



**CITY OF SNELLVILLE
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION**

CASE SUMMARY

July 22, 2025

CASE NUMBER:	RZ 25-05
REQUEST:	Rezoning and Request for Variances
LOCATION:	Tree Ln (Behind 12 Stone Church) 1719 Scenic Highway, Snellville, Georgia
SIZE:	15.01± Acres
TAX PARCEL:	5056 003
CURRENT ZONING:	BG (General Business) District
REQUESTED ZONING:	R-TH (Townhouse Residential) District
CURRENT FUTURE LAND PLAN:	Health Village
DEVELOPMENT/PROJECT:	108-Unit Single-Family (Attached) Townhome Development
PROPERTY OWNER:	Tree Lane Development, LLC Fishers, Indiana 46037
APPLICANT/CONTACT:	DeThomas Investments, LLC Robert "Jack" Wilson, Attorney for Applicant Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046 770-962-9780 JWilson@rjwpclaw.com
RECOMENDATION:	Approval with Conditions



**CITY OF SNELLVILLE
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION**

CASE ANALYSIS

July 22, 2025

TO: The Planning Commission

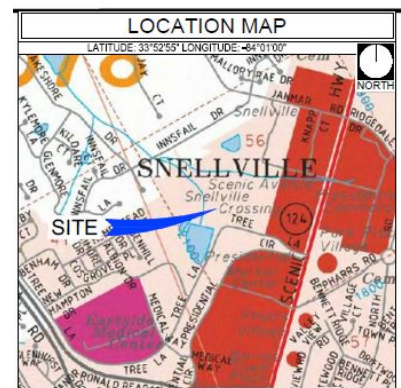
MEETING DATE: July 22, 2025

FROM: Jason Thompson, Director
Department of Planning and Development

CASE NUMBER: RZ 25-05

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The Department of Planning and Development received application from Robert “Jack” Wilson, Attorney for applicant, DeThomas Investments, LLC and property owner Tree Lane Development, LLC requesting to amend the Official Zoning Map for a 15.01± acre site located on Tree Ln, behind 12 Stone Church, 1719 Scenic Highway, Snellville for a 108-unit single-family (attached) townhouse development with a gross density of 7.20 units per acre. The applicant is also requesting several variances from the Snellville Unified Development Ordinance.



The proposed development site is located 250± feet west from the Tree Ln and Scenic Highway (S.R. 124N) intersection and 1,300± feet north of Piedmont Eastside Hospital and Medical Center on a single 15.01± acre parcel. The site is adjacent to a 15± acre

undeveloped tract (zoned BG) to the north; 12 Stone Church campus (zoned BG) to the east; four single-family (detached) residential properties in the Waterford Township subdivision in unincorporated Gwinnett County (zoned R-100) to the west; and to the south is The Sheridan at Eastside senior living community (zoned RO), a regional stormwater detention pond (zoned RO and RS-15), telecommunications tower (zoned HSB), and public right-of-way.

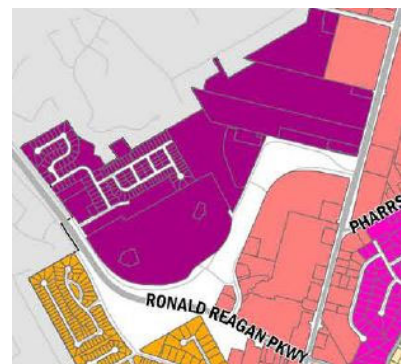
REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting:

- a) To amend the Official Zoning Map from BG (General Business) District to R-TH (Townhouse Residential) District for a 108-unit Single-family (Attached) Townhome Development on a 15.01± acre site located on Tree Ln.; and,
- b) Variances from the Snellville Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) to:
 - 1) Eliminate inter-parcel vehicle connectivity to the undeveloped 15± acre adjacent parcel to the north;
 - 2) Allow a dead-end street in lieu of cul-de-sac turnaround for streets exceeding 1,000 feet in length;
 - 3) Waive the required 50-foot minimum site setback along streets and 40-foot minimum site setback not along streets;
 - 4) Allow front-entry townhomes on lots 73-92;
 - 5) Increase the 35% maximum front yard area for driveways to 67%; and
 - 6) Reduce the 81-foot minimum local street radius to 50-feet.

SNELLVILLE 2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The proposed development site is designated *Health Village* on the February 2024 adopted Snellville 2045 Comprehensive Plan (“2045 Plan”) Future Land Use Map (shown right in purple) allowing for a variety of zoning districts including RS-5, RS-5-BTR, RM, RO, RO-BTR, CI, OP and the requested R-TH District (and R-TH-BTR).



The *Health Village* future land use category is described in the 2045 Plan as “*areas anchored by healthcare facilities and integrated with supportive services and uses such as medical offices, senior living, multi-family residences, or neighborhood services and shopping.*”

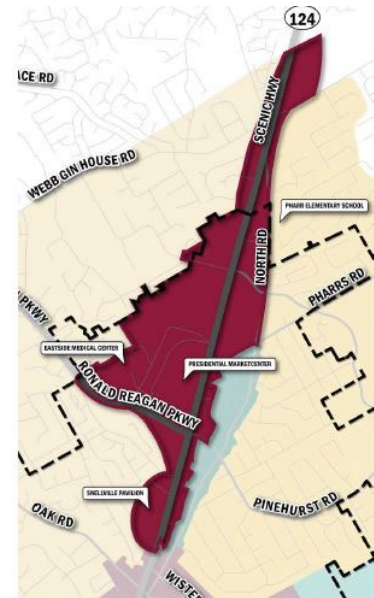
The 2045 Plan Future Development Map places the entirety of the proposed development in the *Scenic Highway North Character Area*, (shown in maroon on the following page) which consists primarily of commercial-retail, office-professional, and health village land uses.

The following excerpt from the 2045 Plan provides a description for the *Scenic Highway North Character Area*, as well as predominate land uses, vision statement, and key implementation strategies.

Scenic Highway North Character Area

Existing Character Description:

The Scenic Highway North character area is the city's economic engine, including a regionally significant shopping corridor along Scenic Highway (SR 124) and Snellville's largest employer, Piedmont Eastside Medical Center. Shopping plazas along Scenic Highway are occupied primarily by national big box retailers and have oversized surface parking lots with deep building setbacks. Piedmont Eastside Medical Center, located off Ronald Reagan Parkway on Tree Lane, has grown in recent years and plans to further expand its footprint in the area. Nearby, medical office parks have located on minor roads with convenient access to the hospital and a continuing care retirement community.



Predominate Land Uses:

Commercial-retail, office-professional, and health village.

Vision:

An impressive gateway corridor into the city containing a mixture of land uses, including destination retail and health services. Parts of this area have been redeveloped to contain additional offices and facilities for senior living.

Key Implementation Strategies:

- As shopping plazas redevelop, encourage buildings to face the street and locate parking to the side and rear
- Reduce parking requirements and encourage reuse
- Provide adequate buffers between residential neighborhoods and intense commercial development on Scenic Highway
- Construct gateway feature along Scenic Highway to signify entrance into the City of Snellville
- Require inter-parcel access between developments
- Work with Gwinnett County and GDOT to encourage wide sidewalks, landscaped medians, and crosswalks as part of the planned roadway widening project for Scenic Highway
- Enhance pedestrian connections between commercial uses and adjacent residential neighborhoods

The proposed development is compatible with surrounding residential land uses and is in line with several goals and policies of the 2045 Plan including:

- LU-1.1: Encourage compatible uses, both residential and commercial, and the utilization of transitional zones and buffers between residential and non-residential development.
- H-2.1: Encourage the construction of housing to support all age groups, incomes and lifestyles.
- Goal H-3: Encourage the development of a diversity of housing types.
- H-3.3: Encourage medium-density residential development to serve as a transitional use between higher intensity commercial and mixed-use nodes and low-density residential neighborhoods.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT ANALYSIS:

The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from BG (General Business) District to R-TH (Townhouse Residential) District where the R-TH District is intended exclusively for single-family (attached) dwelling units and customary accessory uses and structures and which are located in areas where public water and sewer are available and where there is direct access to collector streets, major streets or State routes. The district allows for a maximum gross density of 8 units per acre and requires a minimum 20% of the total site be set aside as open space.

SITE PLAN ANALYSIS:

The 3-25-2025 rezoning site plan entitled *Conceptual Site Layout 1719 Scenic Hwy* and supplemental colored rendering dated 6-5-2025 entitled *Layout A Conceptual Site Plan 1719 Scenic Hwy* (depicted below) shows the entirety of the 15± acre site as well as the parcel boundaries and owner information for adjacent properties.



June 5, 2025 Layout A Conceptual Site Plan

A total of 108 townhome units are shown, with units 1-61 and 93-108 being rear-entry townhomes and units 73-92 being front-entry. The majority of the buildings contain 6-units each with two buildings containing 7-units and two buildings containing the maximum 8-units/building. The unit footprint is staggered, providing façade articulation which helps break-up the visual mass of the buildings.

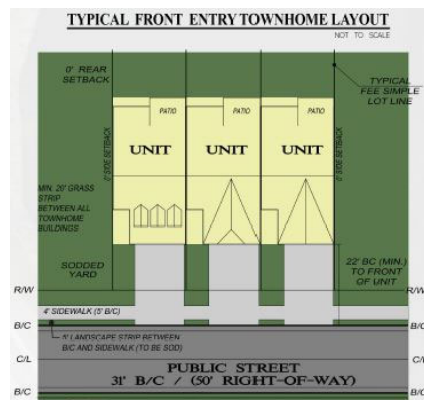
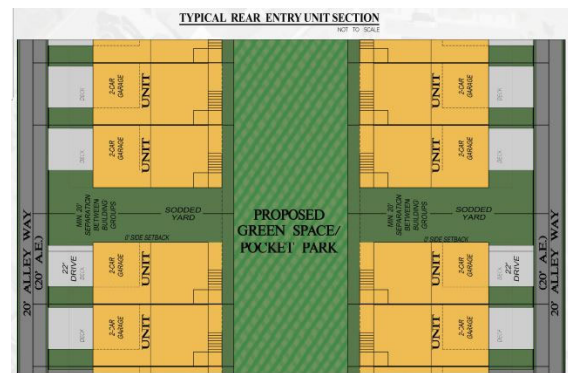
A proposed full-access driveway at Tree Ln serves as the sole ingress/egress point for the development with Street “A” and Street “B” serving as the main residential streets (31’ B.O.C./50’ R/W). With 20-foot wide Alley “A”, Alley “B”, and Alley “C” serving access to the rear-entry townhome units 1-72 and units 93-108. Front-entry townhome units 73-92 have direct access to Street “B”.

Pedestrian circulation for the rear-entry townhomes is provided by a 4-foot wide sidewalk and located adjacent to the 52-60 feet wide green space/pocket park areas. However, there is no sidewalk connectivity between the townhome units in front of the development to the remaining townhome units in the rear. Continuation of the sidewalks is encouraged to maximize pedestrian connectivity throughout the site.

Two stormwater management facilities are shown and located outside of the 50-foot stream buffer and 75-foot impervious surface setback which bisects the development. A mailbox kiosk is shown at Street “B”, located between unit 25 and unit 48. Ample guest/overflow parking is centrally located throughout the development providing 39 additional parking spaces, 12 spaces above the minimum 27 required spaces. A future recreational area is located at the western portion of the site.

As a requirement in the R-TH District, the site plan indicates 7.0± acres of open space, representing 46.7% of the total site acreage, exceeding the 20% minimum open space requirement.

The graphic (right) depicts the typical lot layout for the rear-entry townhomes showing connection to the alley. The rear-entry townhomes will have a minimum heated floor area of 1,800 sq. ft. and will include a two-car rear-entry garage and minimum 22-feet long driveway, measured from front of garage door to alley pavement. The front of each rear-entry unit will face 50- to 62-feet wide green space/pocket park.



The graphic (left) depicts the typical layout for the 24-foot wide by 52-feet deep two-story front-entry townhomes. Each will have a minimum heated floor area of 1,800 sq. ft. (2,282 sq. ft. including garage, front porch, and rear covered porch) and will include a front-entry two-car garage.

Although not consistent with the driveway length requirement of the UDO requiring driveways to be a minimum of 22-feet in length, measured from the front of garage door to edge of sidewalk closest to garage, the site plan and typical front-entry townhome layout shows a 22-feet long driveway measured

from the front of the garage to Street “B” back-of-curb with the townhome layout showing a 4-

feet sidewalk with 5-foot landscape strip between the curb and sidewalk. This reduces the minimum required 22-foot setback between the garage door and sidewalk to 13-feet, resulting in the sidewalk being blocked by parked vehicles and thus making the sidewalk useless to residents and guests of the community. Elimination of the sidewalk along the front-entry units (73-92) would eliminate the conflict (see Condition #4).

Although not required by the UDO, a 25-foot *undisturbed buffer* is shown on the site plan (however shown as a 25-foot *graded and replanted buffer* on the colored conceptual plan) where the development site abuts residential uses to the west and extends eastward 350± feet along the southern property line.

BUILDING ELEVATIONS:

The applicant provided sample renderings for the townhome elevations with the fronts of the rear-entry townhomes consisting mostly of masonry brick veneer with board and batten siding accents to provide some diversity with the rear of the units comprised of painted lap siding.



Sample rear-Entry Townhome Elevations (FRONT)



Sample Rear-Entry Townhome Elevations (REAR)

The front elevations of the front-entry townhomes consist primarily of masonry brick veneer with accents of board and batten, shake siding and lap siding in different configurations to provide some architectural diversity. The side and rear elevations contain a 2-foot masonry brick watertable with lap siding and board and batten on the gable ends.

As these are conceptual depictions of the proposed building elevations, no determination has been made as to conformance with UDO Sec. 201-3.3. (Small Residential Building Standards), Sec. 202-1. (Rules for All Residential Districts), and Sec. 202-6.9. (R-TH Design Standards). A more

thorough review will be conducted upon receipt of the architectural plan set during permitting review to ensure compliance with these requirements.



Sample Front-Entry Townhome Elevations (FRONT)

CONCURRENT VARIANCES:

- 1) Eliminate inter-parcel vehicle connectivity to the undeveloped 15± acre adjacent parcel to the north;
- 2) Allow a dead-end street in lieu of cul-de-sac turnaround for streets exceeding 1,000 feet in length;
- 3) Waive the required 50-foot minimum site setback along streets and 40-foot minimum site setback not along streets;
- 4) Allow front-entry townhomes on lots 73-92;
- 5) Increase the 35% maximum front yard area for driveways to 67%; and
- 6) Reduce the 81-foot minimum local street radius to 50-feet.

Per the Letter of Intent, the applicant is requesting six (6) variances from Chapters 200 and 400 of the UDO. Analysis and staff recommendation of each request is provided below.

1. Request: Variance from Sec. 401-3.4.B. (Vehicular Access): to eliminate the vehicular access requirement to the undeveloped 15± acre adjoining parcel to the north (Parcel 5056 004).

Variance Analysis: The applicant contends, *“The parcel to our north (5056 004) is zoned BG, and we would not want our Single-Family subdivision tying into a commercial piece when the BG property has road frontage on Innsfail Drive.”* Because of existing site conditions on Parcel 5056 004, future development of the parcel is adversely impacted and may never happen due to a tree conservation easement on the back (western) portion of the site, 20-foot sanitary sewer easement, detention pond slope easement, severe topographic challenges, and multiple streams with associated stream buffers and impervious surface setbacks.

Further, since parcel 5056 004 is under the same ownership (Scenic Avenue, LLC) as the 11.31± acre parcel 5056 099 developed in 2016 for Scenic Promenade Shopping Center, should development occur, vehicular access to parcel 5056 004 can be provided via the shared driveway that also serves Lowe’s Home Improvement and Snellville Commons Office Park.

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Development recommends *approval*.

2. Request: Variance from Sec. 401-5.3.C. (Local Streets and Minor Arterials or Collectors): to allow a hammerhead street termination in lieu of a cul-de-sac turnaround for “dead-end” Street “B”.

Variance Analysis: The applicant contends, “*We are providing dead-end streets in lieu of a cul-de-sac which meets Gwinnett County Fire Code standards of not exceeding 150-feet in length.*” A cul-de-sac street termination provides greater safety to children and more room to turn a car around with no awkward three-point turns or having to pull into a private driveway.

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Development recommends *denial*.

3. Request: Variance from Sec. 202-6.6. (Dimensional Standards – Site Setback): to waive the minimum 50-foot site setback (along streets) and waive the minimum 40-foot site setback (not along streets).

Variance Analysis: The applicant contends, “*Due to the unusual shape and topography of the property, combined with the location setback at least 50 feet from Tree Lane we ask for the site setback requirement be waived. In addition, the property located to the east and north is zoned commercial/BG. The adjacent property located to the west is residential and we are providing a 25 foot undisturbed buffer*” Although the UDO does not require a buffer between the proposed townhomes and single-family (detached) properties to the west in the Waterford Township subdivision, the Planning Department supports this request provided areas within the 25-foot undisturbed buffer that are sparsely vegetated be planted per an approved Landscape Plan.

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Development recommends *approval*.

4. Request: Variance from Sec. 201-2.6. (Townhome Building Type): to allow front-entry townhomes for units 73-92.

Variance Analysis: Per Sec. 202-6.3. (Building Types), no building type requirements apply in the R-TH District. Therefore, the requested variance is *not applicable* to the requested zoning. However, front-entry townhomes are prohibited in UDO Sec. 202-6.9.F. (R-TH Design Standards), see variance item #5 below.

5. Request: Variance from Sec. 202-6.9.F. (R-TH Design Standards): to allow front-entry townhomes for units 73-92.

Variance Analysis: The applicant contends, “*All townhomes with the exception of lots 73-92 as shown on the zoning concept plan are rear entry. We would ask due to the size and shape of the property, lots 73-92 are allowed as front entry townhomes with staggered*

front facades and decorative garage doors. Only 18 percent of the total number of homes will be front entry garages.”

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Development recommends *approval*.

6. Request: Variance from Sec. 201-1.6.D.1. (Driveways): to increase the 35% maximum front yard area for driveways or authorized onsite parking to 67%.

Variance Analysis: The applicant contends, *“Since we only have 20 out of 108 total units as front entry, we request that 67 percent of the front yard may be used for a driveway.”*

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Development recommends *approval*.

7. Request: Variance from Sec. 401-5.11.C. (Horizontal Street Alignment): to reduce the minimum horizontal street curve radius for a local street from 81-feet to 50-feet.

Variance Analysis: The applicant contends, *“Due to the block configuration of the streets along with the property configuration (long and skinny) we provide a 50'R at two curves (Unit 12 and Unit 61). While these two curves are below minimum, they still allow for fire and garbage trucks to maneuver through without issue.”*

Recommendation: The Department of Planning and Development recommends *approval*.

CONCLUSION AND STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the staff's evaluation of the request and policies and goals in the Snellville 2045 Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Planning and Development recommends the following actions:

- A. **Approval** of RZ 25-05, application to amend the City of Snellville Official Zoning Map from BG (General Business) District to R-TH (Townhouse Residential) District.
- B. **Approval** of variance from Sec. 401-3.4.B. (Vehicular Access): to eliminate the inter-parcel access requirement to the undeveloped 15± acre adjoining parcel to the north (Parcel 5056 004).
- C. **Denial** of variance from Sec. 401-5.3.C. (Local Streets and Minor Arterials or Collectors): to allow a hammerhead street termination in lieu of a cul-de-sac turnaround for “dead-end” Street “B”.
- D. **Approval** of variance from Sec. 202-6.6. (Dimensional Standards – Site Setback): to waive the minimum 50-foot site setback (along streets) and waive the minimum 40-foot site setback (not along streets).

- E. **Approval** of variance from Sec. 202-6.9.F. (R-TH Design Standards): to allow front-entry townhomes for units 73-92.
- F. **Approval** of variance from Sec. 201-1.6.D.1. (Driveways): to increase the 35% maximum front yard area for driveways or authorized onsite parking to 67%.
- G. **Approval** of variance from Sec. 401-5.11.C. (Horizontal Street Alignment): to reduce the minimum horizontal street curve radius for a local street from 81-feet to 50-feet.

The recommendations above are subject to the attachment of the following recommended **Conditions**:

1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the rezoning site plan entitled "Conceptual Site Layout 1719 Scenic Hwy Snellville GA", dated 3-25-2025 (stamped received JUN 10 2025), with modifications permitted to meet conditions of zoning or State, County, and City regulations. Substantial variation from the rezoning site plan, as determined by the Director of Planning and Development will require Mayor and Council approval.
2. A mandatory Homeowner's Association shall be formed and incorporated within the State of Georgia for all single-family (detached) and (attached) lots in the development and common areas. A rental cap of ten-percent (10%) of the total number of lots at any given time for rentals greater than thirty (30) consecutive days shall be placed on the development with such language being included in the Homeowner's Association Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions.
3. There shall be a 25 feet undisturbed buffer adjacent to Parcels 5056 070; 5041 055; 5041 054; 5041 053; 5041 105; and portion of 5056 002 as shown on the site plan entitled "Conceptual Site Layout 1719 Scenic Hwy Snellville GA", dated 3-25-2025 (stamped received JUN 10 2025). A Landscaping Plan shall be provided for areas within the 25 feet undisturbed buffer that are sparsely vegetated and/or disturbed, to be approved by the Director of Planning and Development.
4. In lieu of sidewalks required by the code on both sides of Street "A" and Street "B", a minimum 4-foot wide sidewalk with minimum 5-foot wide planter strip shall be installed as shown on the site plan for Street "B", with continuation of sidewalk and planter strip along Street "B" between Unit 72 and Unit 108, with sidewalk connection to the existing sidewalk at Tree Ln, with continuation of the Tree Ln sidewalk 150± feet to the west. To allow for the 22-foot minimum driveway length measured from garage door to Street "B" back-of-curb for front-entry Units 73-92, no sidewalk is required.
5. The Applicant/Developer shall comply with the Georgia Blasting Standards Act, including pre-blast and post-blast surveys for any structure within 750 feet of the blast site or directly adjacent to subject property with advanced notice to any affected property owner. The applicant will provide advanced notice of any blasting to the following H.O.A.

Boards: Waterford Township and Shadowbrook Crossing. Before blasting work begins, a blasting notification plan must be reviewed and approved by the Planning and Development Department. Said plan shall include signage, email notification, and any other notification deemed necessary.

6. Uses involving adult entertainment, including the sale or display of adult magazines, books, videos and as further defined by the Adult Entertainment Ordinance in effect on the date this condition is imposed, are prohibited.
7. Signs higher than 15 feet and larger than 225 sq. ft. in area are prohibited.