



**STAFF REPORT
PRELIMINARY PLANNED DEVELOPMENT
570 PRINCE AVENUE
PD-2025-08-1577
SEPTEMBER 4th, 2025**

APPLICANT: Lori Bork Newcomer/ Arcollab
OWNER: Board of Regents University System of Georgia
FUTURE LAND USE REQUEST: From *Government* to *Main Street Business*
ZONING REQUEST: From G to C-N (PD)
TYPE OF REQUEST: Type I
LOCATION: 570 Prince Avenue
TAX MAP NUMBERS: 171A1 D003
COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT: District 2
PROJECT SIZE: 5.047 Acres or 4.81 Acres (applicant shall confirm
at the master review stage)
PRESENT USE: Institutional
PROPOSED USE: Hotel
PUBLIC NOTICE POSTED: August 19th, 2025
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: **COMMENT ONLY**
PLANNING COMM. RECOMMENDATION: **COMMENT ONLY**
MAYOR & COMMISSION AGENDA SETTING: .. November 18th, 2025 (Tentative)
MAYOR & COMMISSION VOTING SESSION: December 2nd, 2025 (Tentative)

I. Summary Recommendation

The applicant is requesting a rezone from Government to Commercial-Neighborhood with a Planned Development (G to C-N (PD)) for 570 Prince Avenue. The University of Georgia's President's House is the subject of a private redevelopment proposal, and the Government zoning and Future Land Use designation would not be compatible with a non-governmental owner or use. *Main Street Business* is the proposed future land use designation. The proposal is for a hotel development comprised of 116 hotel rooms in a new structure to be located behind the historic President's House with the historic structure seeing an addition for a commercial kitchen to serve a restaurant use. Other uses at the historic structure would include a fitness/spa facility and event rental space. The *Hotel* use is allowed in the C-N zone with a limitation of 10,000 square feet. The applicant is requesting a waiver from this limitation to allow 87,753 square feet of hotel use, which Staff does not support. A second waiver is requested to allow required parking spaces beyond the 118 on-site to be at a distance over 1200 feet away, which Staff could support if there was a limit on the percentage of spaces that could be provided off-site.

The project is mostly compatible with the 2023 Comprehensive Plan as a site redevelopment with a component for preservation of the primary historic structure. Compatibility is also found with the proposed Future Land Use of Main Street Business, which is consistent with adjacent non-governmental properties along Prince Avenue.

The requested C-N zoning designation with a Planned Development allows for the binding plan to

place some limitations on the intensity and scale of development that would not otherwise occur. Staff is not supportive of the scale of the proposed hotel use as proposed, but finds the hotel use to be compatible with the commercial corridor and adjacent neighborhood if the scale is reduced significantly. This reduction could also reduce the amount of required parking and possibly reduce the amount of off-site parking needed. Lack of ample parking on site is likely to lead to greater neighborhood impacts with parking on those streets occurring in locations that are closer than the off-site location.

Planning Commission Recommendation: Comments Only

II. Purpose of Applicant Request

A. Proposal

The applicant has requested a Planned Development and Rezone from Government (G) to Commercial-Neighborhood (C-N (PD)) for the redevelopment of the property into a hotel use with 116 guest rooms plus a restaurant/bar with 68 seats, an event space available for rental, a fitness/spa facility and an undefined Athens-history component.

This would involve the retention of the existing primary structure. This is known as the President's House and was constructed in 1856 as a single-family residence. The structure has three levels, including a raised basement. Three additional buildings are on site and located directly behind the primary structure to its east and west. These include a historic guest house and a historic kitchen/carriage house that would be relocated to the rear of the property. A garage structure added between 1964 and 1978 would be removed. The total square footage of the existing structures to be retained is noted as 11,923 square feet.

Proposed construction would include a single-level kitchen addition to the primary structure at its eastern side yard at approximately 1,600 square feet and a "U"-shaped hotel structure with three stories above ground and underground parking. This would add about 74,230 square feet of building area plus 47,826 square feet of underground parking. Access to the site would remain at the location of the existing driveway off Prince Avenue which would be widened to 24' width. An existing parking area to the west of the primary structure would remain while being reconfigured. The driveway would be extended to the north to go beyond the proposed new structure. An access at the northern end of the western side of the new hotel structure would be provided for the underground parking. 109 parking spaces would be located at the underground parking, and nine spaces at the surface parking to the west of the primary structure. A traffic analysis remains to be submitted as non-summer traffic counts need to be included for accuracy.

The historic guest house would be relocated to the rear of the property with access limited to a walkway. This would serve as a special guest suite. The historic kitchen and carriage house would be relocated behind the guest house, with access limited to a walkway from the guest house. The use of this structure is noted as storage or staff use. The proposed fire lane between these structures and the new hotel structure would also be the site of subsurface stormwater detention.

The required parking for the hotel use and the restaurant use totals 134 parking spaces. Required parking for other uses have not been clarified. 118 parking spaces are proposed to be provided on site with 109 of those within an underground parking facility below the hotel. 22 off-site parking spaces are proposed through a parking agreement with an office building over 1200 feet away. A waiver is requested for this distance. An off-site parking agreement is noted as planned for 22 parking spaces at 784 Prince Avenue. This location contains a two-story medical office building with a 22-space parking lot to its rear. The proposed agreement would utilize the entirety of the site's parking. Based on the size of the building, 12 parking spaces are required for the medical office use, with only 10

spaces available for an off-site agreement. A waiver to allow the off-site parking 1200 feet from the property is included in this request.

B. Existing Conditions

The property is located on the north side of Prince Avenue mid-block between N. Pope Street and Grady Avenue. The property has about 240 feet of frontage on Prince Avenue. The left (west) side of the lot has a depth of about 1,145 feet while the right (east) side narrows for the rear (north) 600 feet of the parcel. The tax records for the property indicate a size of 4.81 acres while a survey submitted shows 5.047 acres. The property is relatively flat at the wider southern half of the parcel while the northern half sees a steep rise of about 10 feet along the eastern side and about 14 feet of gentle rise at the far northern end.

The property is currently utilized as the University of Georgia President's House and zoned G. The rear portion of the lot is bounded by single-family zoning, including RS-8 for houses fronting both Grady Avenue and N. Pope Street and RS-15 for properties fronting Barber Street. These are all residential uses and are all within the Boulevard Historic District. The front half of the lot borders multi-family residential uses with RM-1 zoning to the west as well as a property zoned G, which serves the ACCGov IT Services Building. To the east is C-O zoning with office and retail uses. Across Prince Avenue is the Board of Education campus with IN zoning and several parcels with C-O zoning including residential and office uses.

The property includes historic formal gardens in front of the historic primary structure and a formal garden to the rear of the historic guest house at the east side of the yard behind the primary structure. A variety of walkways, walls and garden features extend further north behind the formal garden. Directly behind the historic primary structure is a formal outdoor entertainment area. To its west is a historic kitchen and carriage house with a garage structure. The garage structure was built after 1964. An asphalt driveway and parking area is at the western side of the front half of the lot. The rear of the parcel is maintained as informal lawn or natural areas.

The property is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The primary structure was constructed as a single-family residence in 1856 and operated as such until 1949 when it was purchased and gifted to the University of Georgia for use by the University President. While many University Presidents did reside in the structure, more recent presidents have resided elsewhere and have used this property for University events and functions. No construction dates are suggested for the existing guest house or kitchen/carriage house, though it is stated that the cottage was original to the property prior to the 1856 construction of the primary structure. The formal boxwood parterre gardens in the front yard are thought to have been created at the time the house was constructed. The rear gardens were created around the 1920s by local landscaper Craig Orr and adapted in 1949 for University events by Hubert Bond Owens, Dean of the University's School of Environmental Design. The property is lauded in multiple local history books as "a veritable museum piece" for the Classic Revival Period of Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

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.*
- *Encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures, especially those with historic value.*

Overall, the proposal is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan. The development would preserve the historic President's House and formal front gardens. However, the historic guest house and kitchen/carriage house would be relocated and a formal garden area at the rear of the house would be lost.

B. Compatibility with the Future Land Use Map

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

Government

These are areas in use, or proposed for use, by federal, state, or local government agencies, including the University of Georgia and Clarke County Board of Education. Many of these locations are intended to serve the community and should encourage walkability, landscaping and neighborhood-oriented transportation alternatives.

A change to the Future Land Use Map would be required as the *Government* use would no longer be in use or planned. *Main Street Business* is the proposed Future Land Use designation.

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.

Main Street Business is a consistent designation with the non-governmental properties along Prince Avenue in the immediate vicinity, so Staff deems the request to be compatible with the Future Land Use Map.

C. Compatibility with the Zoning Map

The applicant has requested a planned development and rezone from G to C-N (PD). The Government designation cannot be retained once the parcel is sold and no longer owned or utilized by the Board of Regents or another governmental entity. C-N is not found at any contiguous parcel but is found nearby at the intersection of Prince Avenue and Barber Street. C-O zoning can be found adjacent to the east.

The following information has been provided to compare the difference in development regulations between requested C-N zoning and the adjacent C-O 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:

	ADJACENT	REQUESTED
Standard	C-O Zoning	C-N (PD) Zoning
Minimum Lot Size	5,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.
Density	16 bedrooms/acre	16 bedrooms/acre
Max Lot Coverage	65%	75%
Max Building Height	40 feet	65 feet
Setbacks	6-10 feet	6-10 feet
Conserved Canopy	25%	15%
Total Canopy	50%	45%

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 two main differences between the adjacent C-O zoning and the proposed C-N zoning are that C-N allows for a greater variety of commercial uses than C-O. This includes hotels, convenience stores, vehicle repair, and laundry facilities, though many of these uses have limitations on the intensity allowed. This is the case with the hotel use, which is limited to a maximum of 10,000 square feet of gross floor area per lot. Zoning designations that allow hotels without this limitation include C-G and C-D; E-O and E-I. The proposed C-N zoning and the adjacent C-O zoning allow equal density, but it is not a one-to-one swap. The C-N zoning proposed would allow for more lot coverage, less conserved canopy, and taller building heights. However, with the binding plan associated with the Planned Development Request, the scale and intensity of the project would be bound by the approved plan.

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

A Prince Avenue Corridor Study was completed in 2012. The following were noted within the study.

- The President's House was on a short list of properties along the corridor that were recommended to be considered for local historic designation.
- This study noted that preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures offer benefits both financial and in conservation of materials. Historic Structures offer heritage tourism benefits, as well.
- The 40' maximum height permitted within C-O zoning was noted as more appropriate than the 65' for C-N, which is out of character with typical heights along the corridor. Greater attention was recommended for how development form on the corridor transitions toward residential area, frequently abutting the rear of corridor-fronting lots.
- The Main Street Business future land use designation was noted for the corridor section between Chase Street and Barber Street to be complementary, but that *Neighborhood Mixed Use* might better accommodate the diverse forms of this area. However, this future land use category was discontinued and largely reclassified into *Main Street Business* or *Mixed Density Residential*.

IV. Technical Assessment

A. Environment

The Arborist has reviewed the tree management plan and supports the request with the following comment:

- *The project will be expected to meet all requirements of the community tree management ordinance at the time of development during Plans Review. Staff would like to make note of a Landmark status Ginkgo within the Right-of-Way along the front property line that cannot be disturbed.*

B. Grading and Drainage

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal and offered no comments.

C. Water and Sewer Availability

The Public Utilities Department has reviewed the proposal and has offered the following:

- *ACC water is available*
- *ACC sanitary sewer is available*
- *Capacity is available to serve the proposed build out of 15,000 GPD*
- *The maximum allowable build out per the proposed zoning is 9,235 GPD*
- *The proposed waiver from code section 9-10-2 allowing 87,753 sf of gross floor hotel area as opposed to the maximum of 10,000 sf by code, locks in a higher intensive water and sewer usage. Please note the difference in the max allowable build out usage of 9,235 GPD vs the proposed development of 15,000 GPD.*
- *Sanitary sewer option two as mentioned in the application report is not allowed by ordinance. If this route for sewer is to be pursued, a sewer main extension would be required through a 20' easement dedicated to ACC Public Utilities.*
- *Each structure is required to have its own independent connection to the water and sewer main.*
- *PUD recommends approval with above considerations*

D. Transportation

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal and has deferred comment until a Traffic Impact Analysis is completed and submitted for review.

E. Fire Protection

The Fire Marshal has reviewed the proposal and offered the following comment.

- *The Fire Department's access and turnaround capabilities have been significantly improved. The Fire Marshal's Office requests that the access road be extended to within 200 feet of the structures located at the rear of the property. While this does not fully meet the requirements of the 2018 IFC, the addition of an NFPA 13R fire sprinkler system and a fire alarm system would allow the extended distance to be considered for approval. For the access roads on both sides of the hotel, we recommend working with the designer to explore alternatives to the proposed bollards, such as a vehicle restriction device that can be tied into the fire alarm system.*

F. Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and Development Standards

A Planned Development designation is intended to encourage development of compatible land uses on a scale larger than that of individual small parcels. This designation is used to request waivers to the required development standards in an effort to provide design flexibility to account for special circumstances unique to the design or the development site, as long as the proposal meets the spirit and intent of the code. Planned Development requests include a binding application report, site plan, and architectural elevations in an effort to guarantee to the community that what is proposed will be constructed if approved. All exemptions to the zoning and development standards must be identified in the application prior to approval of a binding proposal since the development will otherwise be expected to adhere to the ordinance standards.

Corrective Actions:

- *The requested C-N zoning places a limitation of 10,000 square feet on uses for retail sales and service within Section 9-10-2, which would include the fitness/spa facility component planned. No floor plans have been included; therefore, it is unclear if the component will comply.*
- *The requested C-N zoning does not allow for temporary special events under Section 9-10-2. The applicant has indicated an area available for rental of event space and the use of the exterior courtyards for special events.*
- *The application report submitted, as well as the tax record, identify the parcel as 4.81 acres while the boundary survey of existing conditions submitted denotes 5.047 acres.*
- *The application report submitted denotes the proposed land use as including a fitness/spa area as well as event rental space that have not been calculated into the required parking total. The parking requirements for hotels under Section 9-30-2(B)9 specifically notes that any convention facilities, restaurants, and other facilities shall be calculated for their individual parking demand.*

Requested Waivers

1. *Waiver from Section 9-10-2 – A waiver from a limitation of a hotel use in the C-N Zone to 10,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area per lot.*

Applicant's Purpose: Allow 87,753 sq. ft. of gross floor area for a hotel use.

Staff Analysis: Staff finds the request to allow the intensity of the hotel use to exceed eight times the maximum set by the requested zoning designation to exceed the scale appropriate for the setting of this property.

For comparison, staff offers the following regarding nearby hotels:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Hotel Rooms</u>	<u>Hotel Area</u>
Athenian	347 W. Hancock	C-D	0.32 acres	10 (+ suites)	7,124 s.f.
Best Western	170 N. Milledge Ave	C-G	1.26 acres	121	53,021 s.f.
Hotel Abacus (inn only)	295 E. Dougherty St.	C-D	3.8 acres	113	22,759 s.f.
Hotel Indigo (hotel only)	500 College Ave.	C-D	1.7 acres	130	83,755 s.f.
Rivet House (hotel only)	355 Oneta St	C-N (PD)	0.26 acres/ 11.11 acres	50	20,092 s.f.
The Bell	183 W. Clayton St	C-D	0.15 acres	9 (+suites)	8,205 s.f.
Proposed	570 Prince Ave.	C-N	4.81 acres	116	87,753 s.f.

On this list the Rivet House at the Southern Mill property is the only hotel listed within a C-N zoning district and that it also has a 2021 Planned Development approval of a waiver to allow up

to 35,000 square feet of hotel area. This was for a C-N zoning with an adjacent residential neighborhood to the south located across railroad tracks and within a mixed-use industrial mill-complex redevelopment.

The hotel proposed for 570 Prince Avenue is directly abutting many residences, both single-family and small-scale multi-family parcels and small office uses. This setting is very much in keeping with the scale associated with the allowed uses in Commercial-Neighborhood. While the size of the subject property could potentially be a justification for some degree of hotel use in excess of the 10,000 square feet, 87,753 square feet is too much in the midst of a neighborhood. Staff does not support this waiver.

2. *Waiver from Section 9-30-8(A). – A waiver from the maximum distance for off-site shared parking at 200 feet.*

Applicant's Purpose: Allow off-site shared parking 1200 feet from the subject property.

Staff Analysis: The code section requires that the distance be a measure of the walking distance from the nearest parking space to the building access along a defined pedestrian route. Staff analysis finds that the actual distance is about 1,286 feet from the front building entrance to the closest parking space. Additionally, as noted in the proposal description, the noted location for off-site parking would not have 22 parking spaces available for a parking agreement. Therefore, an additional site of some unknown distance would be required.

200 feet is the allowed distance for all off-site parking without regard to zoning designation or land use set by the Code of Ordinances, with two exceptions. For residential and hotel uses within the C-D district, off-site parking is allowed up to 1,500 feet distance. For fraternities and sororities or other similar clubs and lodges, within the Milledge Avenue Corridor Special District Overlay off-site parking is allowed up to 1,000 feet distance.

Due to the setback of the existing primary structure and the width of the subject property, the distance of 200 feet is far exceeded just to get to any adjacent parcels. Additional distance is added to reach parking in the rear of buildings. The closest off-site parking space distance is 336 feet away. For this reason, an allowance for any necessary off-site parking to exceed 200 feet is reasonable. However, the appropriate distance to allow for off-site parking and the amount of off-site parking needed are of concern. The presence of on-street parking at both Grady Avenue and N. Pope Street at about 650 feet and 450 feet distance does suggest that the hotel, restaurant, and event space uses could have even greater impact on these neighborhood streets as closer parking options to the subject property.

As a Planned Development request with a binding plan, the allowance for off-site parking to exceed the 200 feet distance, including up to the 1200 feet proposed, might be reasonable. Staff could support this waiver if a condition were added to limit the amount of parking at a distance over 200 feet to not exceed 20 percent of the required parking count.

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.