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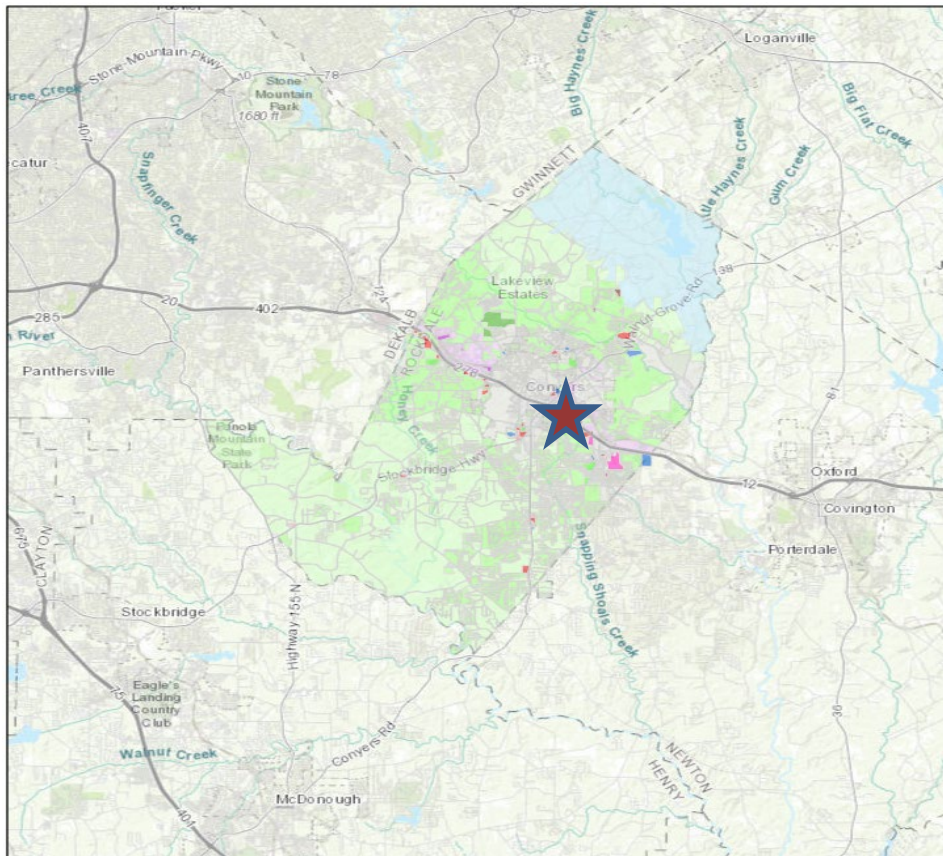
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**PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ROCKDALE COUNTY PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

Case Number: REZ2025-04
Address: 1955 SE Flat Shoals Road
Tax Parcel ID: 076002001E
Site Area: 4.3 acres
Current Zoning: R-1 (Single-Family Residential District)
Existing Conditions: Single-Family Residence/Wooded
Request: To rezone 4.2 acres from R-1 to C-1 (Local Commercial) for local commercial development.
Applicant: David Alan Letson
Owner: David Alan Letson

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

PC Hearing Date: June 12, 2025
BOC Hearing Date: June 26, 2025



ZONING HISTORY

The subject site is located at 1955 SE Flat Shoals Road and is zoned R-1 (Single-Family Residential District). A previous rezoning request was made in 2024 and the Planning Commission voted to approve with conditions, but the Board of Commissioners on July 23, 2024, made the decision to deny the rezoning request for this property.

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

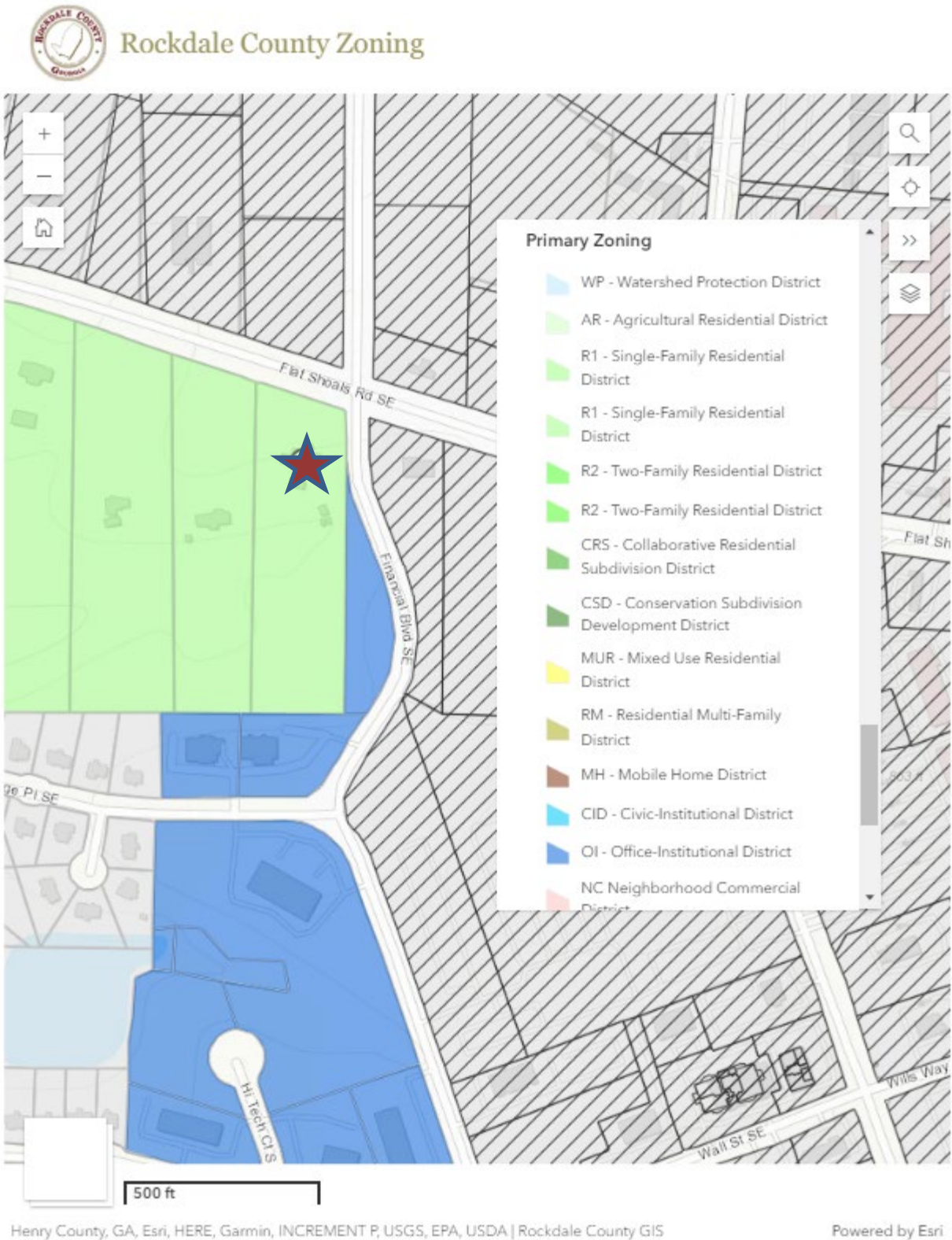
The subject site is a 4.30-acre property developed with a single-family residence. According to property records, the 2,780-square-foot residence was constructed in 1977 and is in excellent condition. A wrap-around driveway with gated entrances along Flat Shoals Road and Avalon Boulevard provides access to the residence. A wrought-iron fence was installed along the front and side property lines. Sidewalks are not present along the property's road frontages, except for a small strip at the northeast corner of the parcel where Flat Shoals Road and Avalon Boulevard intersect. The topography of the site slopes generally down from north to south. A pond and tributary of Snapping Shoals Creek are located on the southern portion of the property, which is largely wooded.

SURROUNDING USE AND ZONING

The subject site is adjacent to residential and commercial uses. The following is a summary of surrounding uses and zoning:

ADJACENT ZONING AND CURRENT LAND USE			
Direction	Address	Zoning District	Current Land Use
North	1954 SE Flat Shoals Road	SRC-MxD	Undeveloped
East	1969 SE Flat Shoals Road	SRC-O-I	Veterinary Hospital
South	2213 SE Exchange Place	O-I	Medical Office
West	1935 SE Flat Shoals Road	R-1	Single-Family Residence

ZONING MAP

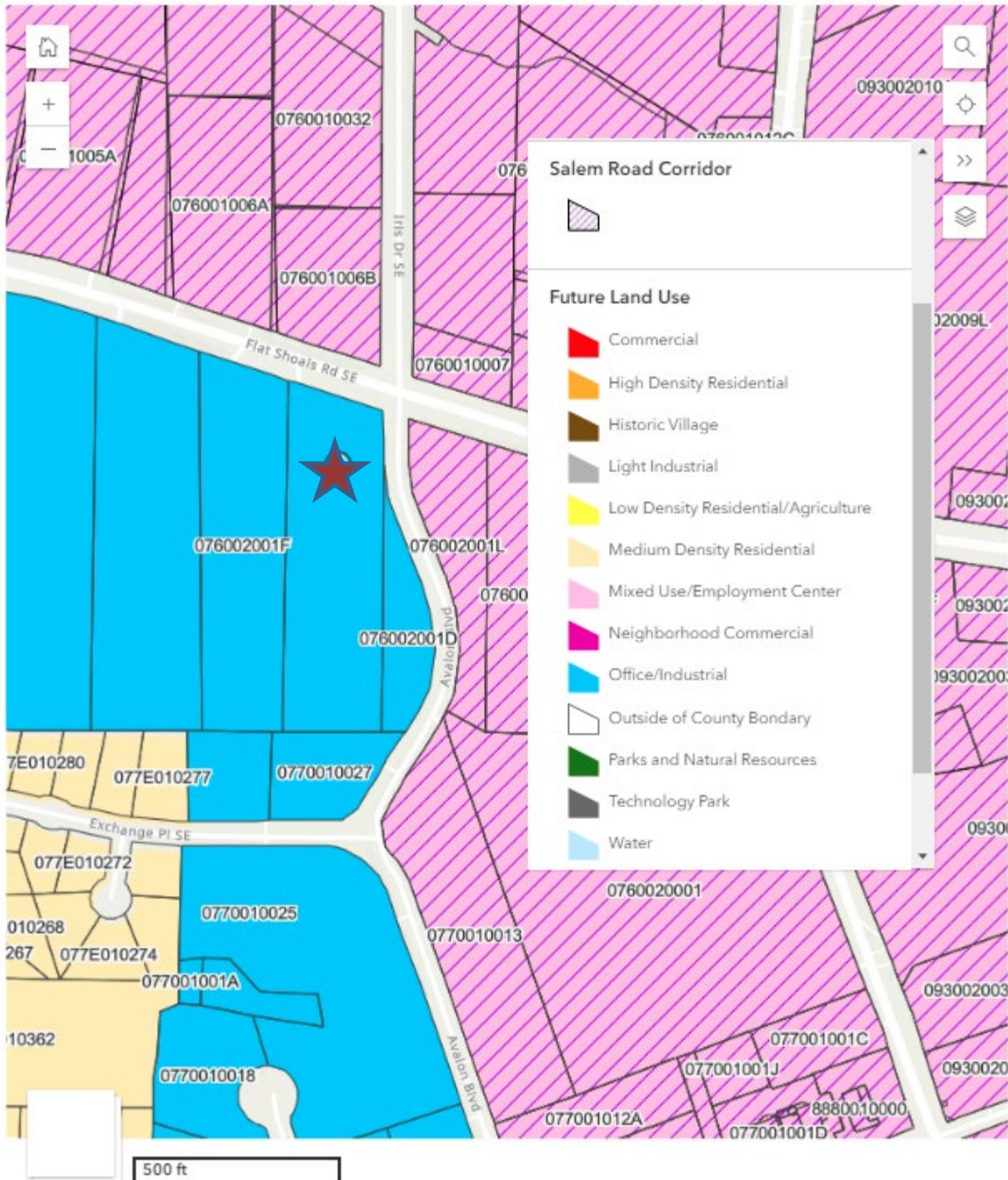


* Salem Road Corridor is indicated by the hatched gray area.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Rockdale County Future Land Use



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PROJECT SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting a rezoning for a 4.3-acre site. The project includes the following:

- A request to rezone the site from R-1 (Single-Family Residential) to C-1 (Local Commercial) for local commercial development.
- No specific commercial use is proposed; the owner of the property intends to sell the property to a commercial buyer.

The site currently is developed with:

- A single-family residence.
- Located at the intersection of Iris Drive and Avalon Boulevard.
- Two access points (from Flat Shoals Road and Avalon Boulevard).
- Adjacent to commercially and residentially zoned properties.

AERIAL



ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The following is a summary of applicable development standards from the Rockdale Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):

ROCKDALE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS			
Standard	Required	Proposed	Meets Standard?
Minimum Lot Size	10,000 SF	4.30 acres	YES
Minimum Lot Width	75 Feet	>75 Feet	YES
Setbacks*			
Front	15 Feet	>15 Feet	YES
Rear	35 Feet	>35 Feet	YES
Side	15 Feet	>15 Feet	YES
Transitional Buffer** (Adjacent to R-1)	50 Feet	N/A	N/A

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AGENCY REVIEW

In addition to the above referenced development standards, the applicant must meet all other UDO requirements related to infrastructure improvements. Internal and External agency comments are attached and provided below.

Fire

No fire and life safety comments for the 1955 Flat Shoals property.

Rockdale Board of Education

No impact.

Stormwater Department

Based on the submitted rezoning documents, there are existing State waters, Wetlands and Tree Protection that must be protected with no adverse impact as it relates to the Stormwater Management Department for Land Disturbance Permitting.

ARTICLE IV – STREAM BUFFER PROTECTION Sec. 310 – 103 Land development stream buffer requirements.

(a) All land development activities, including subdivisions of land and platting activities governed by chapter 302 of the UDO, shall meet the following buffer and setback requirements unless otherwise exempted in this article:

(1) An undisturbed natural vegetative buffer shall be maintained for 50 feet, measured horizontally, on both banks (as applicable) of the stream as measured from the top of the stream bank.

(2) An additional setback shall be maintained for 25 feet, measured horizontally, beyond the undisturbed natural

vegetative buffer, in which all impervious cover shall be prohibited. Grading, filling, and earthmoving shall be minimized within the setback.

(3) No septic tanks or septic tank drain fields shall be permitted within the buffer or the setback.

(b) Any land development activity within a buffer established hereunder or any impervious cover within a setback established hereunder is prohibited unless a variance is granted pursuant to section 310-105.

CHAPTER 324 – ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CRITERIA

Sec. 324-2. - Protection of wetlands.

(a) *Purpose and intent.* Pursuant to O.C.G.A. [12-2-8](#) and the DNR, environmental protection division's Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria chapter 391-3-16, this section establishes regulations to promote the wise use of wetlands and protect them from alterations that will significantly affect or reduce their primary functions for water quality, floodplain and erosion control, groundwater recharge, aesthetic natural areas and wildlife habitat areas.

(b) *Wetlands development permit requirements.* No activity or use, except those identified in subsection (c), shall be allowed in the wetlands without issuance of a local development permit. Local permits will be issued only if the proposed use is in compliance with the requirements of the underlying zoning district and this section. Furthermore, if the area of proposed development is located within 100 feet of the wetlands boundaries, as established by Figure IV-2 of the Rockdale County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers delineation is required under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. If wetlands are altered or degraded, mitigation to offset losses may be required as a condition of a Section 404 permit. Local development permits will not be issued until after any necessary Section 404 permits have been secured.

Sec. 328-15. - Authority, findings, purpose and intent.

(a) *Authority.* This article is enacted pursuant to the county's exclusive planning authority granted by the Constitution of the State of Georgia, including but not limited to Ga. Const. art. IX, § II, para. IV, and Ga. Const. art. IX, § II, para. III, as well as authority granted by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, including but not limited to O.C.G.A. § [36-70-3](#), as well as 1977 Ga. Laws, page 2817, as amended, and 1969 Ga. Laws, page 3639, as amended, and the general police powers of the county and other authority provided by federal, state and local laws applicable to this article.

(b) *Findings, purpose, and intent.* It is the intent of this article to provide standards for landscaping and for the preservation and replacement of trees as part of the land development and building construction process in unincorporated areas of the county. The county finds that the existence of adequate tree cover and landscaping in the county directly affects the public health, safety, and welfare to comprehensively address these concerns through the adoption of the regulations in this article. The purpose and intent of the board of commissioners in enacting this article are as follows:

(1) To protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the county, and to implement the policies and objectives of the comprehensive plan through the enactment of a comprehensive ordinance governing tree preservation and replacement in the county.

(2) To require landscaping and the preservation and replacement of trees in certain areas within the county to ensure the continued health of its citizens through improved air and water quality.

(3) To provide developers and others active in the county with the appropriate guidance to better ensure proper

tree preservation and replacement during the land development process in the county.

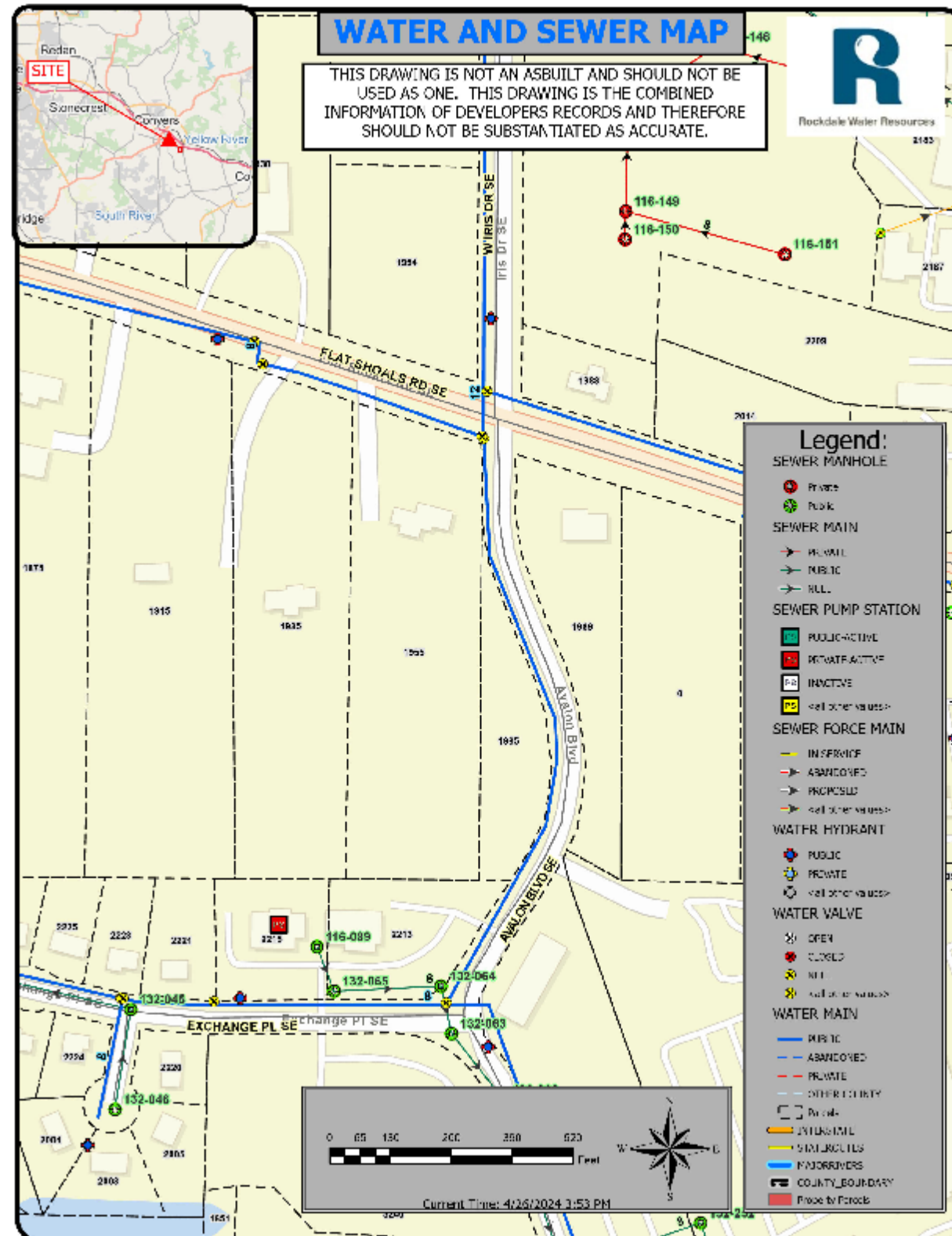
- (4) To preserve property values in the county by maintaining a safe, aesthetically pleasing environment.
- (5) To reduce flooding of county rivers and streams by planting trees and other vegetation to aid in slowing the rate of stormwater runoff.
- (6) To reduce soil erosion in the county by planting trees and other vegetation to aid in prevention of soil loss through stormwater runoff and flooding and to promote stormwater infiltration.
- (7) To reduce noise and glare on adjacent properties from properties that have been extensively developed.
- (8) To conserve energy by cooling surrounding air temperatures through the existence of adequate shade trees.
- (9) To provide improved atmospheric quality by reducing airborne particulates and carbon monoxide and by increasing oxygen through adequate tree cover.
- (10) To promote the saving of trees in nodes throughout a development, rather than as individual trees scattered over a development or around the periphery of a development.
- (11) To prevent clear-cutting and mass grading of land, that results in the loss of mature trees, and to ensure appropriate replanting when tree loss does occur.

Sec. 328-25. - Requirements for other developments.

- (a) Each new development not covered by [section 328-24](#) shall prepare a landscape and tree protection and replacement plan showing compliance with this section.
- (b) The tree protection and replacement plan must, at a minimum, protect or plant 15 units per acre of trees on the land being developed. The tree density calculations shall not utilize trees within required buffers in determining for the overall density factor, existing density factor, or replacement density factor. All new developments with eight (8) or more parking spaces or expanded development that results in eight (8) or more parking spaces, shall provide interior landscaping.
- (c) Rockdale County has given priority to the retention and placement of trees in frontage planting strips and parking lot planting islands. Trees retained or placed in these areas may be used to meet the tree density factor for a project. However, if the tree density factor is met with trees saved or planted in other areas, the tree location guidelines outlined below must still be performed with additional tree plantings.
- (d) *Required landscape strips and re-vegetated buffers.* Landscape strips shall meet the minimum depth requirements as indicated in the following table. Trees may be planted in groups rather than in a single line. Adjoining residential zoning districts, evergreen trees shall be saved or planted in such density or spacing as to provide an eight-foot-tall visual barrier within two years of planting. Required landscaping strips shall not be encroached upon by parking space, driveway surfaces or storm water detention facilities except when complying with requirements below. Driveway crossings may traverse such strips as near to a perpendicular alignment as practical. Signs may be in the required landscape strip.

Water/Sewer

Existing 8" DIP Water main along Flat Shoals Rd and a 12" DIP along Avalon Blvd SE at site. Public 8" Wastewater is serviced from Exchange Pl SE. See Map Attached



Transportation Department

No comments provided.

EVALUATION OF THE REZONING REQUEST

When considering an application to amend the current zoning designation of a property, the Board of Commissioners, the Planning Commission, and the Planning & Development Department shall consider the following standards as described in Section 238-4(G1) of the UDO:

A. Is the zoning proposal permitted as a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property?

The subject site is surrounded by both residential, commercial, and office uses. The residence abutting the subject property to the west was constructed in 1969, according to property records. The commercial uses adjacent to the subject property include a veterinary hospital and a medical office constructed in 1990 and 2003, respectively. Due to the proximity of adjacent office uses, staff believe that a rezoning to Office-Institutional would be the most appropriate zoning district and would help further develop the node at the intersection of Flat Shoals Road and Avalon Boulevard. Furthermore, the required 50-foot-wide transitional buffer provides a viable separation of the property to be rezoned and adjacent residential property.

B. Will the zoning proposal adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property?

The existing uses of adjacent or nearby properties would likely not be adversely impacted by the requested zoning change. Allowing the rezoning for office-institutional development of the property would be consistent with existing office and commercial uses along Flat Shoals Road and Avalon Boulevard. Furthermore, required landscaping and transitional buffers will screen the adjacent residential property.

C. Will the property to be affected by the zoning proposal have a reasonable economic use as currently zoned?

The property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned. However, the site would have greater economic use if rezoned to O-I (Office-Institutional).

D. Will the zoning proposal result in a use which will or could cause excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation, facilities, utilities, or schools?

If all land development regulations are permitted in accordance with the code requirements, the proposed rezoning would likely not increase adverse impacts on public facilities. Future commercial development on the property will be served by public water. Impacts to transportation infrastructure are not anticipated. Water and Sewer are available. Commercial development will have no impact on the Rockdale County school system.

E. Is the zoning proposal in conformity with the Future Land Use Map and the policy with the intent of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan?

The request to rezone the subject property to C-1 (Local Commercial) is in conformance with the Future Land Use category of Office-Institutional; however, an O-I (Office-Institutional) Zoning District will be more aligned with the Future Land Use category.

F. 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?

ROCKDALE COUNTY
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Staff believe that a rezoning of the property from R-1 (Single-Family Residential) to O-I (Office-Institutional) would allow the property to be better utilized by the surrounding community.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on staff's evaluation of the request, and the standards governing exercise of zoning power, the Department of Planning and Development recommends **Approval with Conditions** of a rezoning from R-1 (Single-Family Residential) to O-I (Office-Institutional) with the following conditions:

1. The proposed development shall comply with all Rockdale County Land Disturbance requirements.
2. The applicant shall abide by all applicable standards of the Unified Development Ordinance for the O-I Zoning District, unless otherwise specified in these conditions or through approval of a variance by the Zoning Board of Appeals.
3. The developer shall provide a lighting plan for the site. Outdoor lighting shall be contained in cut-off type luminaries and shall be directed in, toward the property so as not to reflect into adjacent properties or rights-of-way.
4. The development shall provide a 50-foot-wide transitional buffer adjacent to residential zone properties. Buffers shall be replanted where sparsely vegetated and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Director of Planning and Development.
5. The applicant shall provide a 20-foot-wide landscape strip adjacent to the Flat Shoals Road and Avalon Boulevard rights-of-way.
6. In accordance with Sec. 332-9 of the Unified Development Ordinance. A five-foot-wide concrete sidewalk shall be constructed adjacent to the Flat Shoals Road and Avalon Boulevard rights-of-way. A strip of grass or other approved landscape material at least four feet in width shall separate all sidewalks from adjacent curbs on public streets.
7. All utilities shall be placed underground.
8. Natural vegetation shall remain on the property until the issuance of a development permit.

SITE PHOTOS



Google Imagery



Google Imagery