

Memorandum

To: City of Dacula Planning Commission /
City of Dacula Mayor and City Council

From: Hayes Taylor, City Planner

Date: January 27, 2025

Subject: Annexation Case: 2024-CD-AA-01
Rezoning Case: 2024-CD-RZ-04

Proposed Zoning: R-TH (Single Family Residence Townhouse District, City of Dacula)

Existing Zoning: RA200 (Agriculture-Residence District, Gwinnett County)

Size: 8.808 acres

Proposed Use: Attached Single Family Residential

Applicant: Local Land CO LLC
3630 Peachtree Rd
Atlanta, GA 30326

Owner: Kenneth W. Edwards Sr. & Theresa B. Edwards
2636 Jersey Social Circle Rd
Social Circle, GA 30025

Location: LL 268 - 5th District, Parcel 009

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The subject property totals 8.81 +/- acres and is in the southwestern quadrant of the Alcovy Rd, Redflower Rd, and Ewing Chapel Rd intersection. The parcel is zoned RA 200 (Agriculture-Residence District, Gwinnett County). The subject property is undeveloped, heavily wooded, and surrounded by Gwinnett County right-of-way on all three property frontages.

The 277-unit single-family residential development, Summerwind subdivision, zoned TRD (Transitional Residential District), is located north of the subject property, across Alcovy Rd. Wolf Creek subdivision, zoned RA 100 (Single Family Residence, Gwinnett County) is across W. Drowning Creek Rd to the south. Alcova Elementary School zoned RA 200 (Agriculture-Residence District, Gwinnett County) is across Ewing Chapel Rd to the east. The property is less than 0.15 miles from the Alcovy Meadows townhouse community, zoned R-TH (Single Family Residential Townhouse District).

The Proposed Development:

The applicant has requested to annex into the City of Dacula and rezone the 8.808-acre parcel from RA200 (Agriculture-Residence District, Gwinnett County) to R-TH (Single Family Residence Townhouse District) for a 54-unit attached single-family residential subdivision (net density = 8 units/acre). Ten (10) buildings are proposed that range from 3-to-8 units per building. Application materials indicate that unit dimensions are a

minimum of 24' in width and 50' deep and have a minimum building square footage of 1,800 square feet. The concept plan shows entrances from Alcovy Rd and W. Drowning Creek Rd, a mail kiosk center, an internal walking path, an internal pocket park, and a walking path to Ewing Chapel Rd. The two proposed entrances to the residential development provide additional egress that exceeds the minimum requirements, which may allow for better traffic flow on Alcovy Rd and W. Drowning Rd. Further, the submitted site plan shows that in addition to the 50-foot undisturbed buffer, there will be one (1) acre of undisturbed open space on the southwest corner of the parcel.

The concept plan shows 5-foot sidewalks along the length of the property along Alcovy Rd, Ewing Chapel Rd, and W. Drowning Creek Rd, which would further pedestrian connectivity on the south side of Alcovy Rd. The development will also have a 150-foot deceleration lane at the southern entrance to the development on W. Drowning Creek Rd. The development could provide relief to congestion on Alcovy Rd during peak hours by providing additional road connectivity to W. Drowning Creek Rd.

Summary:

The proposed townhouse community could be considered acceptable, as it is consistent with the residential character and density present in the Alcovy Rd residential corridor. Additionally, the development would provide needed street network connectivity, and extend pedestrian infrastructure. As such, considering the forth going, the Department recommends that the requested annexation and rezoning applications be approved with conditions.

Comprehensive Plan:

The subject parcel is designated as Innovation District in the Gwinnett County 2045 Unified Plan, which calls for uses that are predominately research and development, industrial parks, and technological uses. On the City of Dacula's 2050 Future Land Use Map in the City of Dacula's Comprehensive Plan, the parcel is designated as South Alcovy (pg. 65). The character area Land Use section and Zoning Considerations call for developments that reflect the existing residential and small neighborhood commercial character present within the character area. Additionally, the character area description encourages opportunities to connect to multi-use paths and pedestrian amenities, such as pocket parks.

The analysis of the application should be made based upon the "Standards Governing Exercise of the Zoning Power" as stated in Section 1702 of The 2000 Zoning Resolution of the City of Dacula.

1. *Whether the proposed annexation and rezoning will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of an adjacent and nearby property?*

The proposed R-TH zoning is compatible with the existing institutional and residential uses found at the Alcovy Rd and Ewing Chapel Rd intersection. As such, the proposed uses could be considered suitable at this location.

2. *Whether the proposed annexation and rezoning will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby properties?*

The proposed applications would not be expected to adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby properties.

3. *Whether the property to be affected by the proposed annexation and rezoning has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned?*

The property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

4. *Whether the proposed annexation and rezoning will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools?*

With the provided conditions, excessive or burdensome use of streets, transportation facilities or schools would be minimized.

5. *Whether the proposed annexation and rezoning are in conformity with the policy and intent of the Land Use Plan?*

The proposed townhouse development is consistent with both the zoning recommendations and description of the designated character area in the Land Use Plan. As such, the proposed development could be considered suitable at this location (City of Dacula 2050 Comprehensive Plan, pg 65).

6. *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 proposed rezoning?*

The proposed development would increase right-of-way connectivity. The additional right-of-way connection may allow for better flow of traffic at the Alcovy Rd and Ewing Chapel Rd roundabout, which is often congested during peak school hours. Staff recommends requiring traffic calming measures, such as speed bumps or raised cross walks, to maximize pedestrian safety on internal drives. The recommended pedestrian improvements and the improvements shown in the site plan would allow for residents within the proposed subdivision to access Alcovy Elementary School without contributing to school traffic.

Recommendation:

Based upon the applications, the annexation and rezoning to R-TH (Single Family Residence Townhouse District) are recommended for approval with the following conditions:

Concept Plan and Land Use

1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the conceptual site plan prepared by Gaskins Lecraw, Inc. dated January 2, 2025, and with the provided zoning conditions. Any substantial deviation from the approved conceptual plan and/or remaining conditions of zoning shall be resubmitted to the City Council for consideration. The City Administrator shall determine what constitutes substantial deviation.

2. The open space shall not be subdivided and shall be owned and maintained by a mandatory homeowners' association. The deed to the mandatory homeowners' association shall require that the open space be perpetually maintained.
3. The maximum number of dwelling units shall not exceed 10 buildings consisting of 54 units total.
4. The development must have a minimum of two (2) entrances: one from Alcovy Rd, and one from W. Drowning Creek Rd.
5. The developer shall submit the Final Plat to the City of Dacula prior to the issuance of any building permits.
6. Collection of solid waste, recycling, and recovered materials from the townhome development shall be arranged by an agreement with a franchised contractor.
7. The developer shall provide a 20 ft pedestrian access easement, connecting the internal drive to Ewing Chapel Rd.

Architectural Design

8. An entrance feature, landscape, and fence plan along W. Drowning Creek Rd and Alcovy Rd shall be submitted to the City for review and approval. The fence shall be black wood rail fence or wrought iron in style with stacked stone or brick columns on-center (maximum 30-feet). The fence shall extend a minimum of 50-feet from subdivision entrances. Fencing shall be maintained by the homeowner's association.
9. The front and side façades of all dwelling units shall consist of architectural treatments of brick, stone, or stucco with fiber cement siding for the remainder of the elevation. The remainder of the structures shall be constructed of brick, stone, stucco, concrete fiber, or similar material.
10. The minimum heated floor area per dwelling unit shall be 1,800 square feet.
11. All dwelling units shall have at least a two-car garage.
12. The proposed elevation, building materials, and colors shall be approved by the City prior to building permit issuance.

Landscape and Parking

13. The developer shall provide street trees along the internal right-of-way at 40 to 50-foot intervals on center. Street trees shall not be located in the right of way, be 6 to 8 feet tall at the time of installation with a minimum DBH of 3 inches and located five (5) feet from the sidewalk. Subject to review and approval by the City Administrator or his / her designee.

Street trees shall be of one or a combination of the following species:

- a. American Hornbeam
- b. Bloodgood Japanese Maple

- c. Carolina Silverbell
 - d. Eastern Redbud
 - e. Georgia Oak
 - f. North Red Oak
 - g. Nuttall Oak
 - h. Red Maple
 - i. Shumard Oak
 - j. Southern Sugar Maple
 - k. Sweet Bay Magnolia
14. The pocket park shall at minimum include one (1) picnic table with bench seating, two additional street trees, a trash receptacle, and a sidewalk connecting the internal drives. The sidewalk connecting the internal drives shall have a minimum of three (3) commercial quality pedestrian benches located under shade, and street trees planted at 25-foot intervals. Street trees shall be 6 to 8 feet tall at the time of planting, have a minimum DBH of 3 inches, and shall be a combination of the trees listed in condition #13. Prior to issuance of a development permit, an amenity area plan shall be reviewed and approved by the City Administrator or his/her designee.
 15. The mail kiosk area shall contain a minimum of ten (10) parking spaces, a commercial-quality bicycle rack, an additional street tree to provide shade, and a structure with an impermeable roof, such as a gazebo, cabana or covered pergola. The mail kiosk area plan shall be included in the amenity area plan. Prior to issuance of a development permit, an amenity area plan shall be reviewed and approved by the City Administrator or his/her designee.
 16. Existing vegetation within the 50-foot undisturbed buffer from all property frontages must remain undisturbed when feasible. Feasibility will be determined by the City Administrator or his / her designee.
 17. In the case that the 50-foot buffer surrounding the parcel on all property frontage must be disturbed, the undisturbed buffer must be replaced with a 40-foot landscape strip from the property line. Subject landscape strips shall include two rows of staggered privacy trees that are 6 to 8 feet tall at the time of installation and are spaced out no further than 10 feet on center with each row. Landscape buffer trees shall be a combination of the following native species and shall be supplemented by native understory shrubs:
 - a. American Holly
 - b. Eastern Hemlock

- c. Eastern Redcedar
- d. Laurel Oak
- e. Loblolly
- f. Southern Wax Myrtle
- g. Washington Hawthorn
- h. White Pine
- i. Willow Oak
- j. Virginia Pine

Where appropriate, the developer may use the Miyawaki method to replace the disturbed natural vegetation with native foliage installations. The proposed landscape plan must show the needed replanting areas.

- 18. Each townhome building shall have landscape features to include, but not necessarily limited to flowerbeds, a minimum of one (1) under story decorative tree, evergreen understory plantings and the like. Subject to review and approval by the City Administrator or his/her designee.
- 19. Stormwater maintenance / bioretention areas are encouraged to include practices from the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual green standards. The areas may include lower maintenance grass alternatives, such as Blue Star Creeper, Corsican Mint, Micro-Clover, Fescue, or native grasses, native shrubs, and native trees as approved by the City Administrator.
- 20. A black chain link fence is required around the detention pond. The homeowner's association is responsible for the maintenance of the detention pond and fence.
- 21. Gravel is prohibited. Permeable pavement alternatives must be reviewed and approved by the City prior to development permit issuance.
- 22. All trash dumpsters shall be screened by an enclosure using the same exterior building material as the adjacent occupied buildings. Pickup shall be limited to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Dumpster enclosures shall remain closed, locked, and in good repair at all times.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- 23. A 5-foot-wide sidewalk shall be constructed along the entire property frontage of Alcovy Rd, W. Drowning Creek Rd, and Ewing Chapel Rd.
- 24. 5-foot-wide sidewalks shall be constructed on both sides of the internal streets.
- 25. Underground utilities shall be provided throughout the development.

26. Street light service fees and maintenance are the responsibility of the mandatory homeowner's association.
27. The developer will provide pedestrian crosswalks at the stop signs of the internal public drive.
28. The owner/developer must provide two (2), five (5) foot wide raised pedestrian crosswalks providing traffic calming devices, or a stamped two (2), five (5) foot crosswalk protected by speed bumps on either side of the crosswalk in each of the internal public drives. Alternative traffic calming pedestrian measures are subject to the review and approval of the Planning & Development Department.
29. Prior to the issuance of a Development Permit, the developer must satisfy Gwinnett County Department of Transportation requirements. The Developer shall also provide a traffic impact study, as required by Article 4 of the Development Regulations. Subject to final approval by Gwinnett County Department of Transportation, the developer shall make any improvements required by the submitted traffic impact study.