



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: Subhashi Karunaratne, Planner – Development Services

Date: July 14, 2026

Subject: Zoning Map Amendment

Applicant/Agent: Josh Yellin for RM Savannah Investment Properties

Address: 10602, 10612 and 10620 White Bluff Road

PIN: 20587 01003, 20587 01004, and 20587 01005

Site Area: 0.9 acres

Alderman District: 4 – Nick Palumbo

Chatham County Commission District: 1 – Anthony Wayne Noha

Request: Rezone from RSF-6 (Residential Single Family - 6) to BN (Neighborhood - Business)

File Number: 26-002955-ZA-MAP

Request

The Petitioner is requesting an amendment to the Zoning Map from RSF-6 (Residential Single Family - 6) to BN (Neighborhood - Business). The proposed use is a neighborhood-oriented retail center with commercial spaces.

The applicant is also requesting a concurrent Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment from Residential-Suburban Single Family to Commercial-Neighborhood.

Facts and Findings

Zoning History

The three subject parcels are vacant, was originally zoned R-6 (One Family Residential) prior to NewZo (New Zoning Ordinance in 2019).

Site

The subject properties are located along White Bluff Road within the Paradise Park neighborhood. Across White Bluff Road lies the White Bluff/Holland Drive neighborhood. Collectively, the three parcels comprise approximately 0.9 acres, with approximately 195 feet of frontage along White Bluff Road and an average depth of approximately 200 feet.

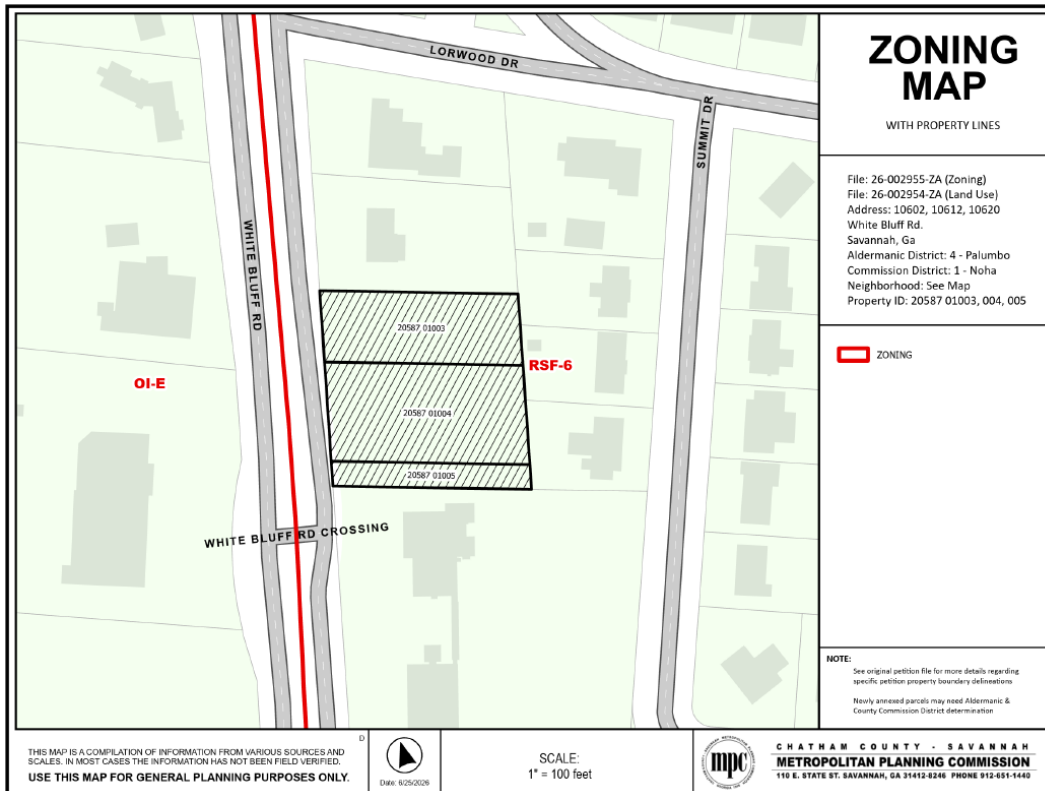


Aerial view of 10602, 10612 and 10620 White Bluff Road

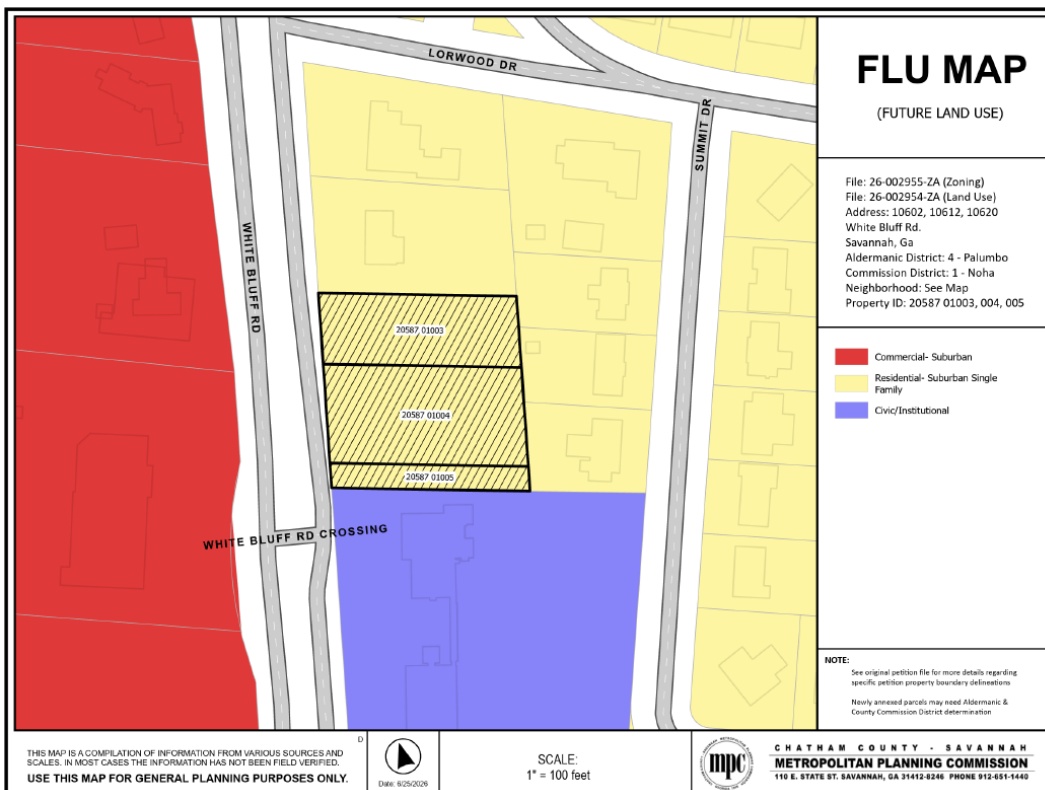
Existing Zoning and Development Pattern

The subject parcel is currently zoned RSF-6 (Residential Single Family - 6). The RSF-districts are established to preserve and create areas of single-family detached development. The five districts (RSF-30, RSF-20, RSF-10, RSF-6, RSF-5, and RSF-4) within the RSF- designation provide for varying development standards but generally permit the same uses. A limited number of nonresidential uses are allowed that are compatible with single-family residential uses.

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Residential	RSF-6
South	Residential and Religious institution	RSF-6
East	Residential	RSF-6
West	Office, Fire Station	OI-E



Current Zoning Map



Current FLUM Map

Public Notice

Mailed notice of the Planning Commission meeting was sent to all property owners within 300-feet of the subject property, signs were posted on site and required newspaper advertisements were run at least 15 days prior to the meeting. The mailed notice included instructions on how to access the public meeting via the internet.

Neighborhood Meetings

According to the applicant, the Paradise Park Neighborhood Association was contacted on July 8 to schedule a neighborhood meeting. As of the date of this report, the neighborhood meeting has not yet taken place.

Impact and Suitability

Public Services and Facilities

The site is served by City water, sewer and stormwater systems. Modifications requiring the issuance of a site development permit will go through the site plan review process which includes approval of all applicable departments.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Element

The subject properties are located within the Suburban Commercial Character Area, which is intended to accommodate automobile-oriented commercial centers serving community and regional shopping and service needs. The Plan encourages redevelopment of these areas through improved site design, reduced visual impacts of parking, and the integration of higher-density mixed-use development where appropriate.

The existing Future Land Use designation is Residential- Suburban Single Family. These are areas identified for single-family detached residential dwellings at a density not to exceed five (5) units per gross acre. This category includes non-residential uses that are compatible with the residential character and scale of the neighborhood.

Existing Zoning District

- Intent of the RSF-6 Zoning District:

The RSF- districts are established to preserve and create areas of single-family detached development.

- Allowed Uses: The uses allowed in the RSF-6 zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.

- Development Standards: The development standards of the RSF-6 zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.

Proposed Zoning District

- Intent of the B-N Zoning District:

The B-N district was established to permit small-scale, neighborhood-oriented nonresidential uses and upper story residences. This district is intended to provide for limited commercial opportunities in a walkable environment and to reduce or prevent impacts on adjacent or nearby residential uses. Uses in this district are intended to be located primarily on collector or arterial streets within convenient traveling distances from neighborhoods which they will serve.

- Allowed Uses: The uses allowed in the B-N zoning districts appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.
- Development Standards: The development standards of the B-N zoning districts appear in charts appended to the end of this report.

Zoning Ordinance Review

The following review criteria for rezoning are prescribed in the Savannah Zoning Ordinance Sec. 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: *The proposed B-N district would allow a broader range of commercial uses that are generally consistent with development along White Bluff Road. However, the district also permits more intensive uses, such as vehicle sales and service, vehicle washes, self-service storage facilities, funeral homes, breweries, distilleries, wineries, and package stores, which may not be compatible with the adjoining RSF-6 residential neighborhood to the rear.*

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

MPC Comment: *The proposed B-N district supports the City's goal of encouraging neighborhood-serving commercial uses along existing transportation corridors. The request promotes strategic infill development, provides commercial services in close proximity to surrounding residential neighborhoods, and supports walkability by reducing the need for longer vehicle trips.*

Compatibility

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

MPC Comment: *The proposed B-N district would expand the range and intensity of uses permitted on the subject properties. While commercial uses are generally appropriate along White Bluff Road, some permitted uses could generate increased traffic, noise, lighting, and operational activity that may adversely affect the usability and residential character of the adjacent RSF-6-zoned properties to the rear. Site development standards, buffering, and landscaping requirements would help mitigate many of these impacts should the property be developed.*

- 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: *Partially. The proposed B-N district is compatible with the commercial corridor along White Bluff Road. However, because the subject properties directly abut an established RSF-6 residential neighborhood, the full range of uses permitted in the B-N district may not be compatible with the existing zoning pattern and residential character of the surrounding area.*

- 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: *The location of the subject properties along White Bluff Road supports commercial redevelopment. However, the adjacent RSF-6 residential neighborhood is an existing condition that warrants careful consideration of the compatibility and intensity of the proposed B-N zoning district.*

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, if the concurrent Future Land Use Map amendment is approved. The applicant is requesting a concurrent amendment to change the Future Land Use designation from Residential-Suburban Single Family to Commercial-Neighborhood. If approved, the proposed B-N zoning district would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the amended Future Land Use designation.*

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.*

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 will be available to serve the proposed use. Modifications requiring the issuance of a site development permit will go through the site plan review process which includes approval of all applicable departments.*

Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: *The subject parcel is within an installation Airport Airfield Overlay. The comments from Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield is attached to the agenda.*

Analysis Summary

The proposed B-N zoning district is consistent with several planning objectives, including encouraging neighborhood-serving commercial uses, promoting strategic infill along existing transportation corridors, and supporting walkability. The location of the subject properties along White Bluff Road makes commercial redevelopment appropriate in principle, and the concurrent Future Land Use Map amendment would bring the proposal into conformity with the Comprehensive Plan.

However, the subject properties also directly abut an established RSF-6 residential neighborhood. While the applicant has proposed a neighborhood-oriented retail center, rezoning to the B-N district would permit a broader range of commercial uses that extend beyond the proposed development. Staff finds that some of these permitted uses may not be compatible with the adjacent residential properties and could adversely affect the existing residential character. Although future development would be subject to site plan review and applicable buffering and development standards, those requirements would not limit the full range of uses permitted by right within the B-N district.

On balance, Staff finds that while the proposal has several positive planning attributes, the expanded range of permitted uses creates compatibility concerns with the adjoining residential neighborhood. Therefore, Staff recommends denial of the requested rezoning.

Recommendation

MPC Staff recommends **Denial** of the request to rezone the subject property to RSF-6 (Residential Single Family - 6) to BN (Neighborhood - Business).