

Approval Criteria for a Zoning Action:

1. Explain how the proposed zoning action is compatible with 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.
  - a. The FLU designation for this property is Mixed Density Residential. This primarily envisions a mix of residential housing types. However, a library would be compatible as it would serve the community's residential areas. The Athens-Clarke county comprehensive plan emphasizes enhancing community services and accessibility. Establishing a public library aligns with goals to improve educational resources and community facilities, supporting the plan's objectives.
2. 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.
  - a. The G (Government) zoning district is intended for properties used by governmental entities. The proposed library fits the G (government) category, meeting the zoning ordinance's criteria. By providing a public library, the proposal gives more educational resources, aligning with the Comprehensive Plan's intent to promote lifelong learning and community engagement.
3. The proposal will not adversely affect the balance of land uses in Athens-Clarke County.
  - a. Transitioning from RM-2 to G for a library adds a community-serving facility within a residential area. This addition diversifies land use without overwhelming the residential character of the area.
4. Public services, which include physical facilities and staff capacity, exist sufficient to service the proposal.
  - a. The site at 1030 Barnett Shoals Road is within an area already serviced by necessary public utilities, including water, sewer, and electricity. The road network can accommodate the expected traffic increase, and public safety services are readily accessible.
5. The existing land use pattern surrounding the property in issue.
  - a. The property is surrounded predominantly by residential developments. Introducing a library serves the local population and enhances the neighborhood's appeal.
6. The possible creation of an isolated district unrelated to adjacent and nearby districts.
  - a. Rezoning to G for the library does not create an isolated district. It integrates a public facility into the existing residential area, offering accessible services to residents.
7. 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.
  - a. The library is a low-impact development concerning population density. While it will attract visitors, the effect on local population density is minimal, and existing public facilities can handle additional usage.
8. 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.
  - a. The primary costs involve the library's construction and ongoing operational expenses for the facility, which are planned and budgeted by the local government. The

investment is justified by the significant educational and social benefits to the community.

9. The possible impact on the environment, including but not limited to, drainage, soil erosion and sedimentation, flooding, air quality and water quantity.
  - a. As an undeveloped parcel, constructing the library will require land disturbance. However, adherence to local environmental regulations will mitigate issues related to drainage, soil erosion, and sedimentation. Sustainable design practices will be implemented, which can further minimize environmental impacts.
10. Whether the proposed zoning action will be a deterrent to the value or improvement of development of adjacent property in accordance with existing regulations.
  - a. Proximity to a public library usually enhances property values due to improved access to educational resources and community spaces, making the area more attractive to potential residents.
11. 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.
  - a. The RM-2 zoning permits residential developments but restricts the establishment of public facilities like libraries. Rezoning to G is necessary to facilitate the proposed public use.
12. The aesthetic effect of existing and future use of the property as it relates to the surrounding area.
  - a. The library's architectural design has been developed to complement the existing residential aesthetics and character of Athens. The schematic design has been approved by the M&C.
13. 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.
  - a. The selection of 1030 Barnett Shoals Road for the East Side Public Library has been approved by the project user group, site selection committee, and Athens-Clarke County Mayor & Commission, reflecting community backing and the importance of the location.