



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: February 6, 2024
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: Special Use Request

PETITION REFERENCED:

Petitioner: Ruth Threatt
Property Owner: Robinson Theresa Trustee
Address: 2501 Bull Street
Alderman: District - 2 – Detric Legget
County Commission: District - 2– Malinda Scott Hodge
Property Identification Number: 20074 07003
Petition File No.: 24-000227-ZA

MPC ACTION:

The Planning Commission recommends **Approval** of the requested Special Use with the following conditions: The Special Use Permit shall be nontransferable.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends **Approval** of the requested Special Use with the following conditions: The Special Use Permit shall be nontransferable.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 9

Traci Amick Jeff Notrica
Coren Ross
Travis Coles- Vice Chair
Karen Jarrett - Chairwoman
Laureen Boles
Wayne Noha
Dwayne Stephens
Tom Woiwode

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation.
(9-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 9	DENIAL Votes: 0	ABSENT
Amick Boles Coles Noha Ross Jarrett Notrica Stephens Woiwode		Kaigler Melder Welch Ervin

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
 Bridget Lidy, Department of Inspections



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning the Future - Respecting the Past

To: The Mayor and Aldermen, City of Savannah
From: The Planning Commission
Date: February 6, 2024
Subject: Special Use Request
Petitioner: Ruth Threatt
Property Owner: Robinson Theresa Trustee
Address: 2501 Bull Street
Alderman: District 2 – Alderman Detric Leggett
County Commission: District 2 – Commissioner Malinda Scott Hodge
Property Identification Number: 20074 07003
Petition File No.: 24-000227-ZA

REQUEST: The Petitioner requests approval of a Special Use pursuant to Section 3.10 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance to establish a Bar/Tavern Use in the TC-1 (Traditional Commercial -1) zoning district. The Special Use process includes review by the Planning Commission and the Savannah City Council. Should the request be approved by City Council, approval and issuance of an alcohol license will still be required for the sale of alcoholic beverages. The scope of the present review includes only those criteria established by the Zoning Ordinance regarding appropriateness of the use at the requested location.

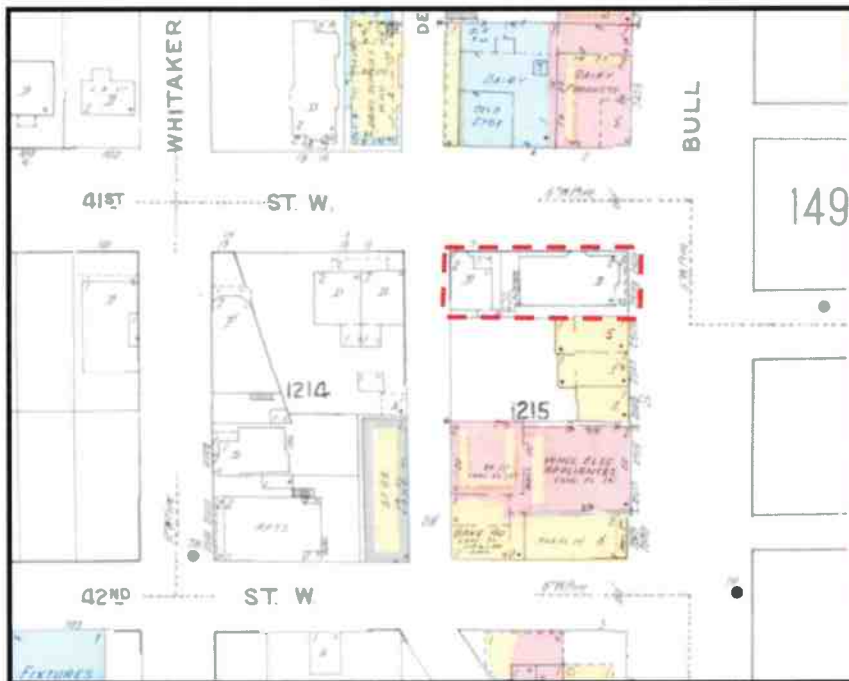


BACKGROUND: The structure at 2501 Bull Street is a noncontributing building in the Streetcar Local Historic District, constructed originally in 1960 and measuring approximately 2,869 sf in area. It is located within a mixed-use, but increasingly commercial, area at the southwest corner of the intersection of West 41st and Bull Streets.

The subject parcel is a conforming double-frontage lot within the TC-1 zoning district. It consists of 0.137 acres (5,990.4 sf) in lot area and having 57.6 feet of frontage on both Bull Street and Desoto Avenue. The parcel is situated within the Streetcar and Victorian parking reduction area. Nonresidential uses are parking exempt up to 3,000 sf of floor area.

The Petitioner intends to establish a bar/tavern use in the existing structure on the parcel. Per the Zoning Ordinance, this is described as *“an establishment devoted primarily to the dispensing of alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises. While such use may also provide food sales, more than 50% of its annual gross food and beverage sales income is derived from the sales of alcoholic beverages. This use may include entertainment. This term does not include nightclub.”*

In initial conversation with MPC Staff, the Petitioner indicated the use could possibly be associated with the adjoining Sey Hey Lounge at 2505 Bull Street. The structure at 2501 Bull Street does not presently have kitchen facilities. Extension of the lounge use could possibly enable food service along with alcohol sales at the new location.



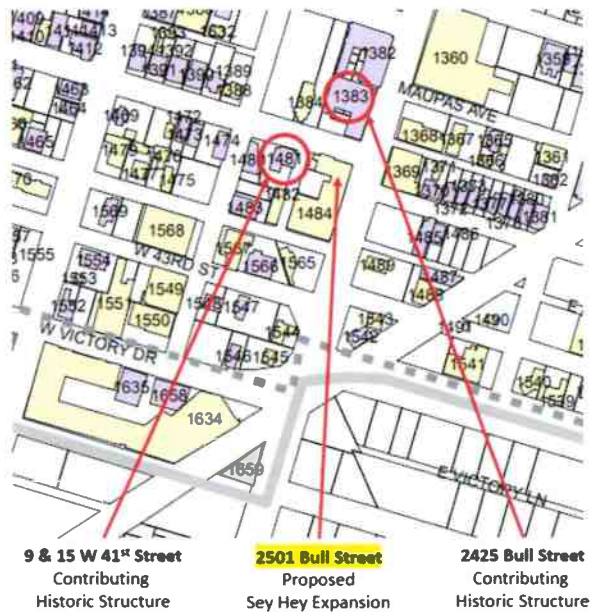
Sanborn maps from 1955 indicate dwellings at the front and rear of the subject parcel.

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. The notice included instructions on how to access the meeting via the internet.

2. **Existing Development Pattern:**

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

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Mixed-Use/Residential and Commercial Building (Streetcar Supplement Map #1383)	TC-1
South	Sey Hey Lounge	TC-1
East	Commercial/Retail Uses	TC-1
West	Residential/Historic Multi-family Structure (Streetcar Supplement Map#1481)	TN-2



3. General Provisions 3.10.2:

The General Provisions for Special Uses identify the purpose of the process and are as follows:

- Special uses within each zoning district are uses that would not be appropriate generally or without restriction but which, if controlled as to number, area, location, or relation to other uses may be appropriate in a particular zoning district.
- A [special use](#) permit shall be required for all special uses (identified with an “S” designation) as set forth in the permitted [use table](#) in [Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table](#) or as part of a use condition in [Article 8.0, Use Standards](#).
- Specific use standards may be applicable to the approved special use.
- Any use or activity on the property not specifically permitted by [Article 5.0, Base Zoning Districts](#), or the special use permit as modified, shall be deemed unlawful and subject to [Article 12.0](#).

4. Review Criteria for Special Use Permits Section 3.10.8:

When reviewing a special use permit request, the review authority shall consider the following criteria:

- a) Whether the special use is consistent with the intent, goals, strategies,

policies, guiding principles and programs of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans;

Staff Comment: The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as *Traditional Commercial*. The Traditional Commercial classification allows for 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. The proposed bar/tavern use would be compatible with the parcel's future land use designation, current zoning, and the general pattern of development in the area.

- b) Whether specific use standards for the special use, if any, as provided in Article 8.0, Use Standards, can be achieved;

Staff Comment: There are no specific use standards for grant of the Special Use Permit with which the Petitioner must comply. However, there are separate criteria to obtain and maintain an alcohol license from the City of Savannah. Additionally, alcohol licensing issues could encumber any plans for association between the proposed use and the existing Sey Hey establishment.

- c) Whether the special use is detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, welfare, function, and appearance of the adjacent uses or general vicinity by reason of any one or more of the following: the number, area, location, height, orientation, intensity (such as traffic, noise, odor, hours of operation), or relation to the neighborhood or other adjacent uses.

Staff Comment:

- The Petitioner spoke at a regular meeting of the Thomas Square Neighborhood Association on January 16, 2024 to describe the concept of the proposed use. MPC Staff was present for the meeting. No negative sentiment was voiced, and the general perception seemed to be that Sey Hey is regarded as a 'good neighbor' in the community.
- The City regulates operational hours for businesses selling alcohol from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 a.m. The Petitioner has not requested specific operating hours, but has expressed a desire to operate until 1 or 2 am on at least some nights.
- The subject parcel is within the Victorian and Streetcar Parking Reduction

Area, and at less than 3,000 square feet has no off-street parking requirement. On-street parking is common in this area, which already hosts several neighborhood-scale drinking and eating establishments which are open relatively late.

- Association of the existing Sey Hey establishment with the proposed bar/tavern would make the combined use greater than 3,000 sq ft, triggering the need to meet the off-street parking requirement.
- A bar/tavern use requires 1 space for each 75 sf of indoor and outdoor floor area.
- Eating and drinking establishments are entitled to a 25% reduction in off-street parking within the Victorian and Streetcar Parking Reduction Area (NewZO Sec. 9.3.7).

d) Whether the subject property is adequate in shape and size to accommodate the Special Use;

Staff Comment: The parcel is conforming within the TC-1 zoning district and is presently developed, though not to 100% lot coverage. The proposed use will occur largely within an existing building, though a future exterior building addition or patio construction cannot be ruled out. A site plan was not submitted in association with the request, and it is feasible that external improvements triggering a site plan review *may not* be required to establish the proposed use. If, however, the floor area is later expanded in excess of the 3,000 sf threshold, a variance to the off-street parking requirement is to be expected.



- e) Whether adequate public facilities are available to serve the proposed use, including, but not limited to water; sanitary sewer; stormwater drainage facilities; public safety and emergency facilities; roadway capacity; vehicular ingress and egress; or, that the applicant will provide adequately for such services and for placement in an appropriate location.

Staff Comment: Adequate public facilities are available to support the proposed use within the existing structure.

- f) Whether the special use will result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any feature determined by the review authority to be of natural, cultural, scenic, or historic importance.

Staff Comment: There will be no loss, destruction, or damage to any site or structure of natural, cultural scenic or historic importance.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The special use provisions of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance are designed to allow the reviewing authorities to consider the establishment of uses in zoning districts, where the use may be appropriate but should not be allowed by right. The review criteria outlined in

Section 3.10.8 are the standards for considering a special use. In evaluating the request against these standards, the subject property and proposed use may be regarded as appropriate. The site is currently developed for commercial purposes and the requested use is not substantially dissimilar to others in the immediate vicinity. If properly regulated, the proposed use is unlikely to have a negative impact on adjacent properties.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Petitioner's request as presented or with recommended and/or other conditions.
2. Deny the Petitioner's request.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the requested Special Use with the following conditions:

The Special Use Permit shall be nontransferable.