

City of Sugar Hill
Planning Staff Report
RZ 21-001

DATE: June 30, 2021; **Updated 7/29/2021**
TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning Director
SUBJECT: Rezoning RZ 21-001
Peachtree Industrial Boulevard at Price Road



Applicant has initiated a verbal request to table their public hearing for a few months to allow more time to research and document traffic conditions during the opening months of this upcoming school year. A written request is pending as of 7/29/2021. As the public notices had already been published and delivered the mayor and city council must take action to allow the applicant to table the request.

ISSUE The City of Sugar Hill has received an application dated March 5, 2021, from RSJIT Properties, LLC c/o Douglas Dillard & R. Baxter Russell requesting to change the zoning from existing general business (BG) zoning to medium density mixed residential district (R36) for the ±27.68 acres at Peachtree Industrial Boulevard at Price Road.

DISCUSSION

- The site is within an existing employment area and adjoins right-of-way for the future Sugarloaf Parkway extension, a long range transportation project planned by Gwinnett County.
- Its future land use designation is “Industrial District” which identifies only Light Manufacturing (LM), Heavy Manufacturing (HM1) and Heavy Industrial (HM2) as appropriate land use zones. However, the property lies on the edge of the “Transition District”.
- Along the Peachtree Industrial Boulevard corridor, there is a wide variety of uses and building types.
- Several utilities tri-sect the entire length of the property parallel to Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, which is likely to render it unsuitable for manufacturing, industrial or distribution use.
- The proposed development is responsive to the need for workforce housing within an existing employment area and an emerging neighborhood activity center.
- While expected at cross-streets along principal arterial roads such as Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, drivers currently experience notable delays during peak hours at North Price Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard.
- The project is within a 15 minute walk to nearest greenway access point via the nearest signalized crossing at Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and North Price Rd.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approval of request to rezone the property to R36 with the following conditions:

1. Total number of parking spaces on all tracts shall not exceed 404 spaces.
2. Number of three bedroom units shall not exceed 6% of the total number of units.
3. Provide interconnected pedestrian paths to access the public sidewalks system.
4. Developer shall conduct a traffic impact study prior to receiving a development permit.
5. Developer shall provide intersection improvements to include a dedicated left-turn and improvements to pedestrian crossing at Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and North Price Road prior to receiving certificates of occupancy for 50% of the dwellings. Subject to coordination and approval by Gwinnett County and City of Sugar Hill. Developer may elect to make a monetary contribution of \$50,000 to the City of Sugar Hill in lieu of installing the improvements.
6. Exterior materials and architectural detail of each attached/detached dwelling shall resemble the image samples attached as Exhibit 2.
7. Developer shall install a masonry entrance feature and a minimum 20' wide landscaped berm a minimum of three feet high at its apex along the project's Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Landscape plan and masonry entrance feature to be approved by the city manager prior to issuance of any permits.
8. Developer shall provide written notification to the school board to include number of units, type of housing, number of bedrooms and phasing of the project.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission held a scheduled public hearing on June 21, 2021. Applicant representative Julie Sellers and owner Rob Jordan spoke on behalf of this request.

Citizen Greg Braswell spoke and indicated his concerns. His elderly mother lives adjacent to this property, he and his siblings own the piece right at the corner of N. Price Road and PIB. He has concerns with the proposed entrance on N. Price Road and the way traffic backs up especially during school. He does not want them to take more right-of-way for improvements, this would devalue their property, and he wants as much buffer as he can get between his mother's house and the development and does not want the foot traffic along his property frontage along PIB going down to the intersection. There were no other public comments.

Planning Commission recommends approval of the rezoning to R36 as recommended by staff with conditions along with the following changes; condition #3 "interconnected sidewalks" be replaced with "interconnected trail," condition #6 remove; "and contained within an easement to be maintained by the HOA, as recorded in the covenants," and replace with; "and maintained by the Owner," condition #7 remove "an easement for a," and replace with; "the" and add the statement at the end of the condition to read; "The trail on the property is a private amenity for the on-site residents." Staff will continue working with the applicant on condition #4. Commission Member Jason Jones made the second. Motion approved 4-0.

BACKGROUND

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| Owner/Applicant: | RSJIT Properties LLC c/o G. Douglas Dillard & R. Baxter Russell |
| Existing Zoning: | General Business District (BG) |
| Request(s): | Medium Density Mixed Residential District (R36) |
| Purpose: | Multi-family residential community. |
| Property Size: | ± 27.68 acres |
| Location: | Tax Parcel Id Number: 7-274-002A Peachtree Industrial Boulevard at N. Price Road |
| Public Notice: | Letters to adjoining owners via USPS regular mail on 3/31/21 Sign posted at 1113 Buford Highway 3/31/21 Ad in legal section of Gwinnett Daily Post on 3/31/21 & 4/14/21 |
| Public Comments: | Mrs. Bernice Braswell and her son Mr. Greg Braswell submitted a request to move the dumpster to a location further away from Mrs. Braswell's residence in addition to increased landscaping along the common property line. Mr. Braswell's comments are summarized above with the planning commission's recommendation. |

FINDINGS OF FACT

Adjacent zoning to the north, south and east: HM1

Adjacent zoning to the west: BG

The proposed site plan shows 12 two-story buildings with 252 apartment style dwellings, a club house with pool and other community amenities throughout the site.

The proposed units are proposed to range in size from 600 square feet to 1400 square feet, with units varying between 1, 2, and 3 bedrooms.

The proposed development is introduced as a private community, complete with gated access and private roads.

A total of 404 parking spaces are provided for the site.

ZONING ANALYSIS

1. Will the rezoning requested permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property?

Yes. The subject property lies adjacent to employment area along the Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Brogdon Road corridors. Adjacent properties are developed as single family detached housing, the development is residential and provides additional housing options.

2. Will the rezoning requested adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby properties?

Yes. The proposed development would impose additional buffers on adjoining non-residential properties.

3. *Does the property for which the rezoning is requested have a reasonable economic use as current zoned?*

Yes.

4. *Will the rezoning requested create an overcrowding condition with respect to the existing streets, transportation facilities, or schools?*

There is current need for an additional lane on the side street approach at North Price Road and Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. The proposed development could exacerbate existing delays.

New housing is likely to add new students to the school population. The city's planning department is coordinating with the school board's planner with each new project. At this time, there is no indication that capacity in the Lanier cluster schools is a concern.

5. *Does the rezoning requested conform to the Sugar Hill Land Use Plan?*

Yes, RM is shown as an appropriate zoning. RM was reclassified as R36 in late 2020.

6. *Are there other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which would give support to an approval or disapproval of the rezoning request?*

The City's Housing Study has revealed a gap in the housing market which demonstrates a need for market value, and below, multi-family housing for workforce housing market.