

DeKalb County Department of Planning & Sustainability

178 Sams Street, Decatur, GA 30030 - (404) 371-2155
Planning and Sustainability | DeKalb County GA

Planning Commission Sketch Plat Hearing Date: May 22, 2024, 6:00 P.M

Variance Application

STAFF ANALYSIS

Case No.: A-24-1247015 Agenda #: N2

Commission District: 3 **Super District:** 6

Location/Address: 1881 2nd Avenue, Decatur, GA 30032

Parcel ID(s): 15-173-07-048

Request: Variance from Sec. 14-200 (5) to reduce the minimum number of access

points from four (4) to three (3) for a mixed-use development containing

over 300 units.

Property Owner(s): Tama Bag Factory Development, Llc

Applicant/Agent: Craig Wasilewsky (Perennial Properties)

Acreage: 13.72 acres

Existing Land Use: Under construction (to be mixed-use with multifamily dwellings and

retail/restaurant use)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Withdrawal without prejudice

The applicant has requested that this item be granted a withdrawal without prejudice. Discussions with other County agencies are ongoing that may affect the necessity for a variance request.



DeKalb County Department of Planning & Sustainability

Hon. Michael Thurmond Chief Executive Officer

Andrew Baker, AICP, Director

PLANNING COMMISSION VARIANCE APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC HEARING (VARIANCES FROM CHAPTER 14: III Subdivisions)

Applicant and/or Craig Wasilewsky, Perennial Properties Authorized Representative			
Mailing Address: 1777 Peachtree St. NE Suite 200			
City/State/Zip Code: Atlanta, GA 30328			
Email: _cwasilewsky@perennialproperties.net			
Telephone Home: 678-478-9859 Business:			
OWNER OF RECORD OF SUBJECT PROPERTY			
Owner: TAMA BAG FACTORY DEVELOPMENT LLC			
Address (Mailing): 1777 Peachtree St. NE Suite 200 Atlanta, GA 30328			
Email: _cwasilewsky@perennialproperties.net			
Telephone Home: 678-478-9859 Business:			
ADDRESS/LOCATION OF SUBJECT PROPERTY			
Address: 1881 2nd Avenue City: Decatur State: GA Zip: 30309			
District(s):			
Zoning Classification: MR-2 Commission District & Super District: 3/6			
Variance Requested:			
 Variance from Section 14-200.(5)-Access Management to Reduce the Minimum Number of Access Points to Three and Remove Vela Park's Northern Most Access onto 2nd Avenue to Improve Trafficonditions and Safety of Pedestrians Crossing 2nd Avenue. 			
TO BE COMPLETED BY PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT:			
Date Received: Fee Paid:			

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AUTHORIZATION OF THE PROPERTY OWNER

I hereby authorize DeKalb County staff and members of the Planning Commission to inspect the premises of the Subject Property

I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property subject to the application.

DATE:	Applicant: Northeast Signature
DATE:	Applicant: Signature

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AUTHORIZATION TO REPRESENT THE PROPERTY OWNER

I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property and that I authorize the applicant/agent to apply for a hearing to the Planning Commission for the requests as shown in this application.

DATE:	Applicant/Age Signature	nt: Craig Wasilewsky
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:		
(I)/ (WE) TAMA BAG FACTORY DEVI	ELOPMENT	LLC
being (owner/ownerly to the property describe	d below or atta	ched hereby delegate authority to: Owner
Notary Public		Owner
Notary Public		Owner



1777 Peachtree Street NE | Suite 200 | Atlanta, GA 30309

April 25, 2024

VIA: EMAIL DELIVERY

Ms. Rachel Bragg, Zoning Administrator Dekalb County Dept. of Planning and Sustainability Current Zoning 178 Sams Street Decatur, GA 30030

RE:

Application by Perennial Properties, Inc. ("Perennial") for a Variance from Section 14-200.(5)-Access Management to Reduce the Minimum Number of Access Points to Three and Remove Vela Park's Northern Most Access onto 2nd Avenue to Improve Traffic Conditions and Safety of Pedestrians Crossing 2nd Avenue.

Dear Ms. Bragg:

Founded in 1988, Perennial Properties is an Atlanta-based developer that specializes in creating high-quality residential and mixed-use communities. As long-term holders of the communities we develop, our core mission is to provide exceptional housing and retail experiences with extraordinary services for our residents and commercial tenants and their customers. We have developed and operated more than 20 properties in and around Atlanta since our founding. One of our most recently built multifamily communities is the new ELLA Apartments at 2201 Glenwood Avenue, next door to the Publix and just around the corner from the Bag Factory site.

In January 2024, Perennial began construction on the 328-unit development at 1881 2nd Avenue, known as Vela Park (formally known as the Bag Factory development), which includes 43 townhomes and 285 apartments. The Vela Park site at 1881 2nd Avenue was rezoned in two separate cases: Case Z-22-1245577 on June 28, 2022 for the original 11.75-acre portion of the site, and Case Z-23-1246248 on March 30, 2023 for the two acre 710 Fayetteville Road portion of the site, which was originally landlocked and owned by the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam before being purchased and rezoned. Each site plan, upon which each rezoning approval was conditioned, showed a total of three access points on 2nd Avenue that aligned with Donald Trimble Mortuary and Huskey's Kitchen (the "Original Three Access Points"). These three access points are the same three that were analyzed in Perennial's updated traffic study by Kimley Horn (attached hereto)

For all the forthcoming reasons, Perennial requests a for a variance from Section 14-200.(5)-Access Management to Reduce the Minimum Number of Access Points to Three and Remove Vela Park's Northern Most Access onto 2nd Avenue to Improve Traffic Conditions and Safety of Pedestrians Crossing 2nd Avenue.

A. The Latest Traffic Study by Kimley Horn for 328 units (updated December 2022) concluded that the Original Three Access Points on 2nd Avenue, as approved in the original Vela Park site plan and zoning (Z-22-1245577) are acceptable with the additional 47 units included. Furthermore, Kimley Horn

Perennial Properties, Inc. Variance from Section 14-200.(5) April 25, 2024 Page 2

recommends against a fourth access point at the north side of the site for multiple reasons founded on best traffic engineering practices.

As part of the second rezoning that added the 47 units, Perennial updated its original traffic study by Kimley Horn (updated December 2022 and attached hereto) to include all 328 units using the same three access points as the original site plan. The traffic study concluded that "no further infrastructure improvements beyond those conditioned in [the original approved site plan] are required to serve the Phase 2 (additional 47 units) development traffic."

Furthermore, Kimley Horn specifically recommends against a fourth access point for the following reasons:

- Access Management along 2nd Avenue: 2nd Avenue is a 35 MPH collector street. In the approximately 800' of total frontage for Vela Park, there are 8 existing curb cuts across the street. Minimizing the number of curb cuts along your side of the street would reduce conflict points with driveways nearby.
- New Crosswalk along 2nd Avenue: This new crosswalk with RRFB's just north of Dancing Fox Road
 will improve pedestrian connectivity across 2nd Avenue, however, the new driveway located just
 60' south of the crosswalk may distract drivers from being aware of pedestrians they may be
 more focused on a car slowing in front of them or looking for their turn rather than a pedestrian
 crossing the street.
- <u>Limited space to turnaround:</u> Since this is a gated community, this access will be resident only. If someone who is not a resident turns into this driveway, there is not space for a turnaround, which means they would have to back-up into 2nd Avenue. This would create an unsafe condition for a gated driveway.
- B. Vela Park will include a 10-foot-wide multi-use sidewalk along 2nd Avenue. Providing four driveways that cross the pedestrian/biker path of travel along 2nd Avenue will create more hazardous conditions for pedestrians and bikers that use the path as they cross even more driveway access points.
- C. The Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam, which controls nearly eight acres of land at 2nd and Glenwood and is Vela Park's immediate neighbor to the north, plans on redeveloping its holdings with a new mixed-use commercial development. The development will include new access points/curb cuts on 2nd Avenue, likely very close its shared property line with Vela Park and less than 100 ft from where the fourth access point for Vela Park was considered. Multiple access points in close proximity to one another on a collector street will create potential conflicts points, create additional distractions for drivers, and generally interfere with the smooth an efficient flow of traffic in front of the two developments.

For all the foregoing reasons, Perennial respectfully requests the approval of its variance application. Please do not hesitate to let me know if I may provide you with any additional information or clarify anything in this letter.

Perennial Properties, Inc. Variance from Section 14-200.(5) April 25, 2024 Page 3

Sincerely,

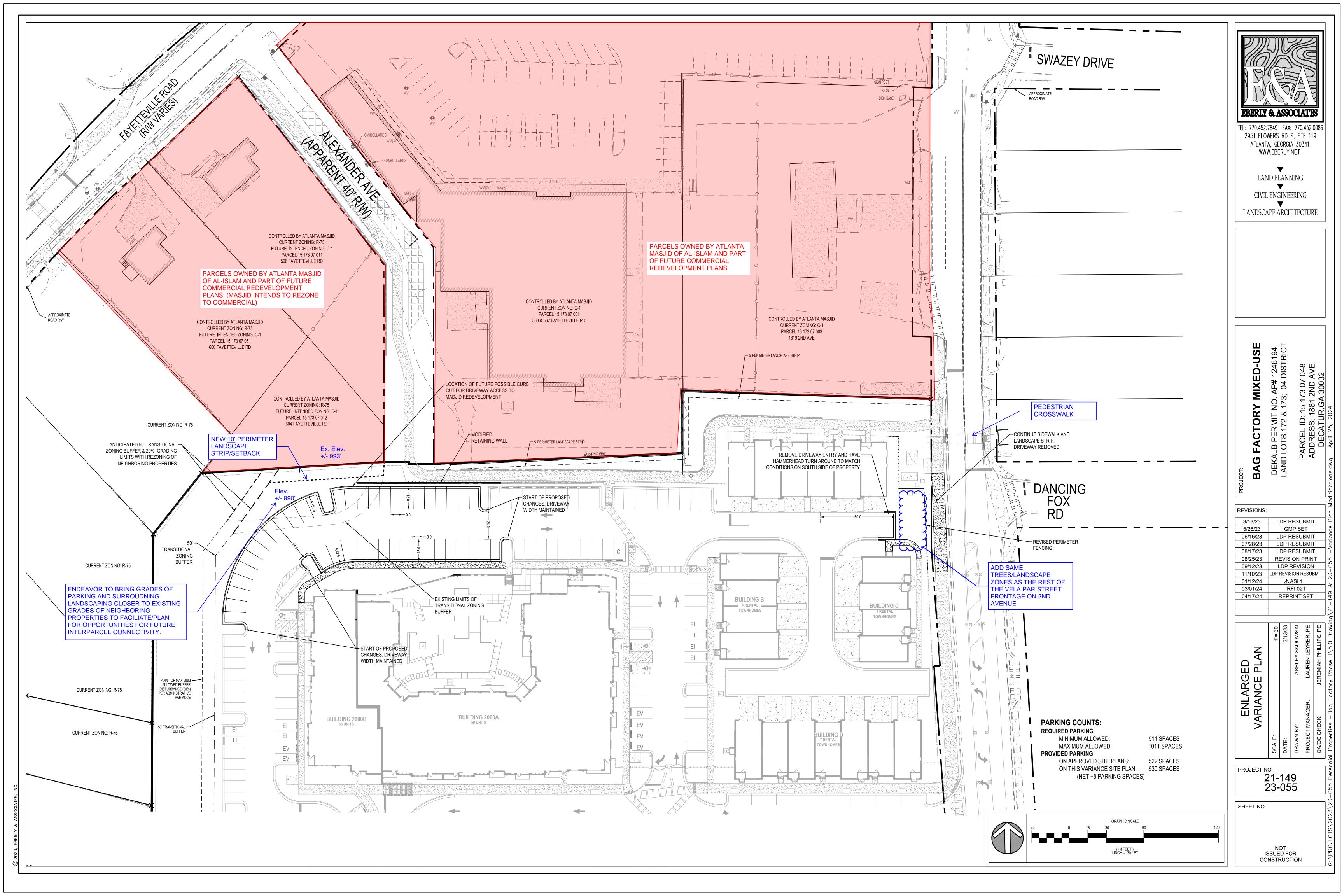
PERENNIAL PROPERTIES, INC.

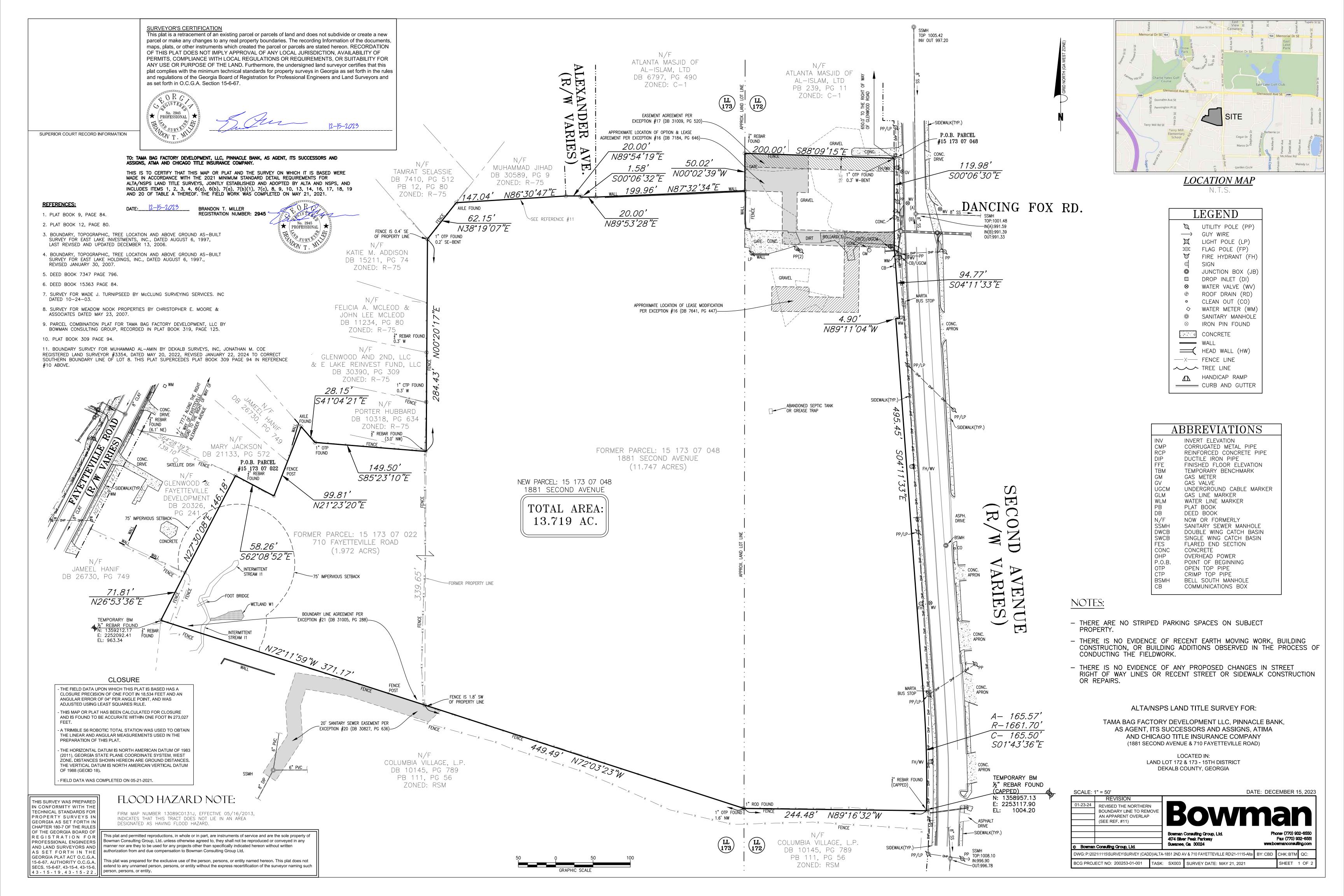
Craig J. Wasilewsky, SE Development Manager Perennial Properties, Inc.

Attachments.

cc: Mr. Lucas Carter, Dekalb County Dept. of Planning and Sustainability (via email)
Mr. Adam Chappell, Dekalb County Dept. of Planning and Sustainability (via email)

UPDATED SITE PLAN WITHOUT FOURTH ACCESS POINT ON 2ND AVENUE





EMAIL OF SUPPORT FROM ATLANTA MASJID OF AL-ISLAM

Craig Wasilewsky

From: Ihsan Saleem <ihsansaleem@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, April 26, 2024 10:57 AM

To: Craig Wasilewsky

Cc: Bragg, Rachel L.; Chappell, Adam W; Keeter, Patrece

Subject: Re: Bag Factory Discussion

Rachel, Patrice, and Adam,

I just wanted to chime in and affirm that the Masjid is fully supportive of this proposal.

Please let me know if a formal letter of support would be helpful.

Ihsan

Ihsan Saleem Chair | Board of Trustees

Atlanta Masjid Community Foundation 560 Fayetteville Rd Atlanta GA 30316 M: 404.210.5129

Ihsan@atlantamasjidcf.org

On Thu, Apr 25, 2024 at 11:07 PM Craig Wasilewsky <<u>cwasilewsky@perennialproperties.net</u>> wrote:

Rachel, Patrece, and Adam,

I can't thank you all enough for hopping on this call on such short notice. Since I have everyone's attention and it's top of mind, I wanted to follow-up with some meeting minutes to memorialize the conversation and verify the required follow-up. I'm also including Ihsan, a leader at the Masjid and the one overseeing their redevelopment efforts. Attached is the plan with the proposed revisions and below is a summary of what was discussed:

- Removal of Fourth Access at North Side of the Site:
 - We understand that Traffic (Patrece) and Planning are supportive of removing the fourth access point onto 2nd Avenue at the north in accordance with the attached site plan, contingent upon approval by Fire and Sanitation. I will get with Fire and Sanitation to confirm their acceptance of the change before ultimately submitting the LDP revision.
 - o The area where the access is removed will be planted with tress and landscaping in accordance with the same plans shown throughout the rest of 2nd Avenue.
- Reduction of the buffer along the property line with 604 Fayetteville Road to realign the parking at Vela as shown in the site plan:
 - 596, 600, and 604 Fayetteville Road are either owned outright or controlled by the Masjid of Al-Islam and will be rezoned to commercial and consolidated into a larger redevelopment project of the corner.

- o By reducing the buffer to accommodate realignment of the parking lot:
 - We better align our parking aisles with the neighboring properties to future proof our project to take advantage of opportunities for interparcel connectivity with more pedestrian interactions and possible vehicular access from Vela to the Masjid commercial campus and, ultimately, out to Fayetteville Rd.
 - Currently, Vela Park's parking tray sits about six feet below the average grade of the Masjid's adjoining parcels, which makes future interparcel connectivity with vehicular and pedestrian routes impractical. By reducing the buffer as shown, the grade of Vela's parking will rise about three feet and be much more closely aligned with the grades of the Masjid's parcels. A more closely aligned grade will promote better integration and connectivity of the sites.
- The Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam, which controls and has an interest in 596, 600, and 604 Fayetteville
 Road, is supportive of reducing this buffer in anticipation of rezoning their sites to commercial and
 ultimately redeveloping them with a cohesive mixed-used project. If requested, we can secure a letter
 from the Masjid representing their position and support.

Again, thank you for getting together and responding to this request so quickly. We are over three months into construction and things are moving quickly. The attached drone image was a taken six weeks ago and since then there's been a lot more mass grading completed, underground utilities installed, and foundation walls constructed. The below photo was taken yesterday from our construction camera.



Craig Wasilewsky, SE

Development Manager

Perennial Properties

Cell: 678-478-9859

cwasilewsky@perennialproperties.net

