



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

To: The Metropolitan Planning Commission

Through: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director and CEO

From: DeAndrae Spradley, Senior Planner

Date: August 25, 2026

Subject: Special Use Permit Request

Petitioner: Key Heritage, Agent for Maizai, LLC. (Agent - Ellen Harris,
Agent for Ethos Preservation)

Property Owner: Heath Shelton, Agent for The 912 Savannah, LLC.

Parcel ID No: 20064 25015

MPC File No: 26-003978-ZA

Address: 2018 Habersham Street, Unit C-1

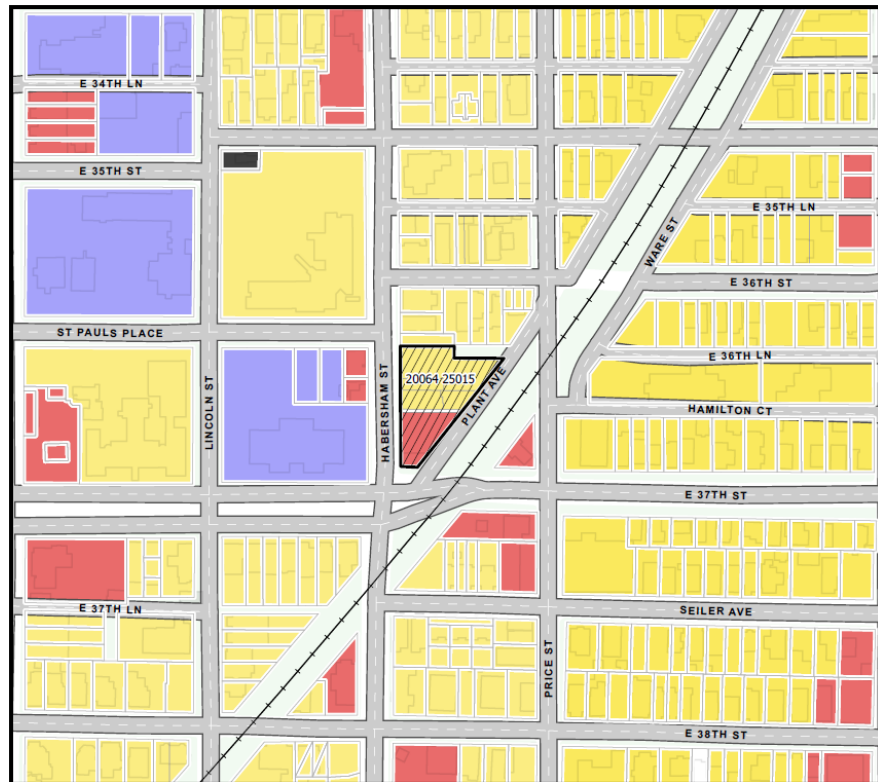
Commissioner: Malinda Scott Hodge

Alderman: District 2 – Detric Leggett

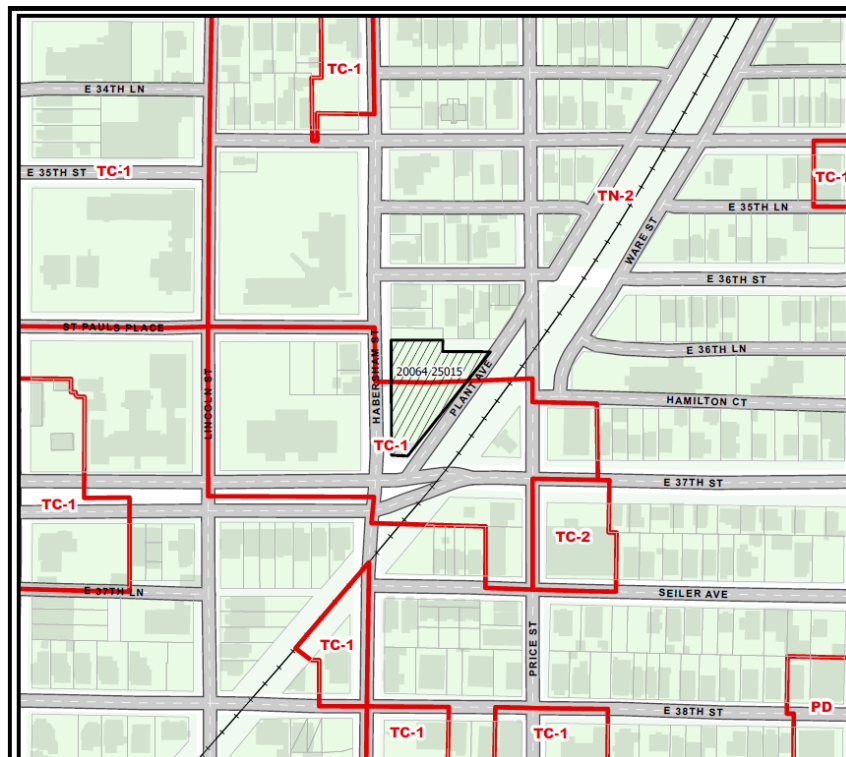
REQUEST: The Petitioner is requesting for approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a Retail Consumption Dealer (On-Premises Consumption of Alcohol) located at 2018 Habersham Street, Unit C-1. The SUP would allow the service of alcoholic beverages in conjunction with a proposed private event venue operating within the Petitioner's tenant space.



Aerial View of Property



Future Land Use Map of Property



Zoning Map of Property



Front of Building



Rear of Property

BACKGROUND: The overall property is 0.54 acres; however, the Petitioner will only be utilizing 1,334 sq. ft. of commercial space on the property. The property is within the Traditional Commercial Future Land Use category and the Traditional Commercial (TC-1) Zoning District. The property is part of a newly constructed commercial development known as, "The 912", located at the corner of Habersham Street and East 37th Street.

In 2019, the property received a zoning amendment from the Traditional Neighborhood-2 (TN-2) Zoning District to the TC-1 Zoning District. In 2025, the property was presented before the City of Savannah's Historic Preservation Commission and received a Certificate of Appropriateness to change the exterior wall material. The buildings at the Petitioner's property are newly constructed, non-contributing resources within the Thomas Square-Streetcar National Register Historic District and the local Streetcar Historic District.

The Petitioner is requesting the SUP to allow for a Retail Consumption Dealer on the property. A Retail Consumption Dealer is defined as a licensed establishment that's authorized to sell alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises. Consistent with the application, alcohol sales are proposed as an accessory component to the event venue operation and not as a stand-alone bar or tavern.

The Petitioner is proposing to operate a 1,334 square restaurant at the property that operates Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and use the same space as a private event venue (hall, banquet, or reception use – private event venue) for catered events, generally from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on select evenings by reservation only. Per to the Petitioner's application, alcohol service would occur only during private catered events and would not be available during the operation of the restaurant.

The property is located within the Streetcar Historic Overlay District. The property is also located at the southwest corner of East 37th Street and Habersham Street within the Thomas Square/Streetcar neighborhood. The property is part of a newly developed mixed-use commercial complex identified as, "The 912."

1. Existing Development Pattern

The surrounding area is characterized by a traditional urban development pattern consisting of a mixture of commercial and residential uses. The land uses and zoning districts surrounding the property include the following:

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Commercial and Mixed-Use Development along E. 37th Street	Traditional Commercial (TC-1)
South	Commercial and Residential Uses	Traditional Commercial
East	Commercial and Residential Uses along Habersham Street	Traditional Commercial (TC-1)
West	Residential and Commercial Uses	Traditional Commercial

The surrounding neighborhood exhibits the characteristics intended by the TC-1 district, including pedestrian-oriented development, walkability, limited parking fields, and neighborhood-scale commercial establishments. The proposed venue would occupy an existing commercial tenant space and would not require expansion of the building footprint. The proposed use is intended to complement the daytime coffee shop operation and to provide a neighborhood-scale event space during evening hours.

2. Public Notice:

A mailed notice of the Planning Commission meeting was sent to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. Public notice signs were posted at the property and the required newspaper advertisements were posted by Staff. The referenced public notice included instructions on how to access the meeting via the internet.

3. General Provisions 3.10.2:

The proposed event venue and accessory alcohol service require Special Use approval prior to operation. The General Provisions for Special Uses identify the purpose of the process and are as follows:

- special uses within each zoning district are uses that would not be appropriate generally or without restriction but which, if controlled as to number, area, location, or relation to other uses may be appropriate in a particular zoning district;
- a special use permit shall be required for all special uses (identified with an “S” designation) as set forth in the permitted use table in Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table or as part of a use condition in Article 8.0, Use Review Criteria Standards;
- specific use standards may be applicable to the approved special use; and
- any use or activity on the property not specifically permitted by Article 5.0, Base Zoning Districts, or the special use permit as modified, shall be deemed unlawful and subject to Article 12.0.

4. Review Criteria for Special Use Permits Section 3.10.8:

When reviewing a Special Use Permit request, the review authority shall consider the following criteria:

- a) Whether the Special Use is consistent with the intent, goals, strategies, policies, guiding principles and programs of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans:

Staff Comment: The Petitioner's request for a Retail Consumption Dealer is generally consistent with the Traditional Commercial (TC) Future Land Use (FLU) designation contained within the City's Comprehensive Plan. The TC FLU designation is intended to support neighborhood-serving commercial activities in historically developed urban areas. Characteristics include walkability, limited parking, mixed-use development, and commercial establishments that are compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The proposed alcohol service is not intended to operate independently of the event venue but rather as an accessory component to private catered events. The request supports activation of an existing commercial space and contributes to the economic viability of the neighborhood commercial corridor while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding uses. Staff therefore finds the request to be generally consistent with the City's currently adopted Comprehensive Plan and

the intent of the TC-1 Zoning District.

- b) Whether specific use standards for the special use, if any, as provided in Article 8.0, Use Standards, can be achieved;

Staff Comment: Staff reviewed Article 8.0 Use Standards of the City's Zoning Ordinance. The proposed alcohol service is accessory to a restaurant and private event venue operation. Alcohol sales are proposed for on-premises consumption only. Therefore, the Petitioner's request meet the intent of the City's Zoning Regulations.

- c) Whether the special use is detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, welfare, function, and appearance of the adjacent uses or general vicinity by reason of any one or more of the following: the number, area, location, height, orientation, intensity (such as traffic, noise, odor, hours of operation), or relation to the neighborhood or other adjacent uses.

Staff Comment: The proposed Retail Consumption Dealer use is not expected to be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, welfare, function, or appearance of surrounding properties. Several factors support this finding:

- the proposed venue occupies only 1,334 square feet;
- events are proposed on a reservation-only basis;
- alcohol service is limited to private catered events and is not available during daytime business hours; and
- the Petitioner is not proposing a stand-alone bar, nightclub, or tavern operation.

Staff does recognize that parking within the surrounding neighborhood is limited to the Petitioner. Based on the submitted site plan, the development contains ten (10) shared parking spaces onsite serving all tenants within the commercial center. However, given the relatively small scale of the proposed venue and the limited event hours, Staff does not anticipate that accessory alcohol service will generate impacts beyond those normally associated with the existing neighborhood-scale commercial activity.

- d) Whether the Special Use will result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any feature determined by the review authority to be of natural, cultural, scenic, or historic importance.

Staff Comment: The Petitioner's Special Use Permit (SUP) request pertains to the operation of a commercial use within an existing building and does not propose any demolition, substantial exterior alteration, or redevelopment of the property. Because the Petitioner's request is operational in nature, Staff finds that the proposed use will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any natural, cultural, scenic, or historic resources. Furthermore, the Petitioner's activation of occupied commercial space within the historic district may reinforce the district's historic mixed-use character and contribute to the long-term economic sustainability of the area.

5. Policy Analysis

The petitioner's request to allow a Retail Consumption Dealer within the proposed event venue is generally compatible with the Traditional Commercial (TC-1) Zoning District and the mixed-use development pattern that characterizes the Streetcar Historic District. The proposed alcohol service is not a primary business activity but rather an accessory use associated with private catered events occurring within a relatively small 1,334-square-foot venue. Because alcohol service will not occur during the operation of the daytime coffee shop and café, Staff finds the Petitioner's request less intensive than a traditional bar or tavern use.

Given the limited size of the venue and the accessory nature of alcohol service, Staff does not anticipate the request will create parking impacts that warrant denial of the Special Use Permit.

The Petitioner's request:

- is consistent with the Traditional Commercial Future Land Use designation;
- can be adequately served by existing public infrastructure;
- is not anticipated to adversely affect historic resources within the Streetcar Historic District; and
- is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood when operated in accordance with the representations provided by the Petitioner.

Based upon Staff's review of the Special Use criteria contained in Section 3.10.8 of City's Zoning Ordinance, the request satisfies the applicable standards and is appropriate for approval with conditions.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Petitioner's request as presented or with recommended and/or other conditions.
2. Deny the Petitioner's request.

RECOMMENDATION:

MPC Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the Petitioner's Special Use Permit Special Use Permit request for a Retail Consumption Dealer (On-Premises Consumption of Alcohol) at 2018 Habersham Street, Building C-1, subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS

1. This Special Use Permit shall be nontransferable.
2. Alcohol sales shall operate only in conjunction with the approved restaurant and Hall, Banquet, or Reception use.
3. Alcohol sales shall be limited to on-premises consumption only.
4. Alcohol service shall be limited to private catered events occurring within the approved venue space.
5. Any expansion of alcohol service beyond the operational scope represented within the application shall require additional review and approval from the City of Savannah.