

Department of Planning and Development



Project Staff Report

City of North Augusta

Planned Development # PD 15-001 MAJOR MODIFICATION TO A GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

May 12, 2015

Prepared by Scott Sterling, AICP: *Scott*

Section 1 - Summary

Project Name	Hammond's Ferry Planned Development General Development Plan Major Modification
Applicants	North Augusta Riverfront Company, LLC and City of North Augusta
Project Engineer	Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
Address/Location	West of Georgia Avenue between the North Augusta Greenway and the Savannah River
Parcel Number(s)	The project contains more than 200 separate parcels of land which are documented in the project file.
Zoning District	PD, Planned Development
Future Land Use	Mixed Use
Proposed Use(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family, multifamily, senior and live/work residential• Office, general and neighborhood commercial• Civic, institutional and educational• Recreation, agriculture and open space
Parcel/Project Size	±195.39 acres
Number of Phases	5 (Phases A through E)

Subsequent to the application and posting the notice of a public hearing, the applicant (North Augusta Riverfront Company, LLC) withdrew its request to modify Phase C. The modifications to the General Development Plan that are proposed in this application the applicant relate to Phase B only.

Section 2 - Staff Recommendation

The Department of Planning and Development has determined that the application is complete and appropriate for consideration by the Planning Commission upon completion of a public hearing. The application, Project # PD 15-001, requires a Planning Commission recommendation to City Council.

Section 3 - Project Description

Please refer to the attached Exhibit C, the project narrative dated July 20, 2010 and revised April 17, 2015 to include information specific to Phase B.

The Hammond's Ferry Planned Development is essentially a public/private partnership between the City and the North Augusta Riverfront Company. The initial Planned Development (PD) ordinance, numbered 2002-23, was adopted on December 2, 2002. Ordinance 2002-23 was amended on October 18, 2010 (Ordinance 2010-13). In addition to the Planned Development ordinance, the public/private partnership is documented in an existing development agreement as amended. This application is a request to amend the October 18, 2010 ordinance.

The updated GDP and ordinance recognize the previous planning and engineering that has been completed and does not propose significant changes to the overall water, sewer, stormwater and circulation plans.

Section 4 – Review and Approval Process

The North Augusta Development Code (NADC) states that a general development plan or major modification to an approved general development plan for property within a designated Planned Development (PD) zone requires both Planning Commission review and City Council approval. The PD application requires a multi-step process for approval and development including an application, general development plan and narrative, and required information specified in Article 3, Zoning Districts, Article 5, Section 5.7 and Appendix B, Application Documents. Sections 5.7.2 and 5.7.3 of the NADC provide a fifteen (15) day completeness review period followed by a sixty (60) day staff review period of any PD site plan or general development plan. After staff review and adjustments to the plan, the application is submitted with comments and conditions, if any, to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission action is a recommendation to the City Council. The Planning Commission may recommend modifications or conditions as needed, including rezoning or amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The existing zoning, density and other limitations on the property are open to change through the PD development planning process.

The Planning Commission must submit its recommendation to the City Council within thirty (30) days of its meeting. The City Council must act on the Planning Commission recommendation within thirty (30) days of receiving it. No development may be permitted in a Planned Development zone unless and until a General Development Plan that complies with the requirements of the NADC is submitted, reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by the City Council.

This application is a major modification to the general development plan for the North Augusta Riverfront Planned Development. The application was initially received on March 19, 2015. Formal action by the Planning Commission is scheduled for the May 21, 2015 meeting.

Section 5 – History

The General Development Plan (GDP) and Planned Development Ordinance for the North Augusta Riverfront Planned Development (Hammond’s Ferry) were originally approved by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2002. Concurrent with the PD approval, the City Council adopted ordinances approving a development agreement and an agreement for the sale of City owned riverfront property to the North Augusta Riverfront Company, a subsidiary of Leyland Alliance.

In 2010, the City and North Augusta Riverfront Company submitted and were approved for a major modification to the approved general development plan and Planned Development Ordinance to update a number of modifications to the development plans and development partners.

Since 2010, Hammond’s Ferry residential development in Phase A has continued. In 2014, a major subdivision plan was approved for Phase D, a second residential phase. Infrastructure work is currently underway in Phase D.

In late 2012, the North Augusta Riverfront Company and the City announced plans to develop Phase B, located closest to the Georgia Avenue Bridge. A mix of residential and commercial uses is proposed, including a stadium, hotel and conference center, retail and restaurants, as well as both single-family and multifamily housing.

This application would modify the general development plan to include the current proposed version of Phase B. The proposed modifications, if approved will be incorporated into a modified Hammond’s Ferry Planned Development Ordinance.

Section 6 – Site Conditions

	Existing Land Use	Future Land Use	Zoning
Subject Parcel	Mixed Use	Mixed Use	PD, Planned Development
North	High and Low Density Residential; Open Space Preservation, Parks, Recreation	High Density Residential; Mixed Use; Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Conservation	R-5, Mixed Residential; D, Downtown; CR, Critical Areas
South	Savannah River	Savannah River	Savannah River
East	Low Density Residential; Open Space Preservation, Parks, Recreation	Mixed Use	PD, Planned Development; P, Public
West	Low Density Residential	Mixed Residential; Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Conservation	PD, Planned Development; P, Public

Access – The roads serving this property include Crystal Lake Drive, Center Street, Riverside Boulevard and Railroad Avenue. Crystal Lake Drive is a state road until it enters the Hammond's Ferry property. Center Street, upon completion of the federal and state funded landscaping, was transferred to the City. Riverside Boulevard will likely need some improvements at the roundabout to accommodate the anticipated turning movements of larger vehicles (emergency vehicles, delivery). There is one potential road improvement remaining to serve Hammond's Ferry. The extension of West Avenue into Hammond's Ferry has been considered for a number of years. The ultimate construction of the extension will depend in part on the need based on the trip generation associated with the ultimate build-out of Hammond's Ferry.

A new traffic study was recently completed by SRS Engineering, LLC, on behalf of the City, to review all existing and future projected build-out traffic volumes. The report identifies some potential mitigation issues (intersection improvements, roadway improvements) that will be reviewed and addressed during future steps in the project planning and review process.

Topography – The site topography is essentially flat and is located on the historic floodplain of the Savannah River with the exception of Phase E which is located on the top of the bluff in the northwest corner of the project site. Phase E is approximately fifty feet higher than the majority of the area in phases A through D of Hammond's Ferry. There is a significant amount of vegetation on the property, particularly in Phases B and C, most of which is not worth preserving. View sheds from the project boundaries include views of the river.

Utilities – The water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer plans for the project were completed in 2002 and many of the planned infrastructure improvements have been installed. The property is served by an existing twelve inch water line and a 36 inch sanitary sewer line. The roads serving this project include Crystal Lake Drive, Center Street, Riverside Boulevard and Railroad Avenue. Construction of many of the internal roads has been partially completed and dedicated to the City. The condition of the roads is currently satisfactory.

Floodplain – The site is within a federally designated floodplain. Construction to date has met the requirements of the National Flood Protection Act and Program. The jurisdictional wetlands associated with the abandoned clay borrow pits have been converted into a reconstructed wetlands, Brick Pond Park. The environmentally sensitive areas along the river (a strip approximately 150 feet wide) and the Crystal Creek drainage areas have been protected and remain in City ownership.

Drainage Basin – This site is located within the Crystal Lake drainage basin as designated on the North Augusta Area Drainage Basins map. The Stormwater Management Department has conducted a baseline assessment of this basin and rates the overall quality as poor and notes that the channel is degraded and unstable. Nitrates, ammonia and manganese were present in measurable amounts in samples taken during the assessment.

Section 7 – Public Notice

A notice of the general development plan application and scheduled date of the Planning Commission meeting and public hearing was posted on *www.northaugusta.net* on May 6, 2015. The notice of the general development plan application and scheduled date of the Planning Commission public hearing was mailed to the owners of property on and within 200 feet of the subject property on May 5, 2015. The property was posted with the required public notice on May 6, 2015. A public notice of the rezoning request and scheduled date of the Planning Commission public hearing was published in *The Star* on May 6, 2015.

Section 8 – Evaluation and Analysis

Section 5.7.3.4 of the NADC prescribes project information that must be addressed by the staff and Planning Commission in the review of general development plans for proposed planned developments. The following discussion addresses the staff findings related to each issue.

1. *Type of PD proposed, physical characteristics of the land, relation of the proposed development to surrounding areas and existing and probable future development.*

Hammond's Ferry has been under construction for more than twelve years and is established in the community. It is a mixed use traditional neighborhood development. A majority of the property will be developed as residential. Housing types include single-family detached, townhomes, condominiums, apartments (both over commercial uses and as separate structures), and live-work units. Neighborhood commercial, personal service, entertainment facilities, hotels, large scale commercial, parking decks, recreation (including the riverfront extension of the Greenway and a major community park, Riverfront Park) and civic uses will also be developed.

The land is level floodplain and appropriate for the uses proposed. A portion of the property, Brick Pond Park, is a reconstructed wetland. Established tree stands of any quality on the property are located along the river and Crystal Creek. Those trees are being preserved as part of the open space retained by the City.

An important element of the design of the project was the potential to redevelop the riverfront and connect the new activity with the traditional downtown. The connection is provided through the extension of Crystal Lake Drive under the Greenway, Center Street over the Greenway, the extension of Railroad Avenue under the Georgia Avenue Bridge and the possible extension of West Avenue over the Greenway. Upon completion, Hammond's Ferry will be a mixed use extension of the downtown North Augusta and an integral part of the City.

2. Relation to major roads, utilities and other facilities and services.

The property is crossed and served by a 12 inch water line and a 36 inch sanitary sewer line. The road connections described in the response to item 1 above provide access to US 25 Business, Georgia Avenue, and SC 125, West Buena Vista Avenue/Atomic Road.

3. Adequacy of evidence of unified control and suitability of any proposed agreements, contracts, deed restrictions, sureties, dedications, contributions, guarantees, or other instruments, or the need for such instruments, or for amendments in those proposed.

The Hammond's Ferry development was originally established as a public private partnership between the City and the North Augusta Riverfront Company, the master developer. This partnership is established in the development and the real estate purchase agreements executed initially in 2003 and as amended. A new development agreement, executed in 2010, added Westo Development Company, LLC, as a partner.

Portions of the project property are owned by the City and portions have been transferred to the private partners. In the future it is anticipated that the master developer will sell or assign portions of the land to sub developers. The PD general development plan and PD ordinance will be applicable to all of the land within the PD and to all sub developers.

4. Compliance of the general development plan with the provisions of this Chapter, the suitability of plans proposed, and the desirability of conditions on the approval, waivers, or amendments, if any, with reasons therefore.

The initial approval of the Hammond's Ferry Planned Development in 2002 was prior to the existing Traditional Neighborhood Use Pattern authorized in the 2008 NADC. The Traditional Neighborhood Development floating zone created in the 1996 Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance did not meet the design objectives for Hammond's Ferry.

The revised general development plan for Hammond's Ferry that is the subject of this application is a major modification to the 2010 Planned Development General Development Plan which replaced the 2002 General Development plan by way of Ordinance 2010-13. It complies with the provisions of the NADC. The plans for Hammond's Ferry have evolved since 2002 with the participation of both the master developer and the City. The plans, including this revised general development plan, reflect a better understanding of the land, the market and the realistic scope of the proposed development. The cooperative approach to the development of the revised general development plan addressed changed conditions and there is no need for conditions on the approval, waivers or additional amendments.

The specific standards for the development of "urban" and "neighborhood" lots are different than the lot standards in conventional zoning districts but one of the purposes of a Planned Development district is to provide for alternative development types.

The only variation from the requirement of the NADC relates to §3.6.1.6.6 which specifies "in addition to the requirements of Article 12, Parking, areas designated for parking shall be physically separated from public streets and shall be designed in a manner conducive to safe ingress and egress. Access points to internal public streets or internal circulation drives should be no more than three hundred (300) feet apart." This requirement is intended for planned commercial and multifamily development of a more conventional nature. On-street parking to serve a portion of the commercial parking requirement is consistent with traditional neighborhood development. Additionally, smaller off-street parking areas which may provide or require access points less than 300 feet apart are consistent with traditional neighborhood development.

5. *Desirable specific modifications in regulations or the Comprehensive Plan as applicable in the particular case based on determinations that such modifications are necessary or justified in the particular case. Any recommended modifications shall be supported by demonstration that the public purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, PD District or other regulations would be met to at least an equivalent degree.*

No modifications in regulations contained in the NADC or any portions of the Comprehensive Plan are necessary.

Section 5.7.4 of the NADC stipulates that the Planning Commission should consider the following factors in making its recommendation to the City Council.

6. *The relationship of the request to the Comprehensive Plan.*

The use and density in Hammond's Ferry are consistent with the Mixed Use Classification in the Future Land Use Element of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and are appropriate for a Planned Development. The Hammond's Ferry Planned Development is consistent with the various redevelopment plans the City undertook and completed in 1991, 1996, 1999 and 2002.

7. *Whether the request violates or supports the Comprehensive Plan.*

See the response to item 6 above. The application supports the 1995 Comprehensive Plan as it existed in 2002 and supports the more recent 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

8. *Whether the permitted uses would be appropriate in the area concerned.*

The development is located adjacent to the downtown area of the City and to urban residential areas near the downtown. The permitted uses specified for the PD are the same uses permitted in the City's Downtown zoning district.

9. *Whether adequate public facilities such as roads, water and sewer facilities, drainage facilities, and schools and other public services exist or can be provided to serve the needs of the development.*

Public facilities are available and adequate to serve the development. Much of the required installation of water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer facilities is complete.

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Electrical, gas, telephone and cable utilities have been extended into the property and plans are in place for the completion of those installations. The property is served by the Aiken County School District and adequate capacity exists in Area 2.

cc: Howard Kaufman, Leyland Alliance, LLC
B. Todd Glover, City Administrator, City of North Augusta

Attachments:

Exhibit A – Hammond's Ferry General Development Plan Modification

Exhibit B – Phase B General Development Plan Detail

Exhibit C – General Development Plan Narrative

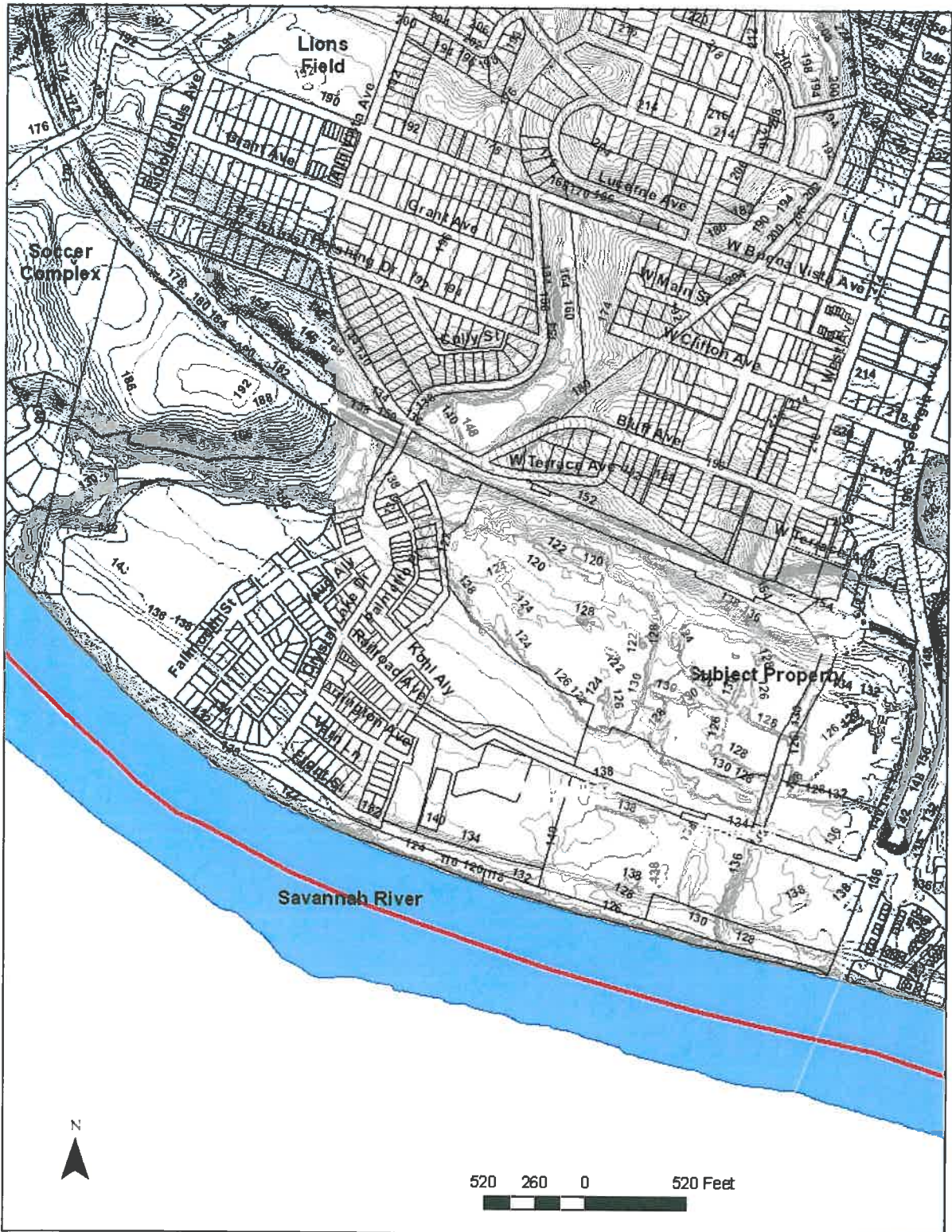
Exhibit D – Hammond's Ferry Pattern Book with Phase B Design Guidelines

Exhibit E – Hammond's Ferry Covenants and Restrictions

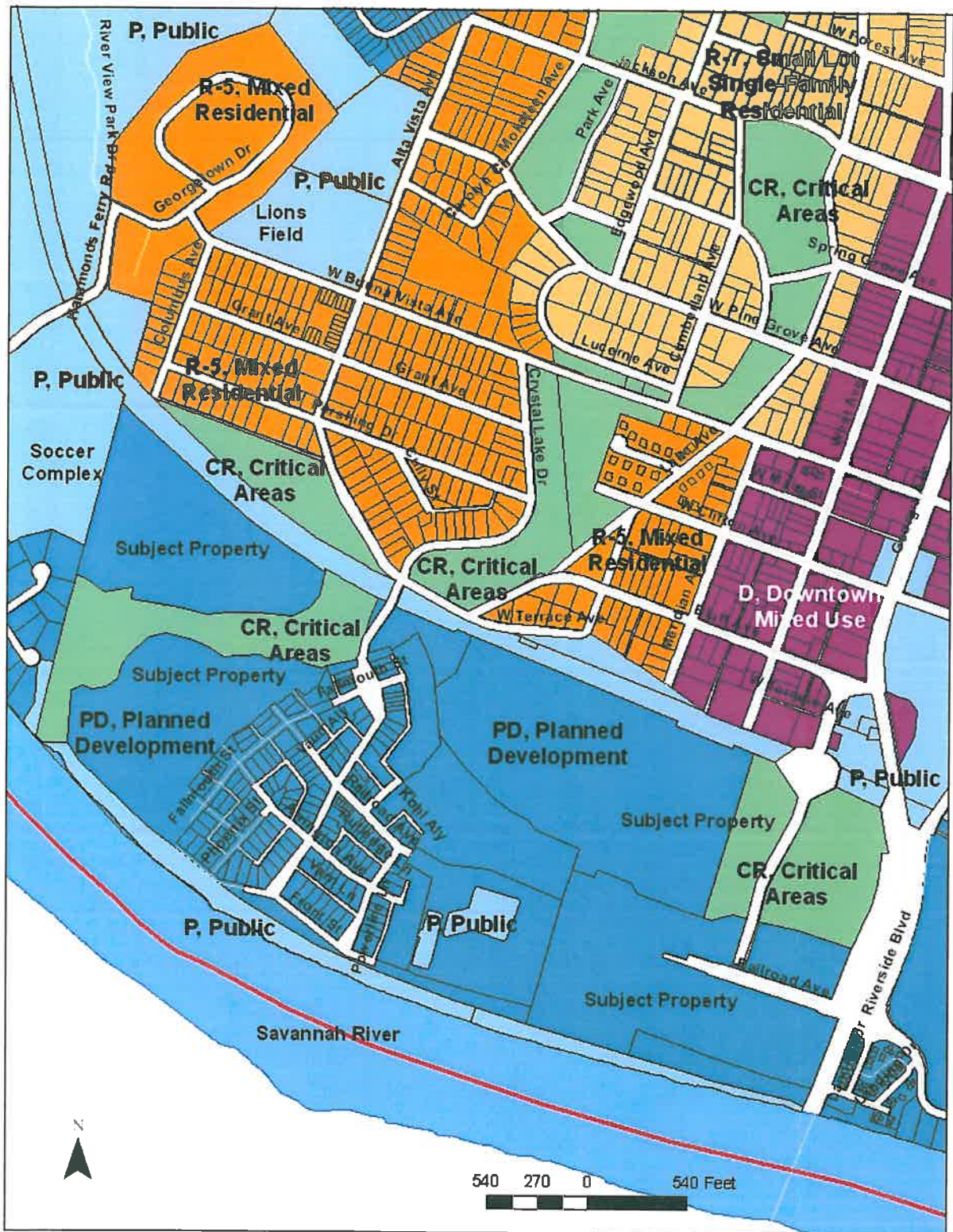
Section 9 – Aerial Photography



Section 10 – Topography



Section 11 – Zoning



Section 12 – Future Land Use

