

STAFF ANALYSIS
REZONING REQUEST
Unified Zoning Ordinance

ZONING CASE: The request of Buckel Design Group (BDG), LLC to rezone from General Commercial (C-2) to High Density Residential (R-7) a tract of land totaling 12.99 acres located on NE intersection of North Bypass and Pleasant Grove Drive, Dalton, GA. Parcel (12-163-05-005)

The tract is currently undeveloped. The petitioner's request was prompted by their desire to develop the subject property as a multi-structure campus totaling 209 multi-family dwelling units.

The surrounding uses and zoning are as follows: 1) To the north are the subject property's undeveloped parent tracts totaling over 40-acres in size and zoned C-2; 2) To the east is a 37-acre tract of land that contains the Hammond Creek Middle School campus; 3) To the south is a continuation of the eastern adjacent tract; and 4) To the west is a 117-acre tract of land containing the Cross Plains community center and park. Also to the west is a 6.8-acre tract of land zoned M-2 that contains a climate-controlled storage facility.

The subject property is in the jurisdiction of the City of Dalton Mayor and Council.

CONSIDERING FACTORS FOR A REZONING/ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

(A) Whether the proposed amendment would allow a use that is generally suitable for the site compared to other possible uses and whether the proposed change is consistent with the established land use pattern and zoning of adjacent and nearby property.

A look at the zoning map in this area indicates that the subject property is a point of convergence between residential, commercial, manufacturing, and agriculture districts. A close look at the built environment of this area, however, would suggest that the subject property is at the intersection of a community center with land uses ranging from commercial, significant public recreation, and public school. There is no existing multi-family zone district adjacent to the subject property, but a short distance north along the North Bypass is an established multi-family condominium development. The nature of this area, as stated previously, is like that of a community center where public facilities, career opportunities, and retail/services are within a short distance. This type of location is a prime opportunity for a quality multi-family development as well as commercial retail/service development.

(B) Whether the proposed (R-7) amendment would adversely affect the economic value of adjacent and nearby property.

Staff identify no adverse impact to adjacent property values based on the existing zoning and development. It is worth noting that the adjacent commercial tracts of land will be required to provide a buffer along the subject property's boundary should they be developed as commercial properties in the future.

(C) Whether the subject property has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned, considering the suitability of the subject property of the proposed zoned uses.

There is no argument to suggest that the subject property is facing a hardship under its current zoning. It is worth noting here, however, that the introduction of a multi-family development at this location would create a viable use of land in an area where public and private amenities are abundant.

(D) Whether there is relative gain to the health, safety, morals, or general welfare to the public as compared to any hardship imposed upon the individual owner under the existing zoning.

N/A

(E) Whether the proposed (R-7) amendment, if adopted or approved, would result in a use which would or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, schools, sewers, water resources, police and fire protection, or other utilities, as contrasted with the impact under the existing zoning.

No impact is expected to affect public utilities due to the abundance of capacity in this area of the City. One will note on the attached preliminary site design that the subject property is planned to have a single point of ingress/egress in alignment with the southern access of Hammond Creek Middle School.

(F) Whether the property sought to be rezoned (or annexed) is in conformity with the policy and intent of the adopted joint comprehensive plan or equivalent. If not, has the plan already been amended, officially or unofficially, by the development of uses which are contrary to the plan recommendation, and if the plan has been amended, does this reasoning or annexation request allow uses which are compatible to the existing uses in the vicinity.

The future development map designates this property as within the Regional Activity Center character area. This character area is intended to represent a concentration of regionally-marketed commercial and retail centers, office and employment areas, and mixed use development. These areas are characterized by a high degree of access by vehicular traffic, on-site parking, low degree of internal open space.

New development should include:

- A relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area.
- Include a diverse mix of high-density housing types, including multi-family town homes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums, including affordable and workforce housing
- Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment by adding sidewalks and creating other pedestrian-friendly trail/bike routes linking to neighboring residential areas and major destinations, such as neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, etc.

The subject property's proposed rezoning and planned development would be an ideal implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Development Map based on existing zoning and development in this area.

(G) Whether there are any other conditions or transitional patterns affecting the use and development of the property to be rezoned or annexed, which give grounds for approval or disapproval of the proposed zoning proposal. Whether the proposed zoning change constitutes an “entering wedge” and is a deterrent to the use, improvement, or development of adjacent property within the surrounding zone districts or would create an isolated, unrelated district (spot zoning) as interpreted by current Georgia law.

The proposed rezoning would introduce an island of R-7 surrounded by C-2 and R-2 zoning. With the existing built environment in mind, the proposed rezoning and development would be an excellent fit for the subject property. It is often a good practice to place multi-family developments adjacent to commercial and recreation centers. The adjacent R-2 zone district is not that of a low-density single-family neighborhood but rather a public recreation and school campus, so there is no concern for any issues resulting of these zones being adjacent in this case.

(H) Whether the subject property, as currently zoned, is vacant and undeveloped for a long period of time, considered in the context of land development in the vicinity or whether there are environmental or cultural factors, like steep slopes, flood plain, stormwater, or historical issues that influence the development of the subject property under any zoning designation.

The subject property has been burdened by the multiple utility easements that can make development more challenging, but the creation of Pleasant Grove Drive and the completion of Hammond Creek Middle School have created economic opportunities that did not previously exist at this location.

Conclusion:

The staff can recommend approval of the requested zoning change from C-2 to R-7.

Reasons for this recommendation:

1. There is no concern that the proposed rezoning and land use will introduce a character that would be in conflict with the existing built environment of this area;
2. The zoning request is an ideal implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and future development map based on the existing character of this area and the established zoning pattern;
3. There is no expectation that the proposed rezoning could have a long-term negative impact on adjacent property values.