



## Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

Minutes  
November 19, 2024 at 1:30 PM

### November 19, 2024 MPC MEETING

Members Present: Karen Jarrett - In person  
Laureen Boles - In person  
Amanda Wilson - In person  
Dwayne Stephens - In person/Online  
Tom Woiwode - In person  
Michael Kaigler - In person  
Jay Melder - In person  
Joseph Ervin - In person

Members Absent: Coren Ross  
Traci Amick  
Jeff Notrica  
Joseph Welch  
Tom Woiwode  
Stephen Plunk

Staff Present: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director  
Edward Morrow, Director of Development Services/Current Planning  
Brad Clement, Senior Planner, Development Services  
Subashi Karunaratne, Planner for Development Services/Current Planning  
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. FLUM Amendment | 1950 Benton Blvd & 76 Highlands Blvd | from Commercial-Suburban & Residential-General to Industry-Light & Commercial Suburban | 24-002877-ZA](#)

#### Motion

Item removed from the final agenda.

#### Vote Results ( Approved )

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Dwayne Stephens

Joseph Ervin - Aye

Tom Woiwode - Aye

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

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

<b>Motion</b>	
Item removed from the final agenda.	
<b>Vote Results ( Approved )</b>	
Motion: Joseph Ervin	
Second: Dwayne Stephens	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Not Present
Coren Ross	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Aye
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Not Present
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Not Present
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

3. [GDP with Variance | Preston Drive-Pointe Grand Savannah | Variance to encroach on existing wetland buffers | 24-004751-ZA](#)

<b>Motion</b>	
Item removed from the final agenda.	

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Dwayne Stephens

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

[4. Approval of the November 4, 2024 MPC Meeting Minutes](#)

 [11-4-2024-mpc-meeting-minutes.pdf](#)

**Motion**

Approval of the November 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Dwayne Stephens

Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye

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

#### 5. Approval of the 2025 MPC Meeting Calendar

📎 [MPC 2025 Meeting Calendar.pdf](#)

##### **Motion**

Approval of the 2025 Meeting Calendar

##### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Dwayne Stephens

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

#### **VIII. Old Business**

#### **IX. Regular Business**

#### 6. MAP Amendment | 0 Silk Hope Road | Rezone from PBC to PB | Z-0924-000508

📎 [Application Packet.pdf](#)

🔗 [Z-0924-000508- Silk Hope Rd. Staff Report.pdf](#)

🔗 [Letter of Intent SR 25 M.P. 6.58 \(003\) GDOT.pdf](#)

🔗 [D. Brannen public comment.pdf](#)

**Mr. Brad Clement, Senior Planner for Development Services/Current Planning** presented the Staff report. **Mr. Clement** stated the Petitioner requests rezoning of the subject parcel from P-B-C to P-B in association with a proposed truck terminal. The subject property is a primarily undeveloped parcel with the exception of a cell tower located near the northwest corner of the intersection of Dean Forest Road and Ogeechee Road. On the northern boundary, the property abuts Silk Hope Road. Silk Hope Road provides vehicular access to the subject property, which does not currently have access to Dean Forest Road or Ogeechee Road. Silk Hope Road has a partially paved width of less than twenty feet. The property has a total area of 12.56 acres: 9.76 acres are upland, and 2.8 acres are marsh, per the County Tax Assessors records. Staff found no record of completed previous zoning actions for the parcel.

In 2018, a petitioner requested to rezone the property for the purpose of expanding the adjacent auto salvage business to the north. The application was withdrawn prior to being heard by the County Commission. MPC Staff recommended denial of the application. In 2021, another petitioner filed to rezone the property for the purpose of establishing a Container Sales and Storage Yard. MPC Staff recommended denial, the Planning Commission voted to approve the rezoning, and the County Commission voted to deny.

The Petitioner is requesting to rezone the property from the P-B-C classification to the P-B classification. Although these are both business districts, the intent of the districts and the permitted uses are very different. The existing zoning is designed to accommodate commercial facilities such as retail, restaurants, hotels, office, and entertainment.

The proposed zoning includes most of the uses allowed in the existing zoning, but in addition, it accommodates heavy commercial and light industrial uses such as warehousing, manufactured home sales, heavy vehicle repair and the petitioner's proposed use, container storage. MPC Staff finds that the subject property would more appropriately be developed under the existing zoning, and that the proposed zoning could result in a less desirable development outcome for a significant intersection in Chatham County, and a gateway into an improving area from a land use standpoint. Based upon the findings outlined in the report and the review criteria, MPC Staff recommends denial of the request to rezone the property from P-B-C to P-B.

**Mr. Michael Kaigler, County Manager**, asked Staff what the recommendation the last time this was presented.

**Mr. Clement** said Staff has maintained position of denial. The initial request was supported by the Commission for denial. The subsequent request was reversing the Staff recommendation with a vote for approval. Both times it went before the County Commission was denied.

**Mr. Michael Smith, Petitioner**, said they are a local business that has been in transportation logistics for over 33 years. His dad was in business for 30 years as a second-generation trucker. Mr. Smith said one of his business partners is a third-generation trucker in the area. He stated they bought trailers from Great Dane Trailers. They love the community, and support the community. They met with our neighbors to be good community partners. They are a local carrier, employing roughly 100 people that are all from the community.

**Ms. Karen Jarrett, Chairwoman**, asked, how many trucks would be entering and leaving the facility on a daily basis and whether the drivers to have to make U-turns.

**Mr. Smith** said they have approximately 90 trucks. Around 65 of those trucks are staffed. We run a local operation and an over the road operation. The local operation, many of those trucks are parked at customer facilities, drivers park their personal vehicles there, report there and go about their day. That truck may never see the yard but maybe once a week for inspection. Their local guys come in very early, around 4:30-5:00 am to get to the Port Gate early. The road drivers interchange in and out of the yard in the night between 2:00-4:00am where there is not a lot of traffic. For about three years they rented the property across Ogeechee Road and never had an incident. That was a right-in and right-out facility.

They navigated that for three years with no issues. There is not a constant in and out, once the trucks are out, they are out for the day. Coming right off of Dean Forrest Road, that right-in will be simple. Right-out will be more cumbersome to go down, find the best first place to U-turn and go back to Dean Forrest Road. They hope would be that they can navigate this issue with GDOT. There is a large space in the middle of Ogeechee Road that is completely unused and untouched. They believe it would be safer to go left-out directly to the light.

**Mr. Dwayne Stephens, Board Member**, asked for a clearer direction of the lot across the street that they are currently leasing.

**Mr. Smith** said the corner they would be at is across Ogeechee a little to the right. We reached a place to where the lessor increased the payment significantly when the lease was up and that became unattainable. Currently they have an office at Chatham Center Drive and a yard across from Ocean Terminal, it's the old Great Dane employee parking lot.

**Mr. Ervin, Board Member**, asked if the Petitioner's lot would be similar to the lot that is across Ogeechee now.

**Mr. Smith** said that lot is more parking and storage so there is more in and out activity at that spot. It looks nice with the berms.

**Mr. Stephens** said as he has traveled up and down that area, he has not seen much activity in that area, which is good if this business has been operating there.

**Ms. Wilson, Board Member**, asked with the space that was previously being rented, when coming off of Dean Forrest and you take a right, going south, how did you get in the place you were renting? Did you have to go down and turn around in the median?

**Mr. Smith** said yes. If they are able to get GDOT to give us left out, that would change drastically. In the current situation, it would be the same.

**Ms. Wilson** asked has there been any issues with that turnaround previously.

**Mr. Smith** said no.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Ms. Dianne Brannen** said she is a resident of Silk Hope Road. The neighbors in the area call her the Mayor of Silk Hope Road because she kept going around meeting people over this issue. They think Mike is great and his partners are great. They are very nice people. He is offering to help with some neighborhood solutions. One of the things they are facing an uphill battle with as a community is neighborhood blight. There will be more meetings about this issue in the weeks ahead. In the meantime, one of the stakeholders that gave them a yes on this rezoning, Cophart, the attitude was a little different, they said they wanted the property. The problem with Cophart, the ownership, is in Connecticut and Virginia. They are an international company. They are over 40 acres directly across the street from Mike's property. Today, they have 20 rigs going up and down Silk Hope Road, crossing Silk Hope and Ogeechee Road making a left onto Ogeechee with no traffic light. There were a lot of rigs yesterday going in and out of Cophart. Mike's idea at some point, letting Cophart share the driveway, share in that cost, and facilitate them getting in and out of that area without running over people on Silk Hope Road. They support the petition.

**Mr. Chase Rosen** said he lives nearby at Fenwick Village Apartments. He stated he was speaking in opposition to this. He appreciate the business and drives by this everyday going to work. This is nothing personal against the Petitioner, but he didn't think there needs to be any further industrialization on Ogeechee Road. This will only take away land that could otherwise be more housing. There are a lot of people that are sitting out, uncovered, waiting a long time for a bus. Every year there is a fatality of pedestrians. He would rather see this area have more retail or residential.

**Mr. Smith** said he was not sure the infrastructure will support retail or more homes in that area. They will end up with a well for sewer for that area. It is surrounded by other Industrial Properties.

**Mr. Kaigler** said he has looked at this project a couple of different times. From the Commission perspective, there was opposition for them to use Silk Hope as a means of egress. The Petitioner did talk about getting a permit from GDOT to make a right in and right out, if there is a consensus to support this, he would want to add a condition that the only egress would be from Ogeechee Rd and not Silk Hope Road.

#### **Motion**

Approval of the request to rezone the property from P-B-C to P-B, with the condition of ingress and egress off of Ogeechee Road only.

#### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Tom Woiwode

Second: Joseph Ervin

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

#### **7. FLUM Amendment | 1001 & 1015 Whitaker St, 120 & 124 West Park | from TN-1 to TC-2 | 24-005816-ZA**

🔗 [1001, 1015 Whitaker St, 120, 124 W Park Ave\\_24-005815-ZA\\_24-005816-ZA\\_Application.pdf](#)

🔗 [development-agreement-forsyth-park-parking-garage.pdf](#)

🔗 [letter-to-seda-request-for-pilot-arrangement-for-the-development-of-a-new-city-parking-garage-at-forsyth-park \(1\).pdf](#)

🔗 [Site Plan.pdf](#)

🔗 [Staff Report.pdf](#)

🔗 [VNA letter of support Park Whitaker.pdf](#)

🔗 [Opposition to 24-005816 ZA & 24-005815-ZA.pdf](#)

🔗 [Combined Public Comments.pdf](#)

**Mr. Edward Morrow, Director of Development Services/ Current Planning** presented the Staff report. **Mr. Morrow** stated the Petitioner requests amendment of the Future Land Use Map from Traditional Neighborhood to Traditional Commercial in association with a proposed office building and underground parking facility. The request is made concurrently with a request to rezone the subject property. The

amendment is requested in connection with a proposed development that will utilize four parcels to construct three office buildings with an accessory underground parking facility that is intended to serve both the proposed structures and the general public for off-street parking needs in the vicinity of Historic Forsyth Park. On March 28th, Savannah's City Council endorsed a development agreement with Forsyth Park Commons, LLC for an underground public parking garage. Per the agreement, the partnership would result in the construction of a 2-story underground parking garage with 450 spaces to support the estimated 115,000 square foot office use. One hundred spaces are to be made available to the public during business hours and all spaces made available to the public after business hours and on the weekend.

This letter from the Victorian Neighborhood Association provides a description of the project. The VNA vision states that: "Ours is an active thriving neighborhood. Streets are a priority over cars. The VNA promotes new development which respects our past while enriching access to new retail, office, and entertainment options in scale and in character with the neighborhood". We believe the proposed development aligns with these values. It features an urban massing that is compatible with the open spaces and mature canopy of Forsyth Park, architectural detailing that is contextual in human scale, and streetscapes that are designed for people over cars. The letter recognizes that cities evolve by necessity, they change over time. The City of Savannah has a future. This is about recognizing how it is that we enshrine those things we value that are on the ground while also setting up a framework to guide what is going to happen next. It is with that mindset that we need to look at these petitions.

The Victorian Mid City Neighborhoods need a new Zoning District Overlay. It was discussed previously before this Commission; we should consider the creation of a new Overlay District or a new Zoning District that was Commercially focused. Not necessarily at the full intensity of a TC-2 but recognizing the nuances of the Victorian or even the Mid City Districts. Since that time, we have seen petitions that have caused us to recognize that the nature of what is happening around Forsyth Park is changing. At a previous Commission meeting a parking lot in this area was discussed and the fact that we are seeing uses intensify along our arterials. We are beginning to see a need for Commercial that is a little bit beyond the scale of what the TN District supports. Being a largely residential district that allows mixes of uses, what we are seeing requests for are things like restaurants and restaurants with alcohol sales that are associated at this time with zoning districts that we believe are a little more intense than what we would like. Staff is looking at this from that perspective. STVR are changing the nature of what is happening in our neighborhoods. This goes back to form over function. We are not actually seeing a change in the form; we are seeing historic structures that are functioning in what is essentially a commercial capacity. Someone can rent one and it is much like a hotel. If you live in the house next door, you are seeing people coming and going who are not your neighbors. That is changing the character of this district even though it looks the same. The FLUM, here within this urban core character area, makes reference to two to four story structures. This district permits three stories, up to 45 feet.

In the absence of a zoning district that adequately captures the characteristics and nuance of the increasingly commercial-dominant mixed-use nature of development along higher volume corridors in the Victorian District, MPC Staff recommends approval of the request to rezone to Traditional Commercial-2 (TC-2) with the following condition: Permissible uses shall consist only of those permitted in the TN-1 zoning district and only in accordance with all applicable supplemental use standards.

**Mr. Jeff Jepson, Agent for Forsyth Holdings LLC**, said there are four principals that are supposed to be part of this development. They take this opportunity to redevelop this portion of the park very seriously. Those four owners operate large businesses in the community and have been doing so for over thirty years. Delaney Industries whose main office and headquarters are in the neighborhood district. Sterling Seacrest whose office is on the actual property. They will have to vacate the property as part of the development. Hunter McLean Law firm who has lost a lot of office space, this is an opportunity to keep some office space downtown and then there is Evans General Contractors. Each of these companies serve on charitable boards, raise money, and are a part of the community. Two of our principals are on the Friends of Forsyth Board. They are equally aligned with the VNA and have had a number of meetings with them. They started this process about three years ago. Sterling Sea Crest acquired a number of properties. They went and talked with their neighbors and started envisioning what this could be. Every time they made a change; it was related to input that was received from the community or various neighborhood meetings. One of the most significant things is the traffic study. The addition of a 450-space parking lot deserved a lot of study. There were almost no negative impacts at all from the traffic study. The only real problem it identified was some pedestrian traffic problems on Saturday mornings



related to use of the particular park. The traffic study made recommendations for them to implement should they move forward where they can improve safety in and around which we certainly support. In addition to meeting with the VNA, they met with the VNA Board. They met with the Historic Savannah Foundation, gave a full presentation to their Board. They talked to the Downtown Neighborhood Association and have their support. They met with the City of Savannah several times. There is a stormwater challenge in that area. Through their engineering they are able to alleviate some of the stormwater constraints because of the pipe size in that particular area. They have met with MPC and HPC several times. They are all locals are committed to this project and believe they are serving this City well with this project.

**Mr. Melder, City Manager**, asked Mr. Morrow if the Overlay District that was mentioned earlier was something that the City and MPC can work on together to get started rather than wait on a petitioner request.

**Mr. Morrow** said yes.

**Ms. Melanie Wilson, Executive Director/CEO of MPC**, said the City would need to make a request to the MPC to do the Overlay in that area.

**Ms. Jarrett** asked for clarity on the Overlay. She asked if this would include an area study and input from residents in and around the area including the Thomas Square Neighborhood.

**Mr. Morrow** said yes. A lot of the changes they are seeing are extending into that area so taking that into account it would be wise.

**Ms. Jarrett** asked if the existing structures that all are there now either have office or commercial use.

**Mr. Morrow** said yes.

**Ms. Jarrett** said this will be similar to SCAD where there is not property tax on that.

**Mr. Jepson** said the developers are not receiving any economic benefit through a tax abatement at all. They are using a pilot as a form to pay for the garage. The City of Savannah has been donated ten million dollars' worth of land. They will get the garage paid for from the revenue system associated with that pilot and the parking. The School Board and the County will maintain the current millage rates all through that period. They are still getting their millage rate and the City is getting the garage. The only one for-going their millage rate would be the City but there is benefit for that.

**Mr. Dwayne Stephens, Board Member**, asked if that will be a collector or arterial street type around that development.

**Mr. Morrow** said Whitaker is a major road, a minor arterial. Park is regarded as local.

**Mr. Stephens** asked, based on the classifications of those roads, what is the intent of those roadways being defined the way they are?

**Mr. Morrow** said the idea behind this district is on the corners and thorough fares, the corners where you will come through, you will see use intensification particularly because there are things happening in other areas that are influencing what is happening on these streets. They are seeing speeds increase, traffic volumes increase, and as Mr. Jepson mentioned, concern for pedestrian safety. There is an intensification of traffic volumes in this area. Things are changing downtown.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Ms. Ellie Isaacs, Historic Savannah Foundation**, said the Board of Trustees and Staff support the Petitioners' request. As MPC Staff stated, this change is consistent with the uses operating on the site and consistent with the parcels located to the south and adjacent to Forsyth Park along Park Avenue.

**Mr. Jim Hundsrucker** said he has lived in Forsyth Park since 1991. One good thing that came out of the last VNA meeting was that Mr. Patterson offered having only three stories and quieting Whitaker Street

down to one lane. We were told not to consider parking but the building needs 300 parking spaces as part of the leasing, so he considers that necessary to discuss. The City should consider, since there are climate events and flooding, a design where the parking garage can be used as a catch basin to relieve the surface flooding. He asked why an archeological study is not being done on the site. That would attract people to the garage.

**Ms. Elizabeth Hollis** said she has lived on Whitaker Street since 1980. This is an issue that has become very controversial. The letter from the VNA was only the opinions of the Board of the VNA and not the membership of the VNA. Even the news media said the Victorian Neighborhood is so happy with this, that is not true. On November 12th much discussion took place at the Victorian Neighborhood Association, there were a lot of unhappy people asking questions and being frustrated with the project. They do not want the FLUM to change or the Zoning.

**Ms. Monica Vernon** said she lives on Gwinnett, two blocks from the project. She echoes what Ms. Hollis said about the VNA letter. The views are not that of the neighborhood. The letter is false and misleading, they do not support this project. This is a residential neighborhood; they are very concerned about this size of the project affecting the fabric of the neighborhood. The residents of the neighborhood have not been properly informed. Ms. Vernon is asking for the project to either be tabled or if the zoning is approved, to be done in increments.

**Ms. Clara Greig** said she lives in the Victorian Neighborhood. She expressed opposition to the project and the VNA letter.

**Ms. Siobhan Leahy** said she lives on Whitaker Street next to the proposed development. She disagrees with the proposal. She said there are only two-story buildings in the area. This project is too big for the area.

**Mr. Ron Tuggle** said he lives on Whitaker Street, one block from the project. He echoes the comments from the previous speakers. The VNA letter does not represent the majority of the members. This project is changing the culture of the Victorian Neighborhood, it will end up being the Victorian Business District. Short term rentals have already started doing this. If this is approved, there is no turning back.

**Ms. Jennifer Shearer** said she lives two doors down from the project on Whitaker Street. The City and Principals are asking them to take a very stable neighborhood and drop a massively disruptive and high intensity commercial project that will impact the area. These streets are already difficult to drive through. Do not allow any additional variances if this project moves forward.

**Ms. Lucy Mayer** said she lives one block from the proposed project. This project is massive, none of the traffic studies have taken into account the amount of nonstop traffic at all times. This project is too big for this area.

**Mr. Tom Murray** said he owns a property in this area. Savannah is changing from a quiet historic city to a massive, overdeveloped area. How long is this proposed to build? As a business owner, this will kill the STVR reviews and asked if there any consideration for business owners in the area.

**Mr. William Dallas** said he is opposed to the project. He owns a home on Waldburg Street and the impact it will have on the community. The parking situation alone will negatively impact the area.

**Mr. Jepson** stated they are strong fans of good planning. They have local architects and engineers on this project. With respect to traffic, they understand there are concerns. They collaborated with the City over the traffic. This area, even though it is TN-1, does not operate like a TN-1 as it exists. The traffic study itself doesn't contemplate that there are any existing uses or traffic there. It is even more conservative in its nature. There is almost 25,000 square feet of office space between all the particular buildings. Some which have a significant traffic impact like the funeral home. They will continue to spend time when they get to height and massing making sure that what they develop above the garage is appropriate. They have been addressing scale and massing's to respect the residential neighborhoods and want to be very respectful of this neighborhood and community.

**Ms. Lauren Boles, Board Member**, asked what the timeline from demolition to completion would be.

**Mr. Jepson** said demolition and construction of the parking garage is about 9 months. Construction for the buildings is another 12 months. Approximately 21 months total.

**Ms. Jarrett** asked if the Petitioner felt TC-2 was what was needed.

**Mr. Jepson** said yes. One of the last meetings with MPC Staff, they originally said not to rezone then came back and said this allows better lenses to review the area.

**Ms. Jarrett** asked if when the meetings that were held if they spoke with most of the people here today. She asked if they were VNA members.

**Mr. Jepson** said most of them we have spoken to, and we are not VNA members, but our offices are in the Victorian Neighborhood.

**Ms. Jarrett** asked if an area study or overlay study would help to define where projects like this should be? Forsyth Park is very important to this City.

**Mr. Morrow** said yes. The request from property owners to do things, does not stop. When people own property, most of them acquire it with the purpose of doing something to it.

**Ms. Melanie Wilson** said part of the reason TC-2 was discussed was to help eliminate some of the variances.

**Mr. Morrow** said all of the TC Districts are nested. They fit into one another. This is not about a change in character. This has a bigger footprint but there are already buildings that are significantly larger that we want to see go away today. This is to fit in the context of what the City has already been doing and create an orderly flow. It is a lens to a view of what is happening here and speaks to an oriented commercial activity. This is a rezoning; things are happening in this area.

**Mr. Jepson** said it's his understanding that an overlay study could take up to two years.

**Ms. Melanie Wilson** said Staff suggested to the Petitioner they could either come back and ask for TC-2 to help with some variances and there could be some general discussion. The other option, which was our preference, was they created a Plan Development which would have allowed them to create a hybrid zoning district that had some of the things they needed, and they would not have to ask for variances. The heights are similar with the zoning districts, there is a five-foot difference. With the TC-2 Zoning, for the size of the site, it would allow a lot more impervious coverage area.

**Mr. Ervin, Board Member**, said, TC-2 does ensure the historic nature of the neighborhood and will not allow the project to overreach for that area.

**Ms. Jarrett** said she is more comfortable with the TC-2. It allows the community to see what is going on. With a Planned Development, there is not as much say.

**Mr. Melder, City Manager**, said this is still protected under the Historic Overlays. It will have to come back to the Historic Board and MPC. The design standards will have to be approved for that area no matter what goes there.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (for the Map Amendment)

**Mr. Hundsrucker** said his experience with TC-2, the corner of Gwinnett and East Broad. If the Petitioner is willing to stick to what the Ordinance says, three stories up to 45 feet, that means do not allow another variance for height. That will turn into a seventy-five-foot building. Another concern is this might not always be office space, one day it could become a hotel.

**Ms. Greig** said cities do evolve over time however the integrity of the neighborhood needs to be taken into consideration when these requests are being made. Continuing to allow these parcels in residential neighborhoods to be rezoned to commercial will chip away at the integrity of their neighborhoods and communities. There is more than just the Whitaker Corridor that is being impacted by this project.

**Ms. Hollis** said her concern with the zoning issue is if one project is allowed to be changed eventually the neighborhood feel will be gone.

**Ms. Leahy** said TC-2 is a commercial corridor not a commercial lot. Since they are going to ask for variances, it should not be changed at all. Leave it as is.

**Mr. Murray** asked for someone to explain what the twenty-one months of excavation in that area looks like. Will the streets be closed?

**Mr. Dallas** said this project will dramatically change the character of their neighborhood.

**Mr. Galloway** said if the parcel is TN-1 now, they can still have commercial use. No one has an issue with office space, it is trying to think of the development for the future. We are one block from this development. The traffic will have a huge impact on their neighborhood. If they go TC-2, do not allow any extra variances.

**Mr. Jepson** said he is hearing a lot of respect for this parcel which it deserves. That is why they hired great local designers to respect the area. There are people concerned that they are looking at one larger building, that is not the case now. They listened and heard. Their latest iteration of the project has three buildings, not one so that they have more pedestrian connectivity. There are still hundreds of design decisions to make as they move forward. They have great design professionals to guide us through that. They will meet with the community when they have a General Development Plan.

**Ms. Boles** said she appreciates the neighbors coming out to voice their opinions. This has been a rigorous process. Maybe the overlay study project can be done in tandem with the project. They want to honor the rigorous process that has already been done.

<b>Motion</b>	
Approval of the request to amend the FLUM from a designation of Traditional Neighborhood to Traditional Commercial, consistent with long standing uses on the subject parcels and adjacency to a minor arterial.	
<b>Vote Results ( Approved )</b>	
Motion: Laureen Boles	
Second: Joseph Ervin	
Joseph Ervin	- Aye
Tom Woiwode	- Aye
Travis Coles	- Not Present
Joseph Welch	- Not Present
Coren Ross	- Not Present
Karen Jarrett	- Aye
Dwayne Stephens	- Not Present
Jeff Notrica	- Not Present
Laureen Boles	- Aye
Stephen Plunk	- Not Present
Jay Melder	- Aye
Michael Kaigler	- Aye
Traci Amick	- Not Present
Amanda Wilson	- Aye

ZA

- 🔗 [1001, 1015 Whitaker St, 120, 124 W Park Ave\\_24-005815-ZA\\_24-005816-ZA\\_Application.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [J. Hundsrucker\\_ Opposition to 24-005816 ZA & 24-005815-ZA.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Site Plan.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [development-agreement-forsyth-park-parking-garage.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [letter-to-seda-request-for-pilot-arrangement-for-the-development-of-a-new-city-parking-garage-at-forsyth-park.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [VNA letter of support Park Whitaker.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [SDBA Letter of Recommendation - Forsyth Office Building.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Staff Report\\_.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Opposition to 24-005816 ZA & 24-005815-ZA.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Combined Public Comments.pdf](#)

See Minutes from the previous item. The FLUM and MAP were presented together.

**Motion**

Approval of the request to rezone to Traditional Commercial-2 (TC-2) with the following condition:

1) Permissible uses shall consist only of those permitted in the TN-1 zoning district and only in accordance with all applicable supplemental use standards.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Joseph Ervin

Second: Laureen Boles

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

**X. Presentations**

**XI. Approved Staff Reviews**

**XII. Other Business**

**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.***