



Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

August 13, 2024 at 1:30 pm
Meeting Minutes

August 13, 2024 MPC MEETING

Members Present: Karen Jarrett - In person
Joseph Welch - In person
Amanda Wilson - In person
Dwayne Stephens - In Person
Jay Melder - In person
Traci Amick - In person
Michael Kaigler - In person
Stephen Plunk - In person
Joseph Ervin - In person
Laureen Boles - In Person
Coren Ross - In Person

Members Absent Travis Coles
Tom Woiwode
Jeff Notrica

Staff Present: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director/CEO
Edward Morrow, Director of Development Services/Current Planning
Subashi Karunaratne, Planner, Development Services
Brad Clement, Senior Planner, Development Services
Sally Helm, Administrative Assistant II, Development Services/Current Planning

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Agenda

IV. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

V. Item(s) Requested to be Removed from the Final Agenda

[1. Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment| 1950 Benton Blvd, 76 Highlands Blvd | 24-002877-ZA](#)

Motion

Item removed from the final agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin - Aye

Tom Woiwode - Not Present

Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

[2. Map Amendment request to rezone from PD-C to I-L, B-C | 1950 Benton Blvd, 76 Highlands Blvd | 24-002501-ZA](#)

Motion

Item removed from the final agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

[3. Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment| 2514 Whitaker St. | 24-003249-ZA](#)

Motion

Item removed from the final agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

[4. Map Amendment request to rezone from TN-2 to TC-1 | 2514 Whitaker St. | 24-003248-ZA](#)

Motion

Item removed from the final agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

[5. Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment| 1421 Whitaker St | 24-001813-ZA](#)

Motion

Item removed from the final agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

[6. Map Amendment request to rezone from TR-2 to TC-1 | 1421 West Gwinnett St | 24-0001759-ZA](#)

Motion

Item removed from the final agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye

Amanda Wilson

- Aye

VI. Items Requested to be Withdrawn

The Consent Agenda consists of items for which the applicant is in agreement with the staff recommendation and for which no known objections have been identified nor anticipated by staff. Any objections raised at the meeting will result in the item being moved to the Regular Agenda. At a 12:30 briefing, the staff will brief the Commission on Consent Agenda items and, time permitting, Regular Agenda items. No testimony will be taken from applicants, supporters or opponents, and no votes will be taken at the briefing.

VII. Consent Agenda

[7. Approval of the July 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes](#)

🔗 [07-23-2024-mpc-meeting-minutes.pdf](#)

Motion

Approval of the July 23, 2024 meeting minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Dwayne Stephens

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

[8. Authorize Executive Director to Execute and file FY 2026 FTA Transit Planning Grant \(Section 5303\)](#)

🔗 [Authorizing Resolution for 5303 Grant.pdf](#)

Motion

Approval for the Executive Director to Execute and file FY 2026 FTA Transit Planning Grant (Section 5303).

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

VIII. Old Business

IX. Regular Business

[9. Text Amendment | Zoning Ordinance - Section 7.8.10, 7.9.10, 7.10.11, 7.11.10, 13.5 | True Stucco in the Historic District](#)

🔗 [STUCCO TEXT AMENDMENT_24-003913-ZA_APPLICATION.pdf](#)

🔗 [24-003913-ZA-TEXT_Staff Report.pdf](#)

Mr. Jonathan Mellon, Director of the Historic Preservation and Urban Design Department, presented the Staff report. **Mr. Mellon** stated this is a Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance to amend Article 7, Sections 7.8.10, 7.9.10, 7.10.10, and 7.11.10, and Article 13, Section 13.5. Earlier this year the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) engaged in discussion as to the appropriateness of keeping the existing rules stating in the definition of true stucco, which stated that stucco could only be applied on masonry construction. HPC Staff researched other municipalities' rules regarding the application of stucco. This research also included several architects, builders, homeowners, and former colleagues from the US Commission of Fine Arts, National Park Service, New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission and the DC Historic Preservation office.

The process was given to a subcommittee from the Historic Preservation Commission, the full Historic Preservation Commission, and then the full Historic District Board of Review. All of whom have unanimously endorsed the proposed amendment. This will apply to the Downtown Savannah Historic District, the Victorian, Cuyler Brownville, and Streetcar Historic Districts.

What is being proposed is the change of the definition of "true stucco" to strike the portion of the sentence that states that it can only be applied over masonry construction. One of the concerns raised was this was getting into means and methods. In the Historic Department there is no jurisdiction over the interior of buildings. In addition, some of the language was cleared up. To summarize, homeowners will now be allowed to do "true stucco" over masonry and framed construction.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ellie Isaacs, Director of Preservation for Historic Savannah Foundation, thanked staff for all the hard work they have done and for applying this to the ordinance at one time. We support the proposed Text Amendment. The language is much more comprehensive and provides much needed clarity.

Motion

Approval of the requested Text Amendment to more clearly define the definition and use of stucco in the City's Historic Overlay Districts.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Stephen Plunk

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

10. Subdivision with Variances within RSF-6 Zoning | 122 Darling St | 24-003928-SUBP

🔗 [APPLICATION.pdf](#)

🔗 [EXHIBIT FOR VARIANCE.pdf](#)

🔗 [SUBMITTAL_1_24-003928-SUBP _LOT 21 & 67 BLOCK 2 WOODVILLE 122 DARLING STREET.pdf](#)

🔗 [Coles_Exhibits.pdf](#)

🔗 [Public comment, Anderson, Woodville Subdivide MPC 8.13.24.pdf](#)

🔗 [Staff Report..pdf](#)

After the item was presented, the board had discussion regarding Conflict of Interest.

Board Discussion

Item was continued to the September 24, 2024 MPC Meeting agenda to allow for the Planning Commission to discuss Conflict of Interest Procedures.

Motion

Item continued to the September 24, 2024 MPC Meeting Agenda.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

11. Subdivision with Variance | 913 & 915 E. Waldburg St | 24-003973-ZA

📎 [913 & 915 Waldburg Application 7-19-24.pdf](#)

📎 [survey Waldburg.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff Report.pdf](#)

Mr. Brad Clement, Senior Planner, Development Services, presented the staff report. **Mr. Clement** stated that the Petitioner was requesting MPC's approval of a Final Plat for a proposed subdivision of one lot to create an additional lot. The proposed subdivision would create a non-conforming lot in the TR-2 (Traditional Residential-2) zoning district. The subdivision would leave an existing over-under duplex on a lot deficient in both frontage and area for the use. The new lot that would be created would meet the requirements of the district for a single-family home with lane access. The purpose of the proposed subdivision is to divide an existing 7,016 square foot lot into two parcels. The parcel currently has approximately 60 feet of frontage on East Waldburg Street with approximately 115 feet of depth. The parcel also has rear lane access. While it is conforming for use as an over-under duplex, the existing structure, built in 1900, appears to be non-conforming with regard to one side setback. As proposed, Lot C1 would be 3,508 square feet in area with 30 feet of frontage, which is conforming for establishment of a single-family dwelling. Proposed Lot D1 would contain the existing nonconforming structure and would become a nonconforming parcel by frontage and area for use as a duplex where a minimum frontage of 40 feet and minimum lot area of 4,500 square feet are required. On August 25, 2022, the adjoining property owner at 921 E Waldburg was granted a variance to reduce the minimum lot width from 40 feet (20 feet per dwelling unit) to 27 feet to subdivide the parcel. In doing so, two nonconforming parcels were created – the first leaving an existing duplex on a 3,795 square foot parcel where 4,500 square feet is required; the second having 27 feet of frontage where 30 is the minimum required by the zoning district. MPC Staff recommended denial of the request as the Zoning Board of Appeals lacks authority to vary density per the Zoning Ordinance (Sec 3.21.8.b). The ZBA approved the variance, permitting the creation of the nonconforming lot. Per Sec. 8-2023.b. of the Subdivision Regulations, the MPC may approve a proposed lot which does not meet the minimum standards upon a finding that the substandard lot being proposed will adequately accommodate the intended use and purpose without adversely impacting the prospective property owner, the adjoining properties, or Chatham County.

MPC Staff recommends approval of the proposed subdivision with the following conditions: 1) The new property line shall be a minimum of 3 feet from the existing structure at all points; 2) No variances to the setback standards of the TR-2 District shall be permitted for the proposed dwelling; 3) The dwelling to be constructed shall be affordable within the scope and meaning of policies established by the City of Savannah. A signed covenant shall be submitted to MPC Development Services Staff prior to plat approval by the Executive Director of the MPC.

Mr. Ben Summerlin, Agent for the Petitioner, stated they agreed with most of the Staff's recommendations. The only concern related to the condition regarding affordability. Mr. Summerlin passed out the 1939 Subdivision Map for Kelly Ward. showing the existing structure had been there since 1900. Mr. Summerlin said the only thing we are asking is to put the lots back like it originally shows on the map. The problem we have with affordability is, we are unclear as to what this means. There is nothing currently established. This would be something City Council would come up with afterwards. The goal is to get affordable housing in the area. Mr. Davis is ready to get housing in that area.

Mr. Plunk, Board Member, stated, to the Applicant's point, the third condition, if they were putting a condition that they abide by a standard that does not exist yet. He asked if the Board could hold someone to something that does not yet exist?

Mr. Clement said no. This would become a City requirement to support the configuration of the proposed lots.

Ms. Wilson, Executive Director and CEO, said when the Applicant originally came in, they talked about this being an affordable housing lot. The City and Mr. Melder are in the process of developing an Affordable Housing Policy. There are several people that come in and say they want to build affordable housing and then don't because no one is mentioning it. This condition is something that is up to the Commission, it can be removed.

MPC Staff recommends approval of the proposed subdivision with the following conditions: 1) The new property line shall be a minimum of 3 feet from the existing structure at all points; 2) No variances to the setback standards of the TR-2 District shall be permitted for the proposed dwelling; 3) The dwelling to be constructed shall be affordable within the scope and meaning of policies established by the City of Savannah. A signed covenant shall be submitted to MPC Development Services Staff prior to plat approval by the Executive Director of the MPC.

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Mr. Plunk, Board Member, stated, to the Applicant's point, the third condition, if they were putting a condition that they abide by a standard that does not exist yet. He asked if the Board could hold someone to something that does not yet exist?

Mr. Clement said no. This would become a City requirement to support the configuration of the proposed lots.

Ms. Wilson, Executive Director and CEO, said when the Applicant originally came in, they talked about this being an affordable housing lot. The City and Mr. Melder are in the process of developing an Affordable Housing Policy. There are several people that come in and say they want to build affordable housing and then don't because no one is mentioning it. This condition is something that is up to the Commission, it can be removed.

Motion

Approval of the proposed subdivision with the following conditions:

The new property line shall be a minimum of 3 feet from the existing structure at all points.

No variances to the setback standards of the TR-2 District shall be permitted for the proposed dwelling.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Laureen Boles

Second: Stephen Plunk

Joseph Ervin	- Not Present
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

12. Subdivision with Variances within TR-2 Zoning | (Kelly Ward) 913-915 E Waldburg St | 24-003925-SUBP

🔗 [survey Waldburg.pdf](#)

🔗 [Davis Variance Application 7-19-24.pdf](#)

🔗 [Staff Report.pdf](#)

See minutes from previous item, they were presented together.

Motion

MPC Staff recommends approval of the proposed subdivision with the following conditions:

- 1) The new property line shall be a minimum of 3 feet from the existing structure at all points.
- 2) No variances to the setback standards of the TR-2 District shall be permitted for the proposed dwelling.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stephen Plunk

Second: Laureen Boles

Joseph Ervin	- Not Present
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye

Coren Ross	- Aye
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Aye
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

13. General Development Plan with Variance | 4307 Bull St, 4219 Bull St, 20 W 60th St, 20 W 58th St | 24-003617-ZA

🔗 [24_0802 - 4307 Bull St - Site Plan \(updated\).pdf](#)

🔗 [4307-BULL-STREET-SURVEY.pdf](#)

🔗 [4219, 4307 BULL ST, 20 W 60 ST, 20 W 59 ST_24-003617-ZA_APPLICATION.pdf](#)

🔗 [combined B. Willard comments.pdf](#)

🔗 [Public comment, YIMBY.08.12.2024.4307BullStreet.pdf](#)

🔗 [Staff Report_08122024.pdf](#)

Ms. Subhashi Karunarathne, Planner for Development Services, presented the staff report. **Ms. Karunarathne** stated that the Petitioner seeks MPC approval of a General Development Plan with a variance and Special Exception to the requirements of Sec. 5.13.5 of the Zoning Ordinance limiting development in the TC-1 zoning district to a maximum of 3 stories and 45 feet in height and maximum footprint of 5,500 square feet. Proposed are a series of mixed-use residential and commercial buildings with up to 4 stories and maximum height of 50 feet; also, one building is proposed to have a footprint of approximately 9,000 square feet. The subject parcels are currently zoned TC-1 (Traditional Commercial-1). The Traditional Commercial (TC) districts are established to allow commercial-oriented mixed-use development in areas that were developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Several factors, including location on higher classifications of streets, development standards that emphasize pedestrianism and the continuation of historic development patterns, combine to create a Main Street character within these districts. The TC districts are intended to be used in conjunction with nearby or adjacent TN and TR districts to create sustainable neighborhoods with convenient access to neighborhood-serving commercial uses. The intensity of uses allowed is indicated by the number following the district name, with the TC-1 being the most limited district and TC-2 the most intense. The TC-1 district is established to ensure the vibrancy of historic mixed-use neighborhoods with traditional development patterns characteristic of Savannah during the streetcar and early automobile eras. The district provides for commercial areas that are developed at a mass and scale harmonious with nearby residential neighborhoods. The property currently identified as 20 W. 60th Street was previously requested to be rezoned in September of 2023 in association with a proposal to develop 63 apartments across 5 buildings. Conditions to the rezoning tie several of subject the parcels to the conceptual Site Plan previously approved. The current Site Plan is intended to supersede the prior approval.

The requested variance is consistent with the intent of the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan. The allowances requested are for the purpose of ensuring the compatibility of the proposed development with its surroundings. The Developer has committed to the provision of economically affordable dwelling units within the project. As proposed, the increased height of the specific structures identified will permit an additional 18 dwelling units that would not be possible with the 3-story limitation. Additionally, the 5-foot height variance is requested to permit a pitched rather than flat roof, which is more consistent with existing neighborhood character. The Developer could achieve a 4th story within the permitted 45-foot height limitation if permitted, but ceiling heights would be lower, and the roof of the

structure would be flat. These variances are requested to make the project more compatible.

The Site Plan under consideration was developed in support of the requested height variance and Special Exception. The present review does not constitute a final approval, as submission and approval of a Specific Development Plan by all relevant plan-reviewing departments of the City of Savannah is required for issuance of a Site Development Permit. The previous development plan approved by MPC anticipated 63 proposed dwellings and received no significant adverse comments at City SPR on August 3, 2023. The most significant difference between the two proposals being the use of subsurface parking.

The requested variances for height and maximum building floor area of a nature anticipated and accounted for in forthcoming affordable housing-related amendments to the text of the Zoning Ordinance. Developers desiring to participate in the City's program can be expected to seek means through innovative design to reduce overall construction costs as a means of reducing cost burden on future homeowners and/or tenants. While policy tools can be created to make the financial implications of projects favorable, the program's greatest challenge will likely be ensuring incentivized projects are contextually sensitive to their surroundings, not consenting to over-building without proper design oversight. The Developer of the present project has voluntarily expressed commitment to providing affordable units.

To ensure compatibility of the present project, the Petitioner has increased height only adjoining Bull Street and tiered the height of structures downward as they recede into the neighborhood. The increased height of structures adjoining Bull Street is appropriate at this particular location as the development is intended to replace existing and prior land uses consisting of a mixture of aging commercial and light industrial, and the street functions as an arterial with daily trip counts in excess of 8,000 per GDOT. As proposed, the development will contain 85 residences and approximately 14,430 square feet of ground floor retail and other nonresidential uses permitted in the TC-1 zoning district. The proposed unit count is well within the gross maximum permitted by land area within the development's scope. Provision of off-street parking is proposed via a combination of surface parking and a sub-surface parking garage. A variance to the required off-street parking generated by the use is not anticipated at this time, though a specific mix of commercial uses and tenants has not been finalized.

MPC Staff recommends approval of the following requests:

1. A variance to construct three buildings containing four stories up to a maximum of 50 feet in height in accordance with the submitted General Development Plan (24-003617-ZA).
2. A Special Exception to construct one building with a footprint of up to 9,000 square feet in accordance with the submitted General Development Plan (24-003989-ZA).

With the conditions of:

1. The proposed residential component development to be constructed shall be affordable within the scope and meaning of policies established by the City of Savannah. A signed covenant shall be submitted to MPC Development Services Staff prior to plat approval by the Executive Director and CEO of the MPC.
2. A revised traffic study be submitted.

Mr. Jerome Elder, J. Elder Studios, said what we are hoping to achieve is a new node for this neighborhood. The one thing that this new developer identified was the previous plan did have mixed use and commercial, however, there were very large surface parking lots. When the new potential owner approached us with this project, they said they wanted to make this similar to what Habersham Village is to their neighborhood. As we started looking at this project, we found we had the opportunity to put some of the parking below ground because of the elevation. We developed a Site Plan that allowed for circulation all through the site. We are trying to create that type of small neighborhood, node, shopping, and eating area. We created various sizes of units for commercial spaces. In exploring this we realized what was needed for commercial areas, we wanted to introduce a new way of looking at mixed use

areas. This creates a much more pleasing environment for mixed-use development. With this being a mixed use residential, we needed to make sure that we were able to get a good unit mix. The developer is committed to implementing and bringing in affordable workforce housing. There are a lot of questions surrounding workforce housing. The range we are looking at based on the AMI is from 60-80 percent AMI. There are affordability requirements that are listed in Savannah's Government Website to guide people on those requirements.

Bull Street being a commercial corridor and one we want to see more activated; we had several community meetings. What we heard most from the community was they wanted a height reduction going toward the neighborhood. We took that into consideration and went with only the buildings that are along Bull Street at four stories. There are setbacks on all three buildings so that, while walking on the sidewalk, the fourth story is not as visible. As we got further into the neighborhood, we went three stories down to two. We are looking forward to continuous work with the community in identifying what additional needs they may have. In breaking down the massing of this project we wanted to make sure the design is still one that is giving a positive impact and thoughtful in approach. There will be an additional three-bedroom home that will be part of the development that will be rented. We created various massing and rooflines, so it does not feel like a large building. There is a 22-foot wide spacing between some buildings and 30-feet in other areas. It helps create a plaza feel. One reason we had to increase the footprint, when we reduced the heights of the building, to make it a more feasible structure we opted to extend one of the buildings to 9000 square feet.

Mr. Stephens, Board Member, said just for clarification, you are looking at 14 commercial units and 85 residential units, and parking 113 vehicles, correct.

Mr. Elder said yes.

Mr. Stephens asked if there was an idea of what types of commercial will be going in.

Mr. Elder said they have been looking into small bookstores, coffee shops, office spaces, and food and beverage. We are looking for smaller, more neighborhood-oriented businesses.

Mr. Stephens said he is pro-development, especially with the community evolving. He has concerns from the density standpoint. Bull Street is already a busy street. There is a sizeable apartment less than a mile away. The narrow streets throughout the neighborhoods might become the paths of travel which is a concern for the residents that currently live there. There are no sidewalks and there is a park around the corner that is regularly used. The biggest concern is traffic in that area.

Mr. Elder said that is something we have been looking into and considering. After looking at the traffic study we are proposing 4-5 different access points. We will continue to work with the Traffic Engineering Department as this is developed further. We hope to help direct the traffic flow in and out of the site that will help give the least amount of impact to that system. Every new development is going to continue to add pressures, we are very mindful of that with our project.

Mr. Stephens said this is a mindful project and I hear you regards to Columbus Street becoming an access, but I do not believe people will cross Bull Street. They will minimize crossing Bull Street because it is so busy unless that becomes a traffic light. The site should not sit and be neglected. We just want to figure out what will be the best approach to allow for development. It would be nice to see that the community get more resources they can walk to within those commercial spaces. It is long overdue, but it needs to be very thoughtful.

Ms. Jarrett asked what the original FLUM shows for that neighborhood.

Ms. Karunaratne said Residential Suburban Single Family.

Ms. Jarrett said she shares the same concerns as Mr. Stephens regarding the Bull Street Corridor. Ms. Jarrett asked if there should be City reviews for a General Development Plan.

Mr. Josh Yelin, Agent for the Applicant, said this is an amendment to the General Development Plan. That plan will still need to become a Specific Development Plan and go through all of the City Staff review along with MPC review. This site is not vacant currently. This site was approved, by City

Council, for 65 units with far less parking, and someone could build that by-right today. Today's petition proposes less bedroom count and more parking. The maximum density for this site if a developer were to max it out and do sub-surface parking is 142 units. We are coming in in the 80's. For the average unit size, the City allows you to go down to 435 square feet per unit. The average unit size that we are proposing is 837 square feet. The three-bedroom units are over 1,300 square feet. The one-bedrooms are 1,050 square feet.

Ms. Jarrett asked if the breakdown of the workforce housing is part of the development agreement.

Mr. Elder said yes, the developer is committing to 12 units of a mix of sizes to workforce/affordable housing.

Ms. Jarrett asked if the site needed to be cleaned up.

Mr. Elder said the site has had various levels of environmental remediation done. As of now the site has been deemed clear.

Ms. Jarrett asked if a large portion of the parking was going to be subsurface parking.

Mr. Elder said yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Betty Jones said she has a lot of concerns regarding this project and it being four stories. Her community does not want four stories in their neighborhood. She mentioned the development on Bull and Derenne and another closer to Victory Drive all having a major impact with traffic.

Mr. Chase Rosen said he supports this petition. He wishes there were more bike parking and less vehicle parking. There is concern with traffic studies and their findings.

Ms. Kellas Hughes requested denial of the petition.

Ms. Ardis Woods expressed a desire to have the four-story building plan architecturally changed. She expressed concern with traffic studies and the changes made to medians and tree lawns.

Ms. Ellie Isaacs, Director of Preservation for Historic Savannah Foundation, said they support several aspects of this project. HSF feels it would be a loss not to rehabilitate and add stories on top of the DIASS Service Station.

Mr. Jason Combs, President of Thomas Square Neighborhood and representing YIMBY Savannah, said not everyone living here will be driving cars every day. E-bikes are more popular, this is a part of affordability most don't think about, transportation. YIMBY feels this is the kind of mixed income housing development that is desperately needed to address the housing deficit that is disproportionately impacting the low to moderate income neighbors. This type of housing will be ideal for hospitality workers, public service sector employees, childcare workers and many others. He fully supports the project.

Mr. Josh Yellin said to summarize, this Plan was recently approved in September of 2023. Pat Shay took the Plan to City Council, the property was rezoned at the rear so that 63 units across 5 buildings could be put on this site. That site was going to have 4 buildings at 45 feet in height. Even though we are asking for a height increase, we are decreasing the height of what is already approved. We are proposing an over 40-foot height decrease across what could be built by-right. We are decreasing the number of bedrooms on this site and increased the number of parking spaces significantly to account for the commercial units that are going in. We also have agreed to dedicate some of these units to affordable housing. Each step of the way, we believe this project being proposed today is an improvement from the project that can currently be built by right.

Ms. Hope Calloway said she has been a resident in the area for 12 years. She agrees the neighborhood would do well to be developed. She expressed concern with the construction traffic that will happen in order to develop the project. There is concern with destroying some of the trees in the neighborhood.

Ms. Becky Willard said she supported the development that was approved last year. She asked for denial of all variances saying the 4-story building or the 9,000 square foot building are not in synch with the neighborhood. She expressed concern for more affordable family housing units. The traffic is a major concern, speedbumps need to be added. Ms. Willard also expressed concern for the live oak trees that are proposed to be cut down.

Ms. Ashley Willard said she is a SCAD student and walks in the neighborhood a lot. She would like to see crosswalks and bike racks in the area. Ms. Willard also mentioned there needs to be more multi bedroom affordable housing units for families. Young people are more likely to move away, and families are more likely to be permanent residents.

Mr. Dave Liebhauser is opposed to four story buildings in that area.

Ms. Pam Edwards said she has property in this area and is opposed to a four-story building. The majority of the properties in that area do not have driveways. They park in the street. There will be a mass of traffic congestion.

Mr. Elder said they will have bike racks, and moped parking on the site. The sites we are building on do not currently have any trees on them. We will be working with the City and an arborist to bring in more trees, tree lawns, creating sidewalks, and implementing crosswalks. We will be working with City Engineering and CAT in hopes of adding a bus stop in the future, after realizing there was not one in this general vicinity. This is a site that we can show is about creating an even more walkable, livable city. While we understand the concerns with a 4-story, what we are trying to do is reduce the overall 4-story impact. It will be more of a 3-story feel. We will continue to work on the massing to help soften the impact even more. We are not proposing 4-stories at the street edge, it is a 3-story expression.

Mr. Stephens asked if anyone has been engaged from a civil standpoint. The flooding is a concern.

Mr. Elder said yes, we are working on types of ways to deal with retention of stormwater on site. The underground parking will help some with this, we will already be looking at retention areas in order to build that. The majority of the site is already hard paved, there are not as many requirements but do want to make sure we implement those things to help offset any issues that could occur.

Mr. Kaigler, County Manager, said there have been several comments regarding having 4-stories on Bull Street. What kind of impact would there be on the project if the layout was reversed.

Mr. Elder said that may not be a great solution. The larger mass buildings would be moved next to the single-family homes. That was something the community said they did not want.

Mr. Kaigler said he notices spacing between the project and the single-family residents there. Will that single-family residence be a part of this project?

Mr. Elder said yes, that is a part of the project. We are going to continue to move forward in working with everyone to try to ease some of the concerns in the community.

Ms. Jarrett asked if the Petitioner could look into the construction routing. It could be a problem for some of the community members.

Mr. Elder said yes, this will be looked at. This is a large site so it will be able to be staged well during the construction. Ideally, they will stage it to where the northern portion is what is built last. That will allow them to deal with the excavation, get the parking underground, and get the other buildings up. This will hopefully minimize the number of trucks going back and forth and they will be able to use that northern site for parking and construction things.

Motion

Approval of the following request:

A variance to construct three buildings containing four stories up to a maximum of 50 feet in height in accordance with the submitted General Development Plan (24-003617-ZA).

A Special Exception to construct one building with a footprint of up to 9,000 square feet in accordance with the submitted General Development Plan (24-003989-ZA).

With the conditions of:

A revised traffic study be submitted, and the Petitioner include his list of affordable be included in the project.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stephen Plunk

Second: Amanda Wilson

Joseph Ervin	- Not Present
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Nay
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Nay
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

14. Special Exception | 4307 Bull St, 4219 Bull St, 20 W 60th St, 20 W 58th St | 24-003989-ZA

🔗 [24_0802 - 4307 Bull St - Site Plan.pdf](#)

🔗 [4307-BULL-STREET-SURVEY.pdf](#)

🔗 [4219, 4307 Bull St, 20 W 60 St, 20 W 59 St_24-003989-ZA_Special Exceptions Application.pdf](#)

🔗 [Staff Report_08122024.pdf](#)

See minutes from the item above. These items were presented together.

Motion

Approval of the following request:

A Special Exception to construct one building with a footprint of up to 9,000 square feet in accordance with the submitted General Development Plan (24-003989-ZA).

With the conditions of:

A traffic study be submitted, and the Petitioner include the list of affordable housing with the project.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Stephen Plunk

Second: Dwayne Stephens

Joseph Ervin	- Not Present
Tom Woiwode	- Not Present
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Aye
Coren Ross	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Aye
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Nay
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

X. Presentations

XI. Approved Staff Reviews

XII. Other Business

15. Appointment of an Officer (Secretary)

Chairwoman Jarrett appointed Mr. Tom Woiwode as Secretary of the Planning Commission.

16. Discussion Regarding Summer Hours

Ms. Wilson said the Summer Hours for the Planning Commission have been extended to the end of September.

XIII. Executive Session

XIII. Adjournment

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.