

# PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

December 15, 2025

**Z-29-25**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Property Owner (X) Petitioner (x)

McWrights Ferry Land, LLC

### Requested Action and Purpose

Rezone from MFR to GC. The applicant states, "Reconfigure lot boundaries to align with revised Site Plan."

### Location and Existing Zoning

5921 New Watermelon Road Avenue – GC/MFR

### Size and Existing Land Use

0.42 acres total; Vacant

### Surrounding Land Use and Zoning

North – Vacant, Zoned GC

East – Commercial/Vacant, Outside City Limits

South – Vacant, Outside City Limits

West – Residential, Zoned LR

### Applicable Regulations

Sec. 25-83. – Purpose.

*The purpose of the general commercial (GC) district is to provide lands for the development of a wide range of nonresidential uses including office, commercial, employment and retail businesses, that may be developed in conjunction with residential uses, either in the same building or on the same development site.*

*See end of report for details of permitted uses in the GC zone.*

### Transportation

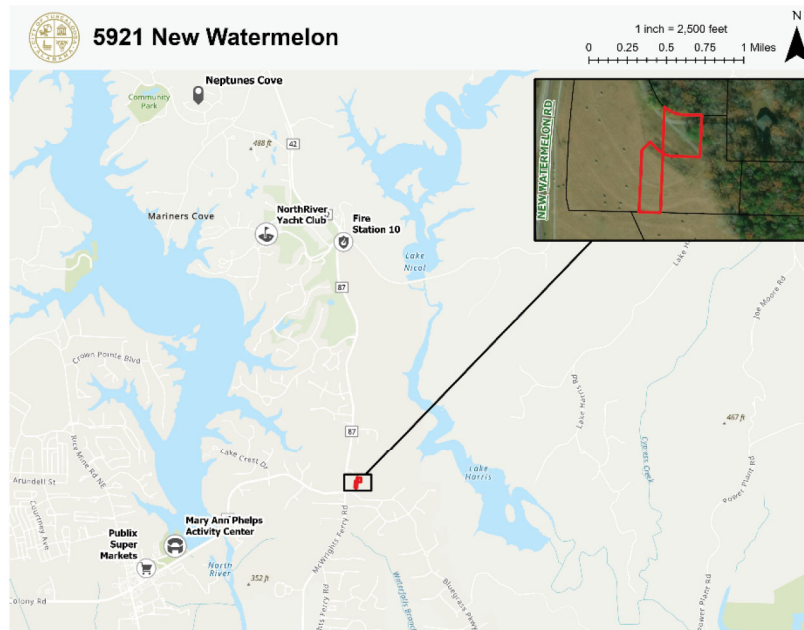
New Watermelon Road, a Minor Arterial

Bluegrass Parkway, a Local street

### Physical Characteristics

0.42 acres to be rezoned. The property is currently a vacant, with vacant land to the north, east, and south, commercial to the east, and residential to the west.

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**SUBJECT PROPERTY**

**ANALYSIS**

In **Framework**, this property is identified in the Future Land Use and Character Map as Traditional Neighborhood, Edge (TN2) & Limited Commercial (NC) (p. 22).

Traditional Neighborhood, Edge (TN2) future land use includes, “Residential areas encompassing many of Tuscaloosa's mid-20th century neighborhoods and modern developments that are primarily single family housing on average size lots developed in a connected street network. Compared to core areas, these neighborhoods have a more uniform housing pattern with larger average lots and longer blocks, that are more car-oriented. These neighborhoods may include areas of small-lot, attached or multi-family dwellings that have a single family scale. They also may feature parks and schools within the neighborhood and may be connected to commercial areas.” (p. 34).

In the Framework comprehensive plan, building blocks were outlined to serve as a general guide to the intended scale and character of development. For TN2, building blocks include (p. 34):

- Height range: 1-3 stories (generally up to 35 feet).
- Building form: Variety of building types and sizes clustered and grouped but linked by a connected street network.
- Building setback: 10-30 feet, generally consistent within a block.
- Streets: Blocks are small and walkable. Streets form an irregular grid system within the neighborhood; may include alleys.
- Transportation: Automobile access with complete sidewalk network; recreational trails.
- Parking: On-street and private off-street; may include front-loaded or alley-loaded garages.
- Open Space: Preserved passive open space, neighborhood parks, pocket parks, private yards.

Framework is organized into six broad theme chapters, reflecting the inter-relatedness of issues. Each chapter is supported by a goal and several objectives that serve to organize the 111 specific actions in

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the Plan. The Growing chapter provides guidance for the physical development, infrastructure improvement and stewardship of natural resources with the following Goal (p. 10):

*Well-managed land and infrastructure that includes revitalization, strategic growth, and stewardship of the natural environment, creates an appealing community character, and promotes the city's long-term financial health.*

The intent of the TN2 area outlined on pg. 34 is as follows:

- Provide vehicular and pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods where feasible.
- Allow residential infill that fits-in with neighboring homes (building scale, placement, etc.).
- Accommodate front-loaded or alley-loaded garages.
- Support neighborhood-scale commercial uses located at the edges of a neighborhood.
- Encourage shared open space features within the neighborhood.

This property is also identified as Limited Commercial (NC) in Framework. In Framework, "Limited Commercial areas are smaller nodes of commercial development that provide goods and services to and within walking distance of surrounding neighborhoods. They generally exist near prominent intersections within a neighborhood or at its edge, and may serve as a transition between a more intense Corridor Commercial and a residential area. These centers may include mixed-use, live-work, or multi-family residential uses that are compatible in scale to nearby neighborhoods." (p. 30).

In the Framework comprehensive plan, building blocks were outlined to serve as a general guide to the intended scale and character of development. For NC, building blocks include (p. 30):

- Height range: 1-2 stories (generally up to 35 feet).
- Building form: Predominantly single story, but may have 2-story appearance. Includes large footprint buildings and both attached and freestanding structures.
- Building setback: 15-30 feet.
- Streets: Small, grid-like blocks with a streetscape designed to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Transportation: Walking, biking, automobile, supportive of transit opportunities.
- Parking: On-street or shared surface parking located to the side or rear of buildings.
- Open Space: Increased landscaping and "green infrastructure" elements per site and integrated in streetscape. Plazas, parks and trail connections as amenities.

Framework is organized into six broad theme chapters, reflecting the inter-relatedness of issues. Each chapter is supported by a goal and several objectives that serve to organize the 111 specific actions in the Plan. The Growing chapter provides guidance for the physical development, infrastructure improvement and stewardship of natural resources with the following Goal (p. 10):

*Well-managed land and infrastructure that includes revitalization, strategic growth, and stewardship of the natural environment, creates an appealing community character, and promotes the city's long-term financial health.*

The intent of the NC area outlined on pg. 30 is as follows:

- Accommodate limited commercial services by-right compared to Corridor Commercial; allow other uses (such as drive-throughs, etc.) under some conditions.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and nearby public uses (schools, parks, etc.).

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- Support some residential use that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood character.
- In a walkable neighborhood context, locate new buildings near the street and accommodate parking to the side or rear of buildings and accommodate on-street parking.
- Improve/provide public realm features such as signs, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and street trees.

Notification was sent via USPS to property owners located within 500 feet of the subject property.

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## Sec. 25-101. – Commercial Principal Use Table.

Table V-3: Principal Use Table for Commercial Uses, identifies the uses within the Commercial Use Classification that are allowed by right, allowed as a conditional use, allowed as a special exception use, or prohibited within each zoning district. Use categories are described in subsection b below. Use types are defined in Sec. 25-31, Definitions. Any use-specific standards are referenced in the right-most column of Table V-3 and are located in subsection c below.

**Table V-1: Principal Use Table for Commercial Uses**

P = Permitted by right

C = Conditional use permit required

S = Special exception use permit required

A = Allowed in PD district

blank cell = Prohibited use

	RESIDENTIAL															INST		BUSINESS								INDUS.		PD						
Use Classification/ Use Category/ Use	OS	CN	SFR-E	LFR	LMF	SFR-1	SFR-2	SFR-3	SFR-4	SFR-5	MR-1	MR-2	MRU	MFRU	MFR	MHR	I-P	I-SP	D	DP	DHE	R	LC	GC	UC	NC	HC	IL	IG	IH	GPD	RPD	Use Specific Standards (Sec. 25-5.2.5. )	
Animal Care																																		
Kennel																								P		S	P	P	P		A		c.1.i	
Pet Grooming																				S			S	P	S	P	P	P	P		A			
Veterinary Clinic																				S				P	S	S	S	P	P		A		c.1.ii	
Business Services																																		
Broadcasting Studio																		P	P	P	P	P	S		P	P	P	P	P	P		A	A	
Catering																		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		A	A	
Conference or Training Center																		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P			A	A	
Contractor Office																				P	P				P		S	P	P	P	P	A		c.2.i
Data Center																									P			P	P	P	P			
Office																		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	
Research and Development																		P	P		S	S	P	S	P		S	P	P	P	P	A	A	
Food and Beverage Services																																		
Bar: Club																				C					C	C								c.3.i(a) & c.3.i(b)
Bar: Restaurant																				C	C		C	C	C	C		C				C	C	c.3.i(a) & c.3.i(c)
Bar: Tavern																				C	C		C	C	C	C	C					C	C	c.3.i(a) & c.3.i(d)
Brewpub																				P	P	S	P	P	P	P	S		P			A	A	
Cigar Bar																				P	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	P				A	A	
Coffee House																				P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			A	A	
Restaurant, Quick-service																				P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P				A		c.3.ii
Restaurant, Sit-down																		P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P				A	A	
Wine Bar																				P	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	P				A	A	
Lodging																																		
Bed and Breakfast			S	S		S	S	S	S	S											P	P		S										c.4.i
Hotel																				P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P				A	A	c.4.ii



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Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park																S											S						c.4.iii
Short-Term Rental	See use-specific standards for use permissions																														A	A	c.4.iv
Recreation and Entertainment																																	
Casino/Gambling Hall																											C				C	c.5.i	
Marina				S																		P	P								A	A	c.5.ii
Private Event Space	S																P	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	S	P	S			A	A	
Recreation, Indoor	P																P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		A	A	
Recreation, Outdoor	P																P	P	S	S	S	S	P	P	P	S	S	S			A	A	
Theater or Auditorium																	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S			A	A	
Theater, Drive-in																								P			P				A		
Retail Sales and Services																																	
Check Cashing																											P				A	c.6.i	
Convenience Store																			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			A	A	
Financial Institution																			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			A	A	
Funeral Home																				S				P			S	P			A	c.6.ii	
Laundromat																	P							P	P	P	P				A		
Laundry and Dry-cleaning Retail Facility																			S	P	P			P	P	P	P				A	c.6.iii	
Liquor Store																			S	S		P	P	P	S	S	P				A	A	c.6.iv
Personal Services																			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			A	A	
Pharmacy																	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			A	A	
Plant Nursery/ Greenhouse																				P	P		S	P	P	S	P	P			A	c.6.v	
Retail Sales, Large																								P			P				A	c.6.vi	
Retail Sales, Medium																			P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P				A	A	c.6.vi
Retail Sales, Small																			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S				A	A	c.6.vi
Self-Service Storage																								P			P	P	P			A	c.6.vii
Sexually-oriented Business																								S			S	S	P			c.6.viii	
Tattoo Establishment																								P			P	S	S			A	c.6.ix
Tobacco or Vape Shop																								P			P	S				A	c.6.x
Vehicle-Mounted or Tent-Sheltered Retail												S	S	S		P	P	S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S	P	P	P	A	c.6.xi		

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Vehicle Sales and Service																																	
Automobile Wash																								P			P	P			A		
Heavy Vehicle and Farm Equipment Sales and Rental																											P	P	P	P			c.7.i
Heavy Vehicle Fuel Station																											P	P	P				
Heavy Vehicle Repair																											P	P	P				
Light Vehicle Fuel Station																				P				P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A		c.7.ii
Light Vehicle Repair																								S	S	S	P	P	P	P	A		c.7.iii
Light Vehicle Sales and Rental																								P			P				A		c.7.iv
Manufactured Building Sales																											P		P	P			
Mobile Home Sales																											P		P	P			
Ride-hailing or Taxi Service																			P	P	P			P	P		P	P	P		A		





# 5921 New Watermelon

1 inch = 200 feet  
0 100 200 300 400 Feet

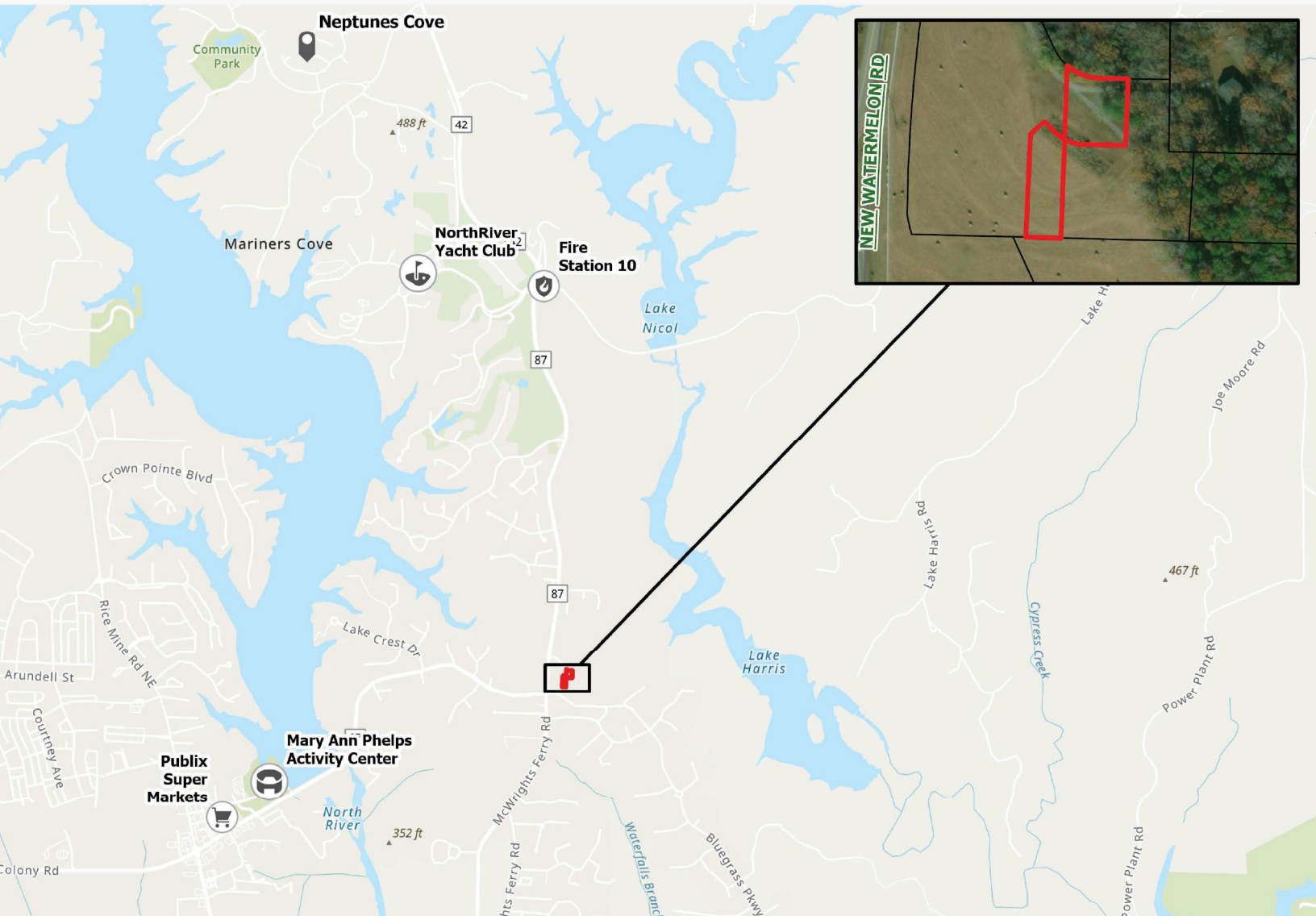






# 5921 New Watermelon

1 inch = 2,500 feet  
0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

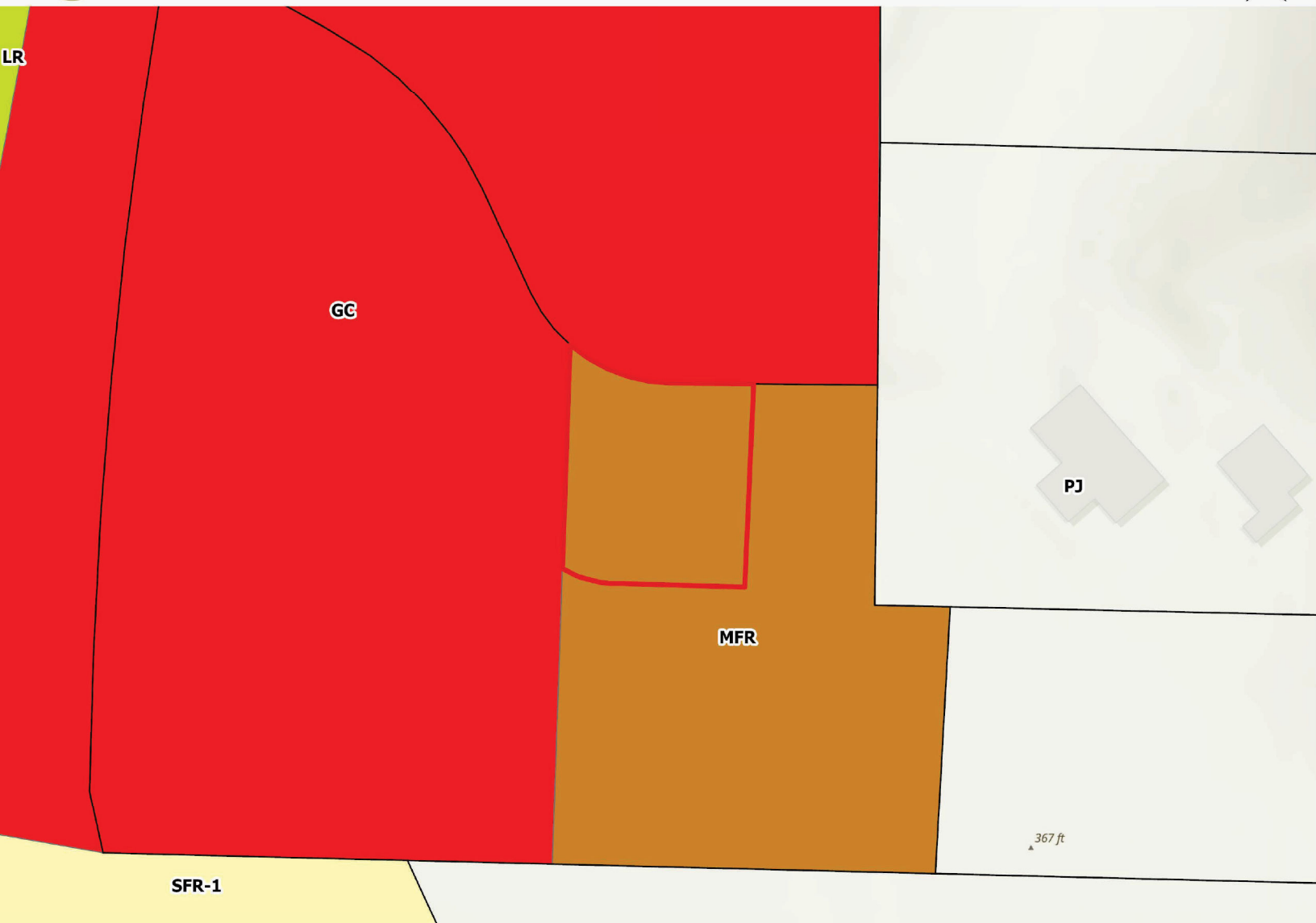




# 5921 New Watermelon

1 inch = 83 feet

0 50 100 150 200 Feet



# Rezoning Application

Have you had a pre-application conference?

Yes

**Pre-Application Conference Date:**

8/29/2024

## Property Information:

**Site Address:**

McWrights Ferry Road & New Watermelon Road Intersection, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35406

**Parcel ID:**

63-21-0828-3-001-003.007

**Total Acres:**

1

**Number of Existing Lots:**

1

**Number of Proposed Lots:**

4

**Current Zoning:**

Multifamily Residential (MFR)

**Proposed Zoning:**

General Commercial (GC)

**Current Land Use:**

Vacant

**Proposed Land Use:**

Commercial

**Detailed Description of the Proposed Request, Including Reason for Rezoning:**

Reconfigure lot boundaries to align with revised Site Plan.

## Applicant Information:

**Applicant Name:**

McWrights Ferry Land, LLC













