VARIANCE(S): V-2017-001

CITY OF SUWANEE VARIANCE ANALYSIS

CASE NUMBER: V-2017-001

REQUEST: STREAM BUFFER ELIMINATION

APPLICABLE SECTION: SECTION 4.1 OF THE STREAM BUFFER

PROTECTION ORDINANCE

SECTION 34-209 OF THE SOIL EROSION,

SEDIMENTATION AND POLLUTION

CONTROL ORDINANCE

LOCATION: SOUTHEASTERN CORNER OF BUFORD

HIGHWAY AND CHICAGO STREET

PARCEL(S): 7-236-002, 003, 004, 204, 430

ZONING: PMUD (PLANNED MIXED USE DISTRICT)

APPLICANT: TERWILLIGER PAPPAS

3565 PIEDMONT ROAD ATLANTA, GA 30305

OWNERS: CITY OF SUWANEE

330 TOWN CENTER AVENUE

SUWANEE, GA 30024

CITY OF SUWANEE DDA 330 TOWN CENTER AVENUE

SUWANEE, GA 30024

MYRON BAYNES

3200 SUWANEE CREEK ROAD

SUWANEE, GA 30024

DONALD JOHNSA

450 BUFORD HIGHWAY SUWANEE, GA 30024

CONTACT: GREG POWER

CONTACT PHONE: 404-500-5766

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

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ANALYSIS:

The applicant, Terwilliger Pappas, seeks a variance from Section 4.1 of the City of Suwanee Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance and Section 34-209 of the Soil Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution Control Ordinance to allow for development within required undisturbed stream buffers associated with a mixed-use project that includes up to 240 multi-family units, 12,000 square feet of commercial space, and 71 townhomes.

The project would be built on an assemblage of 6 tracts of land at the intersection of Buford Highway and Chicago Street, although only 5 of the tracts are impacted by the stream buffer requirements. The total site is approximately 25 acres, although much of this includes future development. The 5 affected tracts total approximately 12.4 acres. A portion of the assemblage is encumbered by two unnamed tributaries of Suwanee Creek. Disturbance of these streams and the associated buffers require a variance from the stream buffer requirements for the portions of these streams shown in "Exhibit A."

The City of Suwanee Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance requires a 50-foot wide <u>undisturbed</u> <u>buffer</u> (Section 4.1.1) supplemented by an additional 25-foot wide buffer (Section 4.1.2) that may be graded but <u>cannot include any impervious cover</u> (examples of impervious cover include buildings, parking lots, driveways, etc.). The Soil Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution Control Ordinance requires a 25-foot wide stream buffer adjacent to all streams (Sec. 34-209).

The subject property is zoned PMUD (Planned Mixed-Use District) and is located one block south of Town Center along Buford Highway. The applicant is proposing to develop an intensive mixed-use project including a parking deck as an extension of Town Center. To the west across Buford Highway is the Shoppes at Olde Towne, a multi-tenant retail/office building. To the north of the subject property is Town Center. To the south and east is lightly developed single family residential property zoned R-140 (Single Family Residential District).

The topography on the subject property drastically slopes away from Buford Highway. Development of the site will require a significant amount of fill to accomplish the City's goal to have the buildings sit close to the street and create a pedestrian friendly environment along Buford Highway as expressed in the Downtown Suwanee Master Plan. The Downtown Suwanee Master Plan calls for more intensive development with buildings located directly adjacent to roads. This style of development in northeast Georgia is generally not compatible with the maintenance of stream buffers. Often streams and buffers will need to be eliminated and piped in order to accommodate this more "downtown" style of development.

Filling the site will require regrading along the edges of the property to meet existing grade on adjacent property. One of the impacted streams (stream 3) is at the edge of the property where this grading transition would need to be done. Approximately, 251 linear feet and 7,980 square feet of stream and buffer are impacted at this location. The second stream (stream 1) is located within the area that would need to be filled to create buildings level with Buford Highway and Chicago Street. Approximately 519 linear feet and 21,910 square feet of stream and buffer are impacted at this location.

As required, the applicant has applied for a variance from the State EPD (Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources) in order to encroach on the 25-foot undisturbed buffers. The State will also be reviewing the request and determining if any additional mitigation is required. The state's decision to approve or deny a buffer variance is independent of the City's decision to approve or deny a stream buffer variance. The applicant has also applied for permits with the Army Corp of Engineers for permission to fill in these streams. The applicant will need approvals from both of these entities and the City in order to have permission to impact the streams as proposed.

In addition to meeting the requirements of these other regulatory agencies, the subject property will still need to meet the City's storm water requirements. The subject property will need to demonstrate through a hydrology study that the quantity and quality of storm water coming off the site will meet City requirements. This study will be prepared by a professional engineer and reviewed by the City's consulting engineer, also a professional engineer, prior to issuance of development permit for the property.

The City's Stream Buffer Ordinance and Soil Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution Control Ordinance grant the Zoning Board of Appeals the authority to grant variances. In this case, the grading is essential to meet the goals of the City.

In conclusion, the subject properties are impacted severely by topography and the existence of the streams. The location of the subject tributaries impedes the style and intensity of development called for by the City's plans on the subject property. Finally the subject tributaries natural function of carrying runoff from the site to Suwanee Creek will no longer be necessary with the proposed development. The site would be regraded and stormwater would be handled on-site by a master storm water detention facility; therefore, the proposed buffer reductions should not have a negative impact down stream. Staff recommends **APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS** of V-2017-001.

Recommended Conditions V-2017-001

The Planning Department recommends approval of the requested variance to allow for a reduction/elimination of stream buffers subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Comply with any conditions of approval associated with approvals from the state Environmental Protection Division and the United States Army Corp of Engineers, as applicable.
- 2. The limits of disturbance within streams and required stream buffers shall be generally consistent with the areas indicated in "Exhibit A."

Standards for Consideration

Pursuant to Section 2009A of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance, the City finds the following standards are relevant in considering all applications for a Variance.

A. Will approval of the variances unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets?

Approval of the variances would not increase the congestion in public streets.

B. Will approval increase the danger of fire or endanger public safety?

Approval of the variances would not increase the danger of fire or endanger public safety.

C. Will approval unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area?

Approval of the variances would not unreasonably diminish or impair property values within the surrounding area.

D. Will approval in any other aspect impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare of the inhabitants of the City?

Approval of the variance would not impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare of the inhabitants of the City.



February 20, 2017

Mr. Daniel Robinson City Planner City of Suwanee 330 Suwanee Town Center Suwanee, Georgia 30024

RE:

City of Suwanee Stream Buffer Variance Application Solis – Mixed Use Development Project

City of Suwanee, Gwinnett County, Georgia

Dear Mr. Robinson:

On behalf of our client, Terwilliger Pappas, please find the enclosed application for a 50-foot 'undisturbed' and 75-foot 'no-impervious' City of Suwanee stream buffer encroachment on designated buffered waters of the City for your review and approval. The project will take place on an approximately 11.5-acre site and will include a mixed-use development zoned PMUD-M1 that will supplement the expansion of the Suwanee Town Center.

The proposed project will result in permanent impacts of 29,890 square feet of City regulated stream buffer (13,170 SF of 50-foot buffer and 16,720 SF of 75-foot buffer). Permanent impacts to the buffer of Stream 1 and Stream 3 will require coordination with the City through its stream buffer variance process. Impacts situated within the 25-foot buffer of these streams are currently being reviewed by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) through the State's stream buffer variance process.

The attached supporting documentation includes the City's Variance Application Documents, supporting figures, project site photos, and supporting mitigation documents.

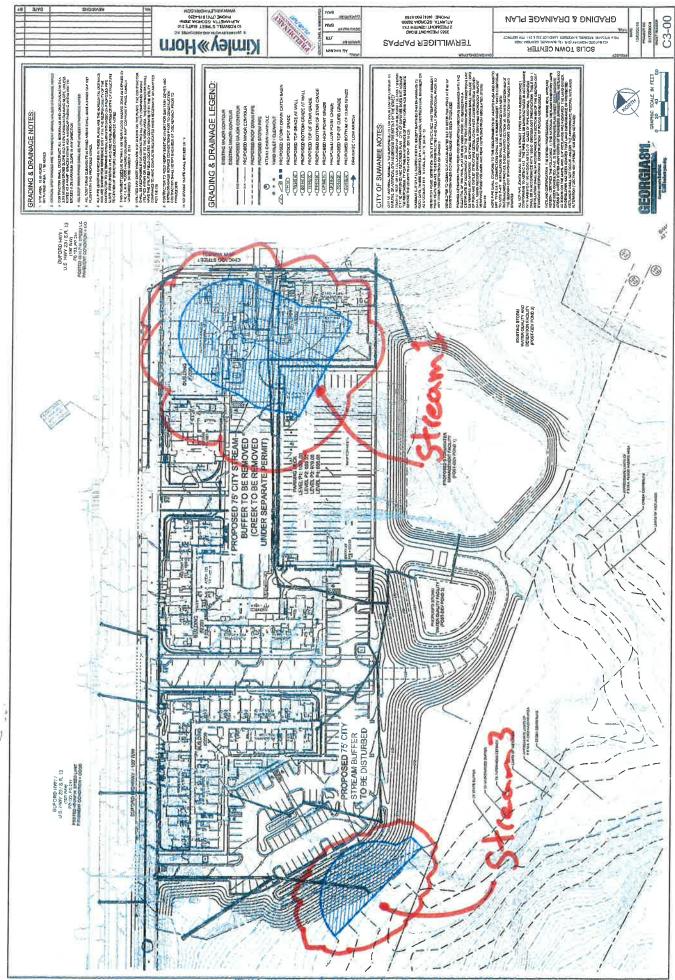
By way of this correspondence, and in accordance with Section 4.1 of the City of Suwanee Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance and Section 34-209 of the Soil Erosion, Sedimentation, and Pollution Control Ordinance, we request your review and authorization of this buffer variance application. Please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience if you have any questions.

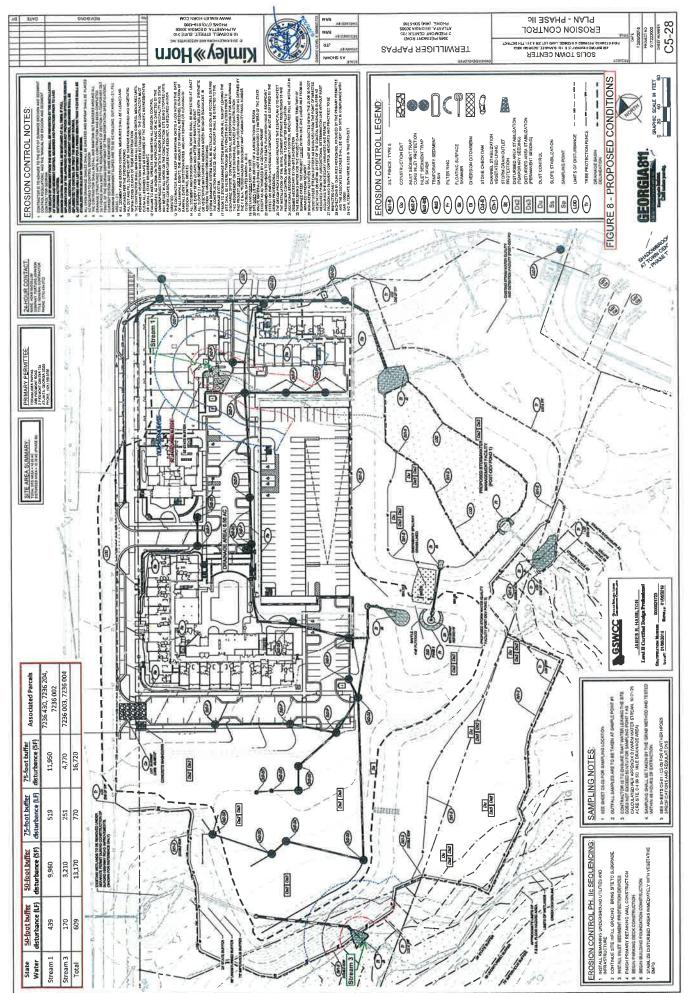
Respectfully.

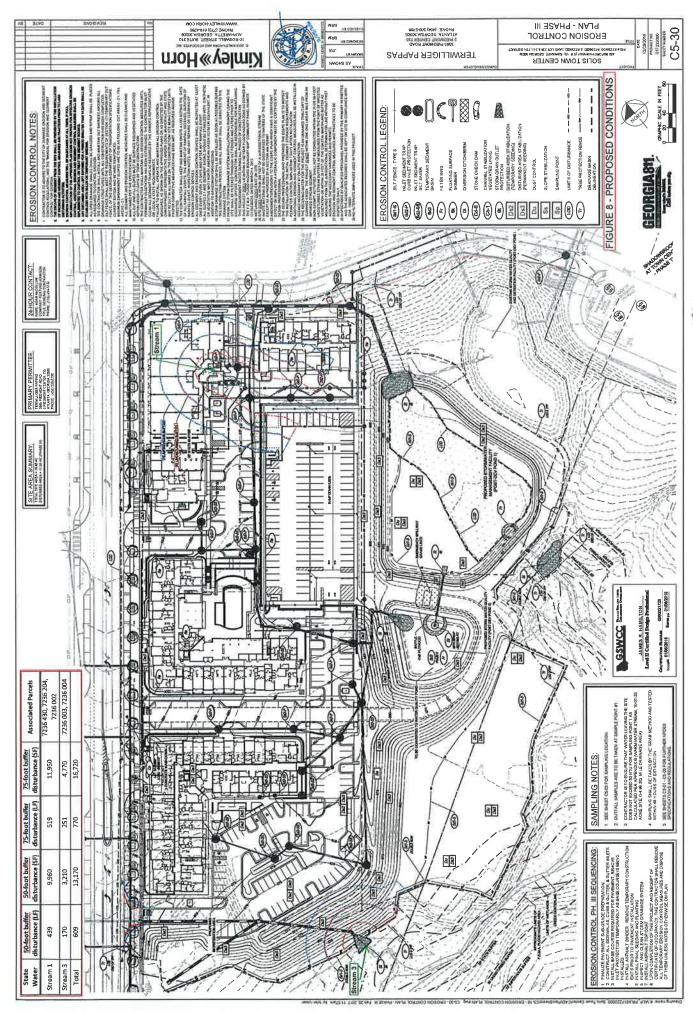
KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Marcus Rubenstein, CPESC Senior Project Manager

404-419-8700







V-2017-00)

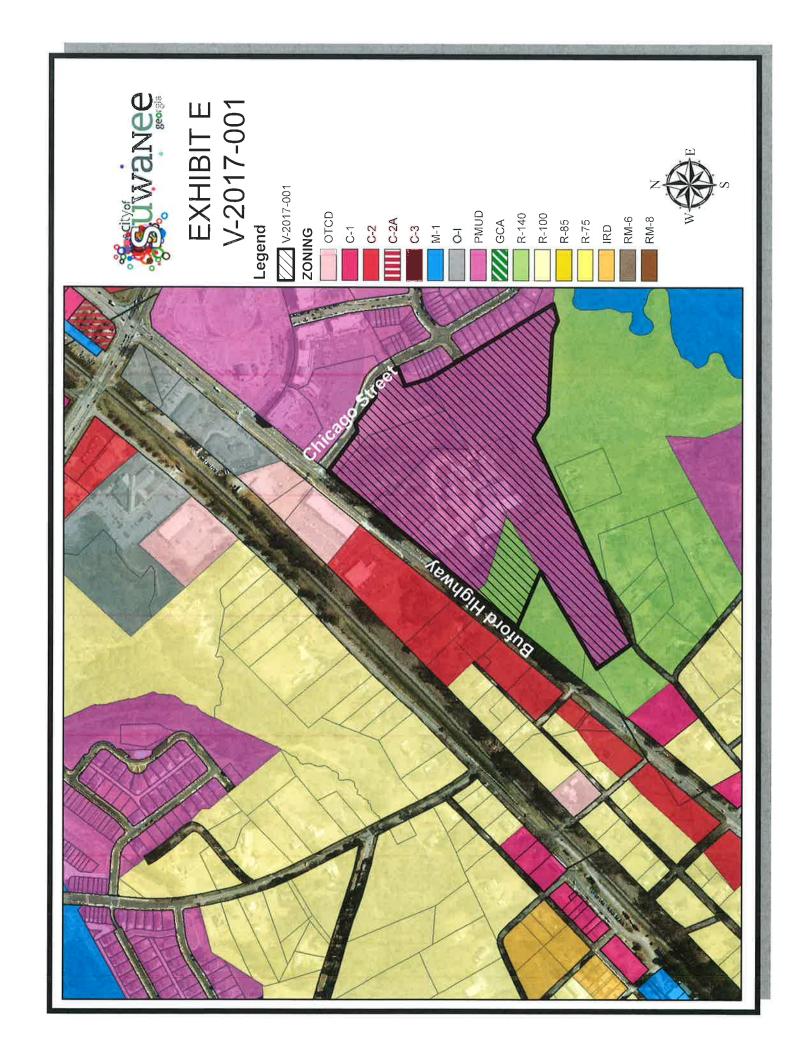




EXHIBIT F V-2017-001



