

City of Sugar Hill  
Planning Staff Report  
RZ 24-004

DATE: September 13, 2024  
TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Planning Department  
SUBJECT: Rezone to RS-100 CBD  
1036 and 1040 Whitehead Road; R7-306-009 and R7-306-111

ISSUE The City of Sugar Hill has received an application, dated July 30, 2024, from Whitehead Road Investments, LLC to rezone the subject properties from AF, RS-100, and RS-150 to RS-100 CBD (within the Central Business District) for future single-family residences.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

**Recommend approval of request to rezone the 4.61 acres described as 1036 and 1040 Whitehead Road to RS-100 CBD with the following conditions:**

1. The development shall substantially conform to the site plan (Exhibit 1) submitted with the application, particularly regarding its general features, placement, and alignments. However, alterations necessary to accommodate requirements from the design review process are permitted without additional Mayor and City Council approval, provided they align with the spirit and context of the approval as determined by the Planning Department.
2. At least three natural gas appliances shall be installed within each residential unit prior to a certificate of occupancy.

AUGUST 19, 2024, PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING AND  
RECOMMENDATION

*The Planning Commission held a scheduled public hearing on August 19, 2024. The public hearing was opened. Applicant representative Nick Thompson spoke on behalf of this request. Amber Chambers, Andrew Shultz, James January, and Philippe Bayard spoke in opposition regarding the lack of application materials.*

*Planning Commission Member Mark Daniels made a motion to recommend tabling the case until a site plan and other application materials were received. Planning Commission Member Brian Shebs made the second. Motion to recommend tabling approved 5-0.*

UPDATES

*At the September 2, 2024 meeting, the City Council authorized legal counsel to begin drafting an MOU with the Sugar Hill DDA for the city-owned parcels represented on this site plan. The rezonings for the city-owned parcels will be considered separately at a later date.*

*At the September 9, 2024, City Council meeting, council unanimously voted to table the review and public to the October 14, 2024, City Council meeting and remand the application back to the Planning Commission at their September 16, 2024, meeting at the applicant's request and staff's recommendation. A site plan has been added to the application for review and consideration.*

## DISCUSSION

- Parcel 7-306-009 is presently zoned Medium Density Single Family Residential (RS-100) and Agricultural – Forest (AF) within the Town Center Overlay and is currently vacant. Parcel R7-306-111 is presently zoned Low Density Single Family Residential (RS-150) within the Town Center Overlay with an existing residence on the property. Both parcels have been requested to be rezoned to Medium Density Single-Family Residential within the Central Business District (RS-100 CBD).
- The Central Business District is an overlay district located in the downtown core of the City of Sugar Hill. Land use designations and design requirements are intended to encourage a variety of transportation options and allow a mix of uses in closer proximity to each other.
- The subject properties are adjacent to the Central Business District to the north and east.
- Within the Central Business District, single family residential developments are limited to townhomes, row homes, or zero-lot line building types. This enables enhanced cohesion between residential and nonresidential developments within the downtown core.
- The two subject parcels account for 4.61 out of 15.3 acres for the whole Hedgewood Homes project. The largest parcel of the project, 7-306-017 with 6.53 acres, is under the same ownership. The remainder of the properties in the project are owned by the City of Sugar Hill. By rezoning to RS-100 CBD, the two parcels would be in accordance with nearby parcels under the same owner. While the proposed project spans across multiple properties; this rezoning only pertains to the specified parcels, and other necessary rezoning applications will be submitted in the future.
- The project site plan and elevations would require design review board approval.
- The site plan includes approximately 180 residences across 15.3 acres. The proposed project includes a mixture of housing types as well as space for recreation and commercial activities. The cottage style development with smaller footprint homes will provide housing stock not currently offered in Sugar Hill. Different housing types may provide an opportunity for folks with different housing needs an opportunity to plant their roots in our community.
- The site plan and proximity to downtown offer future residents the opportunity to utilize different modes of transportation. Multiple restaurants, the splash pad, concerts at the Bowl, and more amenities are located within a 10-minute walk of the project. The Sugar Hill Greenway is also a short walk down W Broad Street connecting residents to neighborhoods and recreation opportunities across our community.
- The proposed project offers an additional recreation and greenspace opportunity in our downtown core centering around the Champion Tree and would include the Love Lock public art display. There would be additional opportunities to incorporate public art into the landscape of the park.
- The site plan includes 3 commercial spaces intended for restaurants. These spaces include outdoor dining areas abutting the park.
- The recreation and commercial amenities proposed would offer the Sugar Hill community new opportunities to gather with neighbors. Accessible by the greenway and within walking distance of hundreds of residences, this space would be a community wide asset.
- While offering smaller lot sizes, the common areas and amenities dispersed throughout the project provide residents the opportunity to recreate and spend time outside close to home.
- The subject property presently abuts the central business district to the north and east. Parcel number 7-306-017, to the northeast of the subject property, has the same property owner and is part of the same development and is over half of the acreage of the proposed project.

Rezoning parcels R7-306-009 and R7-306-111 to RS-100 CBD would bring the subject property into cohesion with the nearby parcels within the central business district.

**BACKGROUND**

Applicant/Owner: Whitehead Road Investments, LLC  
 Existing Zoning: AF/RS-100/RS-150  
 Request(s): Rezone to RS-100 CBD  
 Purpose: Future single-family development  
 Property Size: ± 4.61 acres  
 Location: 1036 and 1040 Whitehead Road  
 Tax parcel: R7-306-009 and R7-306-111  
 Public Notice: Letters to adjoining owners via USPS regular mail on 9/13/24  
 Sign updated on 9/11/24  
 Ad in legal section of Gwinnett Daily Post on 9/15/24  
 Public Comments: See August 19, 2024, Planning Commission public hearing.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning

Direction	Existing Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Warehouse	LM
South	Existing single-family residences	RS-150
East	Existing single-family residence/Vacant residence	RS-100/BG
West	Existing single-family residence	RS-100/RS-150

*City of Sugar Hill: Medium Density Single Family Residential in the Central Business District (RS-100 CBD), General Business (BG), Low Density Single Family Residential (RS-150), LM (Light Manufacturing)*

**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 proposed rezoning fits seamlessly into the existing character of the surrounding area. Located in a well-established residential zone near Sugar Hill’s downtown core, the site is in proximity to multifamily developments, commercial properties, and recreational areas. These uses support a vibrant urban fabric, making the proposed rezoning to RS-100 CBD suitable and desirable. The rezoning will provide a smooth transition between single-family detached homes along Whitehead Road and the mixed-use developments within the Central Business District, further reinforcing Sugar Hill’s goal of creating a cohesive, interconnected community.

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

No, the rezoning aligns with adjacent land uses and promotes the ongoing development of a walkable, dynamic downtown area. The proposed development will enhance the pedestrian environment and support mixed-use activity, which benefits nearby properties by fostering a more vibrant and accessible downtown core.

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

Yes, the property does have a reasonable economic use under its current zoning. However, the proposed rezoning to RS-100 CBD aligns more closely with the vision outlined in the Envision100 Comprehensive Plan, which emphasizes a diverse range of single-family housing types, opportunities to age in place, and pedestrian-friendly design. This rezoning will better support the policy priorities of the city while promoting an economically sustainable development.

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

No, the proposed rezoning and subsequent development are not expected to lead to overcrowding of schools. The subject site is located within the Lanier cluster (Sugar Hill Elementary), and coordination with the Gwinnett County School System will ensure that any potential impact on schools is appropriately managed. Additionally, the extension of Bailey Avenue through to Whitehead Road, as outlined in the site plan, will enhance transportation connectivity, reducing congestion and improving pedestrian access. Coordination with the City of Sugar Hill will ensure that access points and traffic flow are designed to minimize any potential adverse impacts on transportation infrastructure.

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

Yes, the proposed rezoning is fully consistent with the Sugar Hill Land Use Plan. The property is located within an area designated for higher-density uses, including commercial, recreational, and residential developments. Its proximity to the downtown core and potential connectivity to the Sugar Hill Greenway further support a variety of transportation and recreational options, aligning with the city's vision for a dynamic, mixed-use area. The Envision100 Comprehensive Plan designates this area as "Town Center," which encourages development that blends residential, commercial, and public spaces to create a vibrant community.

The Town Center Character Area envisions:

"a vibrant activity center with a mix of uses including retail, service commercial, professional office, medium to high density residential, civic, and institutional uses. Community greenspaces in this area include a mix of active, programmed areas, as well as spaces that preserve opportunities for passive recreation and environmental conservation. Neighborhood gathering spaces are interconnected and easily walkable. Architectural design, landscape, and streetscape blend to create a sense of place that is both aesthetically attractive and functional."

*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?*

Yes, several conditions support the approval of this rezoning request. The Envision100 Comprehensive Plan identifies key needs and opportunities related to greenspace, which align with the design and development characteristics of the proposed project. Prioritizing greenspace and investing in pedestrian-friendly amenities like outdoor gathering areas will significantly enhance the site's functionality and contribute to a more connected community. The following excerpts highlight key components of the project that align with relevant priorities:

Greenspace:

Needs

- Prioritize greenspace through strategic land acquisition.
- Evaluate opportunities for conservation.
- Invest in passive recreation amenities, such as paved and unpaved trails, as well as other flexible outdoor gathering areas.
- Review policies to encourage more ecologically effective landscaping practices.

Opportunities

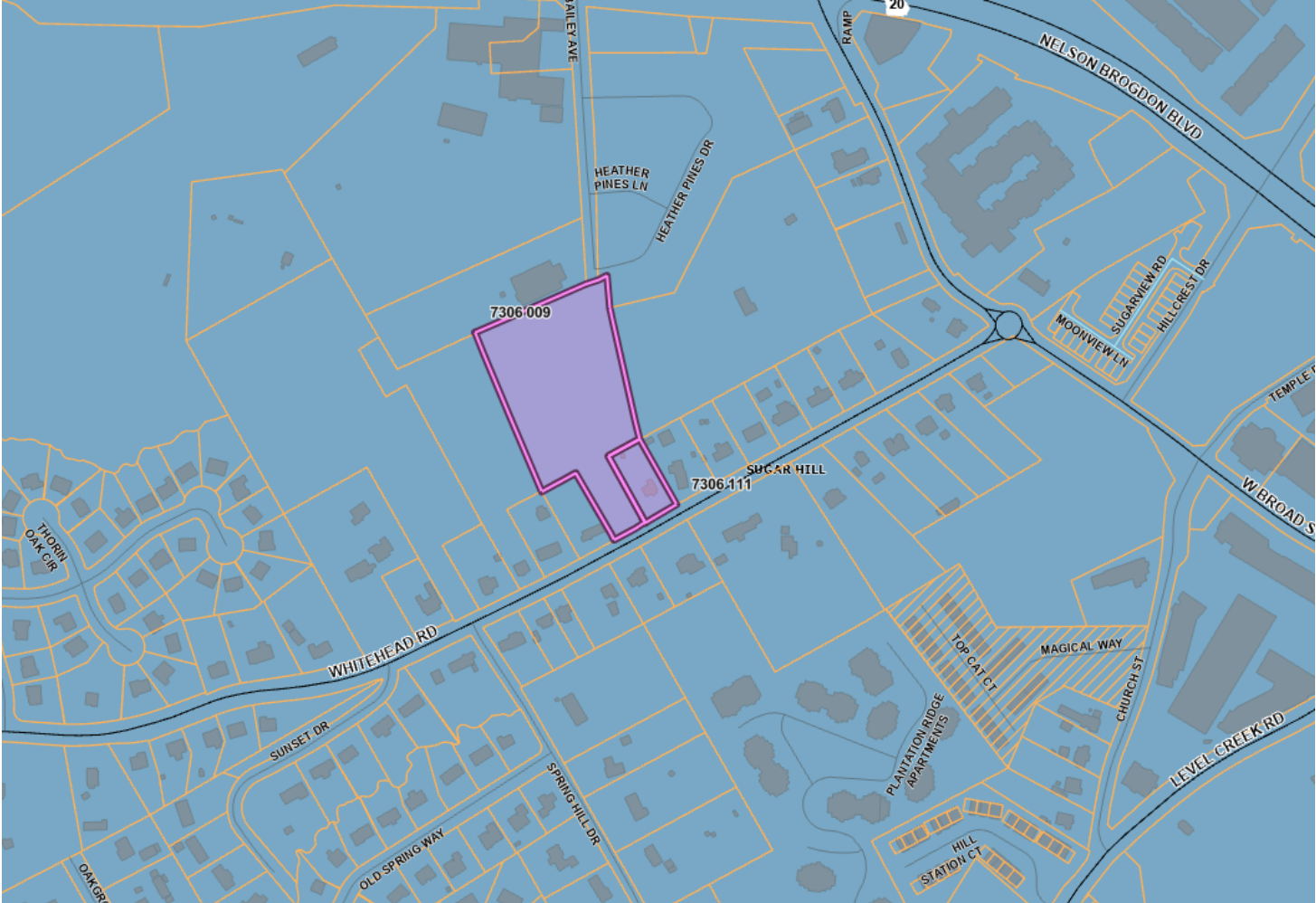
- Complete the Greenway Trail throughout the community.
- Develop a strategy to activate existing greenspace holdings.
- Consider upgrading amenities at existing parks to enhance access and user experience.
- Facilitate flexible programming for gathering, community building, and events.

The Town Center Character Area specifically recommends the following:

- Support businesses and activities that will attract and engage citizens of all ages.
- Incorporate a variety of active and passive greenspaces such as urban plazas, neighborhood parks, and pocket parks as a part of new development.
- Continue to improve pedestrian and bike connectivity between the town center and the rest of the city.
- Design controls are designed to ensure aesthetic quality for new construction.
- Revitalize aging structures and vacant properties through redevelopment and infill strategies.
- Ensure development patterns create a transition in scope and scale between the highest densities in the town center and surrounding suburban areas.
- Maximize development potential with a mix of uses to create critical mass within a 10-minute walk.
- The town center should include new developments that enhance the vibrant nature of the core, including new dining, shopping, and living options.

The proposed rezoning adheres to these guidelines, making it a well-supported and strategic move to enhance the vitality of Sugar Hill's downtown core.

RZ-24-004  
LOCATION MAP



RZ-24-004  
ADJACENT ZONING MAP

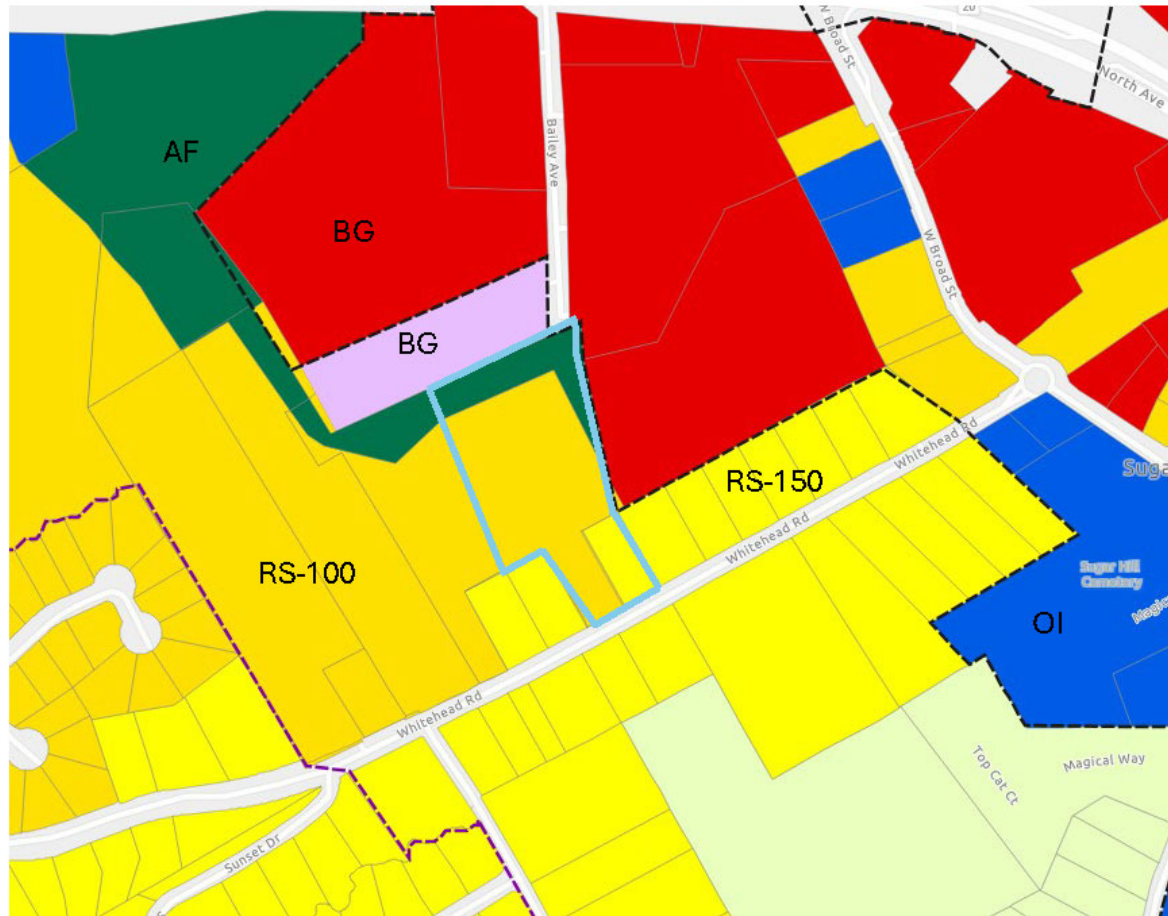

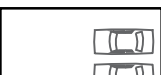

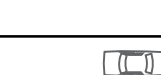
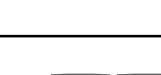






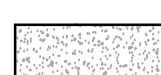



Exhibit 1

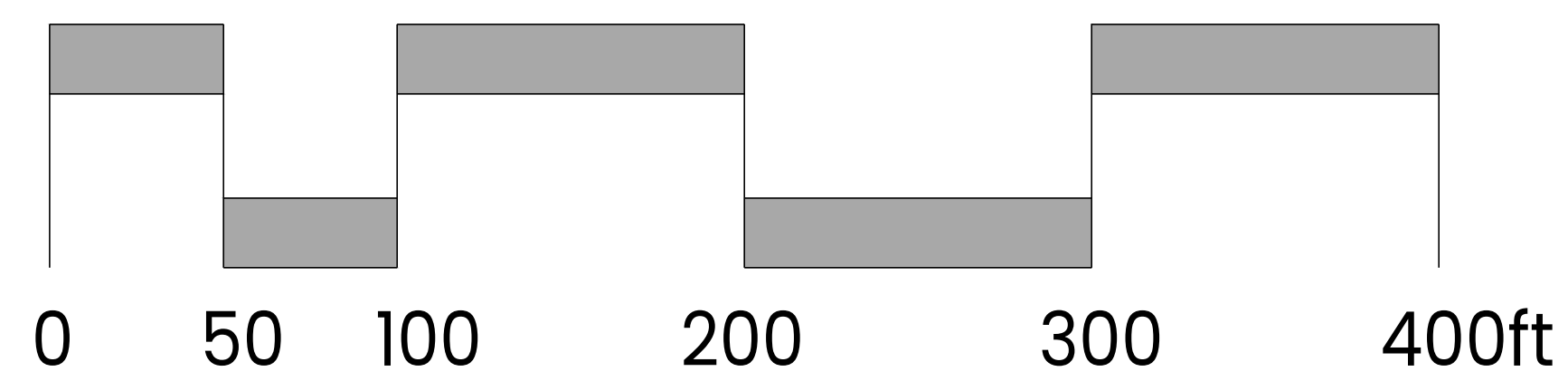


UNIT TYPES:

-  A. 20'x40' 57 units
-  B. 24'x42' 3 units
-  C. 24'x46' 25 units
-  C\* 24'x46' + Garage 12 units
-  D. 18'x48' 5 units
-  E. 20'x30' 42 units
-  F. 16'x30' 21 units

-  Common Green
-  Private Gardens
-  Alleys
-  Pedestrian Walkways

G. Customized Unit 7 units  
 Residential Total: Max. 180 units  
 Commercial: 7,500 sf, 75 parking spaces  
 Total site area: 15.3 acres



**HEDGEWOOD**  
*This is Home*



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drawing scale  
 1" = 50'

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drawing information  
 Drawn by:  
**TSW**  
 Checked by:  
 TSW

project title  
**Sugar Hill**

for  
**Hedgewood Homes**

drawing date  
 September 3, 2024

