



STAFF REPORT
REZONE
360 HAWTHORNE EXTENSION
ZONE-2025-06-1098
JULY 3rd, 2025

APPLICANT: Bryce Hix / W&A Engineering
OWNER: Sean Tran
FUTURE LAND USE REQUEST: Remain *Main Street Business*
ZONING REQUEST: From C-G to RM-2
TYPE OF REQUEST: Type II
LOCATION: 360 Hawthorne Extension
TAX MAP NUMBERS: 121B2 H002A
COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT: District 2
PROJECT SIZE: 0.9 Acres
PRESENT USE: Undeveloped
PROPOSED USE: Unspecified
PUBLIC NOTICE POSTED: June 18th, 2025
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL**
PLANNING COMM. RECOMMENDATION: **PENDING**
MAYOR & COMMISSION AGENDA SETTING: .. July 15th, 2025 (tentative)
MAYOR & COMMISSION VOTING SESSION: August 5th, 2025 (tentative)

I. Summary Recommendation

The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from Commercial-General (C-G) to Mixed Density Residential (RM-2) on a 0.9-acre lot at 360 Hawthorne Extension. The applicant did not include a development concept in the request and is not required to do so. Therefore, Staff evaluated the request for its compatibility with the neighborhood's land uses and zoning. RM-2 zoning would allow the same level of residential density (21 bedrooms) as the current C-G zoning, but does not require ground-floor commercial.

The project is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan due to its infill location and proximity to transportation, healthcare, schools, and other resources and opportunities. The current zoning is not compatible with the Future Land Use Map, but the requested zone is compatible. Approval of the zoning request would align the property with the Future Land Use Map. It is also compatible with the surrounding Zoning Map. The requested multi-family zoning provides a residential transition opportunity between the commercial corridor along Hawthorne Avenue and the adjacent residential neighborhood. Therefore, **Staff recommends approval of the request.**

Planning Commission Recommendation: Pending

II. Purpose of Applicant Request

A. Proposal

The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from C-G to RM-2 on a 0.9-acre lot at 360 Hawthorne Extension. The applicant did not include a development concept in the request, and is not required to do so. Staff is evaluating this request for its compatibility with the neighborhood's land uses and zoning map.

B. Existing Conditions

The property is wooded, undeveloped, and slopes downward from the eastern property line to the western line (downhill from Hawthorne Ave). The properties to the north, east, and south are all zoned C-G. The properties to the east and south contain automotive shops while the properties to north are undeveloped. The two properties to the west, across Hawthorne Extension, are zoned RM-2 with single-family homes. Athens-Clarke County Transit Routes 5 and 21 serve nearby Hawthorne Avenue. Hawthorne Avenue is a prime location for mixed-use development that provides a variety of housing options close to neighborhood-scale commercial (such as restaurants, pharmacy, day care services, etc.) and other important destinations like Bishop Park and Piedmont Athens Regional Hospital.

III. Policy Analysis

A. Compatibility with Comprehensive Plan

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan calls for the following policies that **are** supported in this project:

- *Infill and redevelopment should be prioritized over greenfield expansion.*
- *Create nodal development tied to transportation, healthcare, schools, jobs, workforce, and housing.*

Overall, the proposal is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan. This property is an infill location and any development of this site would **have close proximity** to transportation, healthcare, schools, jobs, workforce, and housing resources, such as Piedmont Athens Regional Hospital, the new medical school campus for the University of Georgia, the YMCA and Bishop Park, Oglethorpe Elementary School, and the shopping at the Beechwood/Alps area (including a full grocery store).

B. Compatibility with the Future Land Use Map

The 2023 Future Land Use Map designates the subject parcel as *Main Street Business*, which is described as follows:

Main Street Business

These are commercial areas where development of a storefront commercial type is encouraged. The uses are generally small-scale, but larger-scale uses can be integrated within a Main Street Business classification if a small-scale storefront is developed along the street facade, with the larger development located behind. Larger-scale uses should only be developed in instances where they are compatible with the adjacent uses. Retail and office uses should dominate the ground floors of the Main Street Business facades, with residential uses encouraged on second and third stories. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. Walkability and pedestrian scale are important and the development should be oriented to the street with sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian access provided.

No change to the Future Land Use Map is required since the proposed zoning action is already compatible with the Map. In fact, the request would bring the property into alignment with the Future Land Use Map. The property's current zoning - Commercial-General (C-G) - is not compatible with the *Main Street Business* Future Land Use, but the requested RM-2 zone is compatible with *Main Street Business*. The *Main Street Business* character description focuses on commercial uses along corridors like Hawthorne Avenue, but residential uses on secondary streets like Hawthorne Extension are compatible because they provide a residential base to support the corridor's commercial uses.

C. Compatibility with the Zoning Map

The applicant has requested a rezone from C-G to RM-2. The following information has been provided to compare the difference in development intensity between the existing C-G zoning and the requested RM-2 zone. Broadly, a comparison of scale, use, and design is offered here to help decision makers evaluate the changes that would be allowed if the request is approved. In terms of building scale, the following chart illustrates the differences in size and scale of buildings that could be constructed:

Standard	CURRENT	REQUESTED
Minimum Lot Size	2,500 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.
Density	24 beds/acre	24 beds/acre
Max Lot Coverage	80%	65%
Max Building Height	65 ft.	35 ft.
Setbacks	0-10 ft.	6-10 ft.
Conserved Canopy	10%	25%
Total Canopy	40%	50%
Parking	Varies	1-2 spaces/unit

The Athens-Clarke County Zoning Ordinance includes a list of defined uses and designates where they can or cannot be established. For this request, the most noticeable difference between the current C-G zoning and the proposed RM-2 zoning is that the current zoning is focused on commercial uses while the proposed zoning limits the property to mostly residential uses. The RM zone would decrease the level of development intensity allowed on the lot compared to the C-G zone.

A large block of properties to the south and west of the subject parcel are zoned RM-2, so rezoning the property to RM-2 would be compatible with the Zoning Map.

D. Consistency with Other Adopted ACCGov Plans, Studies, or Programs

The Transportation and Public Works Department has secured a planning grant as part of the Federal Reconnecting Communities Program to study potential street redesign along Hawthorne Avenue. This complements the Future Land Use update, which identifies Hawthorne Avenue as a corridor with redevelopment opportunities. Rezoning the subject property at Hawthorne Extension could help position this property to contribute to redevelopment along the corridor.

IV. Technical Assessment

A. Environment

There are no designated environmental areas on the property.

The Arborist has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval with the following comment:

- *Project will be expected to meet all requirements of the community tree management ordinance at the time of development during plan review.*

B. Grading and Drainage

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval without comment.

C. Water and Sewer Availability

The Public Utilities Department has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval with the following comments:

- *ACC water and sanitary sewer are available*
- *Capacity is available for the proposed build-out of 990 GPD*
- *Capacity is available for the max allowable build out of 2,520 GPD per the proposed zoning*
- *The max allowable build out per the current zoning is 2,880 GPD*

D. Transportation

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval without comment.

E. Fire Protection

The Fire Marshal has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval with the following comment:

- *The project is expected to meet all fire codes adopted at the time of the plan review.*

F. Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and Development Standards

Since a concept plan is not required or proposed with this request, Staff did not review the request for compliance with the Code. If approved, any proposal will be reviewed for code compliance at the time of permitting review. The applicant has not made any waiver requests, so they will be expected to comply with all of the applicable standards. Signage and lighting are not reviewed at this stage, but the applicant is expected to adhere to those standards as well.

End of Staff Report.

Reviewed

Zoning Criteria Considered by Staff

The following factors have been considered as set forth in *Guhl v. Holcomb Bridge Road Corp.*, 238 Ga. 322, 232 S.E.2d 830 (1977).

- The proposed zoning action conforms to the Future Land Use map, the general plans for the physical development of Athens-Clarke County, and any master plan or portion thereof adopted by the Mayor and Commission.
- The proposed use meets all objective criteria set forth for that use provided in the zoning ordinance and conforms to the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and all its elements.
- The proposal will not adversely affect the balance of land uses in Athens-Clarke County.
- The cost of the Unified Government and other governmental entities in providing, improving, increasing or maintaining public utilities, schools, streets and other public safety measures.
- The existing land use pattern surrounding the property in issue.
- The possible creation of an isolated district unrelated to adjacent and nearby districts.
- The aesthetic effect of existing and future use of the property as it relates to the surrounding area.
- Whether the proposed zoning action will be a deterrent to the value or improvement of development of adjacent property in accordance with existing regulations.
- Whether there are substantial reasons why the property cannot be used in accordance with existing zoning; provided, however, evidence that the economic value of the property, as currently zoned, is less than its economic value if zoned as requested will not alone constitute a significant detriment.
- Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property that give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal.
- Public services, which include physical facilities and staff capacity, exist sufficient to service the proposal.
- The population density pattern and possible increase or over-taxing of the load on public facilities including, but not limited to, schools, utilities, and streets.
- The possible impact on the environment, including but not limited to, drainage, soil erosion and sedimentation, flooding, air quality and water quantity.