

**Action Requested/Required:**

- ☒ Vote/Action Requested  
☐ Discussion or Presentation Only  
☐ Public Hearing
- Report Date: 1/28/26  
Hearing Date: 1/8/26  
Voting Date: 1/5/26

**Department:** Community Development **Presenter(s) & Title:** Steve Green, Zoning Administrator

**Agenda Item Title:**

RZON2510-005 - Request to rezone property from O-I (Office-Institutional) to GC (General Commercial) - 264 Marietta Highway - Allison Aicher

**Summary:**

The applicant seeks to use the property as housing for individuals receiving treatment for substance abuse disorder as a licensed Residential Transition Treatment Program. No treatment takes place on the premise.

**Budget Implications:**

Budgeted? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Total Cost of Project:  Check if Estimated ☐

Fund Source: General Fund ☐ Water & Sewer ☐ Sales Tax ☐ Other:

**Staff Recommendations:**

The Department of Community Development recommends approval of this application. Possible conditions of approval can be found in the staff report.

**Reviews:**

Has this been reviewed by Management and Legal Counsel, if required? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Attachments:**

Application  
Survey/location map  
Community Input Meeting report  
Staff report  
Response to questions and concerns



**Land Use Petition: RZON2510-005**  
**Date of Staff Report Preparation: 1/28/26**  
**Mayor and City Council Public Hearing Date: 1/8/26**  
**Mayor and City Council Action Meeting Date: 2/5/26**

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**Project Name/Applicant: Allison Aicher**

**Property Location: 264 Marietta Highway**

**Parcel ID: B010, Tax Map Number 91N06**

**District/Land Lot: 14<sup>th</sup> District Land Lot 158**

**Acreage: 5.15 acres**

**Existing Zoning District: O-I (Office-Institutional)**

**Proposed Zoning District: GC (General Commercial)**

**Existing Land Use: Single family home**

**Future Development Map Designation: Major Highway Corridor**

**Proposed Development: Boarding and rooming house**

**Owner: Craig Vickers**

**District Standards:**

GC - Zoning District Standards (Primary Street)			
Impervious Surface (max.)	75%	Front Yard Setback (min.)	50'
Open Space (min.)	25%	Side Yard Setback (min.)	15'
Building Height (max.)	6/80'	Rear Yard Setback (min.)	15'
Building Height (min.)	N/A	Buffer Planting (min.)	50'
Zoning Buffer	50'	Overlay Zone	Yes

**Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning:**

Convenience store - GC

North – Residential – RM-15 and R-20

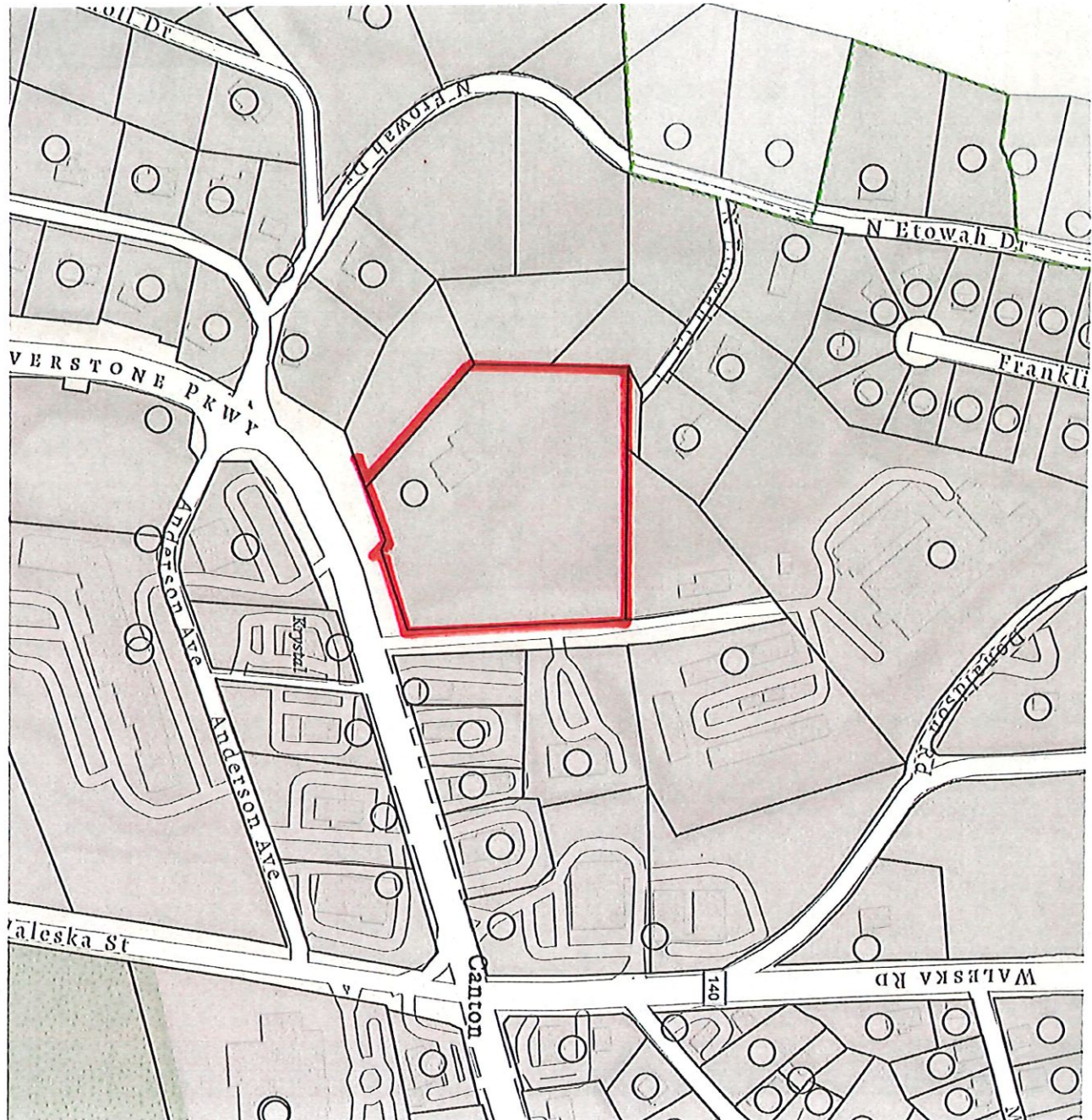
South – Across Marietta Highway, Krystal and

East – Doctors office and restaurant, GC and O-I

West – Vacant lots – R-20



## Location Map





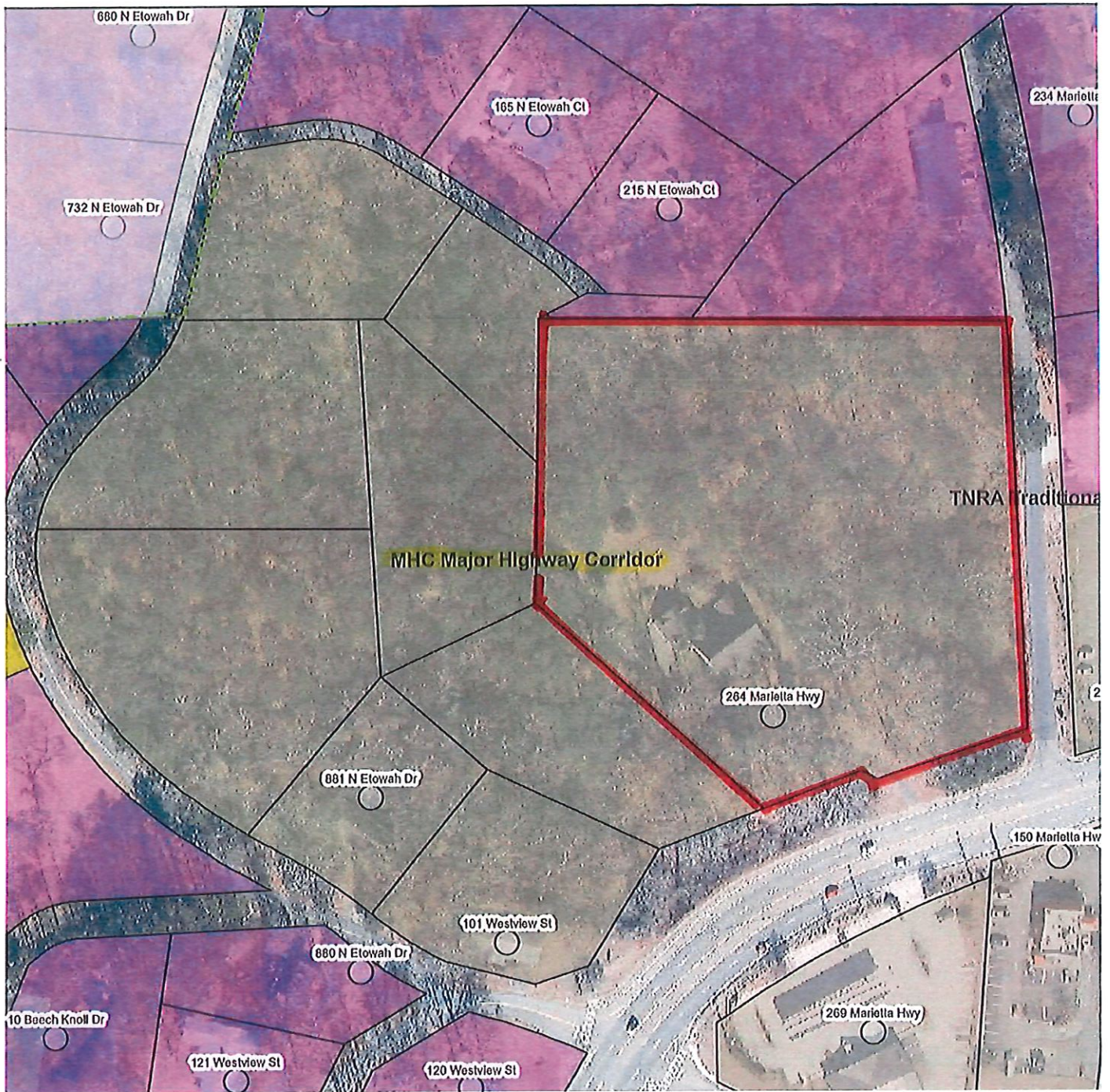
## Existing Land Use Map







## Future Development Map







**Site Description:** The property is currently occupied by a single family with access from Marietta Highway. The parcel is mostly wooded with a mixture of hardwoods and pines.

**Site History:** In 2004 the property was zoned O-P (Office Professional) and was used as a single family residence. In 2014 the current zoning map was adopted and the zoning was changed to O-I (Office-Institutional) and the use remained as a single family home.

**CRITERIA TO BE APPLIED – LAND USE PETITION (REZONING)**

1. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby properties; **The proposed use will be compatible with surrounding and nearby uses. There are two apartment complexes in the nearby area along with an assisted living facility.**
2. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **The proposed use will not adversely affect the existing use of adjacent or nearby properties.**
3. Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned; **The current zoning does allow for a reasonable economic use as there is a medical facility adjacent to the parcel.**
4. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools; **The proposed use will not cause excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools.**
5. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and Future Development Map; **The Major Highway Corridor area lists as compatible uses, retail commercial, office /professional, other commercial, institutional and limited mixed use. The GC zoning district is the only district that permits rooming and boarding houses.**
6. Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal. **The existing use of a single family home fronting Marietta Highway in a commercial area is not a compatible land use. The commercial area along Marietta Highway has slowly expanded westward over the years.**





- 7. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect historic buildings, sites, districts, or archaeological resources. *There are no historic buildings, sites, districts or archaeological resources on the property.***
- 8. Whether the aesthetic and architectural design of the site is compatible with the intent and requirements of the Comprehensive Plan, the Character Areas, and any Overlay Districts. *Any exterior change or expansion to the existing structure must be approved by the Canton Design Review Team.***

**CRITERIA TO BE APPLIED – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (N/A)**

- a. Whether the proposed use is consistent with the comprehensive plan and other adopted policies of the City;**
- b. Whether the proposed use complies with the requirements of this zoning ordinance;**
- c. Whether public services, public facilities and utilities are adequate to serve the proposed use;**
- d. Whether the proposed use will create adverse impacts upon any adjoining land use by reason of:**
  - 1. Noise, smoke, order, dust or vibration generated by the proposed use;**
  - 2. Hours or manner of operation of the proposed use; and**
  - 3. Traffic volumes generated by the proposed use;**
- e. Whether the proposed use would result in an over-concentration of the subject use type within the area of the proposed use;**



- f. Whether the aesthetic and architectural design of the site is compatible with the intent and requirements of the comprehensive plan, the character areas, and all applicable zoning ordinance regulations; and
- g. Whether the proposed use is compatible with adjacent properties and land uses, based on consideration of the size, scale and massing of proposed buildings and the overall site design.

#### **DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

##### BUILDING AND SAFETY SERVICES

- BUILDING SERVICES:

No comment

- SAFETY SERVICES:

Regarding the above cases, the following codes and information will be pertinent to these projects:

- *International Building Code, 2018 Edition, with Georgia Amendments*
  - 2020
  - 2022
  - 2024
  - 2025
- *International Residential Code, 2018 Edition, with Georgia Amendments*
  - 2020
  - 2024
- *International Fire Code, 2018 Edition (GA 120-3-3 Amendments – 27 May 2025)*
- *Life Safety Code, 2024 Edition (GA 120-3-3 Amendments – 27 May 2025)*
- *International Plumbing Code, 2018 Edition, with Georgia Amendments*
  - 2020





- 2022
- 2023
- 2024
  
- *International Mechanical Code, 2018 Edition, with Georgia Amendments*
  - 2020
  - 2024
  
- *International Fuel Gas Code, 2018 Edition, with Georgia Amendments*
  - 2020
  - 2022
  
- *National Electrical Code, 2023 Edition, no Georgia amendments*
  
- *International Energy Conservation Code, 2015 Edition, with Georgia Supplements and Amendments*
  - 2020
  - 2022
  - 2022
  - 2023
  
- *International Swimming Pool and Spa Code, 2018 Edition, with Georgia Amendments*
  - 2020

The City of Canton has an automatic sprinkler system ordinance. All multi-family residential construction (three family dwellings or more) an NFPA 13R automatic sprinkler system. For commercial development, any structure over 3,500 square feet shall require an NFPA 13 automatic sprinkler system.

This project may require two or more fire apparatus access roads (entrances) based on the number of dwelling units constructed, the height of the structure or the square footage of the structure. This requirement is in the 2018 International Fire Code Appendix "D" and the City of Canton Unified Development Code (UDC), section 109.03.12 - Development access.

Approved fire apparatus access roads shall be provided within 150 feet of the exterior walls of all buildings or facilities at grade level as measured along an approved route around the exterior of the building. The distance may be extended to 200 feet on one side of the building or facility when equipped with a full NFPA 13 fire sprinkler system and when approved by the fire code official.



Where required by the fire code official, fire apparatus access roads shall be marked with permanent NO PARKING – FIRE LANE signs and red painted curbs. All sign locations must be *approved* by the fire code official.

The minimum diameter fire main size is 8". Fire hydrant placement is based on both the City of Canton UDC, section 110.02.02 (f)- Design criteria and appendix B and C of the 2018 International Fire Code which has been adopted as law in the City of Canton.

Mail Kiosks shall meet the 2010 Federal ADA standard and USPS-STD-4C. A van accessible handicap parking space and access aisle is required to serve an accessible route to the mail kiosk.

Specific 2018 IFC requirements for civil plans:

1. The 2018 International Fire Code, appendix "D" requires fire apparatus access roads not exceeding 10% grade and for local Cherokee County fire apparatus requirements, access road cross grades may not exceed 5%.
2. Roads throughout the development must be at a minimum, made of asphalt or concrete capable of supporting the imposed load of fire apparatus weighing up to 75,000 pounds.
3. Turn radiuses for all streets shall be 35' minimum for development entrances and 25' for interior streets. Proof of turning radius compliance shall be demonstrated using software analysis such as "AutoTURN" or other clearance/swept path analysis software for a 50' emergency vehicle. For tire curb clearances, bumper swing clearances or inside crimp angles or break over/Break under angles, contact Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services.
4. Dead end fire apparatus access roads in excess of 150 feet in length shall be provided with an approved area for turning around fire apparatus.
5. Aerial fire apparatus streets are required where the vertical distance between the grade plane and the highest roof surface exceeds 30'. The required width of an aerial apparatus road shall be 26' minimum and constructed as noted in note #2 above. One or more of the aerial access routes meeting the building height condition shall be located not





less than 15' and not greater than 30' from the building and shall be positioned parallel to one entire side of the building. Overhead utilities and power lines shall not be located over the aerial apparatus road.

6. Where two fire apparatus access roads are required, they shall be placed a distance apart equal to not less than one-half of the length of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the property or area to be served, measured in a straight line between accesses.

7. Fire Department Connections (FDC) serving commercial properties shall be remote. All FDC's shall be within 100' of a fire hydrant.

8. PIVs, or other approved indicating valves, serving buildings 40 feet or more in height shall be located a minimum of 40 feet from the building. For buildings less than 40 feet tall, the valve shall be located no closer than the height of the building.

9. FDCs and PIVs shall be painted OSHA safety red.

10. Private gates for single-family homes, multi-family complexes or commercial properties shall be installed with back-up batteries that are programmed to fail safe (open completely) during a power outage and stay open when back-up battery power fails. This applies to all gate configurations. Depending on the gate configuration, you may need a double pole "Knox switch" keyed for the City of Canton from [knoxbox.com](http://knoxbox.com).

In addition to this information, I have attached a document that should assist the developer/ owner with requirements related to fire apparatus access.

**Below, I have added specific guidance on the substance treatment facility:**

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## **Definitions:**

### **Personal Care Homes (Georgia)**

As defined under Chapter 111-8-62 of the Georgia Department of Community Health rules, a personal care home is any dwelling—regardless of profit status—that undertakes, through ownership or management, to provide or



arrange for housing, food services, and at least one personal service for two or more adults not related to the owner or administrator by blood or marriage. These facilities offer non-medical, supervised care, including assistance with daily living activities such as bathing and dressing, and provide three meals and two snacks per day. Unlike nursing homes or assisted living facilities, personal care homes do not provide chronic or convalescent care.

### **Recovery Residences**

Also referred to as halfway houses, recovery residences provide peer-supported, alcohol-free, and drug-free living environments. These facilities are intended for individuals transitioning into the community following substance abuse treatment, incarceration, or while on probation or parole.

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## **Applicable Life Safety Code Requirements:**

In accordance with the 2024 Edition of the *NFPA 101 Life Safety Code*, recovery and rehabilitation residences are classified as **Residential Board and Care Occupancies** (New Board and Care – Chapter 32). The following provisions are particularly relevant:

### **1. Occupancy Separation:**

No Residential Board and Care facility shall be located above another occupancy unless separated by an approved fire barrier (minimum 2-hour fire-resistance rating per Sections 4.6.5 and 4.6.7).

### **2. Construction and Renovation:**

Any addition to a non-conforming structure must be separated by a 2-hour fire barrier. Fire-rated doors in such barriers must remain closed unless equipped with automatic closers per 7.2.1.8.2, which release upon fire alarm activation.

### **3. Cooking Facilities:**

- Residential cooking appliances (e.g., stoves with up to four burners) must be protected by a listed, self-contained residential fire suppression system installed in a hood vented to the exterior.
- Commercial appliances (e.g., fryers) must comply with Section 9.2.3.
- Exceptions may apply where an approved automatic sprinkler system (per 32.2.3.5) with appropriate coverage is installed; however, external venting of hoods is still required.

### **4. Emergency Lighting & Exiting:**





- Emergency lighting is required in all common areas and egress paths unless each sleeping room has a direct exit to the exterior at finished grade.
- All sleeping rooms must have a secondary means of escape (door or operable window).

**5. Fire Protection Systems:**

- Automatic sprinkler systems are required per the City of Canton Sprinkler Ordinance and Chapter 32 of the Life Safety Code.
- Fire alarms, including visual alarms (strobes) for hearing-impaired residents, are mandatory.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide detection must be installed.
- Portable fire extinguishers shall be provided per Section 9.9.

**6. Evacuation Procedures:**

- Written evacuation plans must be posted in each sleeping room.
- Fire drills must be conducted quarterly on each shift, with a minimum of two conducted during sleeping hours annually. Documentation of drills must include participating staff.

**7. Hazard Classification & Code Compliance:**

- The design professional (Architect/Engineer) is responsible for hazard classification.
- Compliance with the 2010 ADA Standards is required.
- Architectural or engineering plans must be submitted for all facilities, regardless of square footage.

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Please note that this summary is not exhaustive. Some exceptions or additional requirements may apply depending on specific circumstances.

V/r

Conditions for Consideration

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The applicant has submitted a rezoning application for the property located at 264 Marietta Highway. The request is for GC (General Commercial) zoning to provide a room and boarding house for patients undergoing treatment for substance abuse disorder. There will be NO treatment provided on the property. The Community Development staff has not requested that the property



be rezoned to GC. Rather the applicant has been informed for the proposed use that the GC zoning category is the only category that allows rooming and boarding facilities.

The applicant has provided answers to questions and concerns that were raised during the public hearing. These answers are provided in a separate copy.

The Department of Community Development recommends **APPROVAL** of this application. Below are some possible conditions for consideration.

#### Conditions for Consideration

- 1) The property shall be restricted to the following uses: a) Room and boarding house, b) office and professional use, c) assisted living services to include skilled nursing and life care services, d) daycare facilities, e) funeral home, f) civic or fraternal clubs, g) banquet hall, h) religious facility with Conditional Use Permit approval, i) neighborhood level retail sales, j) catering business.
- 2) The rooming and boarding structure shall be limited to twenty-four (24) rooms not including quarters for supervisory personnel.
- 3) All building and life safety requirements shall be adhered to regarding any modification or expansion of the structure.

These are possible conditions as recommended by staff. Additional conditions may be suggested by the Mayor and City Council during the action meeting.

#### DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

No comment

#### Conditions for Consideration

#### POLICE DEPARTMENT

#### Conditions for Consideration

#### PUBLIC WORKS

#### Conditions for Consideration





UTILITY ENGINEER

Conditions for Consideration

CHEROKEE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Conditions for Consideration

**CHEROKEE COUNTY (AS NEEDED)**

CHEROKEE COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

Conditions for Consideration

CHEROKEE COUNTY ENGINEER

Conditions for Consideration

CHEROKEE COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL

Conditions for Consideration

**STAFF CONDITIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**



Community Development Department  
110 Academy Street, Canton, GA 30114  
(770) 704-1500

## PUBLIC HEARING APPLICATION

Project #(s):

RZON 2510-005

This Application is for:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Annexation                          | <input type="checkbox"/> I Temporary Use Permit            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B Rezoning                 | <input type="checkbox"/> J Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C Master Plans             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D Master Plan Amendment               | <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E Conditional Use Permit              | <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> F Land Use Modification               | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Exception                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> G Zoning Condition Amendment          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> H Density Transfer within Master Plan |  |

1. Please check all information supplied on the following pages to ensure that all spaces are filled out completely and accurately before signing this form. State **N/A**, where Not Applicable.
2. If you are not paying online, please make your check payable to **"City of Canton."**
3. If you have questions regarding this form, please contact the Community Development Department by calling (770) 704-1500.

### Applicant Information:

Name: Allison Aicher  
Address: 200 Rose Ridge Dr  
City: Canton  
State: GA ZIP Code: 30115  
Telephone: 543-666-3693  
Email Address: allison.aicher@gmail.com

### Owner Information:

Name: Craig Vickery, Administrator Annev Barton  
Address: P.O. Box 5111  
City: Canton  
State: GA ZIP Code: 30114  
Telephone: 770-605-6188  
Email Address: Craig.vickery@yahoo.com

I, Allison Aicher, do solemnly swear and attest, subject to criminal penalties for false swearing, that the information provided in the Application for Public Hearing is true and correct and contains no misleading information. I, Allison Aicher, have received and thoroughly read the Public Hearing Procedures.

This 29th day of October, 2025.

Applicant Signature:

Allison Aicher

Print Name:

Allison Aicher





Community Development Department  
110 Academy Street, Canton, GA 30114  
(770) 704-1500

## AUTHORIZATION OF OWNER AND APPLICANT

Project #(s):

RZON2510-005

This form is to be executed under oath. I, \_\_\_\_\_, (Property Owner), do solemnly swear and attest, subject to criminal penalties for false swearing, that I am the owner of the property, which is the subject matter of the attached application, as is shown in the records of Cherokee County, Georgia. I hereby authorize the City of Canton and its representatives to inspect the property, which is the subject of this application, and post any notices required thereon.

This 30th day of October, 2025.

Owner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: Craig Wilkes Administrator  
Anne & Bob's Estate

I, the above signed legal owner of the subject property, do hereby authorize the following application to be submitted to the City of Canton and do hereby authorize the following person named below to act as Applicant in the pursuit of a request for:

This Application is for:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Annexation                          | <input type="checkbox"/> I Temporary Use Permit            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B Rezoning                 | <input type="checkbox"/> J Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C Master Plans                        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D Master Plan Amendment               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E Conditional Use Permit              | <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> F Land Use Modification               | <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> G Zoning Condition Amendment          | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Exception                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> H Density Transfer within Master Plan |  |

Name of Authorized Applicant: Allison Aicher

Signature: Allison Aicher

Mailing Address: 200 Rose Ridge Dr

City: Canton

State: GA

Zip Code: 30115

Telephone: 643-616-3643

E-mail: allison.aicher@gmail.com

Applicant Status:

- ☐ Owner  
☒ Option to Purchase  
☐ Leasee  
☐ Area Resident  
☐ Other (Explain): \_\_\_\_\_

This Authorization of Owner and Applicant Form has been completed and the property owner's signature is

Sworn To and Subscribed Before Me This 30th  
Day Of October, 2025.

Notary Signature: M. Bittig







Community Development Department  
110 Academy Street, Canton, GA 30114  
(770) 704-1500

## DISCLOSURE FORM

Project #(s):

RZON2510-005

**O.C.G.A. § 36-67A-2 / O.C.G.A. § 36-67A-3 requires disclosure of campaign contributions to government officials by an Applicant or opponent of a Public Hearing petition. Applicants must file this form with the Department of Community Development. Please complete a separate form for each authorized Applicant.**

Name of Applicant/Opponent: Allison Aicher

### Section 1

If the answer to any of the following questions is "Yes," complete Section 2.

- A) Are you, or anyone else with a property interest in the subject property, a member of the City of Canton Mayor and City Council?  
☐ YES ☒ NO
- B) Does an official of such public bodies have any financial interest in any business entity which has a property interest in the subject property?  
☐ YES ☒ NO
- C) Does a member of the family of such officials have an interest in the subject property as described in (A) and (B)?  
☐ YES ☒ NO
- D) Within Two (2) years of immediately preceding this application have you made campaign contributions(s) or given gifts to such public officials aggregating \$250 or more?  
☐ YES ☒ NO

### Section 2

1. Name and the official position of the Canton Official to whom the campaign contribution was made **(Please use a separate form for each official to whom a contribution has been made in the past (2) years):**

2. List the dollar amount/value and description of each campaign contribution made over the past two (2) years by the Applicant/Opponent to the named Canton Official:

	Description
\$	
\$	
\$	





Community Development Department  
110 Academy Street, Canton, GA 30114  
(770) 704-1500

## PROPERTY INFORMATION

Project #(s):

RZON2510-005

Address: 264 Marietta Highway

Land Lot(s): 158 District: 14<sup>th</sup> Section: 2<sup>nd</sup> Parcel ID(s) 91N06B010

Existing Zoning Of Property: OI ☒ City ☐ County Total Acreage Of Property: 5.15

Proposed Zoning Of Property: GC Existing Use(s) Of Property: Single family residential

## ADJACENT PROPERTY/OWNER INFORMATION:

Please provide the following information for all adjacent properties, including property connected by public rights-of-way. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

	OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS/PARCEL ID	CURRENT ZONING	CURRENT LAND USE
(1) NORTH	91N06B002E WG Northwood Equities LLC	RM-15	Townhome/MF dev.
(4) SOUTH	14N17031 9460 LLC	GC	Rest - Krystal
(2) EAST	91N06B002F Goshen Valley Farm Inc	OI	Office - Health human s
(6) WEST	91N06B006 ASF TAP GA III LLC	R-20	Vacant Land
South (5) OTHER	14N17030 Somani Properties LLC	GC	Gas Station
East (3) OTHER	91N06B011A 220 Marietta Highway Canton LLC	GB	Restaurant - Mexican
West (7) OTHER	91N06B002C Mary Elizabeth Bennett	R-20	Vacant land

## UTILITY INFORMATION:

How is sewage from this development to be managed? City of Canton

Proposed managing jurisdiction: City of Canton - Same

How will water be provided to the site? City of Canton

Proposed managing jurisdiction: City of Canton - Same Size Limit: NA





Community Development Department  
110 Academy Street, Canton, GA 30114  
(770) 704-1500

## PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

Project #(s):

RZON 2510-005

### PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICY STATEMENT:

"The Mayor and Council of the City of Canton hereby recognize that growth and development can, at times, have an effect on school capacity within the county and therefore recognize the need to share information on developments that have regional impact. In an effort to cooperate with the Cherokee County School [District] and share information on residential rezoning requests, master plan applications, and land use modifications to the comprehensive land use plan, the Mayor and Council hereby encourage open dialogue and meeting between the Applicant and the appropriate school board representative." (105.10.04)

- **Developers whose projects consist of 25 or more residential units shall contact the Cherokee County School District and communicate with a school board representative to discuss their intent.**
- **This communication between the Applicant and the school board should take place, at a minimum, prior to the Informational Item meeting in Month Two (see Pages iii and iv).**
- The Applicant should be prepared to address such communication if requested by the Mayor and Council at the meeting in which final action is to be taken.

The current Cherokee County School District contact regarding any potential mitigation required for this application and proposal is:

**Mitch Hamilton**  
**Director of Planning, Facilities, and Compliance**  
200 Mountain Brook Court  
Canton, GA 30115  
(770) 721-8429  
mitch.hamilton@cherokeek12.net

### ZONED SCHOOLS: (circle one each)

<u>HIGH:</u>	CHEROKEE	CREEKVIEW	ETOWAH	SEQUOYAH
<u>MIDDLE:</u>	CREEKLAND	DEAN RUSK	FREEDOM	TEASLEY
<u>ELEMENTARY:</u>	AVERY	BALL GROUND	CLAYTON	HASTY
	INDIAN KNOLL	KNOX	R.M. MOORE	SIXES

Not applicable;  
no school age  
children





Community Development Department

110 Academy Street, Canton, GA 30114

(770) 704-1500

## REVIEW CRITERIA

Project #(s):

RZON2510-005

How will this proposal be compatible with surrounding properties? The zoning of GC fits with surrounding GC uses such as restaurants, office buildings and commercial developments. It fits in with nearby residential as the exterior will remain unchanged.

How will this proposal affect the use and value of surrounding properties? There should be minimal value change for surrounding properties as many are GC already and the residential is vacant land or boarded up vacant houses.

Can the property be developed for a reasonable economic use as currently zoned? Please explain why or why not.

City of Canton Zoning has requested rezoning for the proposed use.

What would be the increase to population and traffic if the proposal were approved? No substantial traffic implications will be experienced from this proposal. Cars entering and exiting should not exceed 10 and no they will not occur at the same time.

What would be the impact to schools and utilities if the proposal were approved? No impact to schools as the population is 1st. Utilities are already in place, however, water and electricity use will increase.

How is the proposal consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map? The proposal is consistent as the CBD continues to grow and commercial uses expand.

How is the proposal consistent with the City of Canton Roadmap of Success? -This supports Advancing Regional Economic Success and Celebrating the Diversity of Our Community.

Are there existing or changing conditions which affect the development of the property and support the proposed request? North Georgia and the Atlanta MSA has a need for supportive housing for people recovering from substance abuse disorder.

(These criteria should additionally be addressed in the required Letter of Intent.)





October 29, 2025

City of Canton Council Members

110 Academy Street

Canton, GA 30114

RE: Rezoning 264 Marietta Highway Canton Georgia

Dear Council Members,

This document is to serve as a Letter of Intent for the rezoning of the property located at 264 Marietta Highway, Canton, GA 30114 from the existing zoning of OI to GC.

**The Property:**

The current property is owned by the Vickers. It is currently a single family residence with 3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms comprising 4,857 SF. The property has one level completely finished and offers a second level with plumbing, electrical, and framing which upon final build out would increase the SF to approximately 10,000 SF. The property has been owned by the same family since 1952 and has been used as a residence. In 2001 the original house was remodeled into the current structure.

**The Impact:**

The proposed use will not impact traffic patterns as most residents will be provided transportation to and from treatment, substance abuse/AA meetings, and stores. The proposed use will not change the exterior of the property, acreage of the property (5.15 acres), landscaping of the property or require signage. The primary purpose will be to provide individuals a safe living environment while minimizing the impact on adjoining properties. As such, the impact to adjoining property values will be minimal. The current zoning is OI which allows for office and institutional use, however, there is a deed restriction that the property remain residential in nature. The proposed use of the property under General Commercial (rooming and boarding) would be to provide housing for individuals receiving treatment for substance abuse disorder as a licensed Residential Transitional Treatment Program. This will have a tremendous impact on the lives and families receiving services and aligns with the City of Canton's Roadmap of Success in two key areas: Celebrating Diversity and Advancing Economic



Success. A portion of driving economic success is to engage citizens to live, work, and play here. Residents will receive help finding jobs, volunteering, and be encouraged to build community in Canton. This use will also employ 3-5 people. Celebrating Diversity is more than the exterior. Diversity of life experiences, healing, and transformation are powerful tools in any community development. This use will provide men with the ability to become part of a community and learn how their past does not solely dictate their future.

### **Who We Are:**

Firm Foundation Treatment Center was founded in 2024 by Brian Aicher. His career spans 15-years in Behavioral Health ranging from managing sober living to private practice as an LCSW to being a program director at other facilities. He has witnessed what treatment modalities work and what modalities are harmful for patients. Furthermore, he has seen how some treatment facilities treat the patients as subhuman, merely means to bill insurance companies with very little care and therapeutic services provided. A core principle for FFTC is to love people and treat people the way that Christ would. As Christ walked with the prostitutes and lepers, we strive to walk with the marginalized who desire freedom from addiction. Our Vision Statement is simple: FIRM FOUNDATION envisions helping others better their lives from the destructive nature of substance abuse disorders, and mental health issues through an evidence-based Christ centered approach while empowering families and the community through education and advocacy.

Firm Foundation Treatment Center is located in Woodstock, GA. Firm Foundation Treatment Center is licensed through the Georgia Department of Community Health, accredited through the Joint Commission, and credentialed through Tri-Care (veteran insurance) and Blue Cross Blue Shield. 264 Marietta Highway would be a licensed Residential Transition Program under FFTC. As such, any employee on site would be screening and supervised in accordance with GA Department of Community Health and Joint Commission standards. Also, any resident would be subject to the same screening, admission criteria, suicide screening, and clinical treatment as defined in the FFTC policies and procedures. Policies and procedures have been reviewed and approved by Joint Commission and the State and include questions regarding any type of criminal history.

There will be dedicated staff to the property to oversee resident activity, provide therapeutic services, education, and case management support. This level of care falls under Rule 111-8-19-.21 Residential Transitional Treatment Programs. This requires that all activities at the property are subject to all the same policies and procedures that FFTC adheres to with the addition site specific outpatient services on site that include group and individual therapy, group activities, budgeting, education, and potential legal support. Also, there should be sufficient types and numbers of staff members on duty in the residence to provide for safe supervision of clients whenever clients are present.

### **The Need:**

- 1) Overdose is the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18-44.
- 2) In 2023 alone, more than 107,000 people in the U.S. died of a drug overdose, with roughly 70 percent of those deaths involving fentanyl.
- 3) From 2011-2017, the number of heroin-related deaths went up by 3844% in Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties.
- 4) Greater Atlanta has been classified as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area which impacts all surrounding counties.

Substance Abuse still remains a major issue impacting families and individuals. People often stigmatize people suffering from substance abuse which leads people away from treatment due to guilt and shame. FFTC strives to break that cycle of guilt and shame through Christ's love and evidenced based therapeutic services. During their treatment stay, men are required to commit to PHP (full day treatment) for 30-days and 60-days of IOP (half day treatment).

As a result of the destructive nature of addiction, most of FFTC's clients require supportive housing throughout the treatment process, and we would use the Marietta Road property solely for this purpose: to create a safe, structured, and community-based environment for men to navigate treatment and transition either back to independent living or to a step-down sober living environment. Many treatment facilities do not offer these types of supportive services and instead cycle men through treatment without providing dynamic family support, community engagement, or proper aftercare planning. Unfortunately, this often leads to relapse and, at times, death. We are passionate about offering Christ centered care to Cherokee County and uplifting our community.

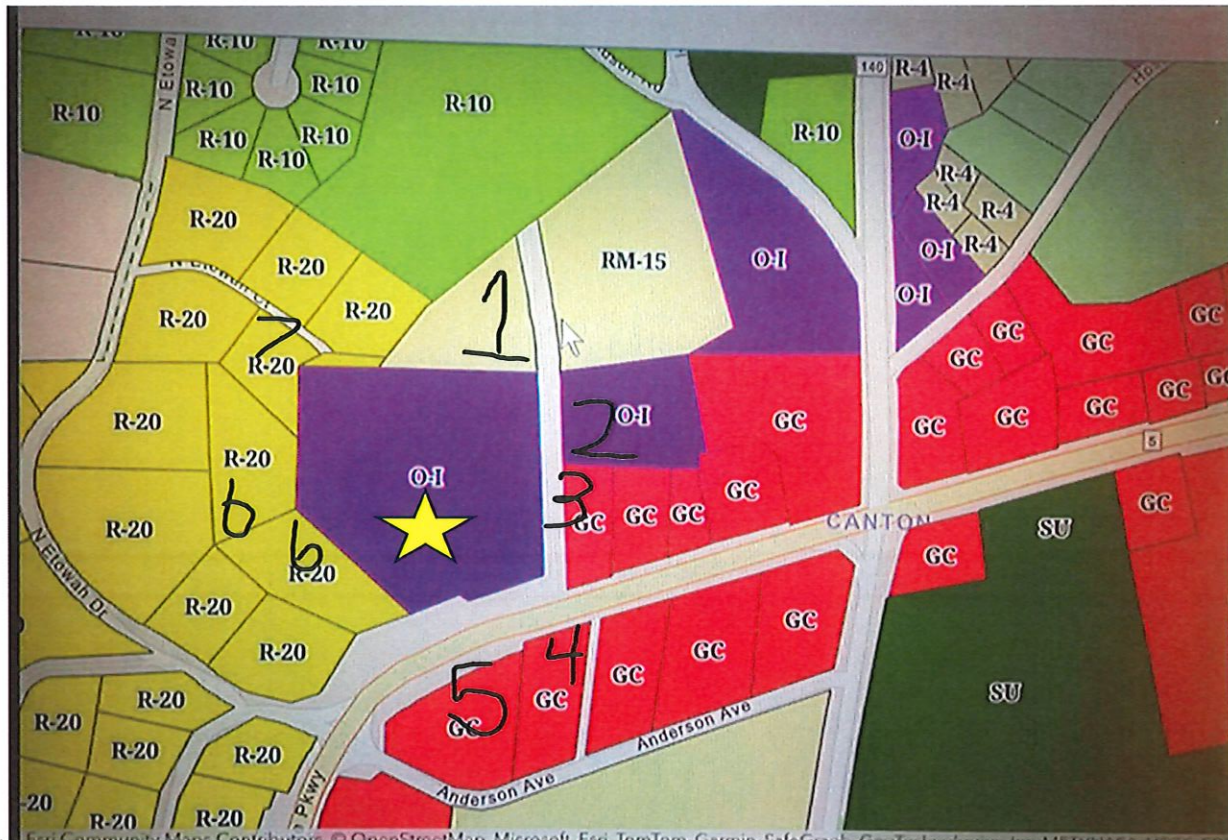
Family programming is also central to our mission. Our Program Director is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with experience building robust family programs at a major treatment center in the past. We are committed to assisting families through the addiction process by helping them establish healthy boundaries and appropriate expectations throughout the treatment timeline. Additionally, community engagement is a vital part of our program. We require participants to become employed, attend 12-step meetings, participate in church services (or another spiritual group if they are not comfortable with church at their current stage of faith), and maintain accountability within the Firm Foundation community. This includes completing chores, tasks around the house, and engaging in community meetings.



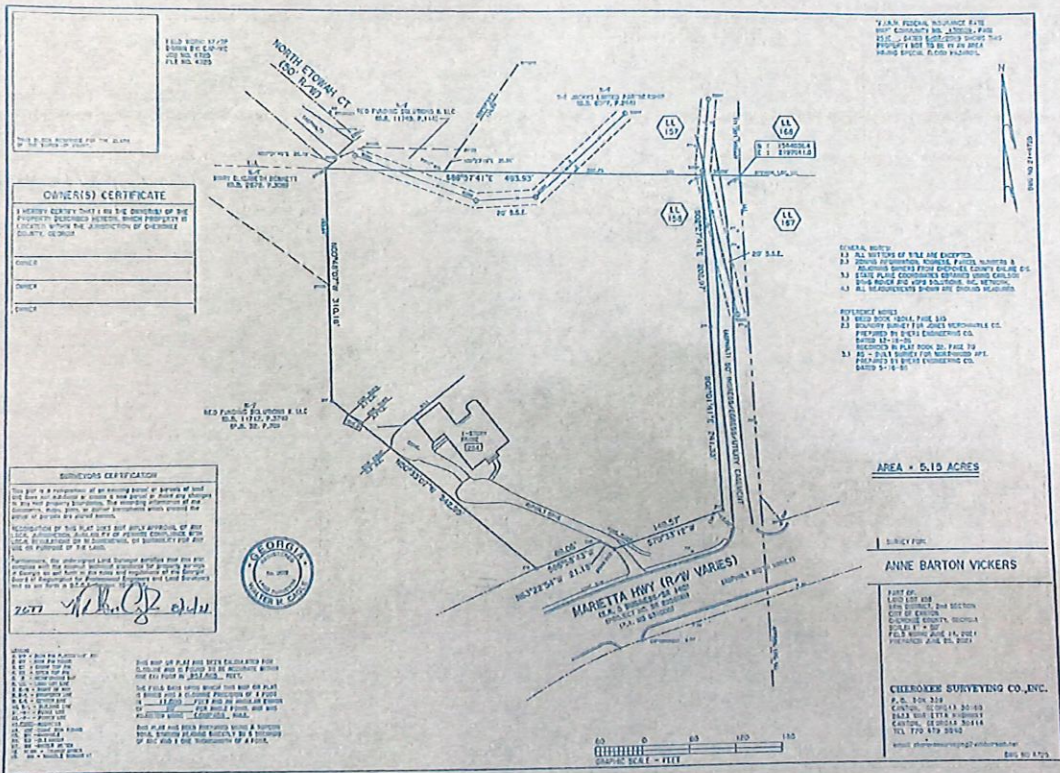
The proposed use and zoning would allow Firm Foundation Treatment Center to provide safe, stable, community-oriented housing as patients transition from substance abuse treatment back into the community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Allison Aicher







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The meeting began at 6:30pm with introductions from Brian and Allison Aicher as representatives of Firm Foundation Treatment Center and Troy and Chris McMahan, who were there as their friends and Realtors to help answer questions. The following chart captures questions asked by community and responses from the 4 people mentioned above unless stated otherwise.

Questions	Responses
Are you a 501(c)3 or a business?	Both. Firm Foundations Treatment Center, the prospective purchaser of the 264 Marietta Hwy property is a for-profit business. A related 501(c)3 has been setup so that in the future, men in the program who need help with daily living costs can be sponsored by funds from the non-profit. A capital campaign to raise funds for the 501(c)3 is being planned for 2026.
Where are the funds to purchase the property coming from?	Mostly from the Aichers, but some will come from friends and family investing in the business and the rest from a mortgage.
What is the difference between the Woodstock facility and the future facility located at 264 Marietta Hwy?	The Woodstock facility is the office and actual treatment center where the counseling and treatment takes place. The 264 Marietta Hwy property will be used as a dormitory for the men who are enrolled in the treatment program.
What types of treatment are done at the Woodstock facility?	Outpatient care only. Men needing crisis stabilization or detox or men that need psychiatric care for behavioral health issues are referred to other groups/facilities.
How many men will be housed in the facility?	16 to 20 is the current projection
Could the facility be expanded to house say 60 to 80 men?	No
What are the qualifications for the men who will be housed in the 264 Marietta facility?	Male Not actively using drugs or alcohol No medically assisted treatment required No behavioral health issues No sexual offenders



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	No violent crime offenders Those who need housing
How long will the men stay at the 264 Marietta facility?	For the full length of the program which is 90 days. The first 30 days is full-time care and the last 60 is part time.
Would you classify Firm Foundations as a business or a ministry?	Both. It is a for-profit business, but a ministry in the sense that God called the Aichers to step out to create a christ-centered, faith-based substance abuse center in Cherokee County.
How long has Firm Foundations been located in Woodstock?	Since August 2024
What are your expansion plans for this facility?	No plans to expand the dormitory facility, but would like to open a treatment center and dormitory for women in the future.
How do other substance abuse centers house their patients?	Many will rent apartments, but this doesn't allow for the type of supervision and "in-home" support that will be provided in this facility.
The nearby residents (north and northwest of property on N. Etowah Dr and Ct.) stated their perception that this facility will drive down property values.	
Will we be putting up some sort of a fence?	We are open to that. This is not a prison where men are not allowed to leave, so it won't be fully gated, but a fence facing the neighbors that have expressed concern can be considered. Reminded the group that the men in the home are actively sober, heavily supervised, are looking for healing and have a desire to get back to their families, community, and work.
What does the supervision in the house look like?	Currently in the process of hiring a housing director and will have 3 to 5 staff available to work at the facility with at least 1 person on site at all times.
Since you are a relatively new business, what is your experience with this treatment model and has it been successful?	Yes, Aichers have personal experience and success with this treatment model and have a person from MARR on the Firm Foundations board. MARR has had great success with this type of treatment.

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Will board members be from the community?	Yes, most live in Cherokee County/Canton.
Is there enough room in that structure for 16-20 people?	Yes, but it will require renovations and will be built out to meet/exceed state and joint commission standards for living facilities.
Where does money to operate the business come from?	Insurance premiums, direct fees paid by patients, and personal equity.
Have you had any complaints from the Department of Community Health?	No
Are the residents volunteer or court-ordered to be in the program? What is the ratio?	Both. Current ratio is 100% volunteer.
Do you treat drug or alcohol addiction or both?	Both
Will the residents get medications as part of their treatment?	Yes, administration of medications is closely supervised by the Firm Foundations staff. A psychiatrist is the medical director and a psych NP oversees medications throughout treatment. This is not a medication assisted treatment program; there is no suboxone, methadone or other detox medications provided.
Do you have any connections with Alcoholics Anonymous?	Yes, patients are required to attend AA.
Is the treatment spiritual or clinical?	Both. Treatment includes clinical counseling, spiritual counseling, and drug testing.
Why do you test for drugs?	It is a better form of treatment and it is required by the state.
Is there a risk for re-lapse during or after the treatment program?	Yes. That is why the patients/residents are closely supervised during the program and that AA is encouraged after the program.
What authority does Firm Foundations have if rules are broken?	The person is kicked out of the program. If they don't have their own vehicle or cannot be picked up by a family member or friend, they are transported to their home, a family member's home or friend's home.
What happens after the 90 day program ends?	The person will graduate and then is discharged. If they don't have their own vehicle or cannot be picked up by a family member or friend, they are transported to their home, a family member's home or friend's home. Discharge planning is part of



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	state licensure and Joint Commission accreditation.
Can you guarantee that there will never be a violent offender or sexual offender at the property?	The screening process is very thorough, but cannot absolute guarantee this, since something like peeing in public will tag a person as a sexual offender.
What happens when a resident has a relapse, exhibits violent behavior, or is aggressive towards other residents?	Firm Foundations has extensive rules and policies in place that have been submitted to the state and joint commission for how to deal with these types of incidents and behaviors. These rules were also submitted to the city as part of the rezoning process. The on-site staff would follow the rules and procedures and would handle the situation themselves unless they felt like police needed to be involved, and in that case, would call the police.
Can the residents have a job while in the program?	Yes, and in fact, during the last 60 days of the program, which is the part-time portion of the program, the residents are actually required to either work part-time or actively volunteer part-time.
Will there be other security measures in place?	There are plans for outside lights and security cameras.
Are there policies against loitering and congregating?	Yes
Is there any mechanism for communicating with the community?	There certainly can be and that type of community involvement would be welcomed. Firm Foundations desires to be an asset to and a part of any community it is located in. The housing manager would be a great contact person for the community.
Why this location?	It was already zoned OI, which Firm Foundations thought would allow for a group home per the zoning ordinances. The city wanted it rezoned to GC for a rooming and boarding use.
Are you worried that the proximity to Reformation brewery and grocery nearby where the residents could purchase alcohol will be a problem?	Because of the rules, supervision, and drug testing, we don't see this as a concern. In fact, we believe it is the perfect location because of proximity to extensive walking trails, the YMCA, and grocery.

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Could you put this facility into an industrial zone.	We don't think so
What is your rate of success?	We have had several clients graduate and stay sober.
What is the average relapse rate of people with addictions?	Overall, it is high
Will the property be ADA compliant?	Yes
What are the fire protection plans?	Sprinklered, Lighted exits, quarterly fire drills, and whatever else the fire marshal requires.
What kind of support do you have to run this business?	The Community Outreach director, Tom Coughlin spoke up and described how involved Firm Foundations has been in the Cherokee Collective and active with churches. Also, the Aicher's church has been very supportive through prayer. Besides the Aichers, the board and 13 staff members are working on this initiative.
Have you worked in this type of residential sober living model before?	No, not directly, but familiar with groups like Second Chances and Sobriety Resources of America who have had success with this model.
How private will this facility be?	The intent is to have it be very private. There are no plans for signage describing the facility. It will continue to look like a residential property.
Has Firm Foundations connected with local churches?	Yes, the outreach director meets regularly with several churches and is open to meeting with others if there are others interested.
Could the community members review the rules and procedures provided to the state and city?	Yes, they are about 100 pages long though.
Is was stated the residents will have limited access to vehicles. What does that mean?	Some residents will have a vehicle and some will not. Those with a vehicle will be supervised as to how and when they can use their vehicle.
A resident expressed concern about an autistic daughter that frequently walks on N. Etowah Dr. How can Firm Foundation ensure her safety? Can you put a breathalyzer into resident's cars?	As previously mentioned, there are strict rules and procedures in place related to all aspects of living in the facility, including driver. No alcohol or drugs or any kind are allowed in the facility. Those who break the rules will be removed from the program. Firm Foundations does not have the authority to



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	place breathalyzer's into personal vehicles. The driveway to the 264 Marietta Hwy property sits on Marietta Hwy. There is no direct access from the property to N. Etowah Drive or Court and there will be no reason for residents to drive on N. Etowah Drive or Court since there are no businesses located there.
Darrell Rice introduced himself as the incoming district 1 city councilperson and encouraged everyone to attend the January 8 meeting where the city council will hear 10 minutes for and against this rezoning application.	

The residents were thanked by Darrell Rice and the Aichers for their active participation and questions. The Aichers reiterated their desire to be a partner in the community with local residents and businesses. The meeting officially adjourned at 7:40pm.

Mr. Green,

Thank you for providing your notes summarizing the January 8<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting. I will do my best to answer all the council members' questions while addressing some community concerns in the most succinct and easy way possible, however, some terminology may warrant further questions, and I am happy to answer any residual questions as they arise.

**Question 1: Is FFTC a 501(c) 3? How /where do the funds come from?**

**Response:** Firm Foundation Treatment Center accepts commercial insurance policies currently. Outpatient treatment services are billed and paid for through health insurance. Firm Foundation did start a 501 (c ) 3 to help scholarship individuals through treatment should they not have resources to pay. Our dream is to have a successful non-profit in the future that fully covers the cost of treatment for individuals without commercial insurance. As we are able, we try to provide treatment for individuals who do not have the ability to pay.

**Question: What are relapse rates for individuals recovering from SUD?**

**Response:** I believe relapse rates are one of the most challenging concerns raised not because I dispute their presence, but the data is difficult to determine when the relapses happen (in treatment versus post treatment), the duration of the relapse (one drink versus months of heavy use), substance used for relapse, etc. Researchers found a very fragmented and often undefined term for relapse. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) estimates that between 40% to 60% of people relapse “early on.” There are few concrete data points surrounding how early on is classified i.e. post detox, was longer term treatment sought, or the relapse being post-treatment.

Alcohol Clinical and Experimental Research found the mean number of attempts for sobriety was 5.35 times while the median attempts for sobriety was only 2 times, however this drives statistics high for relapse rates as 58% of people screened during intake procedures indicate they have previous treatment stays. If screening process is used as the indicator for relapse rates, no further evidence is gathered which perpetuates the inconsistency of data analyzed.

Also, there are a lot of articles posted on peer review sites that are not specific to the United States. Articles discussing relapse rates are difficult to ascertain as research is not



cohesive and can be specific to different countries as an article posted on the NIH website reported an 85.5% relapse rate however it only surveyed 400 men from Southern Iran<sup>1</sup>.

In summary, relapse does happen for individuals suffering from AUD and SUD; it is a risk with a treatment center, however, the data on specific timing, length of use, and type of use is limited and more positive when evaluated with a critical eye versus a stigmatized eye.

**Question: What are FFTC's relapse protocols?**

**Response:** Upon admission into housing, Clients will identify and sign releases for a higher level of care; either detox or residential. They will also identify an emergency contact who will also agree that in the case of a relapse they are the party responsible. If a Client does relapse, the first step will be to contact the pre-identified higher level of care for transportation and admission. Should a Client refuse the higher level of care, the Client will be removed from housing and taken to the treatment center in Woodstock where the emergency contact will pick them up.

Client's refusal of higher level of care or leaving with a family member throughout Brian's career is exceedingly rare (less than 4 times over 14-15 years). However, Brian is an LCSW which has the authority to 1013 a Client should a Client be resistant. 1013 means they are admitted into a hospital against their will. Again, this is a very rare worst scenario.

**Question: How often are Clients drug screened?**

**Response:** In addition to relapse protocols, clients are drug screened on a frequent basis. A random drug screening system is part of the treatment services in Woodstock; however, it is not completely random as clients are screened 2-3 times a week. The randomization is more directed to the days in which the screen takes place versus the people screened. In addition to screening done by FFTC, a third party lab company also screens clients 2 times per week. This company performs a 12-panel test that analyzes chemicals in the sample to ensure appropriate levels of medications are present based on prescriptions.

**Question: Are home values impacted?**

**Response:** There have been studies done that show that home values near a SUDTC have declined. However, many of those studies were challenged and have found to have not used proper statistical sampling and were discredited. There are an equal number or more studies to have shown that home prices stay flat or even rise with the presence of a SUDTC nearby.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11080208/>

The impact on any surrounding property value is further mitigated by the exterior of 264 Marietta Highway remaining unchanged and no signage. Someone driving by would not know or have attention drawn to the operations at the property.

**Question: Transportation? Parking?**

**Response:** Transportation, traffic impacts, and parking were also questioned during the meeting. People will not have access to a personal vehicle during the initial stay at facility (immersion phase). To accommodate no access to vehicles, Firm Foundation will provide transportation through a 12-passenger van and/or a minivan. These two vehicles provide transport for 19 people. Post immersion phase, limited vehicle use will be permitted for residents that satisfy behavioral parameters such as active engagement in treatment, completing assignments on time, and adherence to house rules. Car privileges can be revoked during their treatment stay. The property has a 3-car garage, a concrete area outside of the garage with room for up to 4 vehicles and a parking area on the driveway for 3-4 cars depending on size. Also in bringing the property up to ADA standards, we will be adding a handicap space next to the side entrance and potentially 2 additional parking spots for the overnight staff. In aggregate this provides parking for 14 cars.

With traffic counts on Marietta Highway approaching 20,000 vehicles daily, the additional 2 van trips and possibly 12 vehicle trips will have limited to no impact on traffic.

**Question: FFTC's ideal occupancy? Occupancy max per state?**

**Response:** Occupancy at the property was discussed as well. As we have started the space planning process, things have been in flux. There was a time where we believed the structure would have to remain R-4 which capped occupancy at 16. However, as conversations have continued with the City of Canton Fire Marshall, it was recommended that the renovations elevate this to I-1 International Building Codes which do not have the same occupancy cap as R-4. This classification does require more fire related code adherence. With the 16 occupancy cap no longer driving the restrictions, FFTC's ideal client count for the property is 21 residents with 2-3 staff on site for and aggregate occupancy not to exceed 24.

At the time of application, it was estimated the property size was 10,000 square feet. Upon verification of square footage with an architect that is not correct. The first floor totals 3,672 square feet while a fully built out second floor totals 3,135 square feet for a total of 6,807. Rooming and boarding houses as an industry standard require 100 square feet for one resident and an additional 50 for each additional resident. Yet, when considering the residential nature of the home, Realtor.com suggests 200 to 400 square feet per person. That calculation would range from 17 to 34 people in the residence.



In addition to research on rooming and boarding homes and residential properties, the state of Georgia has requirements for the property. The Department of Community Health requires no less than 100 square feet of bedroom space for single occupant rooms and 60 square feet for multiple occupant rooms. Floor 1 has 811 square feet of bedroom space while floor 2 has 1,587 square feet. This would equate to a single occupant cap of 23.98 (24) people. While most rooms at the property would be multiple occupant rooms and allow for more residents per state standards (approximately 30-32), FFTC feels 24 is appropriate.

The state has requirements for toilet and shower ratios for Residential Transitional Treatment Programs as well. There must be a 6:1 ratio for toilets to people ratio and 10:1 ratio for showers to residents. Our initial plans have 10 showers which equates to a 2.4:1 ratio for showers. There will be 8 toilets which equates to 3:1 ratio for toilets, however, there are also plans for 2 urinals which would reduce that ratio down to 2.4:1 to match the shower ratio.

**Question: How often will the population be turned over?**

**Response:** The treatment program is a 90-day program. It is unlikely complete turnover at the property will happen at the same time. This is due to the dynamic nature of treatment and individualized treatment plans that are developed upon admission. Some clients may be suitable for lower levels or care more quickly than others. There may be some clients that need full day treatment for longer periods of time than others. People will cycle in and out of the program on a regular basis and a rough estimate would be approximately 4 completely different groups of people would happen over 12-months. Again, this would occur in a staggered flow versus a full occupied versus empty property all at once.

**Question: Do SUDTC impact crime?**

**Response:** Crime and strain on public services was addressed as a concern by the community. This unfortunately is another stigma associated with individuals that suffer from SUD or AUD. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health research suggests there may actually be less serious crime near clinics than other community businesses<sup>2</sup>. Pinkerton also cited a 2018 study which found similar results and ultimately concluded

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<sup>2</sup> [https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2016/violent-crime-lower-near-drug-treatment-centers-than-other-commercial-areas?\\_cf\\_chl\\_tk=9WYXo5sNNPbnCN65cQHytZsx0\\_R7OqfWVkpSrDbXE4-1768916056-1.0.1.1-J0.WPJWkIBMe8R8KLdqCNXSCrmyD4\\_hwx34cQBjEkbM](https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2016/violent-crime-lower-near-drug-treatment-centers-than-other-commercial-areas?_cf_chl_tk=9WYXo5sNNPbnCN65cQHytZsx0_R7OqfWVkpSrDbXE4-1768916056-1.0.1.1-J0.WPJWkIBMe8R8KLdqCNXSCrmyD4_hwx34cQBjEkbM)

that investments in drug and alcohol treatment centers' benefits outweigh the costs associated with the programs<sup>3</sup>.

### **Summary:**

We understand the sensitive nature of this request given the stigma associated with individuals suffering from SUD and AUD. However, as more research is done regarding treatment, evidence is demonstrating that it is stigma versus data that causes sensitivity. Stigma for individuals suffering from AUD and SUD has become so rampant in society that lawmakers have recently taken notice. Georgia passed a bill in 2024 that prevented discriminatory practices against treatment facilities. This is also supported by the Fair Housing Act which protects SUD and AUD from discriminatory practices from landlords. Treatment is the first step towards healing; FFTC seeks to help men take that first step towards healing as a community uplifted by the transformative power of Jesus.

### **Further Information on Relapse:**

A study published in November 2021 in the Drug and Alcohol Review titled, "Is the relapse concept in studies of substance use disorders a 'one size fits all' concept? A systematic review of relapse operationalization's,"<sup>4</sup> debated the topic of what a relapse is. Most studies and publications do not define when the relapse happened. It becomes an exceedingly difficult task to identify specifics on overall relapse rates specific to during treatment stays. In FFTC's operation, most clients that relapse leave treatment before drug or alcohol use.

One of the best articles to discuss the intricacies of relapse was published in Alcohol Clinical and Experimental Research from May 2019 titled, "How Many Recovery Attempts Does It Take to Successfully Resolve an Alcohol or Drug Problem? Estimates and Correlates from a National Study of Recovering U.S. Adults<sup>5</sup>." Substance Use Disorders have a stigma of "chronically-relapsing" which has been perpetuated by previous research but is now being challenged and needing more nuanced research. Relapse rates are often gauged through a series of questions during the admission process as part of the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://pinkerton.com/our-insights/blog/reducing-substance-abuse-and-crime#:~:text=According%20to%20a%202018%20study%20published%20in,are%20particularly%20strong%20in%20highly%20populated%20areas.>

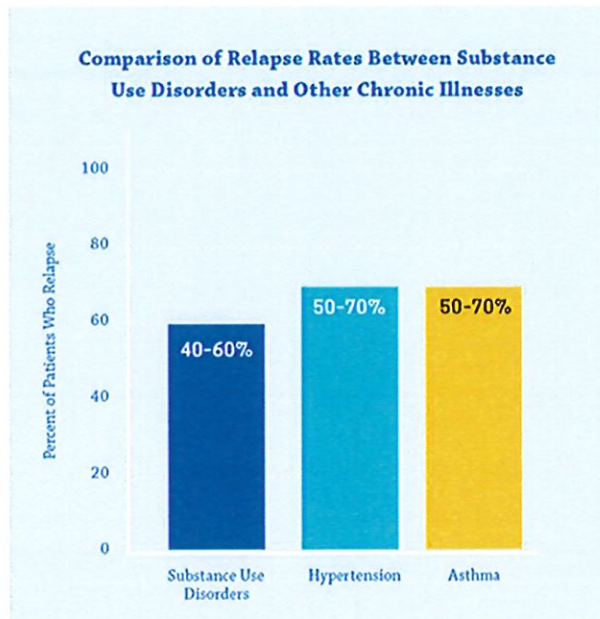
<sup>4</sup> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dar.13401>

<sup>5</sup> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/acer.14067>



biopsychosocial. If a client has sought treatment or detox previously, it would be signaled as a someone who relapsed. However, the nuance of the situation is not fully assessed in the data as a detox stay without further treatment would widely not be considered a true effort to become sober. This is demonstrated in the more nuanced analysis that the mean of recovery attempts is 5.35 with a mean of only 2 times, but if the clients are asked, they report one serious attempt for sobriety.

Articles on relapse and the chronic nature of relapse perpetuate a stigma that treatment and recovery are not effective. However, this is due to social issues surrounding the diseases of alcoholism and SUD, because research shows higher levels of relapse for hypertension and asthma. Yet when an individual relapses considering those medical conditions, it is not viewed as harshly as substance abuse; see chart below.



*JAMA, 284:1689-1695, 2000.*

### Further detail on Home Values:

Another concern raised during the meeting is the impact a treatment center would have on surrounding property values. A study in Virginia in 2014 found that property values could decrease between 8-10% with the opening of a SUDTC (substance use disorder treatment center) in close proximity to residential homes. However, this research was challenged by the National Board of Economic Research's<sup>6</sup> statistical research released in January 2019. The conclusion reached was the following, "When an SDD model is applied, we find no

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w25427/w25427.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25427/w25427.pdf)

evidence that SUDTCs affect property values. Overall, our findings suggest anecdotal claims that SUDTCs reduce property values are potentially overstated.”

This notion is supported by earlier research posted on Researchgate<sup>7</sup> and Journal of Community Psychology<sup>8</sup> (readable through NIH). Again, stigma associated with AUD/SUD often drives negative perception. This is further mitigated by the exterior of 264 Marietta Highway remaining the same and no signage. Someone driving past the property would not know or have their attention drawn to the operations.

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<sup>7</sup>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227638888\\_The\\_Effect\\_of\\_Group\\_Homes\\_on\\_Neighborhood\\_Property\\_Values](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227638888_The_Effect_of_Group_Homes_on_Neighborhood_Property_Values)

<sup>8</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3205983/>