

Hearing Date: April 1, 2024

Case Number: SE-23-016

Applicant: Joe Gambill

Property Owner: Bridge Builder Communities

Property Address: 1140 Merry St

Tax Parcel No(s): 045-1-234-00-0

Current Zoning: R-1C (One-Family Residential)

Fort Eisenhower Notification Required: N/A

Commission District 1: Jordan Johnson

Super District 9: Francine Scott



REQUEST	PROPOSED USE/ACTIVITY	APPLICABLE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE SECTION(S)
Special Exception	Tiny Home Community	Section 26

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

This case pertains to a 3.08-acre parcel located along Merry Street. The parcel is currently vacant and zoned R-1C (One-Family Residential) to R-1E (One-Family Residential) would allow for a tiny home community upon approval of a special exception. The conceptual site plan submitted with this application proposes to construct a total of 25 tiny homes in which the first phase will consist of developing only ten (10) tiny homes, as well as a community building. The overall project aims to assist young adults aging out of the Foster Care system to reach their full potential by providing a safe, affordable housing opportunity and life skills training.

Provisions for tiny homes were added to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance in September 2022, as Section 26-1(v). The Ordinance allows for tiny home communities in R-1E, R-3B, and R-3C zones with the approval of a special exception. Section 26-1(v) also stipulates that a property to be developed for a tiny home community shall be no greater than three (3) acres; the subject property satisfies this requirement. For the proposed tiny home development to conform with the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, the applicant must obtain the following:

1. Approval by the Augusta Commission of this rezoning to place the property within an approved zoning district for tiny home communities.
2. Approval by the Augusta Commission of a special exception to allow for a tiny home community in an R-1E zone pursuant to Section 13-15(c) of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

Please note that the findings and recommendations of this report pertain strictly to the petition to rezone the property; the merits of the special exception petition (SE-24-06) are discussed in the staff report for that petition. **Both petitions must be approved by the Augusta Commission for the tiny home community to begin operations.**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY:**

This property is in the Old Augusta Character Area. Re-development is occurring in many of the well-established neighborhoods of the Old Augusta Character Area. The 2023 Comprehensive Plan's vision for the Old Augusta Character Area will be to continue re-development in some neighborhoods and maintain stability in others, by removing deteriorated and dilapidated structures, construct new or rehabilitate existing single-family housing, as well as new medium and high-density housing, additional commercial and office development, and new civic and institutional facilities. The vision also includes establishing new commercial and office uses, and civic and institutional facilities to allow for more shopping and employment opportunities. Underutilized parcels should be redeveloped in a manner consistent with the overall vision and with respect for existing development patterns and the historic architecture in the area.

**FINDINGS:**

1. The applicant requests a special exception for the purpose of developing a tiny home community.
2. An application was filed on February 26, 2024, to rezone the property from R-1C (One-Family Residential) to R-1E (One-Family Residential) and it will be considered by the Commission in conjunction with this request.
3. The applicant is also seeking a parking variance upon the approval of the rezoning and special exception petitions to reduce the total number of required parking spaces for the tiny home community from 50 to 23 spaces.
4. A conceptual site plan and exterior renderings have been submitted with this application.
5. The 25-unit tiny home development and community building will be comprised of stick-built constructed buildings. Several different exterior elevations will be used in the community; each will be residential in style to blend with the surrounding neighborhood.
6. The proposed tiny homes will each measure 320 square feet, which satisfies the size requirement of 400 square feet or less.
7. Each dwelling unit is limited to one and a half (1 ½) stories in height, all buildings shall be single story and under 45 feet.
8. The proposal has an overall density of 8.3 units per acre which satisfies the ten (10) units per acre maximum density requirement permitted in the R-1E zone.
9. The tiny homes will be developed in pods of five (5) houses, each with houses facing each other creating individual villages within the overall community.
10. Only one resident is allowed per tiny home.
11. Two (2) of the tiny houses are ADA compliant and all tiny houses shall be provided with ADA accessible sidewalks.
12. A minimum of one-half acre, or twenty percent (20%) of the property, shall be dedicated to common open/recreational space, hereafter referred to as Village Green. The Village Green may include landscaping, active and passive recreational facilities, water features, and/or any natural areas.

13. The Village Green shall be centrally located within the proposed development and accessible by all residents/tenants. A recreation area onsite forms the main portion of Village Green.
14. Section 26-1(v) (5) states that the tiny home community shall be owned by a single person or entity and the owner of the project is Bridge Builder Communities, a Georgia 501(c)(3) organization.
15. The owner shall own and maintain Village Green. However, quarterly maintenance opportunities will be held for residents to participate in.
16. Section 26-1(v) (19) (c) requires an enclosed building for each village greenspace, the proposal seeks to provide that all buildings shall be oriented toward street frontage or the Village Green unless the exception is granted to improve the conceptual site plan design.
17. Merry Street is identified as a local road. The overall parcel shall have permanent paved access to Merry Street.
18. Public water and sewer are present in the area.
19. The subject property is not within a flood zone.
20. There are no wetlands present on the subject property.
21. The proposal is consistent with aspects of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan and compatible with surrounding zoning and land uses.
22. At the time of completion of this report, staff received inquiries regarding this application.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Planning Commission recommends **APPROVAL** of the special exception request to allow for a tiny home community with the following conditions:

1. Final exterior architectural feature design shall be subject to approval by the Planning & Development Director or designee on their behalf.
2. The ADA units must be moved to the front of the property.
3. Approval of this rezoning request does not constitute approval of the conceptual site plan submitted with the rezoning application. The proposed development shall obtain site plan approval in compliance with Site Plan Regulations of Augusta, Georgia prior to construction commencing on the property.

*NOTE: This staff report includes the information available approximately two weeks prior to the Planning Commission hearing. It represents an evaluation of the facts presented by the applicant, research done by the staff, and consideration of the relevant factors in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of Augusta, Georgia. New facts may emerge, and staff reserves the right to make a verbal recommendation at the hearing based on all the information available at that time.*



## Overview of Rezoning and Special Exceptions Requests

1140 Merry Street, Augusta GA

February 23, 2024

Drumgoole Family Initiatives, dba Bridge Builder Communities, is a non-profit organization that exists to assist 18-25-year-olds aging out of the Foster Care system to reach their full potential by providing a safe, affordable housing opportunity and life skills training. Its goal is to see every young person in a safe, secure, stable and supportive environment transitioning successfully into adulthood.

We strive for every resident to:

- Complete an Individualized Development Plan
- Complete High School, GED, or Equivalent
- Complete Life Skills Training and Financial Literacy
- Successfully Transition with Substantially Higher Capacity in Educational & Income Potential
- Attain Certification, Diploma, or Degree from a local Training or Community College.

To achieve this goal, Bridge Builder Communities' plan is to create a tiny house community at 1140 Merry Street, Augusta, GA 30901. The first phase work includes a community building and 10 tiny houses. The second phase of the project includes expanding the number of tiny houses from 10 to 25. In addition to safe affordable housing, educational opportunities, certification completion programs, on-site counseling, job training, and structured support systems will be offered on site.

Bridge Builder Communities requests a zoning change and Special Exceptions approval for this development.

Zoning Request –

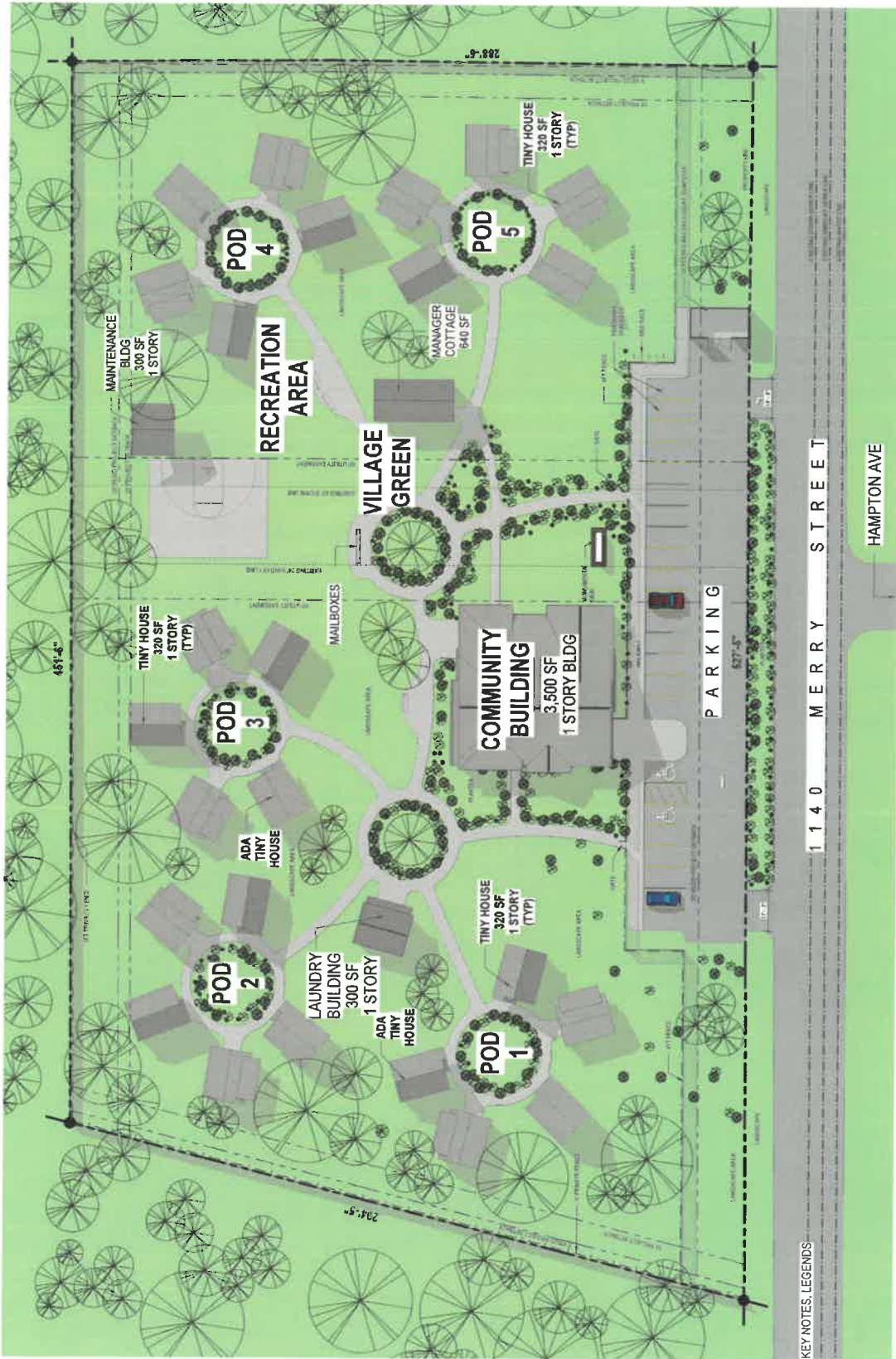
1. The re-zoning request is to change from the current zoning from R-1c (existing) to R-1E (requested).

Special Exception Request –

1. The Special Exception Request is to construct a tiny house community.

The property was acquired from the Augusta, Georgia Land Bank Authority on February 22, 2024. Appropriate documents can be provided if necessary.





NOTES, KEY NOTES, LEGENDS

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN  
1/8" = 1'-0"

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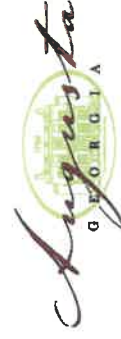
Planning Commission  
SE-24-06  
April 1, 2024

1140 Merry Street

Aerial

Legend

 Subject Property



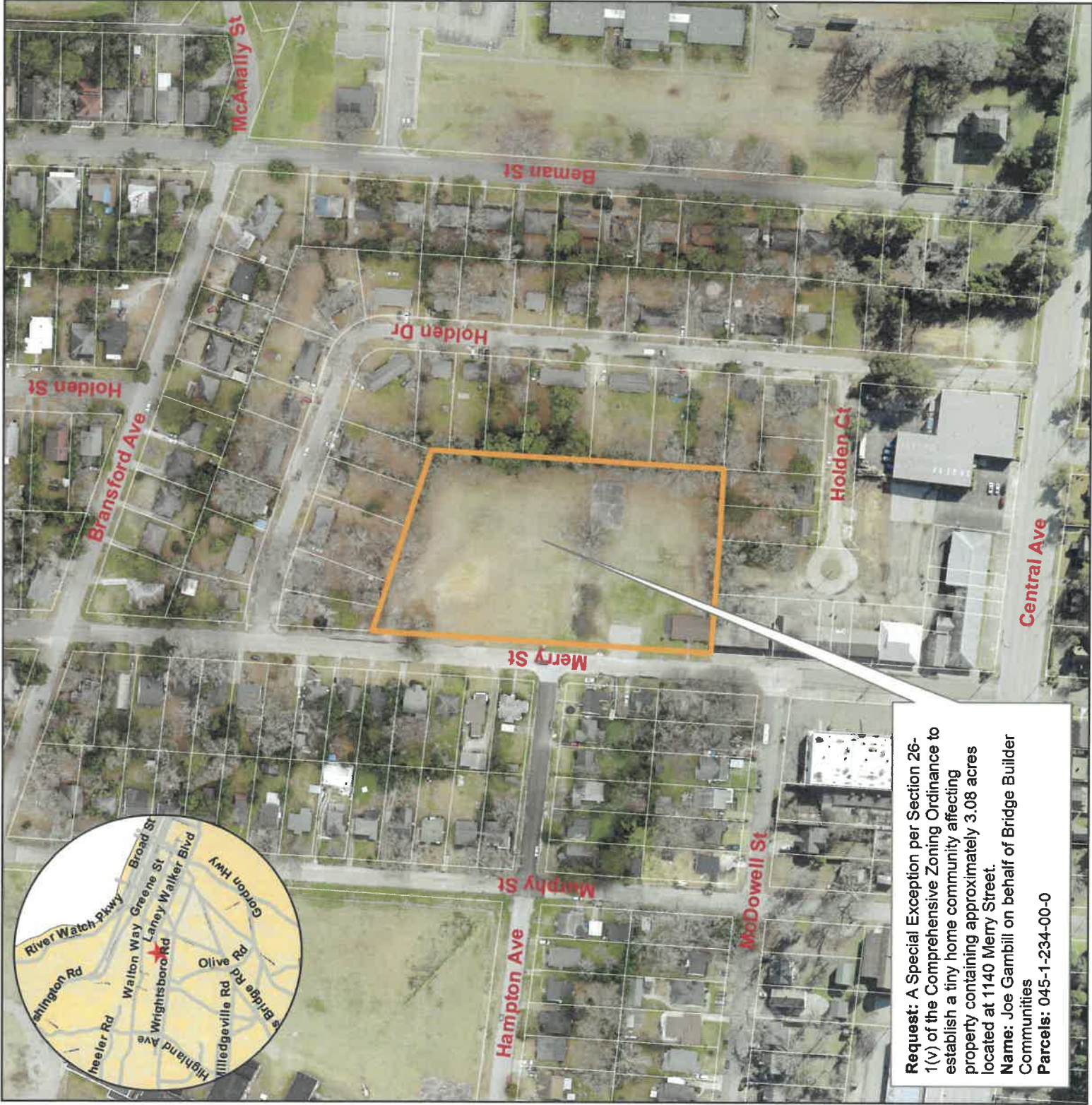
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Augusta, GA Disclaimer

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0 200 Feet



**Request:** A Special Exception per Section 26-1(V) of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to establish a tiny home community affecting property containing approximately 3.08 acres located at 1140 Merry Street.  
**Name:** Joe Gambill on behalf of Bridge Builder Communities  
**Parcels:** 045-1-234-00-0




Planning Commission  
SE-24-06  
April 1, 2024







1140 Merry Street

Current Zoning

Legend

 Subject Property

**Zoning Classification**

-  B-1: Neighborhood Business
-  P-1: Professional Residential
-  R-1C: One Family Residential
-  R-1E: One Family Residential
-  R-2: Two Family Residential
-  R-3C: Multiple-Family Residential



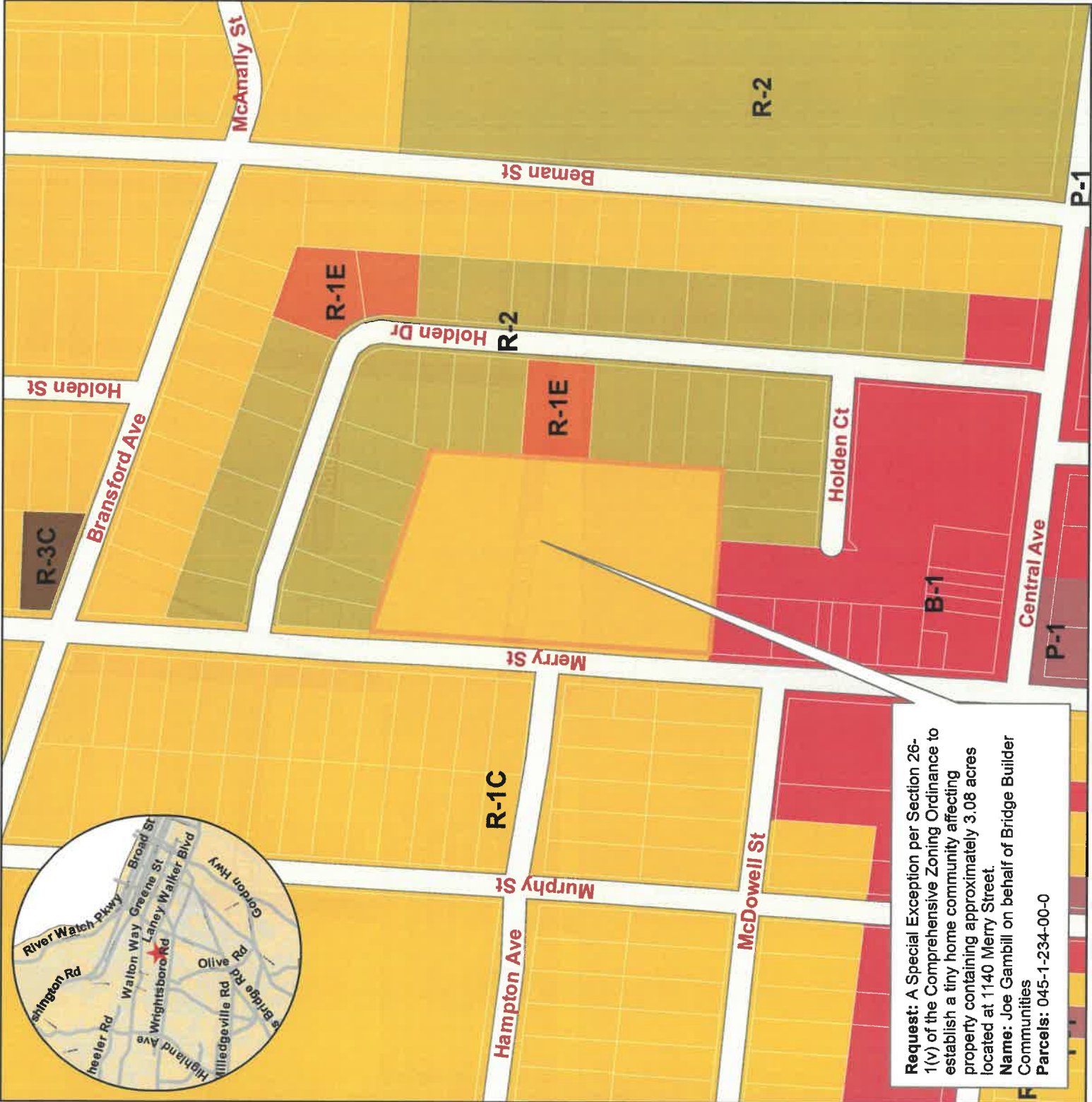
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