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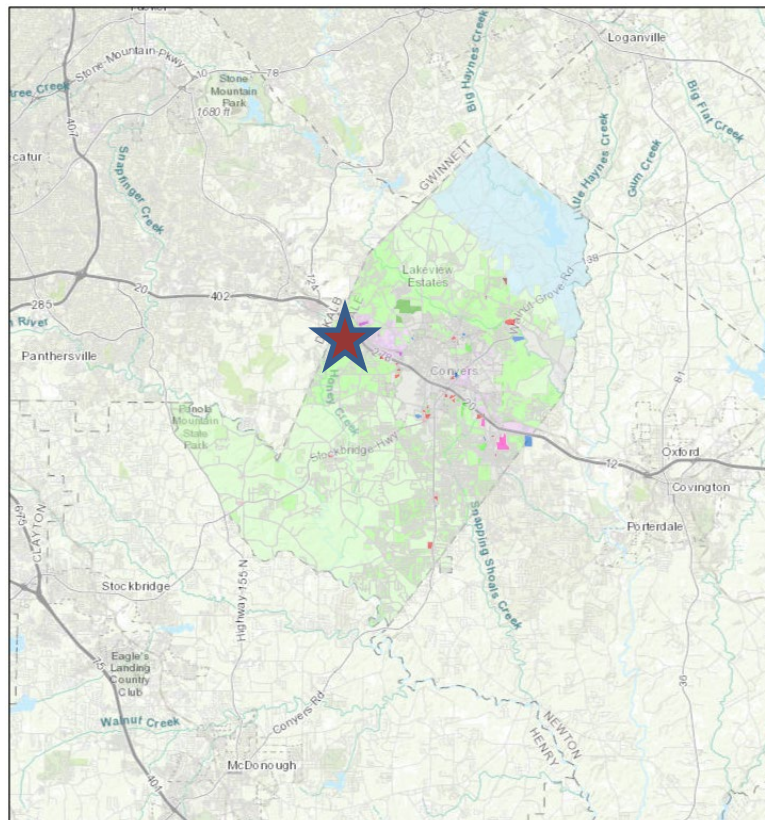
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**PLANNING COMMISSION & BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ROCKDALE COUNTY PLANNING STAFF REPORT**

Case Numbers: REZ2025-07
Address: SW Iris Dr
Tax Parcel: 010D010089
Site Area: 8.79 acres
Current Zoning: C-2 (General Commercial)
Existing Conditions: Woods
Request: To rezone 8.79 acres from C-2 (General Commercial) to RM (Residential Multifamily) for a 70-unit, townhome community.
Applicant: Olmstead Properties, LLC & Battle Law, P.C.
Owner: Olmstead Properties, LLC

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

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



Zoning History

The subject property is zoned C-2 (General Commercial). No prior zoning requests are on record for this property.

Existing Site Conditions

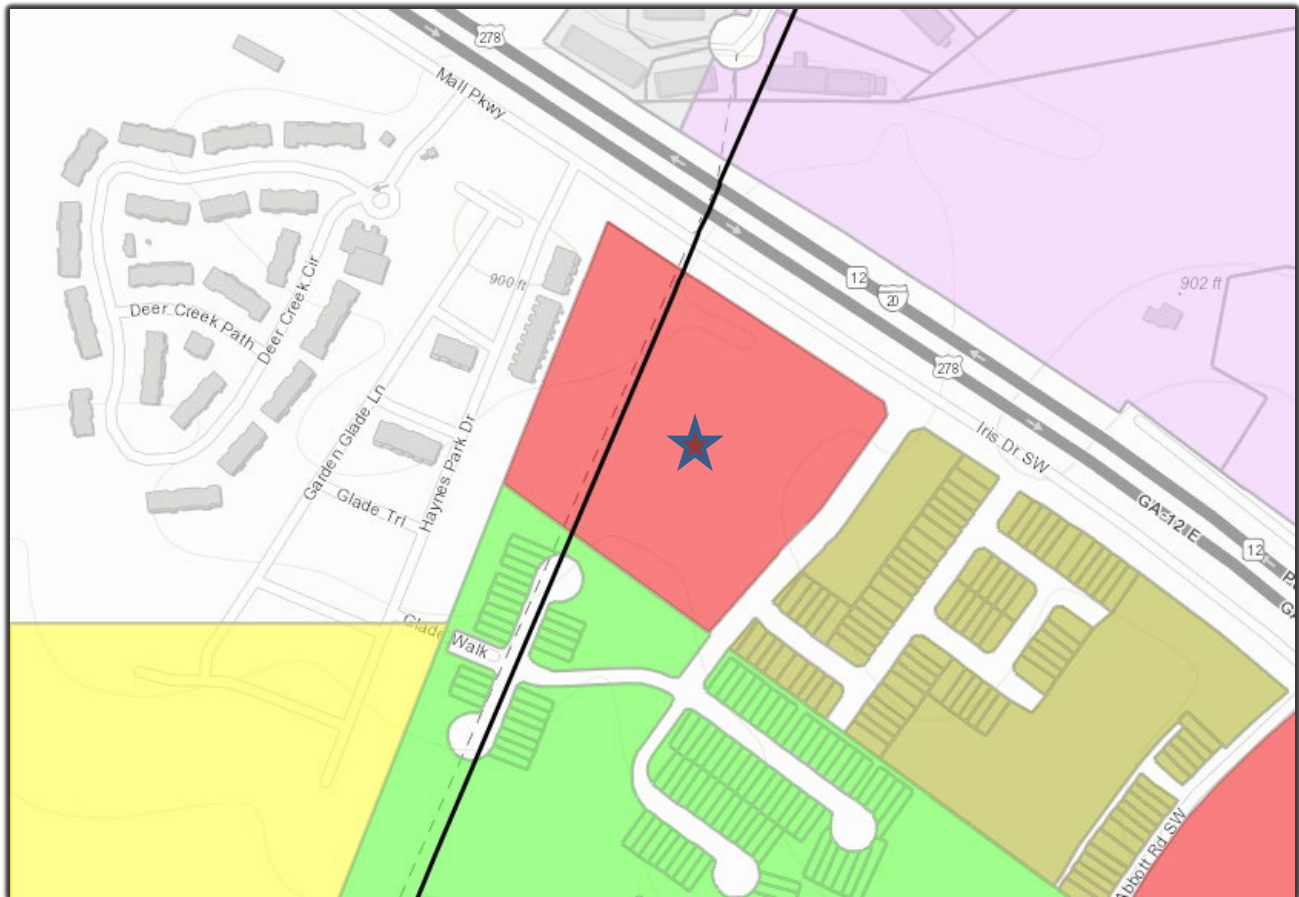
The subject site is an 8.79-acre property located south of Interstate 20 and east of the county boundary line shared with Dekalb County (City of Stonecrest). The property is undeveloped and wooded. The subject property has road frontage along both Iris Drive SW and Ellis Pointe Avenue SW; sidewalks are present along Ellis Pointe Avenue SW. Per the Rockdale County Stormwater Map, a freshwater pond wetland and stream are present on the property.

Surrounding Use and Zoning

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

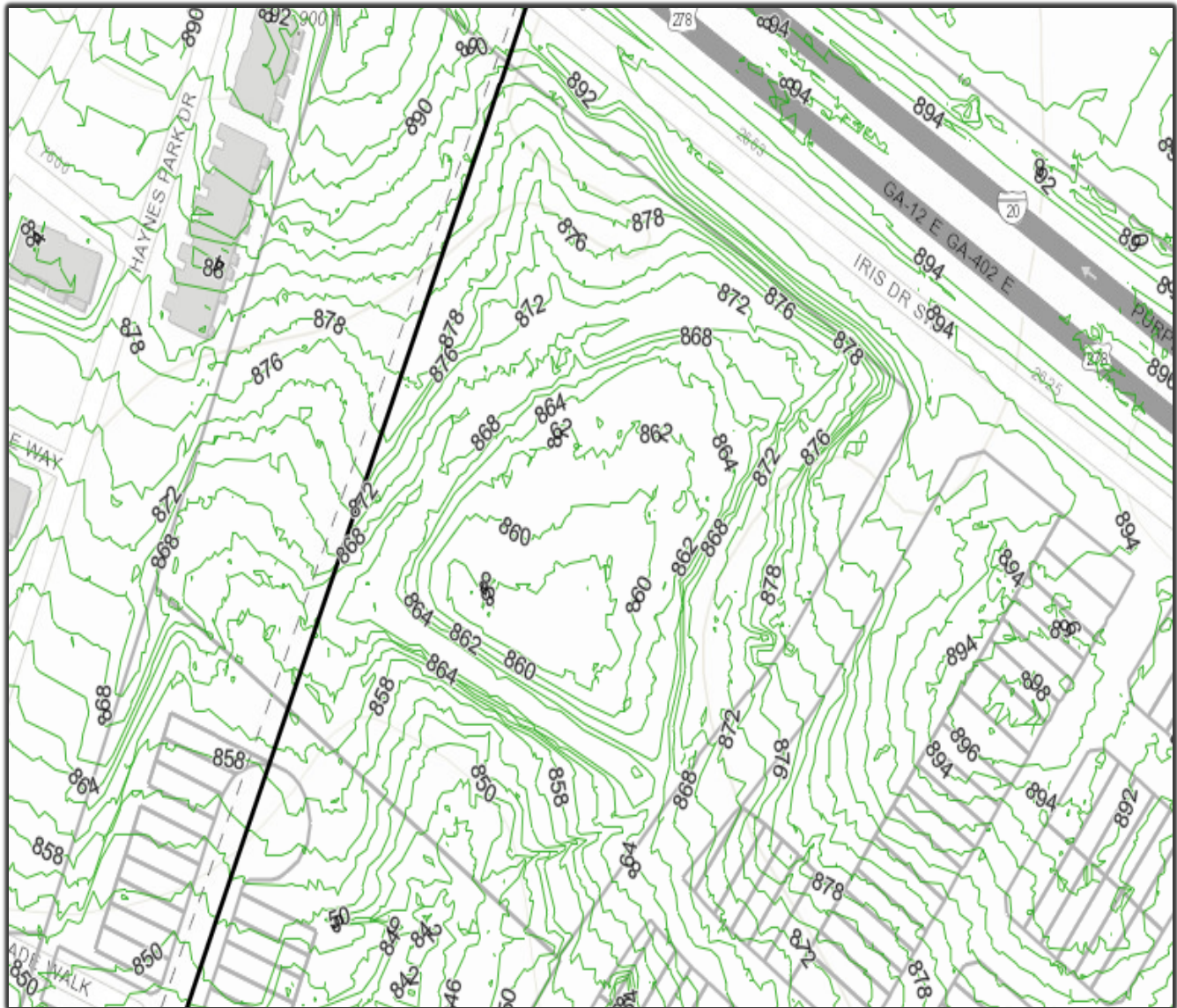
Adjacent Zoning and Current Land Use			
Direction	Address	Zoning District	Current Land Use
West	Haynes Park Drive (City of Stonecrest)	R-3	Haynes Park Townhome Community
North	2565 SW Lake Rockaway Rd	M-1	Sales Equipment - <i>proposed development</i>
East	Ellis Pointe Ave SW	RM	Ellis Pointe Townhome Community
South	Emme Ct SW	R-3	Ellis Pointe Townhome Community

ZONING MAP



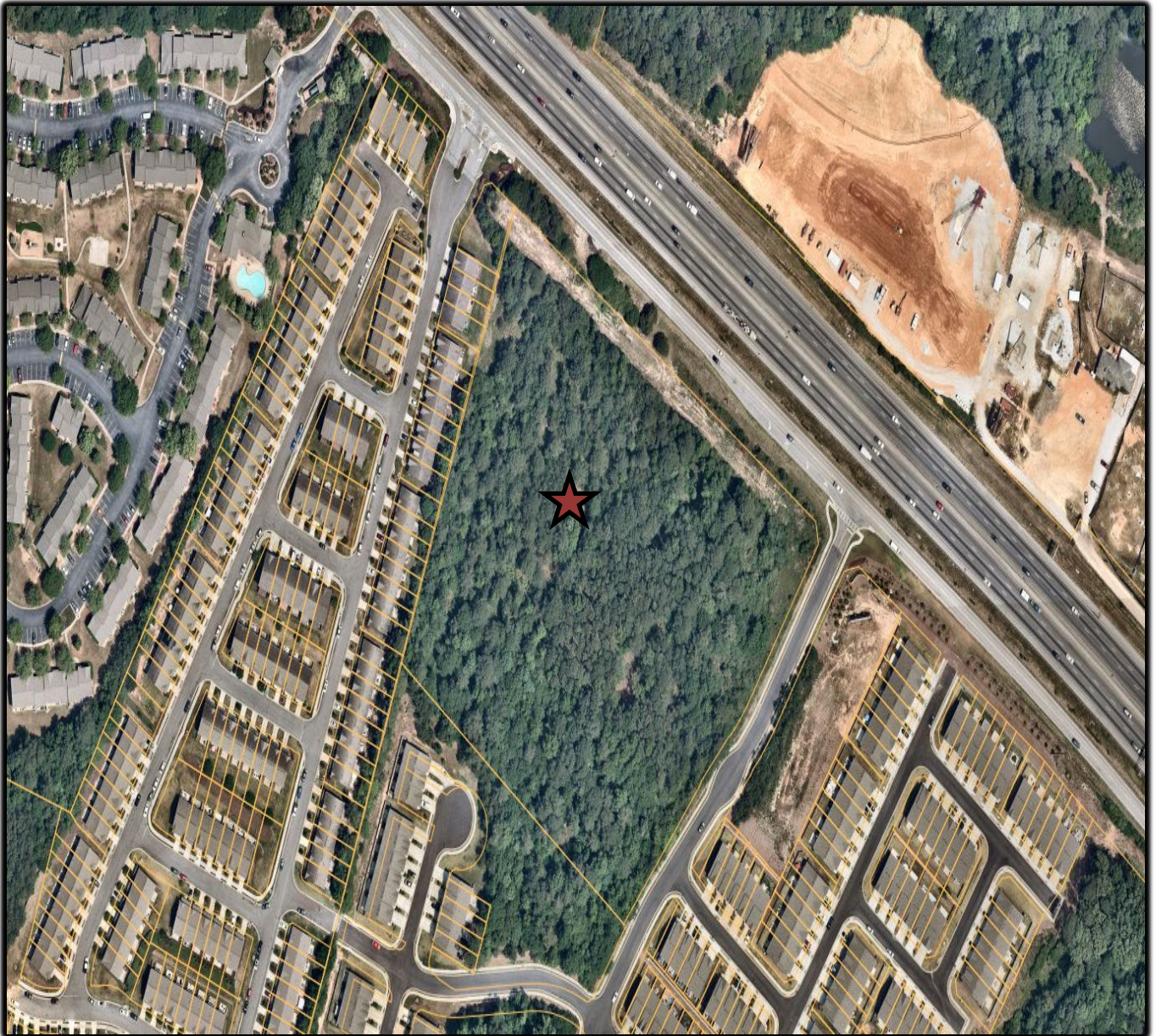
-  RM - Residential Multi-Family District
-  R2 - Two-Family Residential District
-  C2 - General Commercial District
-  M1 - Limited Industrial District
-  MUR - Mixed Use Residential District

CONTOUR MAP



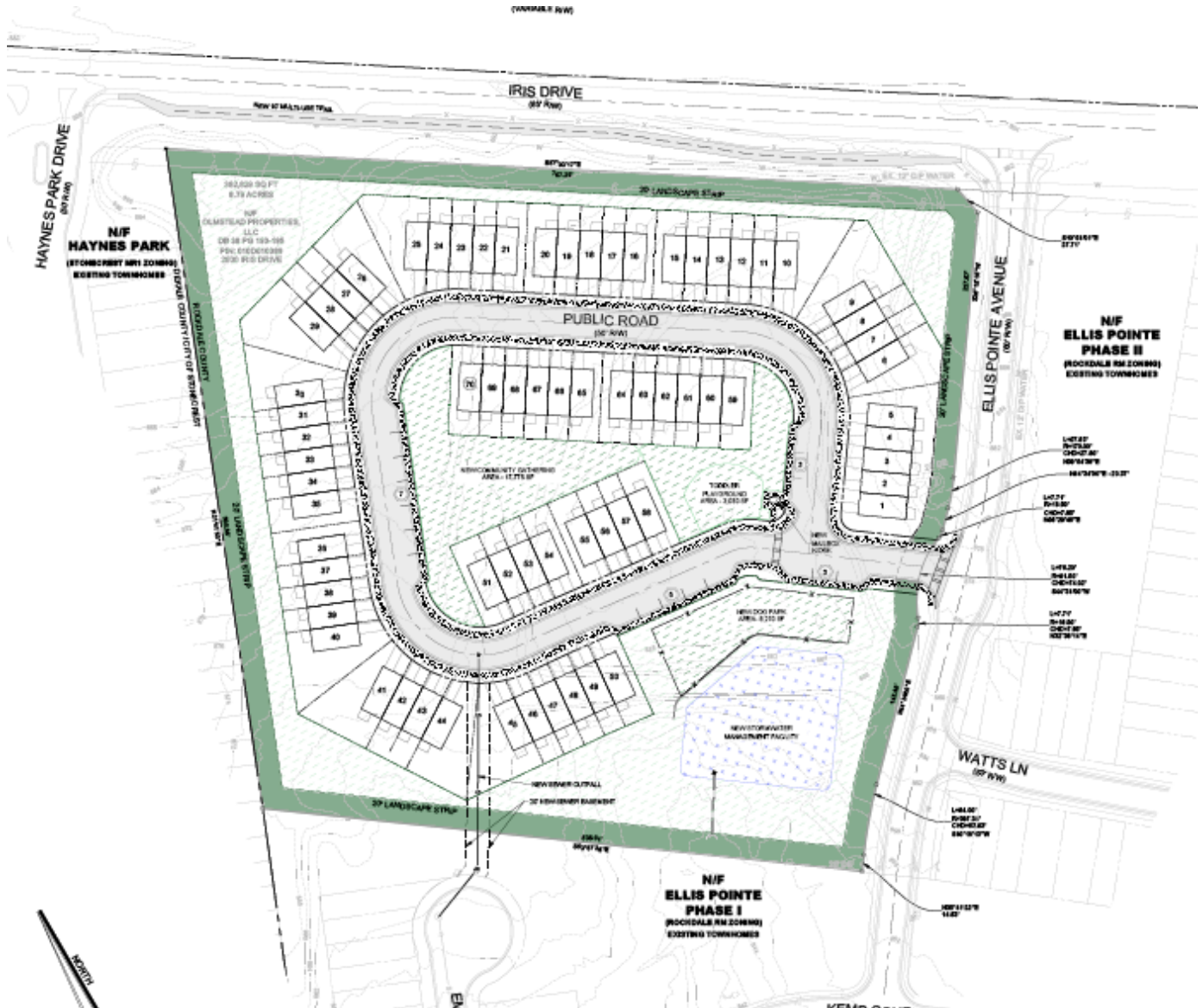
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AERIAL MAP



- 29,125 square feet of proposed active open space. Code requires that developments with more than 50 dwelling units must provide 400 square feet of landscaped outdoor recreation space per unit, so the minimum required recreation space for this development is 28,000 square feet.
- Proposed impervious area of 35 percent. Code allows up to 60 percent of the site to be impervious surface.
- Proposed density of 7.96 units per acre. Code allows up to 12 units per acre in the RM Zoning District.
- Proposed parking:
 - 140 residential parking spaces (2 spaces/dwelling unit), meeting code requirements.
 - **18 guest parking spaces.** The code requires 1 overflow parking space per 3 dwelling units, which would **require** this development to have **23 guest parking spaces.**
- Proposed sidewalks on both sides of internal streets.
- No transitional buffers proposed. Code does not require transitional buffers between properties with the same zoning district.
- 20-foot-wide landscape strip surrounding the entirety of the development, meeting code requirements.
- Recreation areas include a community gathering area and dog park.
- One proposed stormwater management facility.

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ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

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

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS				
Standard	Code Section	Required	Proposed	Meets Standard?
Outdoor Recreation Space	Sec. 206-8(e)(6)a.	28,000 SF (400 SF of landscaped outdoor recreation space per unit)	29,125 SF	YES
Impervious Surface	Sec. 214-1	60% (maximum)	35%	YES
Minimum Development Size	Sec. 214-1	2 acres	8.79 acres	YES

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Front Setback Rear Setback Side Setback	Sec. 214-1 Sec. 214-1 Sec. 214-1	15 Feet 25 Feet 10/15 Feet	15 Feet 25 Feet 10 Feet	YES YES YES
Building Separation Setbacks	Sec. 206-8(e)(4) Sec. 206-8(e)(4) Sec. 206-8(e)(4)	15 feet side-to-side 40 feet front-to-front 40 feet back-to-back	15 feet side-to-side 75 feet front-to-front 70 feet back-to-back	YES YES YES
Residential Parking Guest Parking	Sec. 222-2 Sec. 222-2	140 spaces (minimum) 23 spaces (minimum)	140 spaces 18 spaces	YES NO*
Density	Sec. 214-1	12 units per acre (maximum)	7.96 units per acre	YES
Landscape Strip	Sec. 328-25 Table of Dimensions for Landscape Strips	20 Feet	20 Feet	YES
Transitional Buffer	Sec. 328-6 Table of Minimum Transitional Buffer Requirements	None required	None proposed	N/A

*THE SITE PLAN WILL NEED TO BE AMENDED TO REFLECT THE ADDITIONAL GUEST PARKING REQUIRED.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AGENCY REVIEW

The applicant must meet all other UDO requirements related to infrastructure improvements. Internal and External agency comments are attached and provided below.

Fire

This project does not have a negative impact on the Fire department response as presented. The visitor parking spaces illustration allows the safe passage of emergency vehicles. The parking illustration paired with "No Parking Fire Lane" signs throughout will lessen the chances of cars parking on the street and decrease street width for emergency vehicles. Emergency response time is decreased by not having to navigate parked vehicles.

Rockdale Board of Education

School	Capacity	Current Projection SY25	Current Enrollment
Shoal Creek ES	760	612	628
Edwards MS	1242	913	879
Heritage HS	1650	1319	1264
Current status of the secondary schools – under SY 25 projected enrollment.			
Shoal Creek ES is currently over SY25 projections but under the maximum capacity.			
School District concerns: in combination with the other approved residential development, enrollment numbers will cause larger classes sizes and possibly the introduction of mobile classrooms.			

Transportation Department

Upon review, it appears that no streetlights are currently shown within the subdivision. Per section 332-42 of the Code of Ordinances, streetlights are required for all new subdivisions utilizing new streets or roads to be dedicated to the county, existing county roads, or any combination of the above. The developer must provide a

street light layout, approved by the appropriate department, prior to obtaining any building permits. Please update the subdivision design accordingly and resubmit it for further review.

Stormwater Department

Based on the submitted rezoning documents, there are existing State waters and Wetlands requirements that must be adhered to by Federal, State and County ordinances. Tree protection must be adhered to 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.

CHAPTER 328 – Buffers, landscaping, and Tree Protection

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 by 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 in order 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 in the course of 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 so as to aid in slowing the rate of stormwater runoff.
- (6) To reduce soil erosion in the county by planting trees and other vegetation so as 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 has 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.

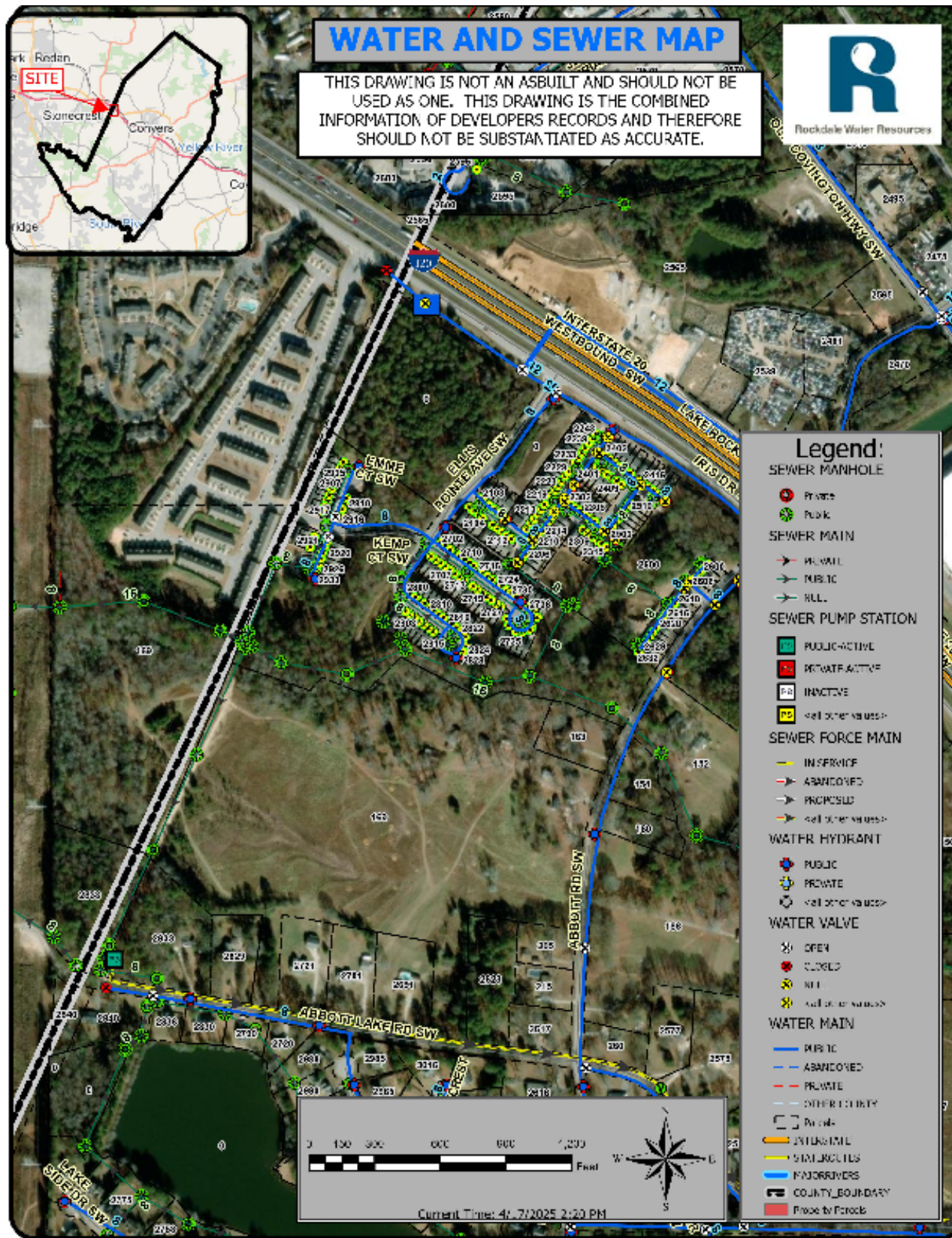
Sec. 328-25. - Requirements for other developments.

- (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 located in the required landscape strip.

Water/Sewer

There is water and sewer available at the project site. The developer or representative will need to perform a downstream analysis to determine the capacity of the existing sewer system to accept the proposed flow. The developer will be responsible for sewer system improvements identified in the analysis. (see attached map of adjacent sewer system)

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EVALUATION OF THE REZONING REQUEST

O.C.G.A. Chapter 36-66: Zoning Procedure Act

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:

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 applicant's request for rezoning from C-2 (General Commercial) to RM (Residential Multifamily) for a 70-unit townhome community is proposed on a wooded property of 8.79 acres. The subject property is surrounded by townhomes; Ellis Pointe townhomes are to the east and south, and Haynes Park townhomes are to the west. As such, the proposed development is suitable in view of adjacent properties.

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

The proposed 70-unit townhome development will likely have minimal impact on surrounding properties in the form of increased traffic.

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.

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

The Transportation Department finds that an additional entrance and lighting plan will be necessitated, but those plans can be resubmitted during the preliminary phase. Rockdale Water Resources (RWR) has indicated that water and sewer are available. Schools in the area are under maximum capacity.

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 Future Land Use Category of this site is Mixed Use/Employment Center, which is in alignment with the requested RM zoning district. As defined by the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, properties with a future land use designation of Mixed Use/Employment Center can be developed with residential uses with a density of 8-12 units per acre. The proposed development will have a density of almost 8 units per acre, which is in conformance with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the RM zoning district.

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?

The proposed development is in conformity with the RM Zoning District, Mixed Use/Employment Center Future Land Use Category, and Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Furthermore, the development will not pose a significant burden to existing streets or other utilities.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends **Approval with Conditions** of the request to rezone from C-2 (General Commercial) to RM (Residential Multifamily). Should the rezoning request be approved, staff recommends the following conditions.

Proposed conditions:

1. The site shall be developed in compliance with the Residential Multifamily (RM) Zoning District if adopted.
2. The site shall be restricted not to exceed 70 units.
3. The number of guest parking spaces shall be amended to meet code requirements.
4. A mandatory Homeowners' Association shall be established and shall be responsible for the maintenance of all common areas and facilities.
5. The Homeowners' Association covenants shall include a rental restriction of five percent (5%) of all townhome units.
6. All townhome units shall have a two-car garage.
7. All grassed areas shall be sodded.
8. All utilities shall be placed underground.
9. Natural vegetation shall remain on the property until the issuance of a development permit.
10. Stormwater detention ponds shall be screened from view from adjoining residential properties. Screening plans shall be subject to review and approval by the Director of Planning and Development.
11. Any structures in the amenity areas shall be constructed using exterior building materials that complement the adjacent residential structures. The amenity areas may be in a single area or in multiple areas. Amenity areas shall be accessible by five-foot-wide concrete sidewalks.