



**METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION**

*"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"*

M E M O R A N D U M

**DATE:** February 27, 2024  
**TO:** THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH  
**FROM:** METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
**SUBJECT:** Text Amendment Section 5.4 Use Schedule for I-L (Light Industrial)

**PETITION REFERENCED:**

**Petitioner:** Robert McCorkle

**Property Owner:** Ramsey Khalidi

**Address:** 100 Old West Lathrop Ave

**Alderman:** District - 2 – Bernetta B. Lanier

**County Commission:** District - 2– Kenneth A. Adams

**Property Identification Number:** 20025 12001

**Petition File No.:** 24-000624-ZA-Test

**MPC ACTION:**

The Planning Commission recommends **Denial** of the requested text amendment to permit 'indoor amusement' uses in the I-L zoning district as a limited (L) use.

Alternatively, **Approval** of the following text amendments: 1) To permit 'indoor amusement' and 'indoor sports facility' uses as a Limited Use (L) in the I-L zoning district in Section 5.4, Principal Use table, with the following use-specific standards to be included in Article 8, Section 8.5, Industrial Use Standards for Limited and Special Uses: Section 8.5.14 Indoor Amusements and Indoor Sports Facilities When such use is located in a light industrial (I-L) zoning district: a. Such use shall be permitted only on a property sharing at least one zoning boundary line with property having a zoning classification other than I-L or I-H. b. Such use shall occur in a standalone building not shared by an industrial use. Where an indoor amusement or indoor sports facility is proposed within the same facility or parcel as an industrial use, a Special Exception shall be required from the Planning Commission. c. The proposed use shall maintain I-L buffers with adjoining uses in accordance with the requirements of the zoning district; however, where the proposed use adjoins a residence or residential-zoned property, an 80' buffer with double-staggered

plantings or a berm shall be maintained adjoining the existing residential use or residential-zoned parcel. A reduction of this standard shall only be permitted through approval of a Special Exception by the Planning Commission in accordance with Sec. 3.12.2.a.iii. d. All activities shall be conducted indoors. 2) To amend Section 3.12.2.a of the Zoning Ordinance regarding Special Exceptions, to include consideration of “colocation of an ‘indoor amusement’ or ‘indoor sports facility’ use in the same facility or on the same parcel as an industrial use.” 3) To include Theatre, Cinema, and Performing Arts.

**MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning Commission recommends **Denial** of the requested text amendment to permit ‘indoor amusement’ uses in the I-L zoning district as a limited (L) use.

Alternatively, **Approval** of the following text amendments: 1) To permit ‘indoor amusement’ and ‘indoor sports facility’ uses as a Limited Use (L) in the I-L zoning district in Section 5.4, Principal Use table, with the following use-specific standards to be included in Article 8, Section 8.5, Industrial Use Standards for Limited and Special Uses: Section 8.5.14 Indoor Amusements and Indoor Sports Facilities When such use is located in a light industrial (I-L) zoning district: a. Such use shall be permitted only on a property sharing at least one zoning boundary line with property having a zoning classification other than I-L or I-H. b. Such use shall occur in a standalone building not shared by an industrial use. Where an indoor amusement or indoor sports facility is proposed within the same facility or parcel as an industrial use, a Special Exception shall be required from the Planning Commission. c. The proposed use shall maintain I-L buffers with adjoining uses in accordance with the requirements of the zoning district; however, where the proposed use adjoins a residence or residential-zoned property, an 80’ buffer with double-staggered plantings or a berm shall be maintained adjoining the existing residential use or residential-zoned parcel. A reduction of this standard shall only be permitted through approval of a Special Exception by the Planning Commission in accordance with Sec. 3.12.2.a.iii. d. All activities shall be conducted indoors. 2) To amend Section 3.12.2.a of the Zoning Ordinance regarding Special Exceptions, to include consideration of “colocation of an ‘indoor amusement’ or ‘indoor sports facility’ use in the same facility or on the same parcel as an industrial use.” 3) To include Theatre, Cinema, and Performing Arts.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** 11

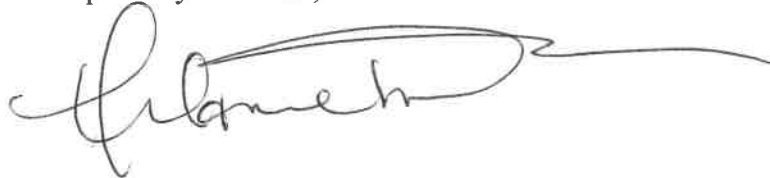
Traci Amick  
Coren Ross  
Travis Coles- Vice Chair  
Karen Jarrett - Chairwoman  
Laureen Boles  
Wayne Noha  
Jay Melder  
Michael Kaigler

Jeff Notrica  
Joseph Ervin  
Joseph Welch

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

<b>APPROVAL</b> Votes: 9	<b>DENIAL</b> Votes: 0	<b>ABSENT</b>
Amick Boles Coles Noha Ross Jarrett Notrica Welch Ervin Melder Kaigler		Stephens 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



### **FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

1. Per Section 5.17.1 of the Zoning Ordinance, “The Industrial (“I-”) districts are established to allow industrial and industrial-like uses with limited non-industrial uses. The intensity of uses allowed is indicated by the suffix following the district name, with the Light Industrial- Restricted (I-L-R) district being the most limited and the Heavy Industrial (I-H) district the most intense.
2. The I-L 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.
3. Accessory structures and uses in this District are governed by Sec. 8.7, *Accessory Structures and Uses*.
4. The Ordinance distinguishes between ‘indoor amusements’ and ‘indoor sports facilities,’ which include “athletic, racquet, swim or health club, gymnastic facility or similar uses. The term excludes firearm and archery ranges. These terms are also distinct from sports arenas, which place greater emphasis on assembly of spectators.
5. Per Section 9.3-1 of New ZO, indoor amusements require one (1) off-street parking space per 250 sf. Indoor sports facilities require one (1) space per 225 sf of gross floor area. Arenas require 1 off-street parking space per 5 seats.
6. Neither indoor sports facilities nor arenas are currently permitted in the I-L zoning district.
7. Bars, taverns, restaurants, food truck parks, and retail alcohol sales (on premise consumption of alcohol) are all presently limited (L) uses in the I-L zoning district.
8. Nightclub use requires grant of a Special Use permit in the I-L zoning district.

### **ORDINANCE ANALYSIS:**

Per section 3.7.7 of Article 3, Savannah’s Zoning Ordinance offers four (4) review criteria for proposed text amendments:

- a. **Consistency** – The extent to which the proposed text amendment is consistent with the remainder of the Zoning Ordinance, including any purpose and intent statements.

**MPC Staff Comment:** *While not appropriate in all circumstances, proper conditioning (identification of appropriate limiting factors) can ensure the proposed amendment remains consistent with the remainder of the Zoning Ordinance.*

- b. **New or Changing Circumstances** – The extent to which the proposed text amendment represents a new idea not considered in the existing Zoning Ordinance, or represents a revision necessitated by changing circumstances over time.

**MPC Staff Comment:** *The proposed amendment is somewhat of a new idea that represents a proactive approach to a likely issue the City and region could face in the future – namely, that of un- and underused warehouse space. The proposed amendment offers a viable solution to utilize warehouses that may experience periods of vacancy either due to decline in market demand or for their structural lack of fitness for use.*

- c. **Error or Inappropriate Standard** – Whether or not the proposed text amendment corrects an error in the Zoning Ordinance, or otherwise improves upon existing requirements or standards.

**MPC Staff Comment:** *The proposed amendment does not correct any error in the Zoning Ordinance or otherwise improve upon existing requirements or standards.*

- d. **Compliance with Higher Law** – Whether or not the proposed text amendment revises the Zoning Ordinance to comply with state or federal statutes.

**MPC Staff Comment:** *The proposed amendment is not a revision to bring a local ordinance into conformance with state or federal law.*

### **POLICY ANALYSIS:**

The overall intent of the requested amendment is to provide a potential new use for underutilized warehouse space. Indoor amusements, which are increasing in popularity, often require large volumes of unobstructed floor area common to these structures. What they sometimes lack, however, are large parking areas for passenger vehicles. Additionally, depending on context, accessing these facilities may place passenger vehicles in common circulation with large commercial vehicles.

The Petitioner has proposed a text amendment applicable to all I-L-zoned property with an eye toward a specific use case. The site identified at 100 Old West Lathrop is consistent with the single Petitioner-proposed limiting condition of requiring that a proposed I-L-zoned parcel adjoin a parcel not zoned I-L or I-H. The effect of the condition is believed to be identification of parcels that are in ‘transition’ zones between less intense commercial and residential uses and more heavily concentrated industrial uses. Allowance as a limited use within the current zoning district would allow the facility to retain its zoning for what could prove to be a temporary need while leaving it situated to accommodate current by right uses as future opportunities may present.

Acknowledging the potential effectiveness of this first condition, Staff proposes to add to it additional limiting factors that will help further distinguish ideal warehouse locations that would not require unnecessary Board oversight for establishment. The first being that such uses should be located in standalone buildings that will not be shared with active industrial users. Isolating these uses in this manner will serve to reduce the exposure of common passenger vehicles to commercial traffic and potentially dangerous or hazardous uses from the general public. Where any indoor amusement and industrial/warehouse use will occupy the same building, the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) should review the proposal to ensure parking, loading, circulation and other aspects of the proposed configuration are sufficient to accommodate both uses safely.

Added to this should be conditions regarding any potential nuisance to nearby land uses. As the parcel will be zoned I-L and has the potential to contain an activity that would generate noise, light, a high volume of patrons, and other impacts to its surroundings, the buffer standards of the I-L zoning district should be maintained regardless of use; however, where the proposed use adjoins a residence or residential-zoned property, an 80’ buffer

or a berm should be maintained adjoining the existing residential use. All activities should be conducted within a building to ensure preservation of the orderly character of the district.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Recommend approval of the request or an alternate amendment.
2. Recommend denial of the request.

**Planning Commission RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning Commission recommends **denial** of the requested text amendment to permit ‘indoor amusement’ uses in the I-L zoning district as a limited (L) use.

Alternatively, the Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the following text amendments:

- 1) To permit ‘indoor amusement’ and ‘indoor sports facility’ uses as a Limited Use (L) in the I-L zoning district in *Section 5.4, Principal Use table*, with the following use-specific standards to be included in *Article 8, Section 8.5, Industrial Use Standards for Limited and Special Uses*:

**Section 8.5.14 Indoor Amusements and Indoor Sports Facilities**

When such use is located in a light industrial (I-L) zoning district:

- a. Such use shall be permitted only on a property sharing at least one zoning boundary line with property having a zoning classification other than I-L or I-H.
  - b. Such use shall occur in a standalone building not shared by an industrial use. Where an indoor amusement or indoor sports facility is proposed within the same facility or parcel as an industrial use, a Special Exception shall be required from the Planning Commission.
  - c. The proposed use shall maintain I-L buffers with adjoining uses in accordance with the requirements of the zoning district; however, where the proposed use adjoins a residence or residential-zoned property, an 80’ buffer with double-staggered plantings or a berm shall be maintained adjoining the existing residential use or residential-zoned parcel. A reduction of this standard shall only be permitted through approval of a Special Exception by the Planning Commission in accordance with *Sec. 3.12.2.a.iii*.
  - d. All activities shall be conducted indoors.
- 2) To amend *Section 3.12.2.a* of the Zoning Ordinance regarding *Special Exceptions*, to include consideration of “colocation of an ‘indoor amusement’ or ‘indoor sports facility’ use in the same facility or on the same parcel as an industrial use.”
  - 3) To include Theatre, Cinema, and Performing Arts

