMILY
RESIDENTIAL PARCEL

- 4 CANOPY IREES
- 5 UNDER STORY TREES
- 30 EVERGREEN SHRURS MAZDUM KE' BIKWING HEIGHT



MULTI-FAMILY PARCEL.
MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL

- 6 CANOPY IREES
- 9 UNDER STORY TREES.
- 35 EVERGREEN SHRUBS



MUNICIPAL, SERVICE/CIVIC PARCELS

- 6 CANOPY TREES
- 35 EVERGREEN SHRUES (MARWUM-6" TRIMOUT) HEICHT)

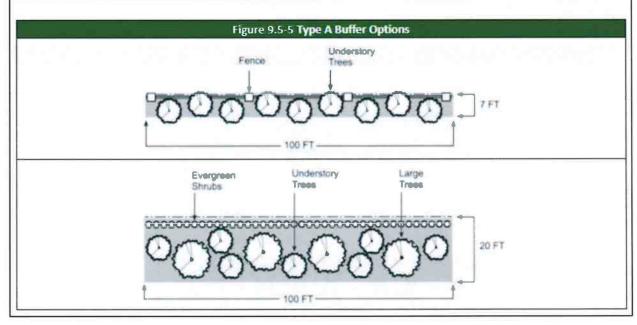
PERIMETER BUFFER MINIMUMS

FIGURE 4.1



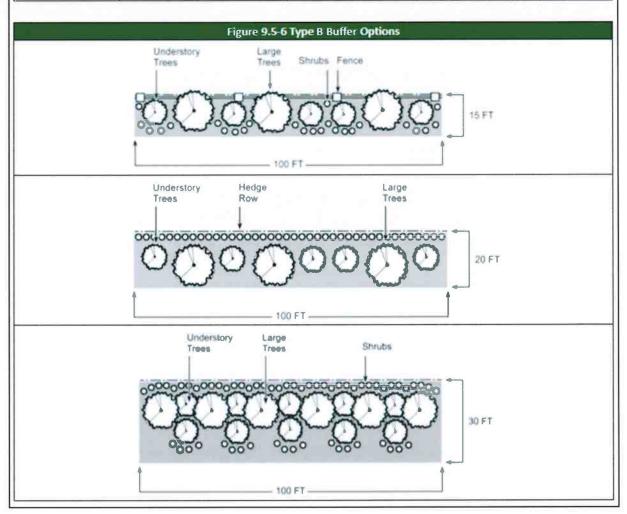
50 Fish of Commerce Way Savannah, GA 31405 • \$12,234,5300 www.shomesanahutton.com/

	Type A Buffer Planting	Options
	7 ft buffer with 6 ft fence/wall	20 ft buffer with No fence/wall
Plantings (per 100 linear feet)	9 understory trees (small only)	4 large trees7 understory trees40 shrubs



2. Type B Buffer Planting Standards

Type B Buffer Planting Options				
	15 ft buffer with 6 ft fence/wall	20 ft buffer with 6 ft hedge row	30 ft buffer with No fence/wall or hedge	
Plantings (per 100 linear feet)	3 large trees5 understory trees25 shrubs	 3 large trees 5 understory trees Hedge row	6 large trees 10 understory trees 60 shrubs	



3. Type C Buffer Planting Standards

	Type C Buffer Planting	Options
4. 本本等性或	20 ft buffer with 6 ft fence/wall	25 ft buffer with 6 ft hedge row
Plantings (per 100 linear feet)	4 large trees7 understory trees35 shrubs	4 large trees7 understory treeshedge row

