



CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION *"Planning the
Future, Respecting the Past"*

STAFF REPORT

To: The Planning Commission

Through: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director/CEO

From: MPC Staff

Date: July 1, 2025

Subject: Comprehensive Plan - Future Land Use Map Amendment

Agent: P. Bart Smith

Address: 1103 E. 69th Street, Savannah, GA 31404

PIN's: 20114 19002

Site Area: 0.2 Acres

Aldermanic District: 3 - Alderman Linda Wilder-Bryan

File Number: 25-003226-ZA

Request:

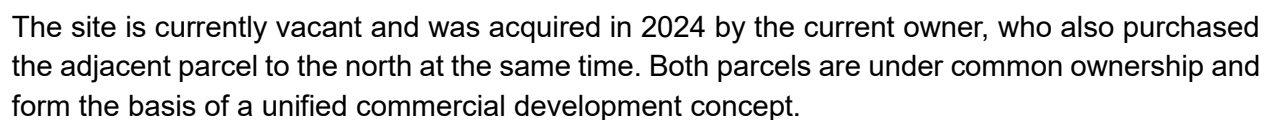
The petitioner is requesting a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment for the subject parcel, from Residential Suburban - Single Family to Commercial - Neighborhood in order to allow the parcel to be used in conjunction with the adjacent parcel to the north (under common ownership), which is already designated Commercial - Neighborhood. The intent is to establish a neighborhood-scale restaurant and drive-thru facility that aligns with adjacent land use and corridor development patterns.

Background:

The subject property, located at 1103 E. 69th Street, is a 0.2-acre parcel situated within the South Garden neighborhood and along Waters Avenue.

South Garden is a modest, historically residential neighborhood in Midtown Savannah, bounded by Waters Avenue and several smaller interior streets such as 69th and 70th. Over the years, the neighborhood has maintained a quiet, predominantly single-family character, but commercial pressure along its Waters Avenue edge has slowly shaped a more transitional land use

Waters Avenue, identified in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan as an Urban Transitional corridor, is evolving into a more walkable, neighborhood-scale commercial spine that compliments the residential neighborhoods. Infill development, small business investment, and corridor improvements are reshaping it into a vibrant edge that supports both economic and community vitality.



Currently designated Residential Suburban – Single Family on the Future Land Use Map, the subject site is zoned Office-Institutional (OI), which is oriented toward non-retail, institutional uses and does not cohesively support the type of commercial activation envisioned for this corridor. The adjacent parcel to the north is designated Commercial - Neighborhood and zoned BN, already aligning with this vision.

Notably, the petitioner currently operates the Sweet Spice restaurant, located directly across the street from the subject parcel. The new development seeks to relocate and expand this existing local business within a new, purpose-built facility that better accommodates its operations and customer demand.

The companion rezoning petition is 25-003170-ZA

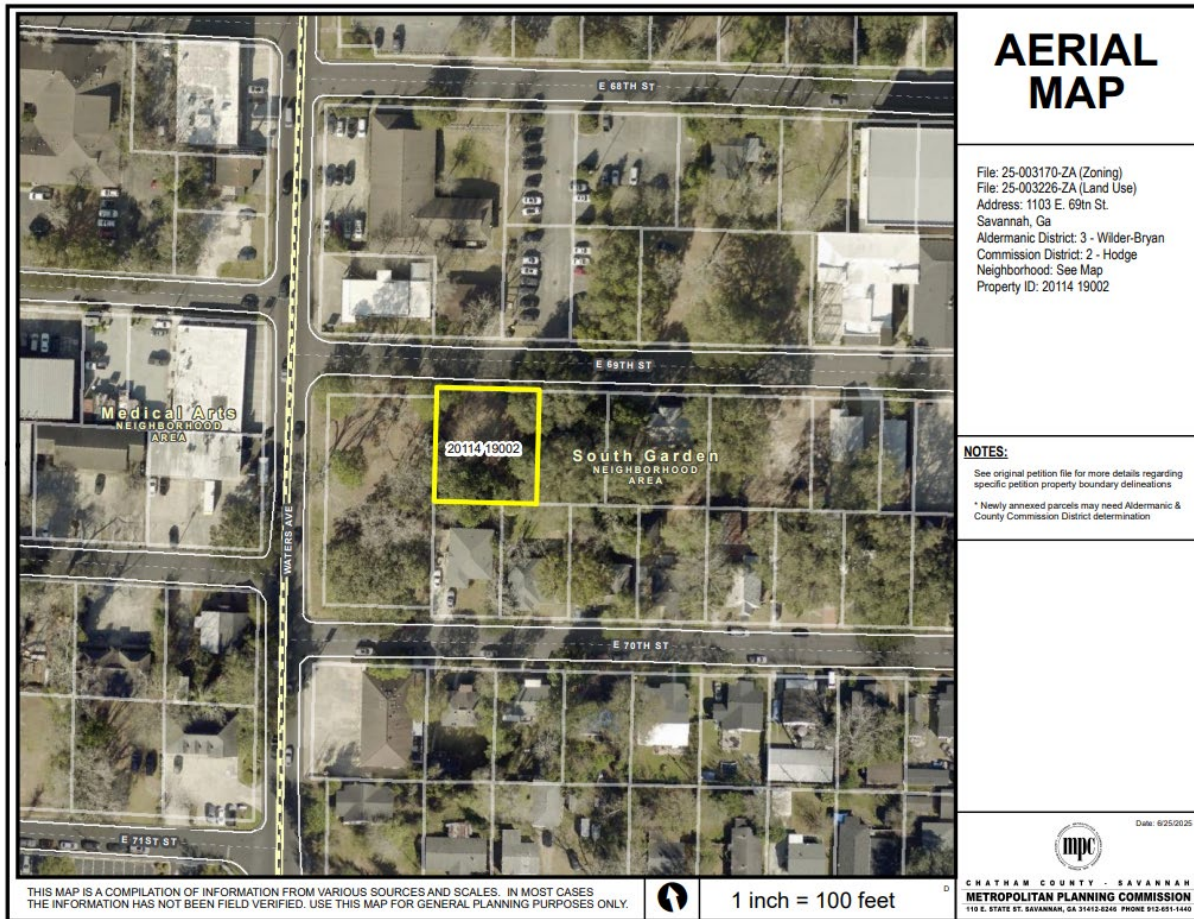
The FLUM amendment would bring both parcels into alignment with the 2040 Plan's vision for active, walkable corridors and coordinated commercial infill.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Current Use:** Vacant land (no structure currently present)
- **Zoning:** OI (Office-Institutional)
- **FLUM Designation:** Residential Suburban – Single Family
- **Parcel Size:** 0.2 acres (90 ft x 100 ft)

SURROUNDING FLUM AND ZONING DESIGNATIONS

Location	FLUM	Existing Zoning
North	Commercial Neighborhood	BN
South	Residential Suburban SF	RSF - 6
East	Residential Suburban SF	RSF - 6
West	Commercial Neighborhood	BN



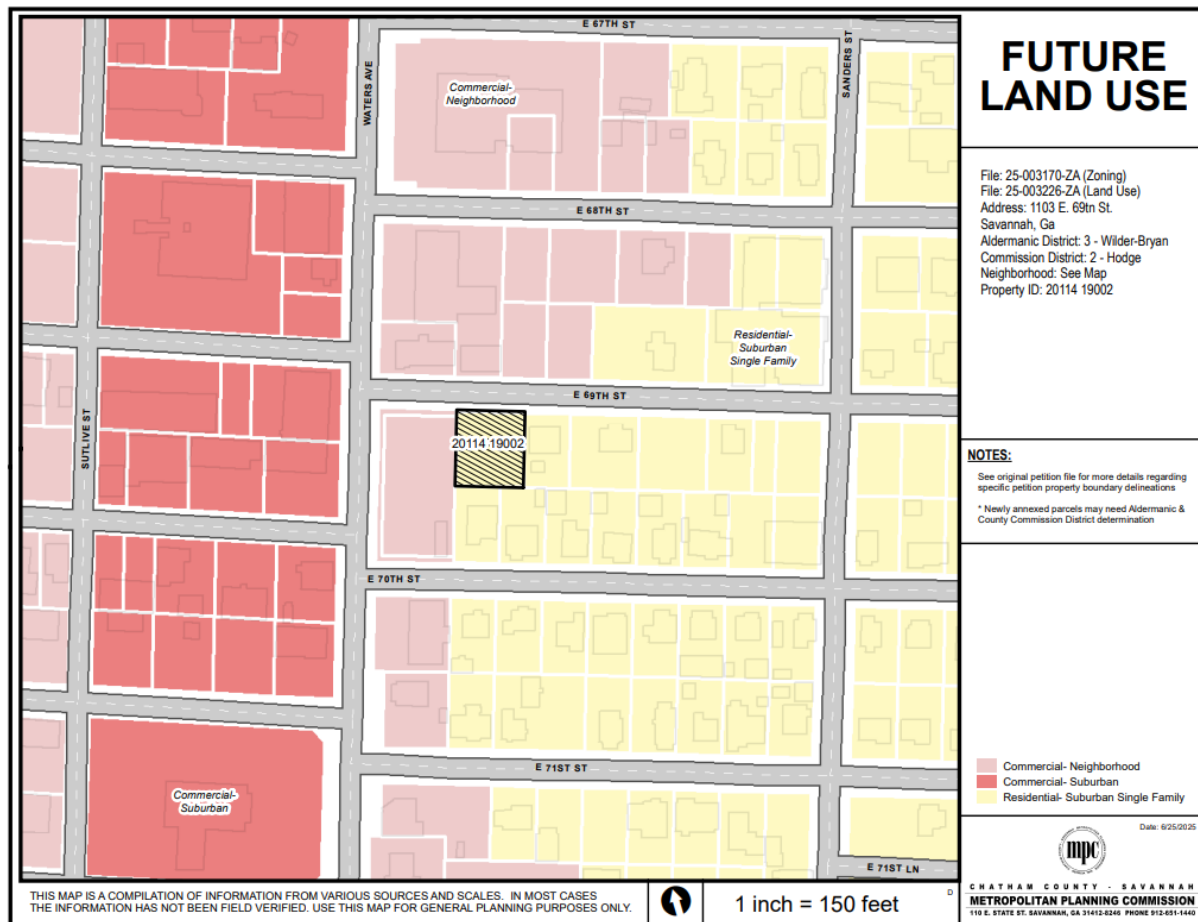
Existing FLUM : *Residential Suburban – Single Family*

This designation is intended for neighborhoods characterized primarily by detached single-family homes, modest lot sizes, and a cohesive residential identity. The category supports residential stability and discourages commercial encroachment, particularly in interior blocks. While this pattern accurately describes most of the South Garden neighborhood, its application to parcels directly fronting Waters Avenue does not reflect the evolving land use conditions occurring along the corridor.

Requested FLUM Designation: **Commercial – Neighborhood**

The Commercial – Neighborhood designation supports walkable, small-scale commercial uses that serve surrounding residential communities. It encourages infill development, reuse of underutilized parcels, and businesses that contribute to the local character of the area. Given the site's position along a transitioning segment of Waters Avenue, its proximity to other commercial designations, and its inclusion in a unified development plan with the adjacent BN parcel, the

requested FLUM category is appropriate and aligned with the 2040 Plan's Urban Transitional policies.



Evaluation:

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

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies Waters Avenue as an Urban Transitional corridor, encouraging incremental commercial infill that promotes walkability and supports low-intensity, neighborhood-serving businesses. The proposed amendment aligns with these goals by facilitating a commercial use at a scale appropriate to the context.

URBAN TRANSITIONAL

Urban Transitional character areas are those that are sometimes classified as "urban edge" or "urban expansion." This character area includes the Cuyler-Brownville Historic District, established neighborhoods such as Ardsley Park and Victory Heights, and commercial corridors on Abercorn Street and Victory Drive. Urban Transitional areas are identifiable by more automobile-oriented, suburban style residential areas that still provide access to urban amenities and public transit. Most of these neighborhoods are also pedestrian-oriented with well-used sidewalks, parks, and open spaces. Redevelopment and infill development opportunities are prevalent in this character area, and special attention should be paid to corridors suited for TOD.



PRIMARY USES	Attached & detached Residential
SECONDARY USES	Commercial, civic & institutional
DENSITY	Medium-high; 6-20 units per acre
TRANSPORTATION	Interconnected street grid, multi-modal transportation
ROAD FUNCT. CLASS	Local roads, collector, arterial, expressway
PARKING	On-street, off-street, surface, private driveways
UTILITIES	Supported by existing municipal utilities
OPEN SPACE	Municipal parks, schools, historic Grayson Stadium



Figure 3: Prescribed Urban Transitional Character Area

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

Land Use :

Goal 1: Establish growth policies for the City of Savannah to guide development and redevelopment in a responsible manner, encouraging compact/mixed-use development, walkable neighborhoods, increased connectivity, and open space preservation

Economic Development Goals :

Goal 5: Become a community with economically vibrant, safe neighborhoods and commercial centers

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

While the subject parcel is currently vacant, data suggests a longstanding pattern of residential and mixed neighborhood-scale uses along this segment of Waters Avenue. The adjacent parcel to the north has already transitioned to commercial zoning, and multiple parcels across and along Waters Avenue support active retail, food service, and personal service uses. These patterns reflect an incremental but steady shift from low-density residential to corridor-based neighborhood commercial uses, consistent with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan's vision for Urban Transitional areas.

Staff also notes that redevelopment interest in this corridor has increased in recent years, supported by city investments in transportation improvements and private-sector reinvestment in small-scale infill. The proposed FLUM amendment supports this broader pattern and encourages land use consistency between adjacent parcels under common ownership.

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

At the time of this report, no formal neighborhood meeting has been held regarding the proposal. No written public comments have been submitted, and staff is not aware of any organized support or opposition. The petitioner has been advised that letters of support or additional community feedback may help demonstrate alignment with neighborhood expectations ahead of the public hearing.

MPC Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the request to amend the Future Land Use Map from Residential Suburban – Single Family to Commercial – Neighborhood for the property located at 1103 E. 69th Street.

Staff however encourages the petitioner to engage with nearby residents or neighborhood groups prior to final action by City Council, in order to promote transparency and minimize potential concerns related to future site operations.