



**STAFF REPORT
REZONE
1030 BARNETT SHOALS ROAD
ZONE-2025-03-0441
APRIL 3rd, 2025**

APPLICANT: Keith Sanders / Athens-Clarke County Unified
Government
OWNER: Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
ZONING REQUEST: RM-2 to G
TYPE OF REQUEST: Type II
LOCATION: 1030 Barnett Shoals Rd
TAX MAP NUMBERS: 174D 005
COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT: District 8
PROJECT SIZE: 6.29 Acres
PRESENT USE: Undeveloped
PROPOSED USE: Public Library (East Side)
PUBLIC NOTICE POSTED: March 19th, 2025
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: **APPROVAL**
PLANNING COMM. RECOMMENDATION: **PENDING**
MAYOR & COMMISSION AGENDA SETTING: .. April 15th, 2025
MAYOR & COMMISSION VOTING SESSION: May 6th, 2025

I. Summary Recommendation

The applicant is requesting a rezone of the subject property at 1030 Barnett Shoals Road from Mixed Density Residential (RM-2) to Government (G). The applicant has submitted a non-binding site plan for the construction of the East Side Public Library.

The zoning request does not require a change to the Future Land Use Map which is currently classified as Mixed-Density Residential. This classification allows for neighborhood-scaled non-residential uses, such as a library. The request is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan, particularly in regards to encouraging community facilities as focal points in residential neighborhoods.

A binding site plan is not required for this rezone request. No changes are proposed at this time but if approved, the proposed change of use will be reviewed for code compliance at the time of permitting review.

Planning Commission Recommendation: Pending

II. Purpose of Applicant Request

A. Proposal

The applicant is requesting a rezone to the subject property at 1030 Barnett Shoals Road from Mixed Density Residential (RM-2) to Government (G). The applicant has submitted a non-binding site plan for the construction of the East Side Public Library. The proposed plan shows an approximately

14,000 square foot building oriented toward the north, facing the 79-space parking lot. The plan provides an area for outdoor programming and includes connections to the North Oconee Greenway trails.

B. Existing Conditions

This 6.29-acre wooded property is currently undeveloped and sits on the western side of Barnett Shoals Road just south of Carriage Lane. The elevation slopes away from Barnett Shoals Rd toward the southeast corner of the property, dropping approximately 10 feet. The property is currently zoned RM-2, as are properties to the south and southeast. Across Barnett Shoals to the east are properties zoned Commercial-Neighborhood with a Planned Development (C-N (PD)). The adjacent property to the west is owned by the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government and is part of the North Oconee Greenway. It's zoned Mixed-Density Residential (RM-1).

III. Policy Analysis

A. Compatibility with Comprehensive Plan

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

- *Encourage parks, schools, and community facilities to be located as focal points in neighborhoods.*
- *Encourage walking and biking as a means of living a healthy lifestyle*

Overall, the proposal is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan. Rezoning the property to G will allow for a library to be located in a residential area that will better serve citizens living on the east side of Athens. The connection to the North Oconee Greenway Trail, will encourage walking and biking to, from and around the facility.

B. Compatibility with the Future Land Use Map

The 2023 Future Land Use Map designates the subject parcel as *Mixed-Density Residential*, which is described as follows:

Mixed-Density Residential

These are residential areas where higher density residential development is allowed and intended. Limited nonresidential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated into these areas (eg. churches, schools, daycare facilities, small businesses and offices). Buildings should be oriented towards the street and include streetscape enhancements. Their design should include connections between uses, good pedestrian connections, and compatibility with public transit. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation.

No change to the Future Land Use Map is required since the proposed zoning action is already compatible with the Map. The Mixed-Density Residential description allows for limited non-residential uses at a neighborhood scale, like a library. The orientation of the building should be towards the street and include pedestrian connections to public transit.

C. Compatibility with the Zoning Map

The applicant has requested a rezone from RM-2 to G. The following information has been provided to compare the difference in development intensity between the existing Mixed-Density Residential zoning and the requested Government 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:

	CURRENT	REQUESTED
Standard	RM-2 Zoning	G Zoning
Minimum Lot Size	5,000 sq. ft.	n/a
Density	24 beds/acre	n/a
Max Lot Coverage	65%	n/a
Max Building Height	35'	n/a
Setbacks	6-10 feet	n/a
Conserved Canopy	25%	n/a
Total Canopy	50%	n/a
Parking	1-2 spaces / unit	n/a

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 proposed G zoning does not specify maximum or minimum requirements for the general regulations.

The proposed zone is compatible with the Zoning Map as it is a community use in a residential area.

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

The Greenway Plan calls for access to North Oconee Greenway and for connections to neighborhoods and downtown to be strengthened. This property abuts the North Oconee Greenway and provides connections to the greenway trails that will link to UGA and downtown Athens.

IV. Technical Assessment

A. Environment

There is a 75' buffer and floodplain at the northernmost tip of the parcel. The location of both is outside of the scope of work.

The Arborist has reviewed the tree management plan with no comment.

B. Grading and Drainage

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal and with no grading and drainage-related comments.

C. Water and Sewer Availability

The Public Utilities Department has reviewed the proposal with no comments.

D. Transportation

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal and offered the following transportation-related comments:

- *In regards to this project's impacts to traffic congestion, traffic volume, or traffic signal operations, Traffic Engineering has no comments or concerns. For Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon*

placement, select a location of the crossing to be at, or as close as is feasible to, the ACC Transit stop(s). It would be best to coordinate and discuss with transit on plans, if any, to locate a transit stop within closer proximity to the library. If so, being able to place the pedestrian crossing at the transit stop would be optimal.

E. Fire Protection

The Fire Marshal has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval with no comments.

F. Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and Development Standards

Since a binding plan is not required or proposed with this request, Staff reviewed the plan for general compliance with the code. If approved the 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.