

**REZONING(S):**

**RZ-2018-008**

**CITY OF SUWANEE  
REZONING ANALYSIS**

**CASE NUMBERS:** **RZ-2018-008**

**REQUEST:** O-I (OFFICE-INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT) TO  
OTCD (OLD TOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT)

**LOCATION:** 343 BUFORD HIGHWAY

**TAX ID NUMBER:** 7-236-448

**ACREAGE:** 0.56 ACRES

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** COMMERCIAL USE

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

**RECOMMENDATION:** **APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS**

**PROJECT DATA:**

The City seeks to rezone a 0.56-acre parcel of land, currently owned by the City, from O-I (Office-Institutional District) to OTCD (Old Town Commercial District) to allow a potential commercial use that would further the goals of the City. Rezoning the property to allow for commercial uses lays the ground work for the City to use it as office, commercial, restaurant or other such uses. The building is currently used by the Gwinnett County Fire Department. The Fire Department lease is set to expire in 2019 and the building does not meet the needs of a modern fire station.

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 O-I to OTCD in order to further the goals of the City's Downtown Suwanee Master Plan and 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The subject property is located at 343 Buford Highway. The purpose of this rezoning is to ensure that the subject property will be developed in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the City.

The property contains a 10,500 square foot one-story brick building with 18 parking spaces located to the east of the building. In addition to being used by the Gwinnett County Fire Department, it is used by the City for maintenance of City vehicles and for storage. The property currently has access onto Buford Highway, and it has right in/right out access onto Suwanee Dam Road. The property is situated in between the City of Suwanee Municipal Court located to the northeast and the City of Suwanee Police Department and City Hall Park to the southwest.

## ANALYSIS:

The subject property is an approximately 0.56-acre tract located near the corner of Buford Highway and Suwanee Dam Road. The site consists of an approximately 10,500 square foot one-story brick building that is currently a Gwinnett County Fire Station.

The OTCD (Old Town Commercial District) zoning category allows for most commercial uses allowed in C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial District) along with some of the alcohol related uses allowed in C-2A (General Commercial District). The Old Town Commercial District may only be used within the Old Town Overlay District. OTCD also requires reduced setbacks. The Old Town Commercial District is the most appropriate commercial zoning district for this location.

The subject property, located in the heart of Suwanee's downtown, is surrounded by a mixture of uses and zoning districts. To the north, across the Norfolk Southern Railroad Track, is a mixture of commercial uses including a music store, a bike shop, a barber, and an insurance company (zoned C-2). Also to the north and northwest are three parcels that are home to a Gwinnett County Public Library, Evergreen Presbyterian Church, and an undeveloped parcel owned by the City of Suwanee all zoned Office-Institutional (O-I). The City property is currently in the design phase for a new city park. This park will essentially be an extension of Town Center Park. Further west are single family residences zoned R-100. To the east and south 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 southwest of the subject property is a parcel zoned Old Town Commercial District (OTCD) developed with an auto repair facility and a small shopping center.

The City developed the 2030 Comprehensive Plan to guide the growth of the City. 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 calls for similar uses to extend southwest down Buford Highway. *"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."* Another goal of the Comprehensive Plan also includes policies designed to strengthen the Town Center Character Area. Town Center has emerged as "the new civic heart of the city" and "its public face." Anticipated growth of this nucleus includes portions of the residential and commercial land uses across Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road to the north and northeast and the parcels along Buford Highway to the southwest. Although the subject property is located on a parcel with the recommendation being a public or institutional use within the Town Center Character Area, a commercial use would meet the intent of the City of Suwanee's 2030 Comprehensive Plan as the goal of this Character Area is to promote pedestrian connections to the open space and recreational needs of the community. The subject property will be a crucial part of linking Town Center and the park on Main Street, as the parcel is adjacent to the new park.

The 2015 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan further refined the vision for this area. The Plan established 10 distinct character districts to guide future development within downtown Suwanee. The proposed development is within the Town Center District, which is anchored by Town Center. The Plan calls for "a diversity of residential and non-residential uses in this district to allow for commercial and professional uses in addition to numerous core public uses." A

commercial use within walking distance of the Public Library, park and amphitheater, and Library further supports the Town Center District, as one of the major goals is “improved pedestrian connections.” The parcel the subject property is located on is classified as “mixed-use” with a recommendation that the majority of uses being low rise and non-residential. Per the vision of the 2015 Downtown Suwanee Master Plan, the use is consistent with the goals of the Town Center District.

The request to rezone the property from O-I (Office-Institutional) to OTCD (Old Town Commercial District) is part of an effort to encourage a type of use on the subject property that is consistent with the future plans of the City as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Suwanee Master Plan. The change to a commercial zoning district to allow for a potential commercial use is consistent with the surrounding uses and would further the City’s vision of Town Center as a live, work, play destination. As such, **the City is initiating the rezoning of the subject property as OTCD subject to conditions.**

Recommended Conditions  
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The Planning Department recommends rezoning the subject property to OTCD subject to the following conditions:

1. Outdoor dumpsters shall be contained in an enclosure constructed of a material consistent with the primary building material for the building.
2. 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 commercial use 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;

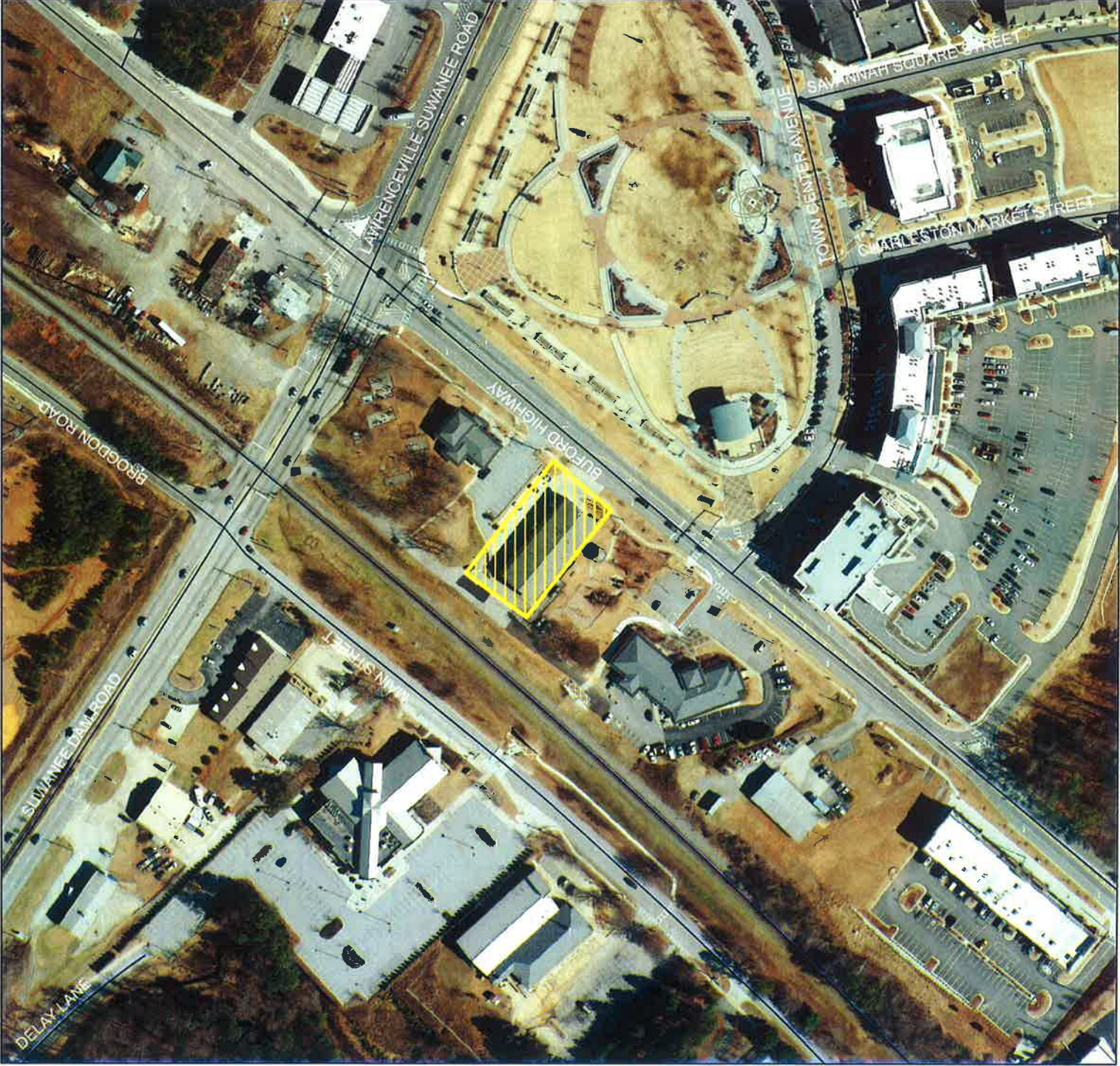
The proposed concept is in conformity with the general policy and intent of the Land Use Plan, which calls for Mixed-Use Center. It is not mixed-use, but it provides a commercial use that is compatible with a surrounding mix of other uses.

- 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 is in the process of designing a park on the other side of the railroad tracks that would essentially be an extension of Town Center Park. The subject property and the adjacent City park will be an important part of linking Town Center and the park on Main Street.



# Location Map RZ-2018-008



## Legend



1:2,500





# Zoning Map RZ-2018-008

## Legend



## ZONING

- C-1
- C-2
- C-2A
- C-3
- GCA
- IRD
- M-1
- OI
- OTCD
- PMUD
- R-100
- R-140
- R-75
- R-85
- RM6
- RM8
- Roads



1:2,500

