



**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:** Future Land Use Map Amendment

**PETITION REFERENCED:**

**Petitioner:** Bridget Lidy, on behalf of the City of Savannah

**Property Owner:** The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah

**Address:** 4801 Meding Street

**Alderman:** District - 5 – Dr. Estella Shabazz

**County Commission:** District - 5– Tanya Milton

**Property Identification Number:** 20108 01001

**Petition File No.:** 24-000287-ZA

**MPC ACTION:**

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the requested FLUM amendment for the 66.5 acre parcel at 4801 Meding Street.

**MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the requested FLUM amendment for the 66.5 acre parcel at 4801 Meding Street.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** 11

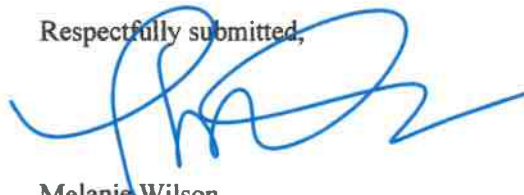
Traci Amick  
Stephen Plunk  
Travis Coles- Vice Chair  
Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman  
Laureen Boles  
Dwayne Stephens  
Tom Woiwode  
Jeff Notrica  
Joseph Welch - Online  
Jay Melder  
Michael Kaigler

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

<b>APPROVAL Votes: 11</b>	<b>DENIAL Votes: 0</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
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*”

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**STAFF REPORT**

**To:** The City Council

**From:** The Planning Commission

**Date:** May 8, 2024

**Subject:** Comprehensive Plan - Future Land Use Map Amendment

**Petitioner:** Bridget Lidy, on behalf of the City of Savannah

**Address:** 4801 Meding Street

**PIN's:** 20108 01001

**Site Area:** 66.5 Acres

**Aldermanic District:** 5 – Alderman Dr. Estella Shabazz

**Chatham County Commission District:** 5 – Commissioner Tanya Milton

**File Number:** 24-000287-ZA

**Request:** The Petitioner requests amendment of the Future Land Use map from Parks and Recreation to Planned Development for the subject parcel. The parcels have a combined area of 66.5 acres. The subject parcel (Figure 1) was previously used as a fairgrounds. The Petitioner’s intent is to develop the parcel as a mixed-use development for the land uses of single family residential, senior housing, multi-family residential, retail, recreation and a ‘creative exchange.’

**Purpose and Intent of the Comprehensive Plan:** Georgia’s Department of Community Affairs requires that communities undertake a Comprehensive Plan update every 5 years to maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status. Each Georgia municipality that utilizes zoning or similar land development regulations within the scope of the state’s Zoning Procedures Law is required to include a Land Use element within its Plan. At the core of this element is the intent to demonstrate how the locally adopted land use tools will be used to shape and improve the nature of land development within the jurisdiction to meet the social, economic, and ecological needs of its residents.

The *Character Area Map* is the chosen tool to convey Savannah-Chatham County’s aesthetic and functional vision for each of its unique and dynamic neighborhoods. The *Future Land Use Map* (FLUM) provides general land use categories to inform zoning decisions based on the desired community character identified during the planning process. Together, these policy documents



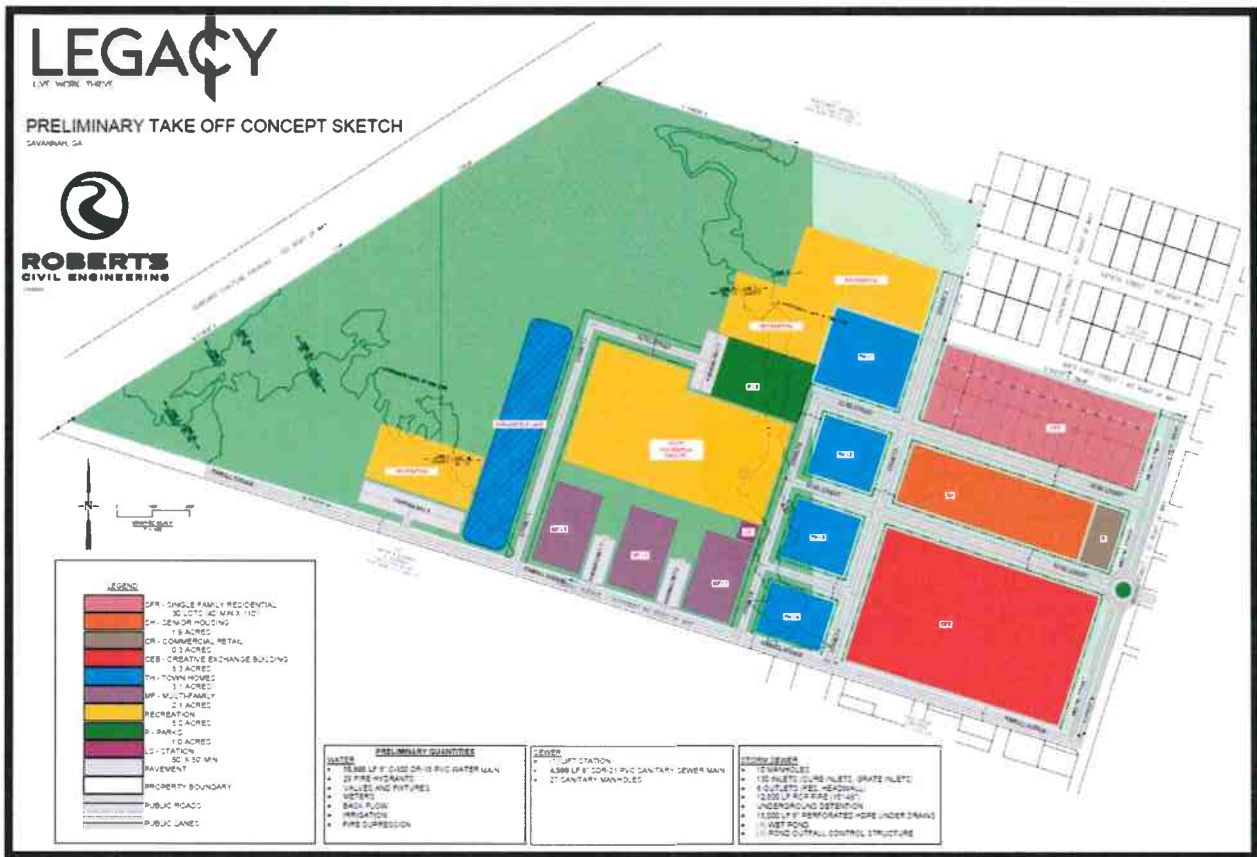


Figure 2: Preliminary Engineering Report Submitted as proxy Concept Plan

**Background:** The proposed development lies approximately one mile north of Hunter Army Airfield and approximately 1.5 miles west of the Medical Center neighborhood. The historic Tatemville neighborhood forms the eastern border of the neighborhood and a portion of its southern border. The property includes several large, abandoned buildings and several aged roadways. The buildings were built before 1986. Part of the property is delineated as wetlands and a direct tributary of the Little Ogeechee River.

Planning for the site began as early as Summer 2020 with the City's open request for design proposals from entities interested in working toward the site's redevelopment. In December 2020, MPC issued a technical memorandum offering perspective on an appropriate course for site planning, future uses and other design considerations. The memo also included brief reviews of the proposals of three finalists selected (Exhibit: MPC 2020 Technical Review).

At that time, Staff expressed support for expansion of the existing historic development pattern, significant permanent green space preservation as active and passive recreation uses, and development of mixed residential and commercial uses at appropriate scale to enable a comfortable and seamless transition into existing adjoining neighborhoods.

## Evaluation

Within the City of Savannah, **the Zoning Ordinance requires amendments to the zoning map to be consistent with the FLUM.** In essence, amendment of the FLUM very technically signals approval of only specifically identified zoning districts.

The Planned Development zoning district offers petitioners the flexibility, where warranted, to create a unique set of use and development standards that are not necessarily reflective of those ordinarily prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance. **Where the intent of the proposed development is known, allowance of a 'PD' designation is ideal, as the customized regulations are meant to account for unique and specific development constraints or objectives.**

Given that the Ordinance specifies no particular criteria, consideration of the following points may serve to elucidate whether the proposed amendment meets the intent of existing, published guidance:

1. The relationship of the proposed amendment to the existing and future land uses depicted in the Future Land Use Map.

Savannah-Chatham County's Joint Comprehensive Plan, Plan 2040, identifies the subject parcel and surroundings as 'Urban Core' (Figure 3) with regard to the anticipated character. Per the Plan, these areas are places with higher density and established mixed-use, residential, commercial, and industrial areas, or future opportunities for critical transportation hubs. The Urban character areas for Chatham County are located entirely within the limits of the city of Savannah, and include the historic downtown, urban neighborhoods, port industrial sites, and transitional areas towards the edge of downtown. These areas are poised to receive a large portion of the county's projected population growth, as they have the greatest number of urban amenities, including convenience to employment, schools, and retail. The future of this character area looks to infill development in the Urban Core, and redevelopment and growth in the Urban Transitional areas.

Presently, the FLUM designates the area as '*Parks and Recreation*,' likely owing to its prior use as fairgrounds, and in the interest of deterring impact to identified environmentally sensitive lands on the site. The Plan defines the land use category as '*Land dedicated to open space that is accessible to the public or areas dedicated to sports, exercise, or other types of leisure activities.*'



## URBAN CORE

The Urban Core character area contains the local and National Register Victorian and Streetcar Historic Districts, as well as the Eastside neighborhoods in the city of Savannah. This area is characterized by a mix of detached and attached single-family homes, mid-size multi-family buildings, and smaller-scale, neighborhood commercial. Urban Core areas are walkable with a well-connected sidewalk network and street grid. Lot sizes are larger and building heights lower (around 2-4 stories) than in the Urban Downtown. Infill and redevelopment opportunities are more widely available in the Urban Core; any future development should maintain the walkable densities and be compatible with the community character. A range of housing options should be encouraged in the Urban Core to accommodate workers, students, small families, seniors, and others.



<b>PRIMARY USES</b>	Attached & detached Residential, Multi-Family
<b>SECONDARY USES</b>	Commercial, mixed-use, civic & institutional, short-term rental
<b>DENSITY</b>	Medium-high, 6-20 units per acre
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	Interconnected street grid, multi-modal transportation
<b>ROAD FUNCT. CLASS</b>	Local roads, collector, arterial, expressway
<b>PARKING</b>	On-street, off-street, limited surface, private driveways
<b>UTILITIES</b>	Supported by existing municipal utilities
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>	Municipal parks, squares, cemeteries, waterfront

Figure 3: Prescribed Urban Core Character Area

The proposed '*Planned Development*' designation is described as being intended for Master planned areas accommodating cluster development, neo-traditional 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.

While greater detail regarding the proposed development standards and the manner in which the site and its various component uses will be collectively managed is needed, the proposed Planned Development designation has the potential to be consistent with the Plan.

2. The relationship of the proposed amendment to any applicable goals, objectives, policies, criteria, and standards adopted in the Comprehensive Plan.

As described, the proposed development is consistent with several PLAN 2040 Goals regarding 1) creation of unique educational and economic development opportunities, 2) creation of compact, walkable, economically vibrant neighborhoods, and 3) flood hazard prevention.

Further, the selected concept and resulting preliminary engineering report, which was provided as the basis of the request, were the result of a public selection process. The selected concept was chosen by Council due to belief that it best achieved particular City policy objectives and concerns identified through community feedback. The concept was presented in a Council Work Session on July 15, 2021 ([Council Work Session 7/15/21 \(viebit.com\)](#)).

3. Other professional planning principles, standards, information and more detailed plans and studies considered relevant.

The anticipated concept is generally consistent with the objectives identified in the Technical Memorandum issued by MPC in 2020.

Additionally, as of April 2024, the City has been awarded a \$2.5 million OneGeorgia Rural Workforce Housing Initiative grant from the State of Georgia to make sanitary sewer infrastructure improvements necessary to develop the property. Arguably, the award signals State support for the City's redevelopment plans.

4. Written comments, evidence, and testimony of the public.

MPC Development Services Staff did not receive any direct correspondence either via phone call or email regarding the request. Legal ads were run in Savannah Morning News and public notice mailers were sent to property owners within 300' of the property lines of the subject parcel in preparation for multiple scheduled appearances of the item between February and April of 2024.

As previously stated, the chosen concept on which the anticipated proposal is based was developed and selected through a process that involved both the public and elected officials.



### **Planning Commission Recommendation**

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the requested FLUM amendment for the 66.5 acre parcel at 4801 Meding Street.