



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: Ken Gorski – Senior Planner, Development Services

Date: February 17, 2026

Subject: Zoning Map Amendment

Applicant: Elizabeth A. Tootle New

Agent: Craig A. Call – Scheer, Montgomery & Call, P.C.

Address: 8501 Lynn Avenue

Property PIN: 20530 07028

Site Area: 0.25 acres +/-

Alderman District: 4 – Nick Palumbo

Chatham County Commission District: 1 – Anthony Wayne Noha

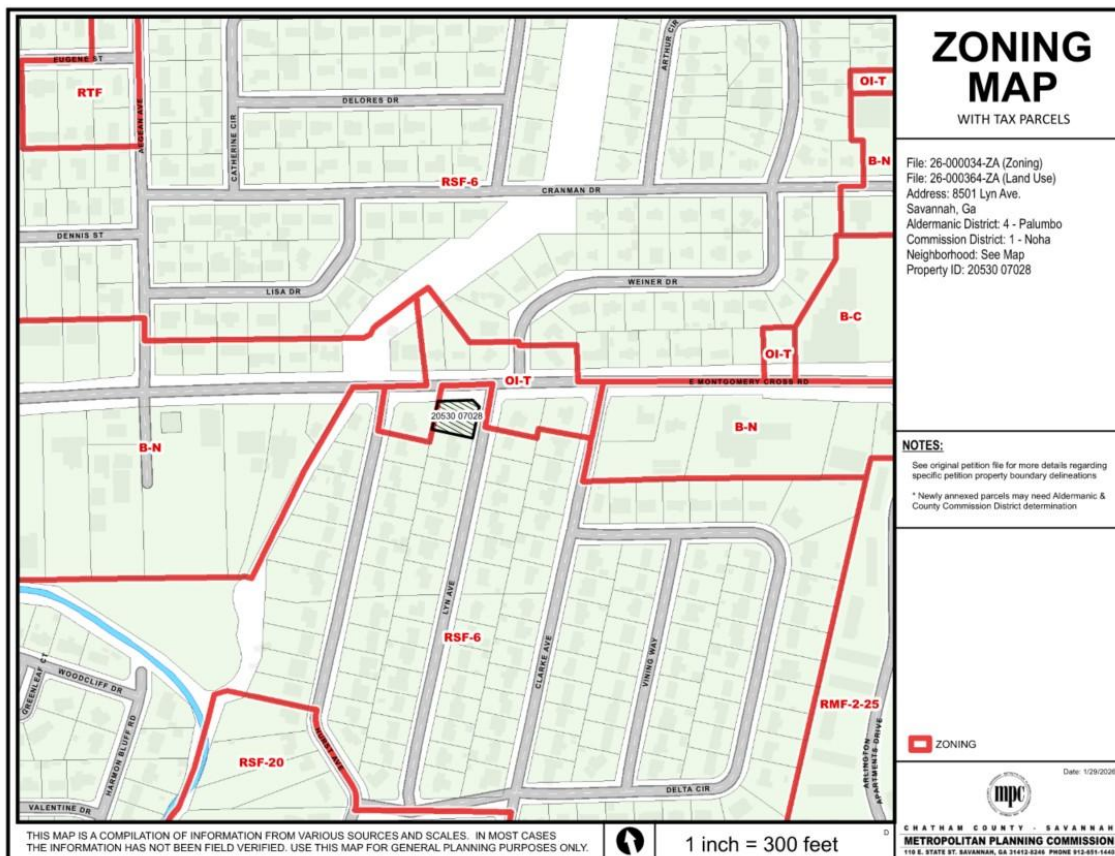
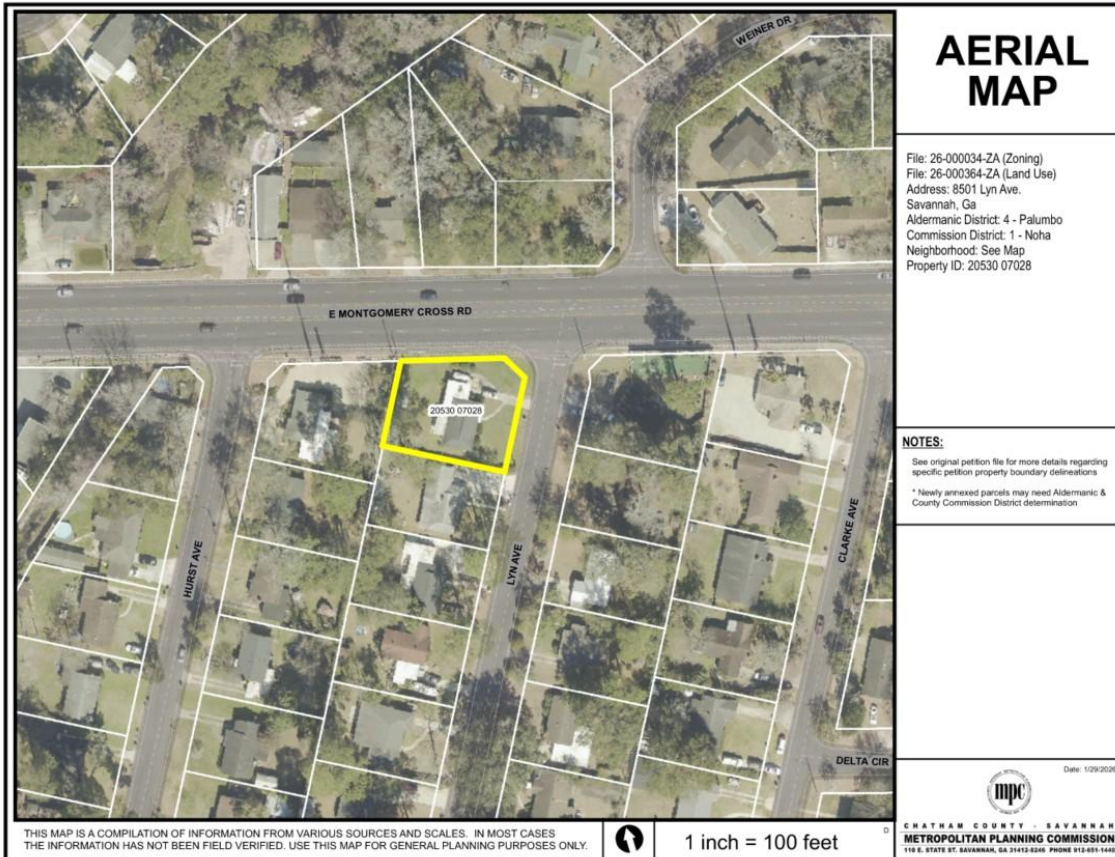
File Number: 26-00034-ZA

Request:

The petitioner is requesting an amendment to the Zoning Map from RSF-6 (Residential Single Family – 6) to OI-T (Office and Institutional – Transition). The proposed use is for general business functions for Clearwater Pool & Patio with limited customer or public interaction. The property is currently a single-family home. There are no variances requested within the application.

Facts & Findings:

- **Site:** The subject property is located at the intersection of Montgomery Cross Road and Lyn Avenue. The parcel is bordered on the west by a law office and on the south by single family homes. The subject property is 0.25 acres in size and is served by public water and sewage systems.
- **Access:** The property currently has a single-vehicle-width concrete driveway from Lyn Avenue that leads to a carport and small adjacent parking pad. If the rezoning is granted, there will need to be additional parking and improved access to comply with OI-T and general commercial-use requirements and Traffic Engineering regulations.



- **Existing Zoning & Development Pattern:** The subject property is currently zoned RSF-6 (Residential Single-family – 6) and adjacent properties within the immediate area are presently zoned RSF-6, OI-T (Office & Institutional – Transition) or B-N (Business – Neighborhood). Montgomery Cross Road is primarily commercial in nature despite having adjacent residential areas. The subject property's current RSF-6 zoning reflects the original nature of the community but not its current evolution. As seen on the zoning map below, most of the parcels along Montgomery Cross Road have already become commercial in nature (B-C, B-N or OI-T zoning).
- **Public Notice:** Mailed notice of the Planning Commission meeting was sent to all property owners located within 300 feet of the subject property, signs were posted on site and required newspaper advertisements were published at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. The mailed notice included instructions on how to access the public meeting via the internet.
- **Neighborhood Outreach:** The applicant has discussed their rezoning request with neighbors from the immediate community and has provided 13 signed letters of support.

Impact and Suitability:

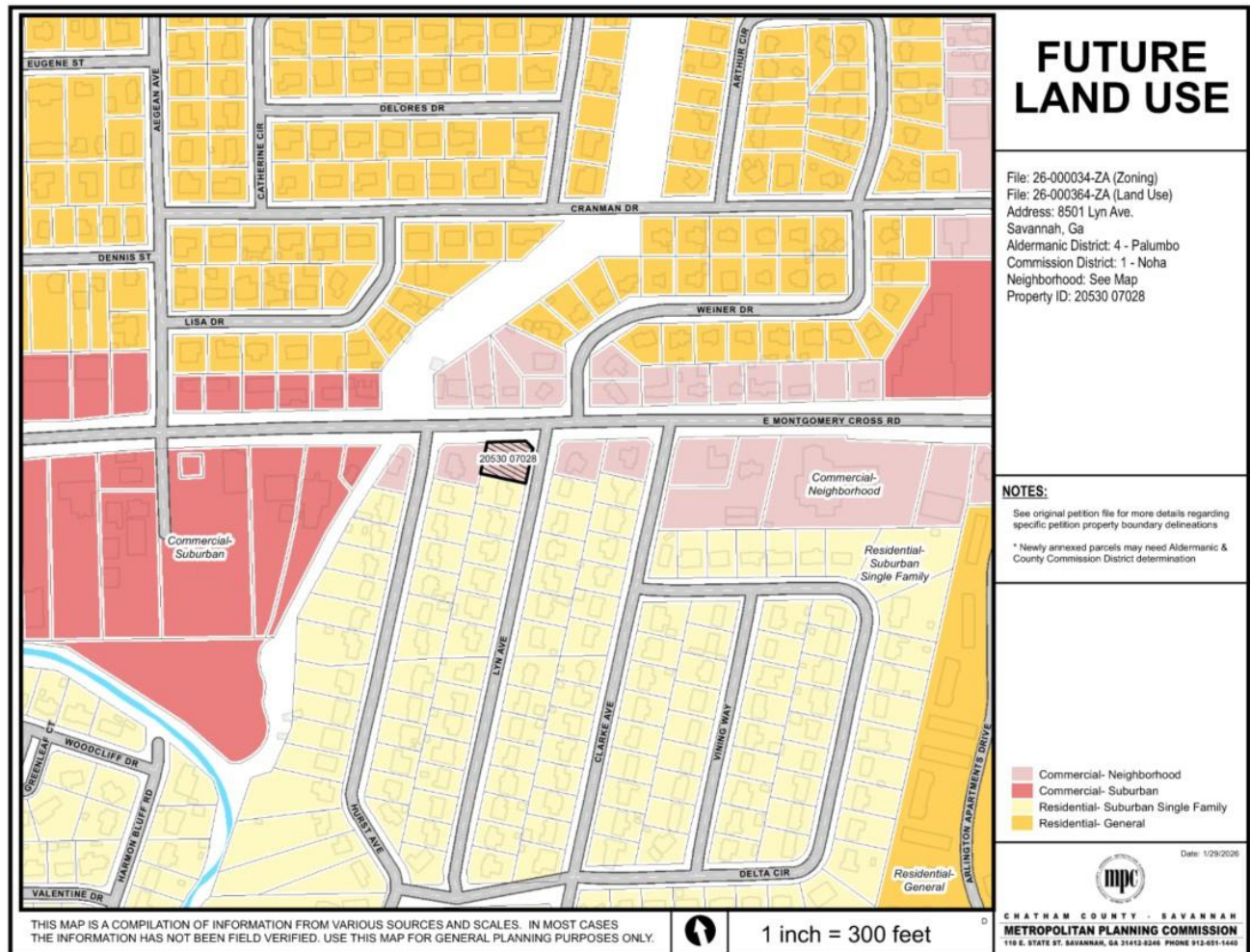
- **Public Services & Facilities:** The property is served by City water, sewer and stormwater systems. No significant changes or modifications are anticipated.
- **Comprehensive Land Use Plan Element:** The subject property is located within a Suburban Residential Character Area with a future land use of Commercial-Neighborhood.

Suburban Residential Character areas include low and medium density developments; generally, this character area features either single-family structures on large lots or medium-lot residential subdivisions with relatively uniform housing types and densities. However, multi-family apartments and attached single-family residential subdivisions are also prevalent in this area. Secondary uses may include small scale commercial such as what is typically found in Office & Institutional-Transition zoning, where small businesses often operate out of single-family home structures. The "transition" aspect allows limited business functions into houses while maintaining the visual fabric and structure of the residential neighborhood.

Suburban Residential areas adjacent to Suburban Commercial Character areas should, to the extent possible, be designed as cohesive, connected neighborhoods. While primarily residential in nature, small commercial uses are often located along arterial road frontages with traditional subdivisions behind, creating a land use pattern that separates housing from heavy traffic patterns. The long-term vision for these areas includes a transition toward low density commercial, retail and office functions along major roadways that protect and insulate residential areas in a cohesive and symbiotic manner.

The Commercial-Neighborhood land use designation in the FLUM allows for nodal and multi-tenant retail areas that are within predominantly residential areas and are developed at a scale and intensity compatible with adjacent residential uses. Current development and land use patterns along Montgomery Cross Road has seen the application of Office and Institutional – Transition zoning and small businesses and professional offices operating out of the existing residential structures.

The requested zoning change to OI-T for this property is consistent with current land use patterns, adjacent zoning, the *Plan 2040* Character Area and the intent of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation of Commercial-Neighborhood.



Zoning Ordinance Review:

The following review criteria for rezoning are prescribed in the Savannah Zoning Ordinance Section 3.5.8:

Suitability and Community Need

- Whether the range of uses permitted by the proposed zoning district is more suitable than the range of uses that are permitted by the current zoning district.

MPC Comment: Yes. The range of uses permitted under the proposed OI-T zoning is more suitable than those allowed under the current RSF-6 designation. Similar adjacent properties along Montgomery Cross Road are already zoned OI-T. This change would promote zoning consistency and better aligns with the intent of the Comp Plan and FLUM. OI-T also limits the intensity and variety of commercial functions that are appropriate directly adjacent to an established residential area.

- Whether the proposed zoning district addresses a specific need in the county or city.

MPC Comment: *Yes. The proposed zoning addresses a specific need identified in the Comprehensive Plan and delineated in the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). This zoning change would fill a gap within the current Commercial – Neighborhood zoning corridor along Montgomery Cross Road shown on the FLUM.*

- Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.

MPC Comment: *No. The zoning proposal is not expected to adversely affect the use or usability of adjacent or nearby properties. There are development standards and requirements for buffers and landscaping that will help safeguard and insulate adjacent houses from the new commercial functions.*

- Whether the zoning proposal is compatible with the present zoning pattern and conforming uses of nearby property and the character of the surrounding area.

MPC Comment: *Yes. The zoning proposal is compatible and consistent with the adjacent zoning, the land-use pattern and the character of the surrounding area. Neighboring properties have already been rezoned to OI-T. The intent of the Comp Plan and FLUM is to have limited and appropriate commercial uses located along Montgomery Cross Road to act as a buffer for the existing residential communities.*

- Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal.

MPC Comment: *There are no other conditions that affect the rezoning of this parcel. The new owner intends to relocate their general business functions here, which will align the zoning and land use pattern to the gradual character shift to business uses along Montgomery Cross Road per the Comp Plan and FLUM.*

Consistency

- Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans, such as a redevelopment plan or small area plan.

MPC Comment: *Yes. The zoning proposal is consistent with the overall intent of the Comprehensive Plan and land use designated on the FLUM.*

Reasonable Use

- Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable use as currently zoned.

MPC Comment: *The subject parcel has reasonable use as presently zoned and developed as a single family residence. However, the proposed zoning change is more consistent with recent development patterns, adjacent zoning and the intent of the 2040 Comp Plan.*

Adequate Public Services

- Whether adequate school, public safety and emergency facilities, road, ingress and egress, parks, wastewater treatment, water supply and stormwater drainage facilities are available for the uses and densities that are permitted in the proposed zoning district.

MPC Comment: *Adequate City services are available to serve the proposed use. Modifications requiring the issuance of any site improvement or building permits will go through the necessary application process which includes review and approval by any and all applicable departments and jurisdictions.*

MPC Staff Recommendation:

MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the request to rezone the subject property to *Office & Institutional - Transition* based upon adjacent land use, consistency with the intent of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map, and written support from adjacent neighbors.

Additional Comments:

Section 5.15.2 should be revised to allow OI-T in the Commercial-Neighborhood districts, as it is a less intense classification. This amendment would better reflect surrounding conditions and the intent of the Comp Plan:

5.15.2 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Consistency

The OI districts are permitted only in the following FLUM categories:

- Office/Institutional: OI-E, OI, OI-T
- Office-Transition: OI-T
- Commercial-Suburban: OI-E, OI, OI-T
- ***Commercial-Neighborhood: OI-T (ADD)***

Office and Institutional-Transition (OI-T)

The OI-T district supports the transition of properties originally developed for residential use into limited nonresidential uses. It is intended for areas where traffic increases, roadway modifications, or similar factors have reduced residential viability, creating a need for a transitional buffer between residential and nonresidential uses.