



CHATHAM COUNTY – SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

MPC STAFF REPORT

March 31, 2026

**Minor Subdivision/Final Plat
Lot 14 and Part of Lots 13 and 15
Block 2, Meyer Ward, Avondale
PIN 20060 37001
1028 Bonaventure Road and 2001 Ohio Avenue
1 Lot to 2 Lots, 0.214 acres (9,351.72 sf)
MPC File No. 26-000745-ZA (24-003928-SUBP)
Thomas Stephenson and April Brooks**

MPC Staff: Edward Morrow

Nature of Request

The Petitioner requests MPC approval of a Final Plat for a proposed subdivision of one lot to create two nonconforming single-family home lots in the RSF-6 zoning district. The two parcels would be deficient with regard to the minimum lot area of 6,000 square feet required within the RSF-6 zoning district.

Findings

1. The purpose of the proposed subdivision is to divide an existing 9,364 square foot parcel containing two nonconforming structures into two parcels, each containing one structure.
2. The parcel contains two address points within the Master Address database. Per the Tax Assessor, 1028 Bonaventure Road is a 1,161 square foot commercial structure previously utilized for an automobile service and repair operation. It was constructed in or about 1923. The residential structure, identified as 2001 Ohio Avenue, was built in around 1940 and contains approximately 1,344 square feet of living area.
3. The structures on each parcel are nonconforming with regard to one or more required setbacks within the RSF-6 district, but both predate the adoption of the current zoning and development standards. As no structural modifications that would increase the existing nonconformities are proposed, the Zoning Administrator regards the structures as *legal*, not requiring variance relief due to the subdivision.
4. Per Sec. 5.7.5 of the Zoning Ordinance, the RSF 6 zoning district requires a minimum lot area of 6,000 square feet for subdivision of new lots.

5. Proposed Lot A (1028 Bonaventure Road) would be 5,144 square feet in area where 6,000 square feet are ordinarily anticipated.
6. Proposed Lot B (2001 Ohio Avenue) would be 4,207 square feet in area where 6,000 square feet are ordinarily anticipated.
7. All lots will be served by City of Savannah water and sanitary sewer system.
8. The Planning Commission is authorized to grant variances to the standards of *Article 5, Base Zoning Districts*, upon the basis of the criteria established in Sec. [3.21.10](#).

The following review criteria for Variances are prescribed in the Savannah Zoning Ordinance Sec. 3.21.10:

A. General Consistency

The variance shall be consistent with the intent of this Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan and shall not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.

MPC Comment: The variance is generally consistent with the intent of the Zoning Ordinance to promote "*orderly, harmonious, and judicious use of land*." It seeks to formalize a property configuration that already contains two distinct, long-standing structures on one parcel, aligning them with the potential for individual ownership.

Based on Staff discussions with the Petitioner prior to the variance request, it is believed that the intended use of the property is establishment of a single-family dwelling, which is consistent with the current zoning.

A. Special Conditions

i. Special conditions and/or circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, buildings or structures involved and which are not applicable to other lands, buildings or structures in the same zoning district.

MPC Comment: The parcel currently contains two primary structures: a commercial building constructed in 1923 and a residence built in 1940, which were established long before the adoption of current RSF-6 zoning and development standards.

ii. The special conditions and/or circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant.

MPC Comment: These conditions are not the result of actions by the current applicant, as the structures predate their ownership and current regulatory requirements.

iii. The special conditions and/or circumstances are not purely financial in nature so as to allow the applicant to use the land, buildings or structures involved more profitably or to save money.

MPC Comment: The request is not purely financial in nature. It is a practical measure to separate two viable structures onto separate parcels of adequate area for single-family residential use.

B. Literal Interpretation

Literal interpretation of the provisions of the regulations would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the Ordinance and would result in unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant.

MPC Comment: A literal interpretation of the RSF-6 minimum lot area of 6,000 square feet to deny this subdivision would be unreasonable due to the two existing structures that are nonconforming because they predate the zoning ordinances. Such a denial could result in an "unnecessary and undue hardship" by forcing the permanent entanglement of two unrelated structures or forcing the demolition of a viable structure.

C. Minimum Variance

The variance, if granted, is the minimum variance necessary to make possible the reasonable use of land, buildings, or structures.

MPC Comment: The requested variance represents the minimum necessary to allow for the reasonable use of the land and buildings. The total parcel area is 9,364 square feet, and the proposed division creates lots of 5,144 square feet and 4,207 square feet. While these are below the 6,000-square-foot minimum, the subdivision follows the existing physical placement of the buildings on the ground. No structural modifications are proposed that would increase the existing nonconformities, ensuring the variance is limited to the smallest degree possible.

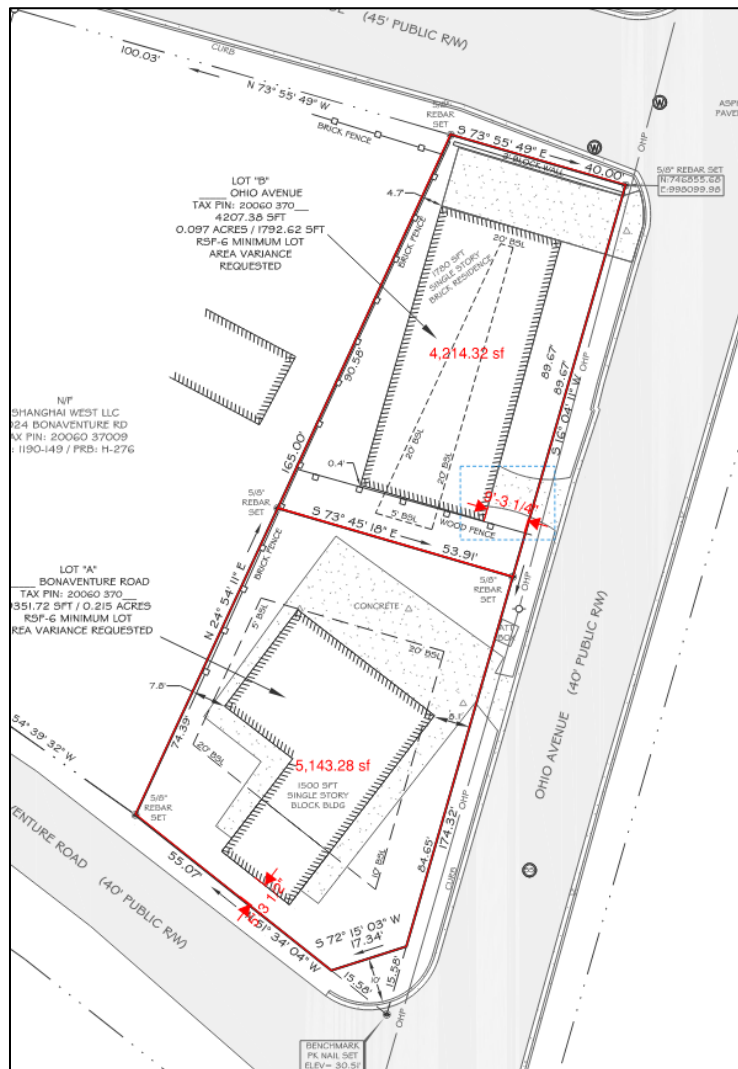
D. Special Privilege Not Granted

The variance would not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this Ordinance to other lands, buildings, or structures in the same zoning district.

MPC Comment: Granting this variance would not confer a special privilege denied to other lands in the same district as the Petitioner has demonstrated a legitimate hardship.

9. Per Sec. 8-2023.b. of the Subdivision Regulations:

The MPC may approve a proposed lot which does not meet the minimum standards upon finding that the substandard lot being proposed will adequately accommodate the intended use and purpose without adversely impacting the prospective property owner, the adjoining properties, or Chatham County.



Proposed Subdivision

Recommendation

MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed subdivision to permit the creation of two single-family home parcels in the RSF-6 zoning district with the following conditions:

1. The prior nonconforming use of the commercial structure shall not be reestablished. This area is an established residential neighborhood and introducing a commercial function here would be contrary to the zoning and disrupt the community fabric.
2. All inaccurate labels, annotations and building envelopes on the plat shall be updated and corrected prior to resubmission and MPC Staff approval (25-004826-SUBP).
3. The resubmitted plat shall reflect the hearing date and Case Number of the MPC's Decision (26-000745-ZA).



1028 Bonaventure Road – existing structure



2001 Ohio Avenue – existing structure