

**CITY OF SUWANEE
REZONING ANALYSIS**

CASE NUMBERS: RZ-2015-001
REQUEST: M-1 (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT) & PMUD (PLANNED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT) TO PMUD (PLANNED MIXED USE DISTRICT)
LOCATION: CORNER OF BUFORD HIGHWAY AND CHICAGO STREET
TAX ID NUMBER: 7-236-002, 7-236-430, & 7-234-204
ACREAGE: 4.87 ACRES
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: MIXED USE BUILDING WITH MULTI-FAMILY AND COMMERCIAL USES

APPLICANT/ OWNER(S): CITY OF SUWANEE
330 TOWN CENTER AVENUE
SUWANEE, GA 30024

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

PROJECT DATA:

Following the approach of the Suwanee Town Center, the City seeks to zone the subject property and connect it to adopted plans. Once again, the City is positioned to play a role in the form and quality of development in the downtown area. For this reason, the City initiated this rezoning from M-1 and PMUD to PMUD in order to further the goals the City's Downtown Suwanee Master Plan and 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The subject property is located at the corner of Chicago Street and Buford Highway adjacent to Town Center. The property consists of 3 tracts of land totaling 4.87 acres owned by the City of Suwanee. The purpose of this rezoning is to ensure that the subject property will be developed in a manner that is consistent with and adds to Town Center. The City wishes to rezone the property from its current M-1 (Light Industrial District) and PMUD (Planned Mixed Use Development District) to PMUD (Planned Mixed-Use District).

The City is nearing the completion of its most recent update to the Downtown Suwanee Master Plan (Council voted to transmit the plan to the Atlanta Regional Commission for comment at the July Council meeting). The DSMP is the principal planning document for the Town Center and downtown area. The DSMP was a community-based planning effort to guide future development and reinvestment into the City's downtown area. This plan, which was crafted and guided with input from a citizen and business owner stakeholder group, consulting firm, staff and elected officials, identified the subject property as a potential catalyst for extending high quality development down Buford Highway from Town Center.

At the time this report was being developed, the ownership of the subject property was being transferred from the City to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). A DDA is an independent authority that serves as the development arm of a city. It may be tasked to

undertake development activities for a City including owning and selling of property. The City of Suwanee wishes to task the DDA in this manner for this property. The City initiated the rezoning of this property to control and prepare for future development.

The subject property consists of 3 tracts totaling approximately 4.87 acres. Tract 1 is zoned M-1 which allows for light industrial uses. This parcel is currently undeveloped, but was previously developed with a small apartment. The small building was demolished by the City in 2011. Tract 2 is an undeveloped 0.22 acre parcel that is zoned PMUD. The City zoned it to PMUD as per RZ-2003-007 in order to enable the development of Town Center. Tract 3 was also rezoned to PMUD per RZ-2003-007. The parcel contains a regional detention pond that serves Town Center. This pond could be modified to serve the remainder of the subject property as well.

DEVELOPMENT COMMENTS:

When the subject property is developed it may use this master detention facility, but the project will need to demonstrate compliance with all of the storm water requirements for City.

ANALYSIS:

The subject property is an approximately 4.87 acre undeveloped tract located on the corner of Buford Highway and Chicago Street. Access is available to both roads. The site consists of some areas with steep topography and contains the regional detention pond for Town Center. Tract 1 is a heavily wooded, but the rest of the property is mostly cleared of trees.

The subject property is surrounded by a mixture of uses and zoning districts. To the north, across Buford Highway, is a mixture of commercial uses including a credit union (zoned C-2), multi-tenant shopping center (zoned Old Town Commercial District – OTCD) and an auto repair shop (zoned OTCD). The Old Town Commercial District is only allowed within the Old Town Overlay District. It allows for many commercial uses that are found and C-1 and C-2, but also allows for uses that involve the sale of alcohol. OTCD also requires reduced setbacks. To the east of the subject property is Town Center which is zoned PMUD and contains a mixture of uses including residential, commercial, institutional recreational, and office uses. To the south is an undeveloped property zoned R-140 residential. To the west is the Suwanee Lumber Company yard, zoned M-1.

The City developed the 2030 Comprehensive Plan to guide the City. The Comprehensive Plan allows for and encourages mixed-use development in specific areas. The subject property falls into the Town Center Character Area. This Character Area is identified as an appropriate location for mixed use developments, specifically mixed-use center, similar to Town Center in function and style. The Plan also called for Town Center to expand onto the subject property and the adjacent lumber yard property, *“Particular attention should be paid to expanding Town Center to the south...continuing development down Buford Highway to support the Old Town gateway at Russell Street...”* The Downtown Suwanee Master Plan adopted in 2009 anticipates 3-5 story mid-rise mixed-use development on the subject property. The latest draft of the DSMP update, officially endorsed by Council and transmitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission for review, calls for Town Center-style development to extend down Buford Highway toward Russell Street. The conceptual plan shows a multi-family building around 5 stories tall with

commercial uses on the ground floor served by structured parking. The structured parking could also help alleviate parking issues around Town Center during events.

In 2002 the City adopted the Old Town Master Plan. That plan put forth the idea of a new Town Center for the City of Suwanee to be located on the corner of Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and Buford Highway. The City placed the property on that corner under contract and created a more detailed plan for the a Town Center. Upon completion of the Suwanee New Town Center Master Plan the City purchased the land through an Urban Redevelopment Authority. The City then rezoned the land to the PMUD zoning district (per RZ-2003-007 and 008) and commenced with development of Town Center Park and Town Center Avenue. Upon completion of the park and infrastructure the City released requests for proposals on the surrounding city owned land seeking parties interested in developing the land in manner consistent with the goals expressed in the City's planning documents. The City then sold these parcels one at a time to entities that proposed to develop the land in a manner most consistent with City goals.

Following this model, the City recently released a request for proposals for land acquisition and development of the subject property. The RFP describes the property as being suitable for, "mixed-use development including residential and a limited amount of commercial/retail/office/institutional uses." Design elements should include "downtown-style elements, such as buildings in close proximity to the street, vertical construction, wide walkways and sidewalks, structured parking, focus on pedestrian design, etc. Attention to architectural detailing, proportional massing, appropriate and complementary tenant mixing..."

The RFP is part of an effort to encourage a type of development on the subject property that is consistent with the future plans of the City as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, the 2009 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan and the 2015 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan Update. The City will be working with the Downtown Development Authority to ensure that development on the property is consistent with these plans. As such, **the City is initiating the rezoning of the subject property as PMUD subject to conditions.**

Recommended Conditions
RZ-2015-001

The Planning Department recommends rezoning the subject property to PMUD subject to the following enumerated conditions:

1. Development shall be a unified mixed-use project containing up to 240 residential units and up to 30,000 square feet of commercial/office space. Development shall have a minimum of 10,000 square of commercial space at street level and directly facing Buford Highway and Chicago Street. Uses in this space shall be limited to those found in the Old Town Commercial District. Uses in the remainder of the building shall be limited to those that are customarily found in residential areas.
2. Development shall include a multi-level parking deck.
3. Architecture shall be reviewed and approved by the City of Suwanee Planning and Inspections Director prior to the issuance of a development permit. Architecture shall be of a first-class manner consistent with downtown styles, materials and features.
4. Residential development shall be subject to the following development standards:
 - a. Up to 5% of the residential units may contain 3 bedrooms.
 - b. Up to 40% of the residential units may contain 2 bedrooms.
 - c. All remaining units shall be one bedroom or studio units.
 - d. The average size of all the units must fall between 900 and 1,000 square feet.
 - e. All units shall be separately metered to allow for condominium conversion.
 - f. All units shall have a minimum 9 foot interior ceiling heights, 42” cabinet heights, premium countertop surfaces and premium appliances.
 - g. First class tenant amenities such as a swimming pool and workout center shall be provided.
 - h. In addition to the standards listed above, development shall be subject to all applicable life safety and building codes.
5. Commercial development shall be subject to the following development standards:
 - a. Primarily glass storefronts.
 - b. Minimum 20 feet interior ceiling heights.
 - c. Design shall allow for construction of restaurant uses in a portion of the project via the provision of adequate base infrastructure.
6. The development of the site, including design and construction, shall be coordinated with the construction of Buford Highway, with an emphasis on ensuring that the “sidewalk area” is consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Materials, street furniture, street trees, lighting, etc. shall be consistent with the City’s plans for Buford Highway.
7. Outdoor dumpsters shall be contained in an enclosure constructed of a material consistent with the primary building material for the building.

8. Prior to issuance of a development permit a comprehensive signage plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the City.
9. If not specifically addressed in the Downtown Suwanee Master Plan, the City's current zoning, sign, development building code and other regulations shall apply and remain in full force and effect. Nothing herein shall grant deviations to building, fire or other life-safety codes or regulations except as normally allowed by said codes.

Standards Governing Exercise of Zoning Power

Pursuant to Section 2006 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance, the City finds the following standards are relevant in balancing the interest in promoting the public health, safety, morality, or general welfare against the unrestricted use of property and shall govern the exercise of the zoning power therewith.

- A. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property;

The proposed rezoning as a planned mixed use development is suitable in light of the variety of uses and developments in the surrounding area.

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

With the recommended conditions, approval of the request would not likely affect the existing uses or usability of nearby property.

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

The subject property has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

- D. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools;

Approval of the request likely would not result in excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools.

- E. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Land Use Plan;

The proposed concept plan builds on the recommendations found in the Land Use Plan. The plan adheres closely to the recommendations of the Downtown Suwanee Master Plan and the subsequent update as well. The City's Comprehensive Plan recommends a mixture of residential and non-residential uses for the property.

- F. 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;

The City of Suwanee is currently in the process of completing a context sensitive design for Buford Highway that is intended to accommodate uses and development consistent with the proposal.

Downtown Suwanee
Master Plan (2015)
Rendering of Buford Highway
Building on subject property
RZ-2015-001



TOWN CENTER AREA CONCEPTUAL PLAN



Note: This conceptual plan represents one possibility for redevelopment and public improvements and is for illustrative purposes only. This plan assumes that any future development will occur with willing property owners and developers working in concert with the City of Suwanee.

58 **Approximate boundary of subject property**

TOWN CENTER AREA CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Developed over the past decade, Suwanee Town Center was the city's first true mixed-use development. It serves the entire city and provides a place for citizens and visitors to live, shop, and socialize in an ever-changing and exciting environment that is different in form and intensity than much of the rest of Suwanee. Other parts of the city show more traditional suburban housing and commercial forms. The 2020 Comprehensive Plan, and later the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, promote the expansion of Town Center, emanating from the park to continue to serve the community as the city grows. Both plans envision more housing, more shopping, and more activity over time in a manner that is consistent and compatible with the precedent set by Suwanee Town Center.

Suwanee's existing Town Center is not only the focal point of the community, but a walkable urban center where shops, residences, and greenspace combine to create a true sense of place. Over the past decade, previous plans have proposed extending this feel south along Buford Highway. The plan shown on the previous page represents a refinement of previous visions.

Multifamily housing should be an important part of the development mix on this site, given the market demand for this type of housing from millennials and empty nesters, and given the need to create a critical mass to support sidewalk retail in Town Center and along Buford Highway to the day-to-day energy of Town Center. Two likely sites, each with the potential for 200-300 units with structured parking, are shown in the land immediately south of Town Center along Buford Highway. The first, a 3-acre, vacant city-owned property at the corner of Chicago Street and Buford Highway, is well suited to this building type and available for immediate development.

Because the site falls off abruptly from its street frontages, there is an opportunity to put parking spaces in a deck that is partly below grade. This parking would be wrapped with a four- to five-story building to shield it from view. Sidewalk-oriented shops would front Buford Highway.

The second site, currently occupied by Suwanee Lumber Company, is proposed to be redeveloped in a similar manner, except that the grade change from front (at Buford Highway) to back (at Suwanee Avenue extension) is more extreme. Accordingly, it is envisioned as two separate buildings. The first building would front Buford Highway with street-level commercial use and residential or office use above, which could have parking under the building one level below the street and accessed from the rear. The second (rear) building would be purely residential, likely four to five stories in height. Stormwater management requirements for these two



Mixed use buildings will extend the sidewalk retail experience of Town Center as well as provide a large number of residents to make the area more vibrant

blocks of intensive development would be centralized in an expanded shared detention pond to replace the two existing ponds seen from Chicago Street.

This plan also shows the potential for infill development in the existing Town Center parking lot, with two sidewalk-oriented commercial buildings fronting on Chicago Street. This arrangement urbanizes both sides of the street, and helps to create a walkable connection back to Town Center Park. This infill could also include a stand-alone parking structure to support the new development and satisfy future downtown parking demand.

Across Buford Highway, on the site of the existing auto repair business, the plan shows the potential for redevelopment of either a senior living facility or a hotel of approximately 100 rooms, with parking at the rear (partially within the railroad right of way) that could extend southward behind the existing commercial buildings. This parking would have to be benched into the existing slope. The credit union site is shown to be infilled with two additional commercial buildings that frame a new internal roundabout intersection with an extension of White Street from the south. Along White Street, and elsewhere in the plan, the plan envisions residential infill transitioning in intensity from townhomes (adjacent to commercial uses) to small detached cottage lots. This infill development pattern includes the addition of several new side streets and, wherever possible, rear lanes to accommodate off-street parking.

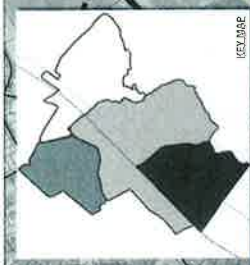
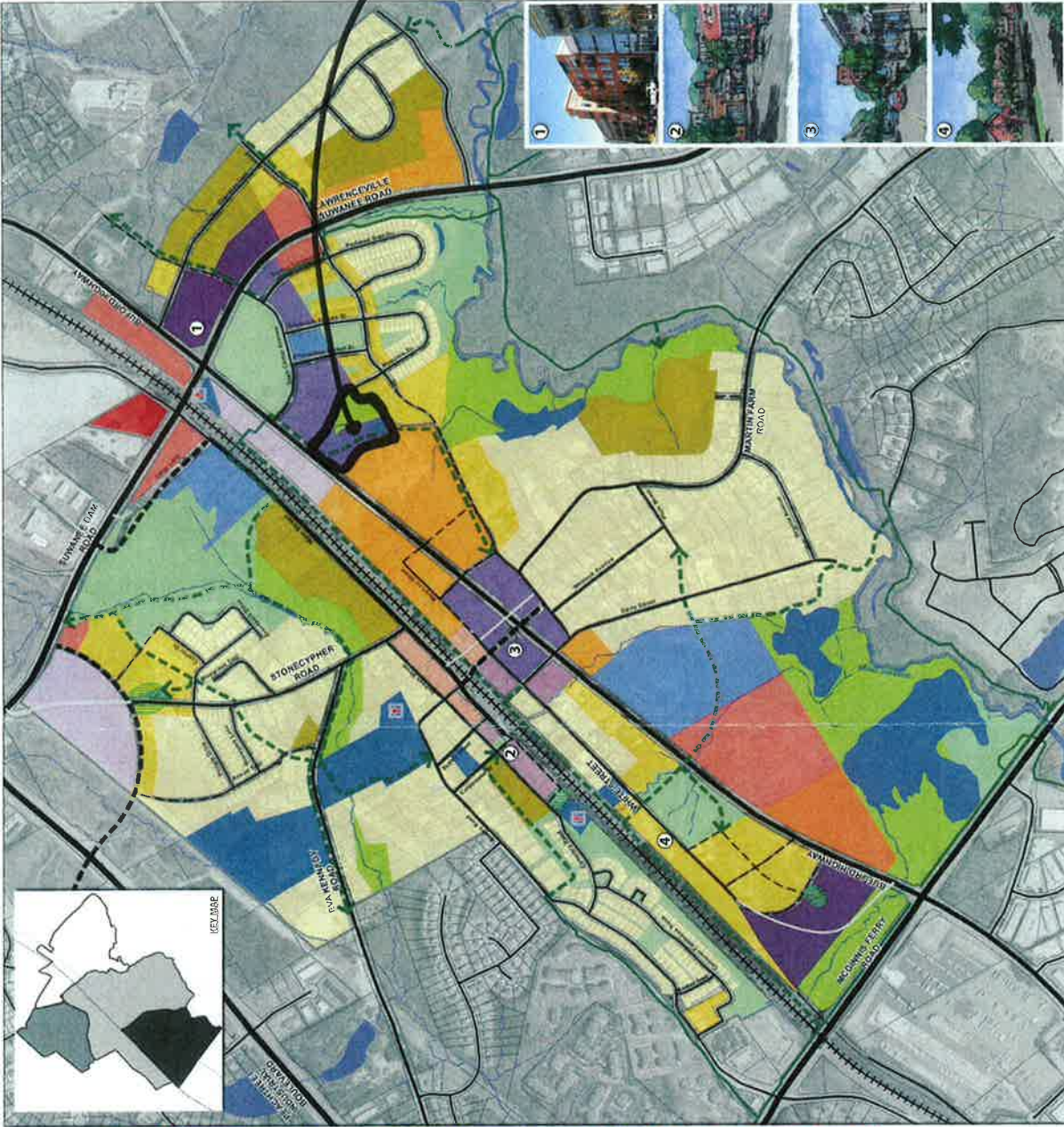
In some cases, where parcel depths permit, and particularly along Buford Highway, cottages and townhomes are turned so their front doors, rather than facing the street, front onto a shared pocket park or "mews" which provides a green space amenity for the residents and for the community at large. A series of greenway connections is envisioned to link these new infill areas to the existing Suwanee Creek Greenway to the south.

DOWNTOWN SUWANEE CONCEPT PLAN



INVESTMENT
AND COORDINATION
WITH LOCAL AGENCIES
DATE: 2009

MIXED USE Mixed-Use Mixed-Use Mixed-Use (1-3 Floors)																				
RESIDENTIAL Single Family Homes, Detached																				
COMMERCIAL Low-Rise Office, Retail (1-3 Floors)																				
INDUSTRIAL Low-Rise Industrial (1-3 Floors)																				
OPEN SPACE Parks, Recreation Open Space																				



Subject Property

Downtown Suwanee Master Plan (2009)

D7-2015-001














EXHIBIT A

RZ-2015-001

Location Map

Legend

-  RZ-2015-001
-  Roads
-  Railroad
-  OTCD
-  C-1
-  C-2
-  M-1
-  O-I
-  PMUD
-  R-140
-  R-100

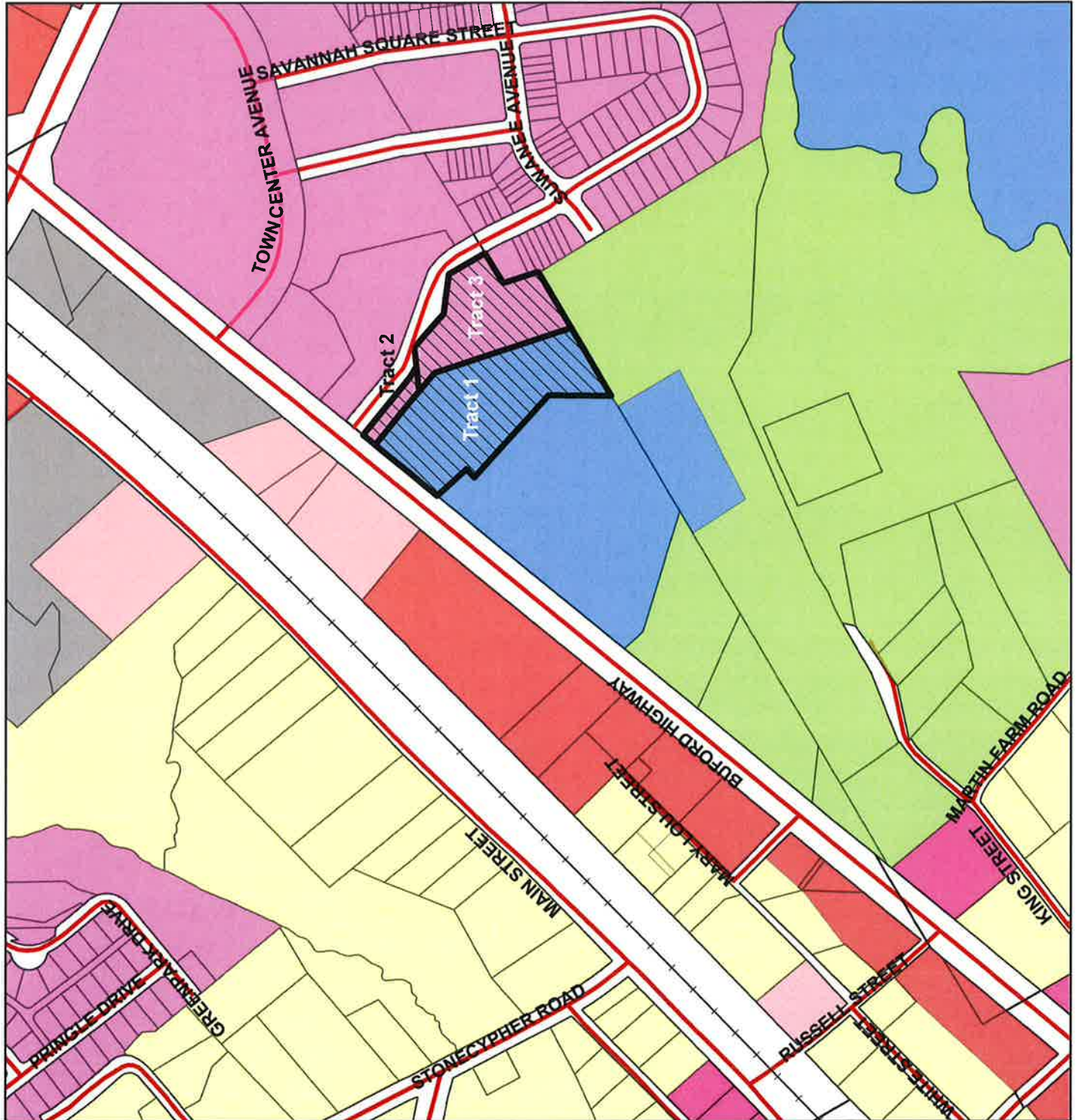
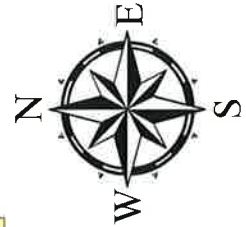




EXHIBIT B RZ-2015-001

Aerial Map

Legend



RZ-2015-001

Roads



Note: The house shown on the subject property was removed by the City in 2011.

