CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"*Planning the Future, Respecting the Past"*

STAFF REPORT

File No.	26-004645-ZA
Date:	October 27, 2026
To:	The Planning Commission
Through:	Melanie Wilson, Executive Director/CEO
From:	Ely Zarka, Senior Planner – Development Services
Subject:	Zoning Map Amendment
Applicant/Agent:	Josh Yellin for Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)
Address:	906 Drayton St and 905 Abercorn St
Parcel ID:	20064 43027
Site Area:	0.56 acres
Alderman District:	2 – Detric Leggett
Chatham County Commission District:	2 – Malinda Scott Hodge

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 office.

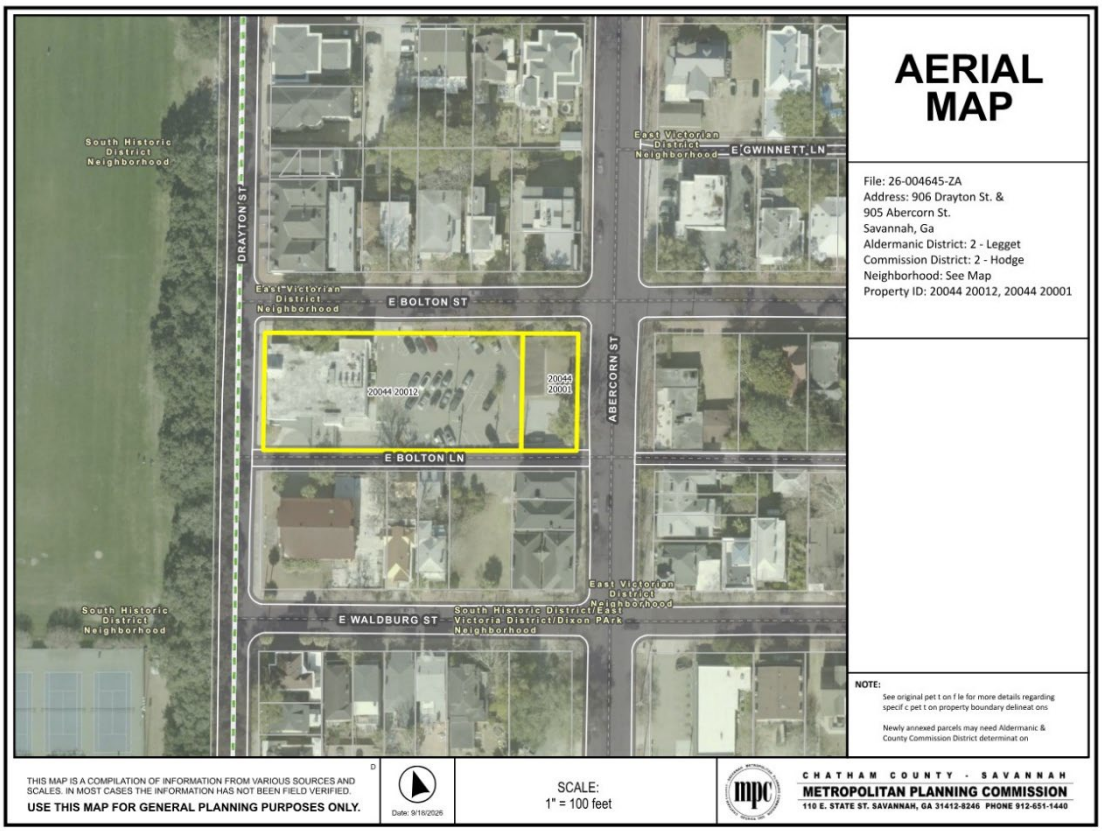
Facts and Findings

Zoning History

The subject site is made up of two parcels, one being the current SEDA office building, and the other having a vacant building owned by SEDA. These properties originally zoned 2-R prior to NewZo (New Zoning Ordinance in 2019).

Site

The subject properties are located between Drayton St and Abercorn St along E Bolton St. This parcel is in the Victorian Historic District and both the Victorian Neighborhood Association as well as the Forsyth Park Community Alliance areas. The Petitioner has indicated the parcels will be combined for the future development.

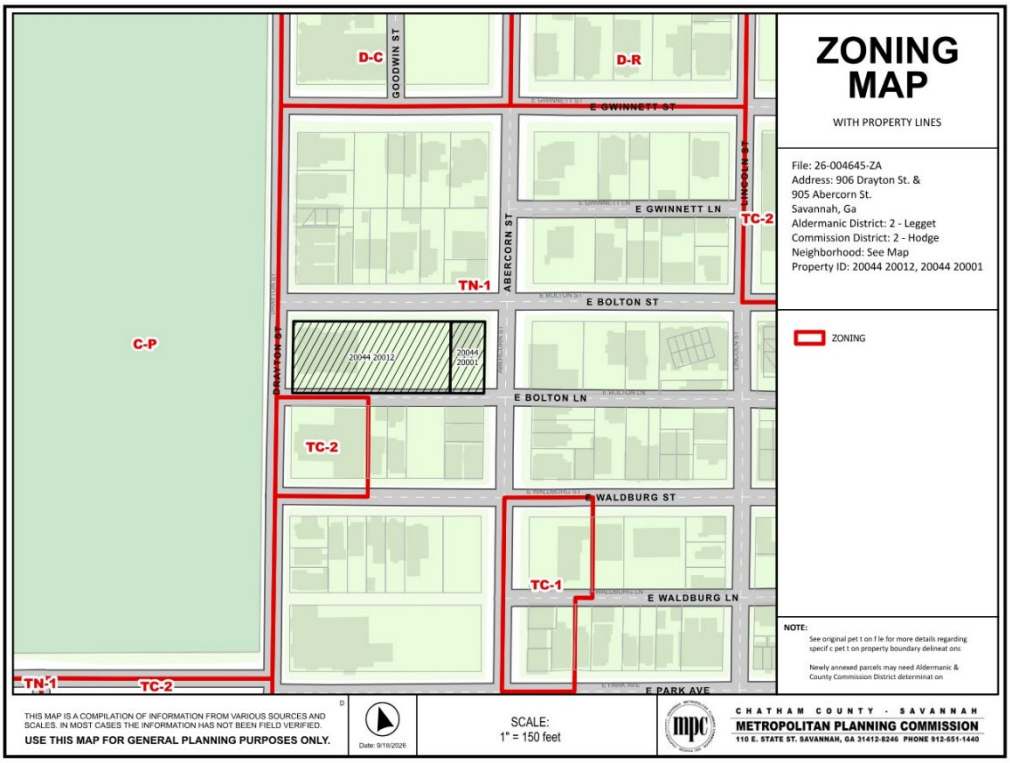


Aerial view of Subject Parcel

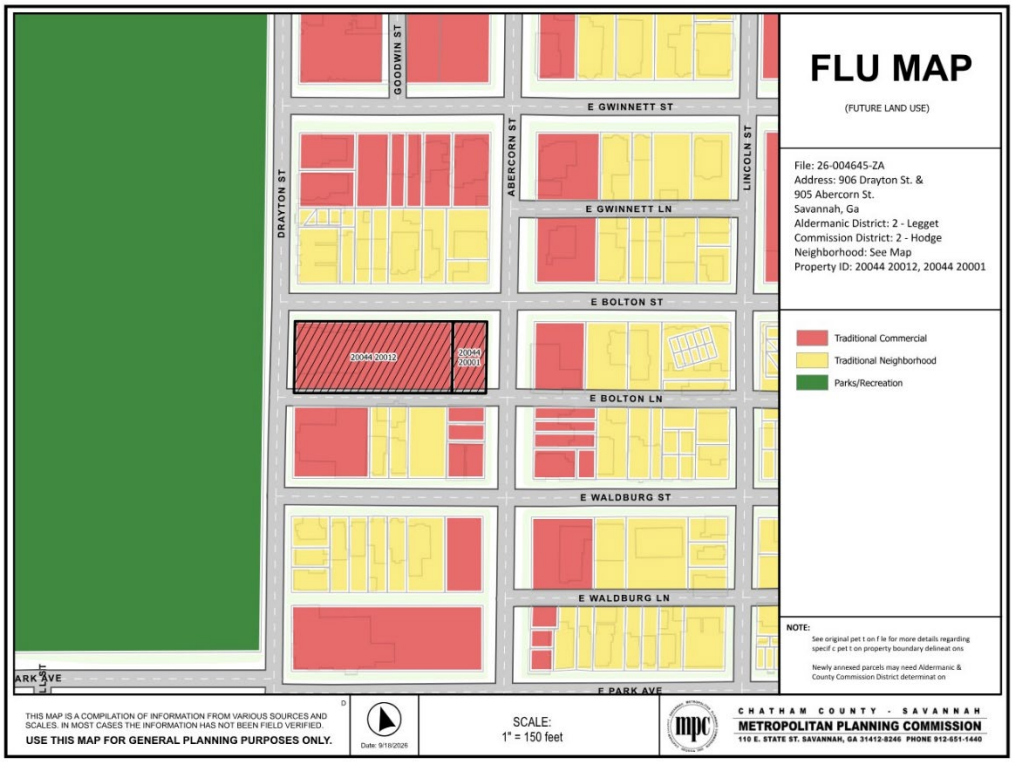
Existing Zoning and Development Pattern

The subject parcel is currently zoned TN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood-1). 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.

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Residential	TN-1
South	Residential, Bed & Breakfast, Event Venue	TN-1, TC-2
East	Commercial	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 meeting has already occurred with Forsyth Park Community Alliance and the Victorian Neighborhood Association.

Impact and Suitability

Public Servies and Facilities

The site is adjacent to 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 Urban Core Character Area, which contains the local and National Register Victorian and Streetcar Historic Districts, as well as the Eastside neighborhoods in the city of Savannah. This area is characterized by a mix of detached and attached single-family homes, mid-size multi-family buildings, and smaller-scale, neighborhood commercial. Urban Core areas are walkable with a well-connected sidewalk network and street grid. Lot sizes are larger and building heights lower (around 2-4 stories) than in the Urban Downtown. Infill and redevelopment opportunities are more widely available in the Urban Core; any future development should maintain the walkable densities and be compatible with the community character. A range of housing options should be encouraged in the Urban Core to accommodate workers, students, small families, seniors, and others.

The existing Future Land Use designation is Traditional Commercial. These are business areas in close proximity to Downtown Savannah or in outlying historically settled areas. This category includes commercial uses that should be compatible with the character and scale of adjacent neighborhoods, most often found along collectors and arterials. Characteristics include walkability, limited or on street parking, and multi-tenant retail.

Existing Zoning District

- Intent of the RSF-6 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.

- 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: *The proposed TC-2 district would allow a much broader range of commercial uses that are not all generally consistent with development near residential and mixed use neighborhoods. However, the district is specifically allowed and intended to serve in the historic areas of the city along major corridors. The intended use by the applicant is also permitted in more restrictive districts, as well as the current district.*

- Whether the proposed zoning district addresses a specific need in the County or City.

  MPC Comment: *The proposed TC-2 use does support some specific infill development on currently vacant properties, however may of these goals are more neighborhood scale type of use. The intent of the Traditional Commercial districts are to specifically allow certain types of development that are compatible with the historic mixed use character also present in this area.*

Compatibility

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

  MPC Comment: *The proposed TC-2 district would expand the range and intensity of uses permitted on the subject properties. While commercial uses are generally appropriate along Abercorn St and Drayton St, some permitted uses could generate increased traffic, noise, lighting, and operational activity that may adversely affect the usability and residential character of the adjacent residential uses. The use proposed by the Petitioner already does exists nearby and even already on site with the existing SEDA office.*

- 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 TC-2 district is compatible with the commercial corridor along Drayton St and Abercorn St. However, the petitioner is specifically requesting the TC-2 district for the more permissive development standards. The TC-1, and even the current TN-1 district would also permit the proposed use, just not with desired development standards.*

- 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 intended use of office is compatible with the surrounding area and is already heavily represented in the surrounding neighborhoods. Most concerns would be tied to the other uses potentially permitted by TC-2.*

Consistency

1. 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 site is currently designated as Traditional Commercial, with this proposal actually bringing the site in line with the Comprehensive Plan if approved. The existing SEDA office will also be more in line with the standards in TC-2 than its existing zoning designation.*

Reasonable Use

2. 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

3. 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. Another site is owned one block south (1001 Abercorn St) that is a parking lot that will also serve the subject site(s) for overflow parking requirements that may exceed what the existing site can provide.*

Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: *The subject parcel is not within an installation Airport Airfield Overlay.*

Analysis Summary

The proposed TC-2 zoning district is consistent with some planning objectives, including encouraging commercial uses and promoting strategic infill along existing transportation corridors. The location of the subject properties adjacent to Drayton St and Abercorn St may make commercial redevelopment appropriate in principle and bring the site in concurrency with its current Future Land Use designation.

However, the TC-2 zoning district, while tailored for this region of the city, does introduce the possibility for several uses that are not as compatible with the surrounding mixed-use and residential neighborhoods. The TC-1 district would also permit the intended use of office; however the Petitioner has stated that certain development standards within TC-1 would not fit the development as intended. That does not mean that all of the standards in TC-2 are entirely appropriate in the context of the adjoining neighborhood.. Any development will also require approval through the Historic Preservation Commission.

Staff finds that the proposal is for a reasonable use that is compatible with the surrounding area, and a district specifically for this region. However the intended district does have some concerning uses that could be permitted if this application were to be approved. As a result Staff will be recommending an alternative proposal to mitigate some of the concerns tied to the TC-2 district.

Recommendation

MPC Staff recommends **APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS** of the request to rezone the subject property to TN-1 (Traditional Neighborhood-1) to TC-2 (Traditional Commercial-2) subject to the following conditions:

1. A recombination plat combining the two properties shall be required.
2. The uses permitted shall be limited to those permitted in Traditional Commercial-1(TC-1).
3. If necessary 1001 Abercorn St will be utilized to meet any parking requirements.
4. The maximum building footprint shall be capped at 7,500 square feet.