



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: Ely Zarka, Senior Planner – Development Services

Date: June 2, 2026

Subject: Zoning Map Amendment

Applicant/Agent: Josh Yellin for Orchard Group

Address: 912 Drayton St

PIN: 20044 20008

Site Area: 0.32 acres

Alderman District: 2 – Detric Leggett

Chatham County Commission District: 2 – Commissioner Malinda Scott Hodge

Request: Rezone from TN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood-1) to TC-2 (Traditional Commercial-2)

File Number: 26-002039-ZA-MAP

Request

The Petitioner is requesting an amendment to the Zoning Map from TN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood-1) to TC-2 (Traditional Commercial-2). The proposed use is for a Banquet or Reception Hall. The property was previously utilized as a private club.

Facts and Findings

Zoning History

The subject parcel, was originally zoned 2-R and was designated as Traditional Neighborhood-1 as part of NewZO (New Zoning Ordinance in 2019).

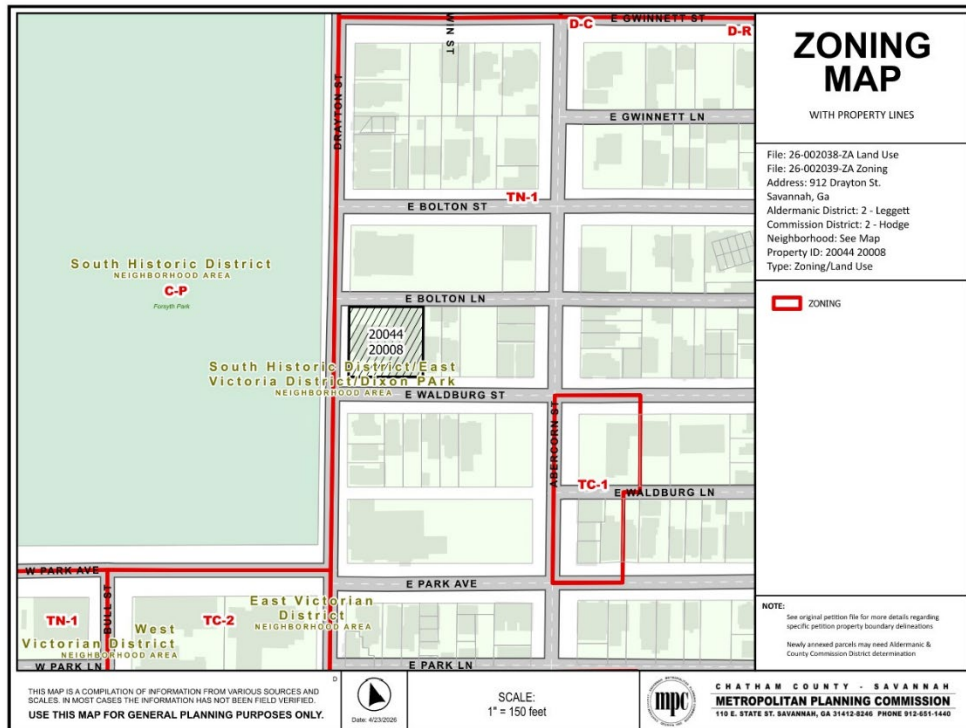
Site

The subject property is located at 912 Drayton St, towards the southern end of Forsyth Park. The parcel is 0.32 acres in size and rectangular in shape with 115 feet of frontage along Drayton St and a depth of approximately 125 feet. The property contains a large structure built in 1980 with an under-roof area of just over 10,300 square feet. The structure was previously in use as a Masonic Temple.

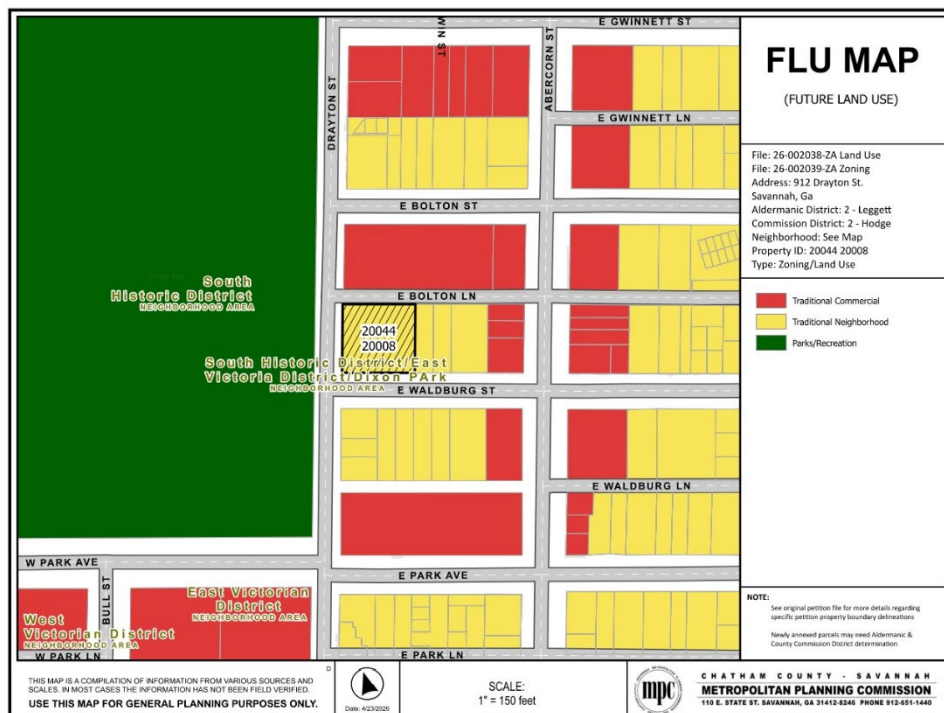
Existing Zoning and Development Pattern

The subject parcel is currently zoned TN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood-1). The Traditional Neighborhood designation is typically used as a transitional zone between the more commercial sections and residential zones in many of the historic part of the city. Today, adjacent and nearby properties are zoned entirely TN-1. Towards the North is the southern end of a Downtown Commercial (D-C) area and along Park Ave is a string of TC-2 (Traditional Commercial-2) parcels.

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Office, Single-family and multifamily residences	TN-1
South	Single-family Residences; Hotel/Inn	TN-1
East	Single-family Residences, Hotel/Inn	TN-1
West	Park	C-P



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

A neighborhood meeting was held with the Victorian Neighborhood Association with members of the Forsyth Park Community Alliance also in attendance.

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 Urban Core character area contains much of the urban, historic neighborhoods of the city, the Streetcar Historic District and the Victorian Historic District. It is characterized by a mix of attached and detached single-family homes, small to mid-sized multifamily and neighborhood scale commercial. Urban cores are walkable and connected within the traditional grid. Infill and development opportunities are more widely available and should maintain the walkable densities and be compatible with the community character.

The proposed zoning change to Traditional Commercial-2 (TC-2) to accommodate a banquet hall may not be entirely appropriate for this specific character area. The TC-2 district is intended to ensure the vibrancy of historic mixed-use neighborhoods with traditional development patterns. The district provides for the creation of commercial corridors along higher classifications of street that traverse historic neighborhoods. The property's current Traditional Neighborhood Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation does not technically permit the TC-2 district under current ordinances; the property needs a FLUM amendment to Traditional Commercial to achieve strict consistency. While there are merits to introducing a commercial designation along a higher classified street, introducing a larger traffic use such as a banquet hall, does not necessarily match with the character of the neighborhood.

Existing Zoning District

- Intent of the TN-1 Zoning District:

The TN-1 district is intended to ensure the vibrancy of historic residential neighborhoods with traditional development patterns characteristic of Savannah from approximately 1890 to 1920 during the streetcar era. While the district provides for primarily residential uses, it also includes limited non-residential uses that are considered compatible with the residential character of the neighborhood. The TN-1 district is intended for use only within the Victorian Historic Overlay District.

- Allowed Uses: The uses allowed in the TN-1 zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.
- Development Standards: The development standards of the TN-1 zoning district appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.

Proposed Zoning District

- Intent of the TC-2 Zoning District:

The TC-2 district is established to ensure the vibrancy of historic mixed-use neighborhoods with traditional development patterns characteristic of Savannah during the streetcar and early automobile eras. The district provides for the creation of commercial corridors along higher classifications of streets that traverse historic neighborhoods.

- Allowed Uses: The uses allowed in the TC-2 zoning districts appear in a chart appended to the end of this report.
- Development Standards: The development standards of the TC-2 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: *No. The uses currently permitted in TN-1 does allow for a varied amount of non-commercial uses to be permitted. The TC-2 district while potentially appropriate does allow a much wider variety of uses, that would be suitable along a higher classification of street, such as Drayton Street, but not necessarily when surrounding by the varied types of residential and inn styled uses.*

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

MPC Comment: *The proposed zoning does not address a specific need in the city. The proposed zoning change is to allow for a banquet hall and event space. The petitioner will be adapting the existing structure, which is contributing, to achieve their goal for using the space.*

Compatibility

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

MPC Comment: *No. The requested zoning district may not adversely affect the use or usability of adjacent or nearby properties depending on the use. The property is currently developed as a large structure with zero associated parking. While some uses may not necessarily adversely affect neighboring properties, high traffic uses such as a banquet hall may have an adverse effect.*

- 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 requested zoning is compatible and consistent with the adjacent zoning, the evolving land-use pattern, and the character of the surrounding area. While the immediate block was historically residential, neighboring properties along the corridor have already been rezoned to TC-1. However, the Traditional Neighborhood districts serve as a buffer to strict residential areas, while also allowing a mix of residential and specific non-residential uses.*

- 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: *Yes. The requested zoning aligns with the changing conditions along the Drayton St corridor and surrounding Forsyth Park. The parcels surrounding the park are seeing increased changes to be more commercial in nature, with more recent changes occurring along Park Ave, an area that is designated as Traditional Commercial. Due to a combination of the parking reductions included in the Victorian Parking Reduction (9.3.7), and the standards regarding legal non-conforming parking (11.7) no additional parking is required.*

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: *The subject property is currently designated as Traditional-Neighborhood on the FLUM. Under current regulations, TC-2 is only permitted in Traditional Commercial FLUM categories.*

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 not within an installation AICUZ or APZ, nor is it in proximity to an airport.*

Additional Comments

MPC Comment: The Petitioner has submitted that business hours for onsite employees will generally be 9am to 5 pm. Events will generally be held from 5 pm to 11 pm. A commercial kitchen is not proposed on site, but a prep/catering kitchen will be on site.

A Special Use will be necessary for on premise consumption of alcohol.

Recommendation

MPC Staff recommends **DENIAL** of the request to rezone the subject property to *Traditional Commercial-2* based upon the evolution of adjacent land use patterns and compatibility with the surrounding commercial and transitional area.

As an alternative MPC staff does recommend **APPROVAL** of a rezoning to the TC-1 district, which would require a Special Use Permit for the Banquet Hall Use.