



**MPC STAFF REPORT
REZONING MAP AMENDMENT
APRIL 21, 2009
MPC FILE No. Z-090403-36937-2**

REZONING SUMMARY

Report Status	Initial report
Petitioner/Agent Property Owner	Attorney Harold Yellin, Petitioner/Agent Coastal Towers, Inc. and Madison Retail, LLC., Owners
Staff Project Planner	Jim Hansen
Property Description	Street Address: 0 Normandy Road PIN: 2-0006 -04-001A, 2-0013 -01-002, and 2-0006 -04-001 Property Size: 21.61 acres Existing Use: Vacant/Undeveloped/Industrial Proposed Use: Mixed Use Non-Residential
Existing Zoning	I-L (Light Industrial)
Requested Zoning	PUD-LU (Planned Unit Development-Limited Use)
Future Land Use Plan Designation	Downtown Expansion
Policy Analysis	The proposed zoning is generally consistent with the <i>Tri-centennial Comprehensive Plan</i> Future Land Use Map, which designates the subject property as Downtown Expansion. (Please refer to the discussion on the Downtown Expansion area later in this report.) However, the requested zoning classification does not require the simultaneous submittal of a master site development plan and, in absence thereof, it is not possible to ascertain the consistency of this development with the <i>Tri-centennial Comprehensive Plan</i> Downtown Expansion area criteria, and therefore, the staff cannot support the request to zone the site to a PUD-LU classification without having a master plan (civic master plan) as has been developed for the property across President Street from this one.

Recommendation

The MPC staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the request to rezone 0 Normandy Road (PINs 2-0006 -04-001, -001A, and 2-0013 -01-002) from an I-L classification to a PUD classification if a master plan (civic master plan) is prepared in accordance with established format and content requirements (see the *Riverfront Civic Master Plan*) and approved by the Planning Commission prior to this zoning action being forwarded to the Mayor and Aldermen.



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"

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: MPC STAFF

DATE: APRIL 21, 2009

**SUBJECT: PETITION OF ATTORNEY HAROLD YELLIN, AGENT
COASTAL TOWERS, INC. AND MADISON RETAIL, LLC., OWNERS
0 NORMANDY ROAD
ALDERMANIC DISTRICT 2
COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT 2
PINS 2-0006 -04-001A, 2-0013 -01-002, AND 2-0006 -04-001
MPC FILE NO. Z-090403-36937-2**

JIM HANSEN, MPC PROJECT PLANNER

REPORT STATUS: Initial Report

Issue:

At issue is a request to zone an approximate 21.61 acre site from an I-L (Light Industrial) classification to a PUD-LU (Planned Unit Development-Limited Use) classification.

Background:

The subject property is located on the south side of President Street, south to Normandy Road, bounded by the Bilbo Canal on the east and General McIntosh Boulevard (extended) on the west. The properties are located in the Hitch Village/Fred Wessels Homes neighborhood. The petitioner is requesting zoning to the PUD-LU classification. As stated in the Ordinance, the purpose of this district is to "...create an area within which a business planned development may be established under specified conditions..." Unlike many of the other PUD districts, the classification sought does not require the simultaneous submittal of a master plan or general development plan. Rather, the zoning stands alone, and the Ordinance provides that prior to "...issuance of any development permit within a planned unit limited development district, preliminary and specific land use development plans and a plat of the site shall be submitted to and approved by the MPC." Said plans have not yet been submitted.

The subject property contains three lots of record that total 21.61 acres. Though the site has previously been used for several varying types of activities including the now vacant Savannah Diversion Center and an existing roofing storage facility, the site is largely vacant and/or undeveloped.

Facts and Findings:

1. **Public Notice:** As required by the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance, all property owners within 200 feet of the subject property were sent notices of the proposed rezoning and postings were placed on the site. There is no known neighborhood association serving the Hitch Village/Fred Wessels Homes neighborhood.
2. **Existing Zoning and Development Pattern:** The property is located in an area that serves as an eastern gateway into downtown and the Landmark Historic District. The petitioned property is zoned I-L.

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

<u>Location</u>	<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Zoning</u>
North	Vacant (Savannah River Landings)	PUD-MXU [1] and I-L
South	Vacant	I-L
East	Vacant (Bilbo Canal)	I-L
West	Vacant	I-L

[1] Planned Unit Development-Mixed Use

3. **Existing I-L Zoning District:**
 - a. **Intent of the I-L District:** According to the Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of the I-L district is to "...create and protect areas for those industrial uses which do not create excessive noise, odors, smoke and dust and which do not possess other objectionable characteristics which might be detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods or to other uses permitted in this district."
 - b. **Allowed Uses:** The uses allowed within the I-L district appear in the attached chart.
 - c. **Development Standards:** The development standards for the I-L district appear in the attached table (Table 1).
4. **Proposed PUD-LU Zoning District:**
 - a. **Intent of the PUD-LU District:** According to the Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of the PUD-LU district is to "...create an area within which a business planned development may be established under specified conditions designed to minimize impacts on surrounding land uses, preserve the carrying capacities of surrounding roadways, and maximize the visual compatibility of such development with its surroundings."

- b. **Allowed Uses:** Residential uses including single family and multi-family dwellings; Lodging facilities including hotels and motels; Cultural facilities including museums, theatres, and galleries; Offices of health services/practitioners; Physical fitness and health service clinics; General office uses; Amusement and recreation venues; Retail sales and service facilities; Eating and drinking establishments, Printing or letter shops; Off-street parking lots and garages; and similar uses approved by the MPC.
- c. **Development Standards:** The development standards for the PUD-LU district are as listed in the Ordinance and must include the following:
- 1) The location and arrangement of all permitted uses and the design and construction of all buffered areas shall be in accordance with the approved land use plan as approved by the planning commission.
 - 2) There shall be a minimum of two (2) square feet of ground area for each one (1) square foot of floor area.
 - 3) Where retail business uses are planned within a building designed primarily for nonretail business uses, such retail space shall not exceed 20 percent of the gross floor area of the building.
 - 4) The development shall have direct access to and from arterial and/or collector streets.
 - 5) Minimum building setback requirements shall be as approved by the planning commission and shall be shown on the approved specific development plan.
 - 6) Off-street parking spaces shall meet the requirements of Article "D" of the Zoning Ordinance.
 - 7) All buffers and screening shall be as approved by the planning commission and shall be shown on the approved specific development plan.
 - 8) Not less than 10 percent of the land area (excluding streets, drives, parking areas and required perimeter buffer area) shall be in common landscaped open space as approved by the planning commission and as shown on the approved specific development plan.
 - 9) All buildings shall be constructed and uses and facilities shall be operated in a manner so as not to emit smoke, odor, or create objectionable noise or waste material.
 - 10) Storage of all products, goods, and materials shall be within an enclosed building unless otherwise approved by the planning commission.

5. **Alternative PUD Zoning District:**

- a. **Intent of the PUD District:** According to the Zoning Ordinance, the intent of the PUD district is to "...encourage innovations in land development techniques to afford better living environments, more open space, and other amenities, and wider choices of lifestyle for residents of the City of Savannah, and to give the developer more reasonable assurance of ultimate approval before expending complete design money while providing local officials with assurances the project will retain the character envisioned at the time of concurrence."
- b. **Allowed Uses:** As governed by the development master plan.
- c. **Development Standards:** As governed by the development master plan.

6. **Land Use Element:** The *Tri-centennial Comprehensive Plan* Future Land Use Map designates the subject property as Downtown Expansion. Downtown Expansion is defined in the Plan (from various sections) as:

"areas in close proximity to the Central Business District that are identified for growth of retail, office, entertainment, 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...Development should be pedestrian, bicycle and transit oriented...The street grid that supports this vibrant urban environment (downtown) shall be continued into the Downtown Expansion areas...Development characteristics, including setbacks, lot coverage, building height, and density should be compatible with the downtown. Development should feature a high degree of connectivity to the central business district...(and) Encourage development that is compatible with traditional forms of development in the central business district."

The PUD-LU zone change is generally consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation. However, absent a master development plan, it cannot be assured that all of the desired attributes as described above can be or will be achieved.

- 7. **Public Services and Facilities:** The property is served by the Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Police Department, City of Savannah fire protection and by City of Savannah water and sanitary sewer. The property is also served by the Chatham Area Transit System with access available nearby on routes 10 along Wheaton Street and 24 along Oglethorpe Avenue.
- 8. **Transportation Network:** Primary access to the site will be from a signalized intersection at President Street and the entrance to Savannah River Landings. Secondary access will be available in the form of right in and right out driveways at other locations along the President Street frontage as well as an ingress/egress connecting the project site with Normandy Road.

President Street is currently a four-lane divided roadway with an average daily traffic count of approximately 25,000 trips per day. The City of Savannah as well as major land owner/developers in the immediate vicinity are currently updating traffic studies and preparing plans for the reconstruction of President Street including new connections to the Truman Parkway, and a bridge over the CSX Railroad.

9. A Master Drainage Plan will be required for the entire site. Outfall will most likely be to the Bilbo Canal and the Savannah River, but on-site retention/filtration should be used to first filter out impurities before runoff is released.
10. A detailed development plan has not been submitted. Staff is concerned that the intent of the Downtown Expansion area will not be realized if the zoning is allowed to proceed without a master plan. The City, SDRA, and the MPC have numerous outstanding development issues that have not been addressed or resolved. Chief among these are the following: transportation, connectivity, drainage, water and sewer, development standards, conformance to the comprehensive plan, and relationship to the Unified Zoning Ordinance conversion.
 - a) Transportation - The City, along with the Georgia Department of Transportation, CSX Railroad and developers, including the petitioner, in the immediate vicinity of the property, have been discussing and preparing proposed improvement plans for President Street for the past several years. It is still undetermined what the final recommended improvements will be and how said improvements will impact the subject property.
 - b) Connectivity and conformance to the Comprehensive Plan - As noted above, the project site is designated for Downtown Expansion on the Tri-centennial Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. One of the tenets of that classification is to assure a continuation of the downtown grid pattern in the expanded areas. Ideally, an extension of the arrangement of squares would also be made. The proposed site should align with the prevalent grid pattern and provide future connecting stubs at the project's edge. Without benefit of a development plan to present with the zoning, no such assurances can be made. This is critically important since the Housing Authority is beginning to plan redevelopment of Hitch Village, which will allow extension of the existing street grid into the area under consideration in this petition.
 - c) Design – Numerous design charrettes have been held with the current property owners to address transportation and the design of an urban retail center (some places use the term “lifestyle”) in order to ensure development of the site compatible to the Downtown Expansion area guidelines; chief among them are extension of the historic grid pattern of streets and lans and other public spaces to ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly environment and amenities. During the charrettes we were also looking at development characteristics, including setbacks, lot coverage, building height, and density that would be compatible with the Downtown Expansion area and allow a retail center to succeed. Although it has no standing at this point, a draft of the plan developed at the charrettes is in the attached file named “Charrette Plan”.
 - d) Drainage, water and sewer - Unresolved issues persist as to how drainage will be handled. Will on-site retention be required? Where would said retention be located? Will improvements to the Bilbo Canal be required? Similarly, though the subject parcels are located within the City of Savannah water and sewer service area is there adequate capacity to serve the proposed project? These and other questions can and should be addressed through the development of a site master plan adopted as a part of the rezoning process.

- e) Development standards - The requested zoning classification gives little guidance as to appropriate development standards. Guidelines for such issues as required setbacks and building height should be established before approval is given.
- f) Unified Zoning Ordinance conversion - The MPC on behalf of the city and the county are in the process of updating and unifying the current zoning ordinances (UZO). A part of the UZO process involves the conversion of existing district classifications to new, proposed classifications. A new planned district (PD) is proposed for use in areas such as this and would be the logical conversion if a master plan is included in the zoning; however, the PUD-LU district will not have the master plan so this classification now will thwart the future conversion of this area. Instead, conversion would be to a general commercial district which is neither desirable at this location nor is it indicative of what is envisioned and planned.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 1. *Will the proposed zoning districts permit uses that would create traffic volumes, noise level, odor, airborne particulate matter, visual blight, reduce light or increased density of development that would adversely impact the livability or quality of life in the surrounding neighborhood?*
Yes ___ No X
- 2. *Will the proposed zoning districts permit uses that would adversely impact adjacent and nearby properties by rendering such properties less desirable and therefore, less marketable for the type of development permitted under the current zoning?*
Yes X No ___
- 3. *Will the proposed zoning districts permit uses that would generate a type or mix of vehicular traffic on a street or highway that is incompatible with the type of land use development along such street or highway?*
Yes ___ No X
- 4. *Will the proposed zonings district permit uses that would generate greater traffic volumes at vehicular access points and cross streets than is generated by uses permitted under the current zoning district to the detriment of maintaining acceptable or current volume capacity (V/C) ratio for the streets that provide vehicular access to the proposed zoning district and adjacent and nearby properties?*
Yes ___ No ___ Perhaps X
- 5. *Will the proposed zoning districts permit uses or scale of development that would require a greater level of public services such as drainage facilities, utilities, or safety services above that required for uses permitted under the current zoning district such that the provision of these services will create financial burden to the public?*
Yes ___ No ___ Perhaps X

6. *Will the proposed zonings district permit uses or scale of development that would adversely impact the improvement or development of adjacent and nearby properties in accordance with existing zoning regulations and development controls deemed necessary to maintain the stability and livability of the surrounding neighborhood?*

Yes X No

7. *Will the proposed zoning districts permit development that is inconsistent with the comprehensive land use plan?*

Yes No Perhaps X

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the petitioner's request as presented.
2. Deny the petitioner's request.
3. Deny the petitioner's request and approve an alternative classification.
4. Modify the petitioner's request.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The proposed zoning is generally consistent with the *Tri-centennial Comprehensive Plan* Future Land Use Map, which designates the subject property as Downtown Expansion. (Please refer to the discussion on the Downtown Expansion area earlier in this report.) However, the requested zoning classification does not require the simultaneous submittal of a master site development plan and, in absence thereof, it is not possible to ascertain the consistency of this development with the *Tri-centennial Comprehensive Plan* Downtown Expansion area criteria, and therefore, the staff cannot support the request to zone the site to a PUD-LU classification without having a master plan (civic master plan) as has been developed for the property across President Street from this one.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MPC staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the request to rezone 0 Normandy Road (PINs 2-0006 -04-001, -001A, and 2-0013 -01-002) from an I-L classification to a PUD classification if a master plan (civic master plan) is prepared in accordance with established format and content requirements (see the *Riverfront Civic Master Plan*) and approved by the Planning Commission prior to this zoning action being forwarded to the Mayor and Aldermen.

Table 1: Development Standards for the I-L Zoning District (Non-residential)	
	I-L District
Minimum Lot Area	N/A
Minimum Lot Width	N/A
Front Yard Setback	50 feet from centerline of a major arterial or 15 feet from property line, whichever is greater
Minimum Side Yard Setback	0 feet from a major arterial
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	0 feet unless adjoining an "R" district, then "R" district requirement
Maximum Height	N/A
Maximum Building Coverage	N/A
Maximum Density	N/A