



**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Planning and Zoning Department

**SUBJECT:** SLUP23-009

**ADDRESS:** 3309 and 3313 Panola Road

**MEETING DATE:** November 8, 2023

**Summary:** Applicant is seeking a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) to develop a Place of Worship.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** APPROVAL with condition(s)

**PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:** TBD



SLUP23-009

Planning and Zoning Department

**Commissioner District #3: Councilwoman Alecia Washington**

<b>PROPERTY INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Location of Subject Property:</b> 3309 and 3313 Panola Road	
<b>Parcel Number:</b> 16 022 01 004 and 16 022 01 246	
<b>Road Frontage:</b> Panola Road	<b>Total Acreage:</b> 3.55 +/-
<b>Current Zoning:</b> R-100 (Residential Medium Lot)	<b>Overlay District:</b> N/A
<b>Future Land Use Map/ Comprehensive Plan:</b> SUB (Suburban)	
<b>Zoning Request:</b> Applicant is seeking a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) to develop a Place of Worship.	
<b>Zoning History:</b> N/A	

<b>APPLICANT / PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION</b>
<b>Applicant Name:</b> Darrell Johnson
<b>Applicant Address:</b> 3375 Glenwood Road Decatur, GA 30032
<b>Property Owner Name:</b> CCC Christ Gospel Parish
<b>Property Owner Address:</b> 3309 and 3313 Panola Road



## DETAILS OF ZONING REQUEST

Since the city's incorporation, the sites have been zoned R-100 (Residential Medium Lot-100). The Applicant is proposing to develop and operate a Place of Worship (POW) on subject property. POW are defined as a lot or building wherein persons assemble for religious worship and which is maintained and controlled by a religious body organized to sustain public worship. The term "place of worship" shall also include any of the following accessory uses and buildings means schools, religious education, social gathering rooms, food service facilities, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, child daycare center, kindergarten, parsonage, rectory or convent and columbarium.

In [Section 4.2.42](#) of Chapter 27, it elaborates on regulations for POW that are located within residential zoned district. The regulations are as follows:

1. Any building or structure established in connection with places of worship, monasteries or convents shall be located at least 50 feet from any residentially zoned property. Where the adjoining property is zoned for nonresidential use, the setback for any building or structure shall be no less than 20 feet for a side-yard and no less than 30 feet for a rear-yard.
2. The required setback from any street right-of-way shall be the front-yard setback for the applicable residential district.
3. The parking areas and driveways for any such uses shall be located at least 20 feet from any property line, with a visual screen, provided by a six-foot-high fence or sufficient vegetation established within that area.
4. Places of worship, convents and monasteries shall be located on a minimum lot area of three acres and shall have frontage of at least 100 feet along a public street.
5. Places of worship, convents and monasteries shall be located only on a thoroughfare or arterial.
6. Any uses, buildings or structures operated by a place of worship that are not specifically included within the definition of place of worship must fully comply with the applicable zoning district regulations, including, but not limited to, any requirement for a special land



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use permit.

### ADJACENT ZONING & LAND USE

<b>NORTH</b>	<b>Zoning:</b> R-100 (Residential Medium Lot-100)	<b>Land Use:</b> Single-Family Dwelling
<b>SOUTH</b>	<b>Zoning:</b> R-100 (Residential Medium Lot-100)	<b>Land Use:</b> Single-Family Dwelling
<b>EAST</b>	<b>Zoning:</b> R-100 (Residential Medium Lot-100)	<b>Land Use:</b> Single-Family Dwelling
<b>WEST</b>	<b>Zoning:</b> RSM (Small Lot Residential Mix)	<b>Land Use:</b> Single-Family Dwelling



**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS & INFRASTRUCTURE**

The site is currently developed with one (1) road frontage (Panola Road). There aren't floodplain and/or statewaters on the subject property.

**SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT CRITERIA**

1. Adequacy of the size of the site for the use contemplated and whether or not adequate land area is available for the proposed use including provision of all required yards, open space, off-street parking, and all other applicable requirements of the zoning district in which the use is proposed to be located;
2. Compatibility of the proposed use with adjacent properties and land uses and with other properties and land uses in the district;
3. Adequacy of public services, public facilities, and utilities to serve the proposed use;
4. Adequacy of the public street on which the use is proposed to be located and whether or not there is sufficient traffic-carrying capacity for the use proposed so as not to unduly increase traffic and create congestion in the area;
5. Whether or not existing land uses located along access routes to the site will be adversely affected by the character of the vehicles or the volume of traffic generated by the proposed use;
6. Adequacy of ingress and egress to the subject property and to all proposed buildings, structures, and uses thereon, with particular reference to pedestrian and automotive safety and convenience, traffic flow and control, and access in the event of fire or other emergency;
7. Whether the proposed use will create adverse impacts upon any adjoining land use by reason of noise, smoke, odor, dust, or vibration generated by the proposed use;
8. Whether the proposed use will create adverse impacts upon any adjoining land use by reason of the hours of operation of the proposed use;
9. Whether the proposed use will create adverse impacts upon any adjoining land use by reason of the manner of operation of the proposed use;
10. Whether the proposed use is otherwise consistent with the requirements of the zoning district classification in which the use is proposed to be located;
11. Whether the proposed use is consistent with the policies of the comprehensive plan;



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12. Whether the proposed use provides for all required buffer zones and transitional buffer zones where required by the regulations of the zoning district in which the use is proposed to be located;

13. Whether there is adequate provision of refuse and service areas;

14. Whether the length of time for which the special land use permit is granted should be limited in duration;

15. Whether the size, scale and massing of proposed buildings are appropriate in relation to the size of the subject property and in relation to the size, scale and massing of adjacent and nearby lots and buildings;

16. Whether the proposed use will adversely affect historic buildings, sites, districts, or archaeological resources;

17. Whether the proposed use satisfies the requirements contained within the supplemental regulations for such special land use permit;

18. Whether the proposed use will create a negative shadow impact on any adjoining lot or building as a result of the proposed building height; and

19. Whether the proposed use would be consistent with the needs of the neighborhood or the community as a whole, be compatible with the neighborhood, and would not be in conflict with the overall objective of the comprehensive plan.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

Staff recommends the following:

- **Approval with condition(s):**

1. Applicant must submit a Lot Consolidation (Minor Plat) Application prior to LDP (Land Disturbance Permit) being issued;
2. Applicant must comply with parking regulations in [ARTICLE 6. - PARKING](#); and
3. The proposed development shall be within general conformity with the applicant's submitted survey/site plan (dated 07-16-2023).



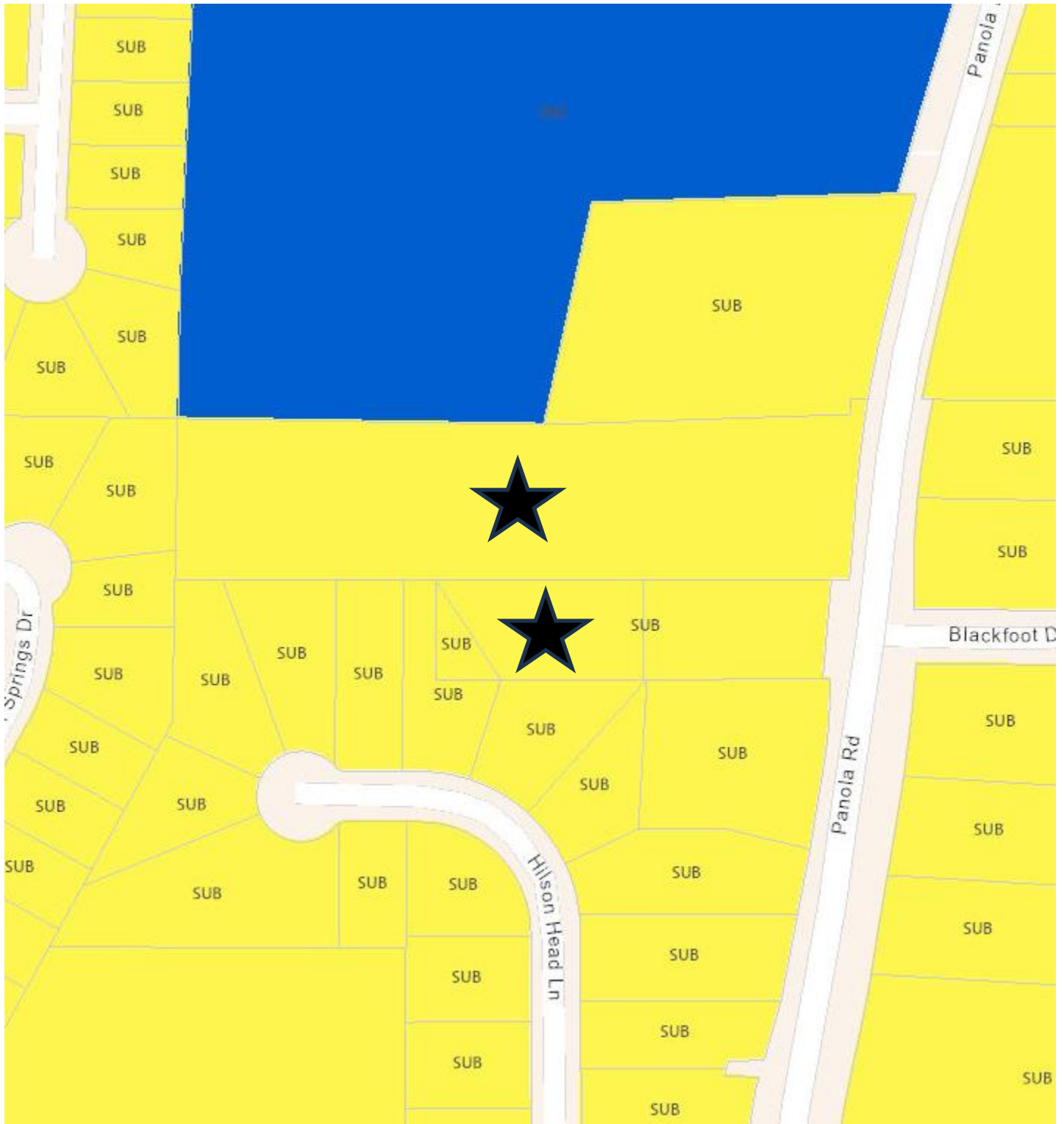
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**Attachments Included:**

- **Future Land Use Map**
- **Zoning Map**
- **Aerial Map**
- **Site Plan/Survey**
- **Environmental Site Analysis**
- **Letter of Intent**

## Future Land Use Map







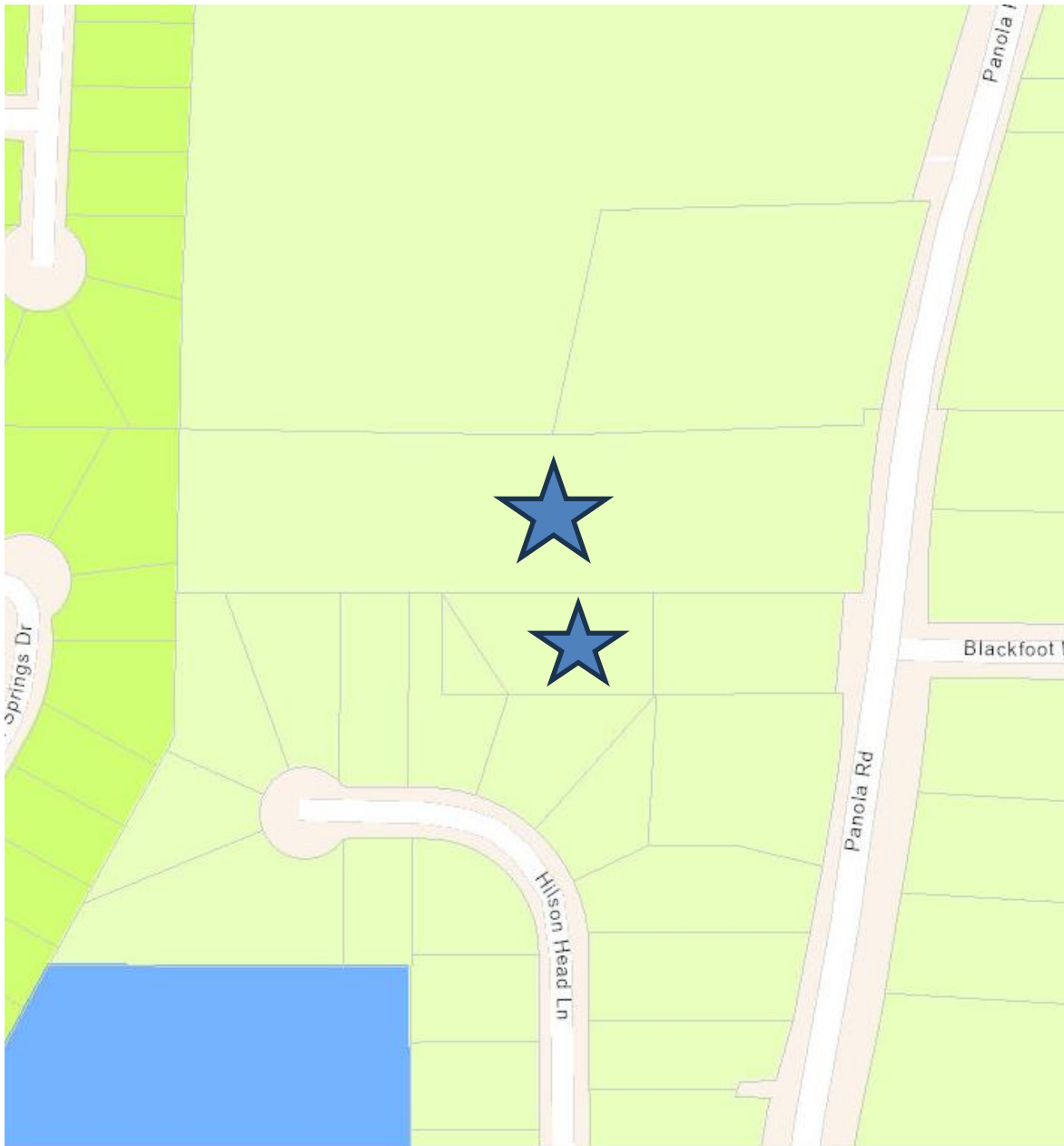
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## **Suburban Neighborhood (SN)**

The intent of the Suburban Neighborhood character area is to recognize those areas of the city that have developed in traditional suburban land use patterns while encouraging new development to have increased connectivity and accessibility. These areas include those developed (built out) and those under development pressures. Those areas are characterized by low pedestrian orientation, limited transit access, scattered civic buildings and curvilinear street patterns. The proposed density for areas of this type is up to 8 dwelling units per acre.

## Zoning Map



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Stonecrest Parcels

City Limits

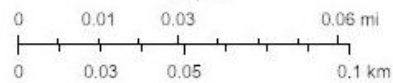
Zoning

OI - Office-Institutional

R-100 - Residential Med Lot

RSM - Small Lot Residential Mix

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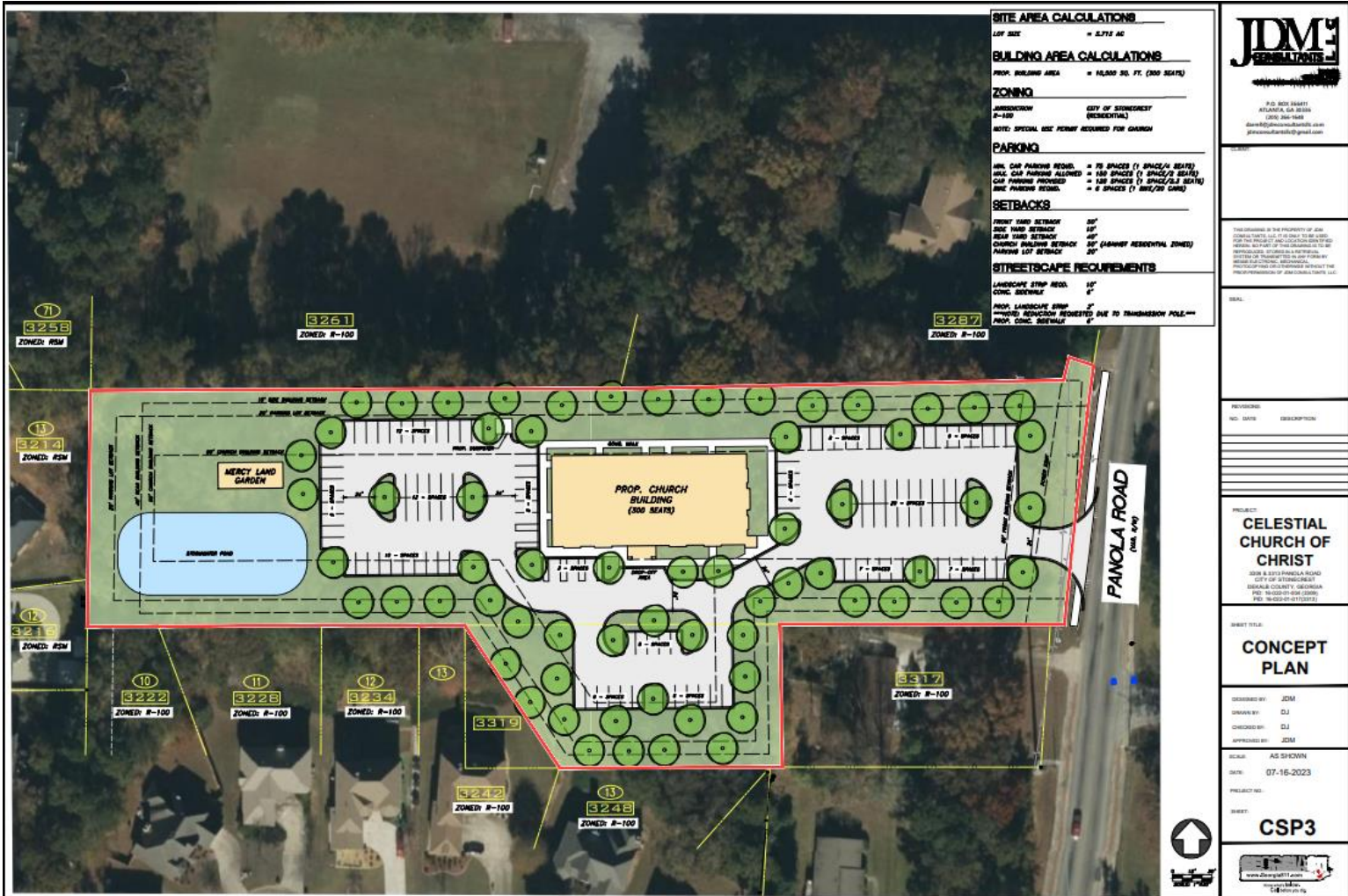


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## Aerial Map



**Submitted Site Plan**







## Environmental Site Analysis

### SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT CRITERIA AND ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ANALYSIS

PREPARED FOR:

Christ Gospel Parish  
Celestial Church of Christ, Inc

3309 & 3313 Panola Road  
City of Stonecrest, DeKalb County, GA  
Contact: Rebecca Famakinwa  
Phone: 470-218-0928

PREPARED BY:

JDM Consultants, LLC

P.O. Box 366411  
Atlanta, GA 30336  
Contact: Darrell Johnson  
Phone: 206-266-1648

August 09, 2023



SLUP Criteria and  
Environmental Site Analysis  
Celestial Church of Christ

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JDM Consulting  
08.09.2023



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## SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT CRITERIA

### A. Adequacy of Site Size

The Site size is approximately 3.713 acres as measured by the boundary survey provided by DeKalb Surveys, Inc., dated April 3, 2023. The site size is more than adequate for the proposed use. The topography does not appear to present any challenges for developing this site. There is sufficient space for the main drive aisles, meeting parking requirements, the building footprint, utilities, stormwater facilities, and comfortable navigation around the site. There is sufficient space for the building footprint and parking areas to meet required setbacks.

### B. Compatibility with Adjacent Land Uses

The proposed use of a church is compatible with adjacent land uses. The current zoning map shows the surrounding lots are zoned R-100. Most of those lots are single family residential lots. One of the lots to the North (3261) is zoned R-100 and also has a church on it.

### C. Adequacy of Public Services/Facilities

Public facilities are adequate for this development. This church building is approximately 3.1 miles from fire station 17. The site is approximately 6 miles from the police station. It is approximately 4 miles from Emory Hillandale Hospital and approximately 7 miles from Georgia Regional Hospital. There is an existing sidewalk in front of the site on Panola Road. Utility providers have indicated Communication (internet/phone), power, gas, water, and sewer are available at the site.

### D. Adequacy of Public Street Capacity

Panola Road is a two lane road in front of the site. Due to the traffic patterns of the proposed use mainly generating trips on Sunday mornings, or off peak hours, the capacity of the existing infrastructure is more than adequate for the proposed use. With the current setbacks and power easement at the frontage of the property, there is also space for Panola Road to expand in the future. However, there is a transmission line on this side of Panola road with steel poles and high voltage power lines on it that would need to be moved before Panola Road could be expanded towards the proposed site.

### E. Adverse Impact to Adjacent Land Uses Due to Traffic from Site

No adverse impacts to adjacent land uses are anticipated due to traffic patterns from the site. The only access point to the proposed site is Panola Road. Typical trips generated will be almost entirely off peak hours on Sundays. The church proposes 300 seats

### F. Ingress / Egress for Automobiles and Pedestrians

There is sufficient ingress and egress for this site for automobiles and pedestrians. Pedestrians have access to the site from the sidewalk on Panola Road. Automobiles have an approximately 50 foot entrance drive before the first parking bays are available. This helps reduce stacking into the street.





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**G. Adverse Impacts of Noise, Smoke, Vibrations**

Adverse impacts due to noise, smoke, and vibrations are not anticipated. Worship music is anticipated within the building. However, it is planned within the building which is designed to meet building code and will have noise reducing capabilities. Due to the setbacks, there will also be natural vegetative screening between the proposed and adjacent properties. It will also be done within daytime hours and will not exceed OSHA standards for sound hazards for adjacent land owners. Thus, no adverse impact to the public health, welfare, safety, or quality of life is anticipated due to excessive sound.

**H. Adverse Impacts of Hours of Operation**

No adverse impacts due to the hours of operation are anticipated. Hours of operation are anticipated to align with standard day time business hours.

**I. Adverse Impacts of Manner of Operation**

No adverse impacts due to the manner of operation are anticipated. Operation the majority of the time will consist of a few office staff members available during daytime business hours. Sundays anticipate a max number of 300 visitors for a few hours.

**J. Consistency with Proposed Zoning District**

The existing zoning is R-100. A church is not on the prohibited list of developments for this zoning category. The zoning code indicates a special land use permit may be applied for to propose a church in this zoning category.

**K. Consistency with Policies of Comprehensive Plan**

This proposed development is consistent with the policies of the comprehensive plan. This development is adjacent to R-100 properties. It is not attempting to rezone. Another church is adjacent to this property also zoned R-100. This development will be a support and benefit to the spiritual health of the community. This development is also consistent with the future land use map for this area showing a mix of residential and institutional land uses.

**L. Required Buffer Zone Compliance**

This development is in compliance with the required building and parking setbacks and buffers relevant to this property. The site plan meets the required 50' church building setback. Please see the attached Site Plan for more information.

**M. Adequate Refuse and Service Areas**

The project proposes a dumpster area that will be adequate for the service of this project. There are waste service companies available to serve this property.

**N. SLUP Duration Limits**

The proposed SLUP requests no duration limits as it proposes a church that is intended to be a permanent structure.



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**O. Appropriate Size / Scale of Building(s) Compared to Adjacent Properties**

The building for this development is an appropriate size / scale compared to adjacent properties. The height on the main building is proposed at 34'-11.5". The structure proposes a section with a height of 37'-1". These heights fit in with the surrounding single family residential houses.

**P. Adverse Impacts to Historical / Archeological Resources**

There are no known adverse impacts to historical or archeological resources at this time. An analysis of the history of this site back to the early 1980s shows it has remained largely undeveloped with a single family house on it. A few years ago the single family homes was demolished and cleared from the property. No other portions of the site appear to have anything that would be listed in the national or local historical registries. From the site visit, there did not appear to be any archeological resources on site. Further studies of the site may be required.

**Q. Satisfaction of Requirements of SLUP**

The development satisfies the requirements of the SLUP. A church is under the institutional category. It is an allowable use for this zoning category with a special land use permit. The proposed layout meets all parking and setback requirements. No variances are requested at this time.

**R. Negative Shadow Impact of Building on Adjacent Lots**

No negative shadow impacts on adjacent properties are anticipated due to the height of the building. Due to the building only having a proposed height of 37'-1" and the building location being more than 50' from the nearest property line, no negative shadow impacts are anticipated.

**S. Disproportional Proliferation of Similar Land Uses**

There are approximately 5 other churches in this area also in the R-100 zoning. However, this category of consideration may apply to other land uses like chemical factories or quarries where it would be wise to consider the combined negative impacts on the surrounding area, public health, welfare, and safety. However, it is not anticipated that a proliferation of churches will be anything but a benefit to the local community.

**T. Consistency & Compatibility with the Needs of the Neighborhood**

The development fits in well with the surrounding R-100 zoned properties. The surrounding area is filled with single family homes and other churches. The proposed development is consistent and compatible with the neighborhood.



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## ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ANALYSIS

### SECTION 1: Conformance to the Comprehensive Plan

#### A. Project Description and Existing Environmental Conditions

The project proposes a church, associated sidewalks, parking lot, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure on approx. 3.7 acres of land. The existing conditions are a mostly undeveloped wooded area with approx. 1.1 percent impervious area of a concrete driveway and old small shed. According to the boundary and topographic survey, there are no 100 year floodplains on the property. From the site visit, there do not appear to be streams or wetlands on or within 200 feet of the property. There did not appear to be any chemical spills, underground storage tanks, asbestos or lead. No recognizable environmental hazards were encountered during the site visit.

#### B. Adjacent Property Description with Site Plan

The adjacent properties are single family residential lots zoned R-100. One lot to the North is zoned R-100 with an existing church. Please see attached site plan for more information.

#### C. Project Conformance with Comprehensive Land Use Plan

This proposed development is consistent with the policies of the comprehensive plan. This development is adjacent to R-100 properties. It is not attempting to rezone. Another church is adjacent to this property also zoned R-100. This development will be a support and benefit to the spiritual health of the community. This development is also consistent with the future land use map for this area showing a mix of residential and institutional land uses.

#### D. Site Location on Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map

Please see below for attached current zoning map and future land use map with site location identified.

#### E. Site Evaluation for Comprehensive Land Use Plan

This site is compatible with the comprehensive land use per the comprehensive land use map attached below. There are 5 nearby churches on property zoned R-100. The future land use map shows the area's intended future use to match the current use with residential and institutional uses.



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**SECTION 2: Environmental Impacts of The Proposed Project**

**A. Wetlands**

There are no known wetlands on or within 200 feet of the project site.

**B. Floodplain**

Per FEMA FIRM Map of DeKalb County, Georgia 13089C0158J, effective date May 16, 2013, this site is not located within a flood hazard area.

**C. Stream / Stream Buffers**

There are no known streams or stream buffers on or within 200' of the site.

**D. Slopes Exceeding 25 Percent Over a 10 - Foot Rise in Elevation**

There are no slopes at or exceeding 25 percent on site for more than 10 vertical feet.

**E. Vegetation**

Vegetation on site is mostly wooded.

**F. Wildlife Species (Including Fish)**

Wildlife species expected on site are typical wooded creature such as squirrels, birds, and rabbits. No endangered species were observed during the site visit. No fish habitats were observed on site.

**G. Archeological / Historical Sites**

There are no known adverse impacts to historical or archeological resources at this time. An analysis of the history of this site back to the early 1980s shows it has remained largely undeveloped with a single family house on it. A few years ago the single family homes was demolished and cleared from the property. No other portions of the site appear to have anything that would be listed in the national or local historical registries. From the site visit, there did not appear to be any archeological resources on site. Further studies of the site may be required.



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### SECTION 3: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

#### A. Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas

No known environmentally sensitive areas were identified on site. However, erosion control Best Management Practices will be provided in conformance with state and local issuing authority requirements.

#### B. Protection of Water Quality

Sufficient space for a stormwater management pond has been allocated in the site plan. The stormwater pond and other water quality BMPs will be utilized to meet water quality requirements.

#### C. Minimization of Negative Impacts on Existing Infrastructure

There are no anticipated negative impacts on the existing infrastructure. As a church, the traffic generated from the development is minimal most of the week, and the majority of trips are typically generated on off peak hours of Sunday mornings. In discussions with utility providers, they indicated utilities are available to serve this site. There have been no indications of negative impacts at this time.

#### D. Minimization on Archeological / Historically Significant Areas

Currently, no archeological or historically significant areas have been identified on site.

#### E. Minimization of Negative Impacts on Env. Stressed Communities

Currently, no negative environmental impacts are anticipated with this development.

#### F. Creation and Preservation of Green Space and Open Space .....

This site proposes a green space amenity of a garden area. There is ample open space with the proposed layout. See attached Site Plan for more information.

#### G. Protection of Citizens from the Negative Impacts of Noise and Lighting

There are no anticipated negative impacts from noise or lighting from this development.

#### H. Protection of Parks and Recreational Green Space

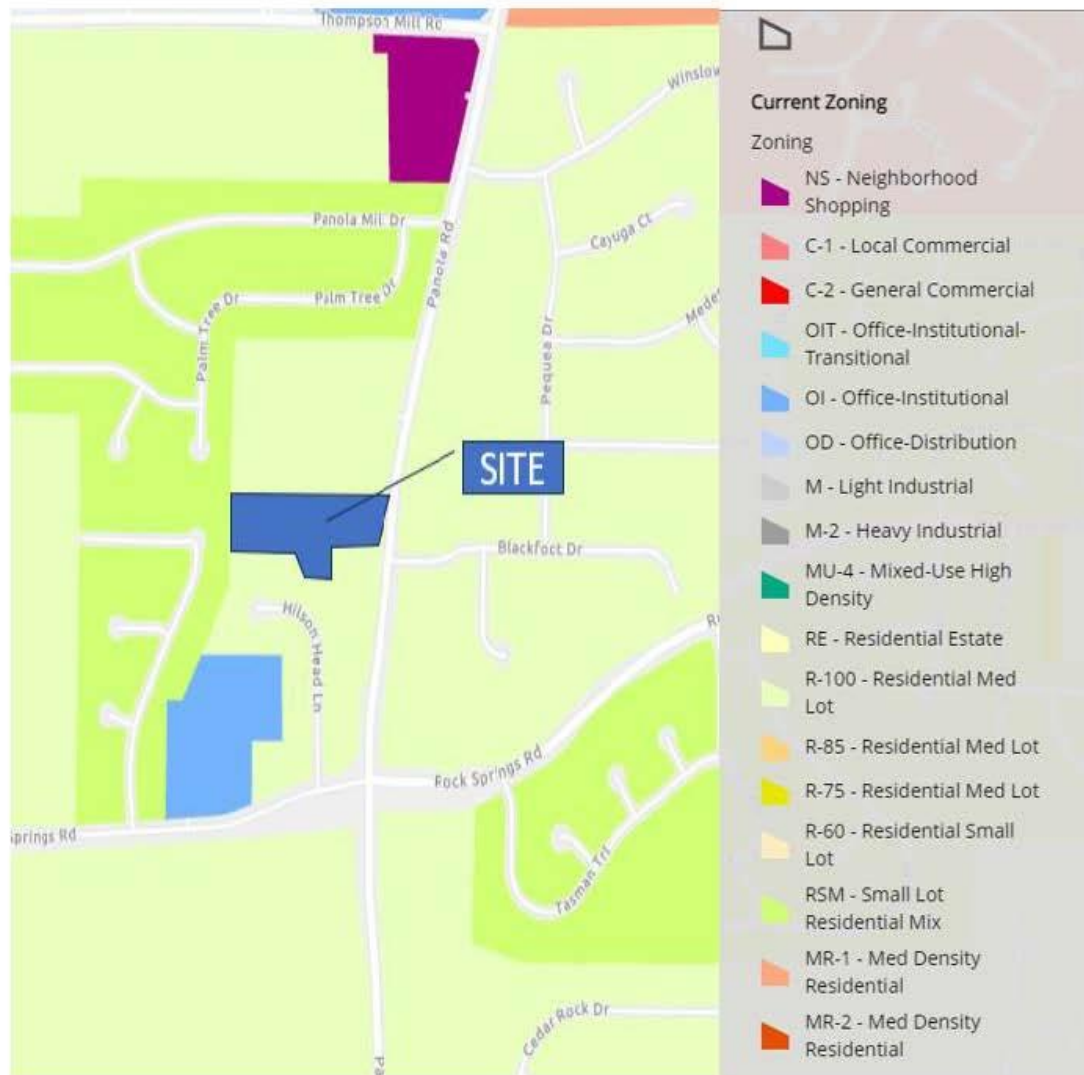
This development does not anticipate any negative impacts to parks. The site proposes to cultivate the area into usable space to enjoy a garden area in the rear of the site with a majority of the rear of the site being green space.

#### I. Minimization of Impacts to Wildlife Habitats

The proposed plan has an ample amount of green space and surrounding undisturbed area that will provide for habitats for typical local wildlife. The proposed plan will also have landscaping plans that meet local landscaping requirements.

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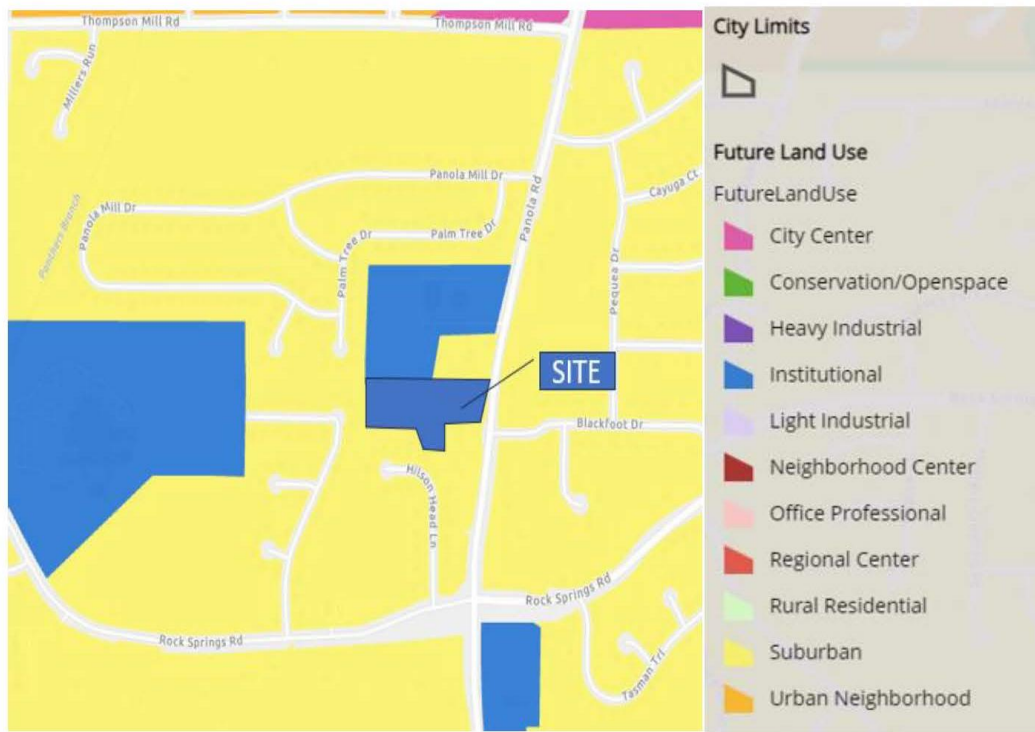
## CURRENT ZONING MAP



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Environmental Site Analysis  
Celestial Church of Christ



## FUTURE ZONING MAP





## Letter of Intent



DESIGN  
CONSULTING  
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

**August 09, 2023**  
**City of Stonecrest Planning and Zoning**  
**3120 Stonecrest Blvd, Suite 190**  
**Stonecrest, GA 30038**

### Statement of Intent

The applicant, Christ Gospel Parish Celestial Church of Christ, Inc, is seeking a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) for the combined property at addresses 3309 and 3313 Panola Road, City of Stonecrest, DeKalb County, GA 30038 totaling 3.713 acres (to be referred to as the "subject property"). The request SLUP is for the development of a church. The subject property is presently zoned R-100. This zoning category does allow for churches as a land use. The proposed church will have 10,500 square feet and 300 seats. It meets all required parking and setback requirements from the City of Stonecrest's zoning ordinances.

The "subject property" is situated in Land Lot(s) 22 and 43, District 16 in the City of Stonecrest. It has frontage on the East side of the property along Panola Road's right of way. It has similar R-100 zoned church to the North and R-100 zoned single family residential properties on the South and West.

The applicant has given special attention to ensure the layout and design of the site allows for efficient ingress & egress to the "subject property," as well as pedestrian traffic & landscaping across the site. The applicant looks forward to discussions with the neighbors, county officials and other interested parties to ensure a similar blend with the surrounding area.

Thank you for the thoughtful attention to the foregoing request for rezoning. We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Please call us if you have any questions.

Regards,

Darrell Johnson, CEO  
JDM Consultants, LLC

JDM Consultants, LLC | 205.266.1648 | JDMConsultantsLLC@gmail.com