



Planning Commission Staff Report
January 2024

The Planning Commission will meet on January 9, 2024. The following staff report has been prepared for an application that was received by the Planning and Zoning Division of the Community and Economic Development Department.

Applicant: St. Thomas More Catholic Church c/o Paul Flippo, P.E.

Property Address: 618 West Ponce De Leon Avenue

Parcel ID: 15 245 02 041

Present Land Use Category: I – Institutional

Present Zoning District: I – Institutional

1. The subject property is an approximate 7.23 acre parcel (316,821 SF) currently owned by Archbishop Roman Catholic and Aoa Parish Real Estate Trust. The applicant, St. Thomas More Catholic Church, currently owns and operates a place of worship and a pre-K - 8th grade private school.
2. The subject property was approved for a change in land use designation from RL – Low Density Residential to I – Institutional, per Ordinance O-00-Z-03; and was approved for a change in zoning district from R-60 – Single Family Residential to I – Institutional, including a new comprehensive site development plan, per Ordinance O-00-Z-04, both having been approved on June 19th, 2000.
3. The subject property boundaries are defined by public streets and does not directly abut any neighboring properties. Properties to the north and west are zoned R-85 Single Family Residential, RS-17 – Single Family Residential, and I - Institutional. The property to the northeast is zoned C-2 - General Commercial. Properties to the south are zoned RS-17 - Medium Density Residential and R-60 - Single Family Residence (Adair Park).

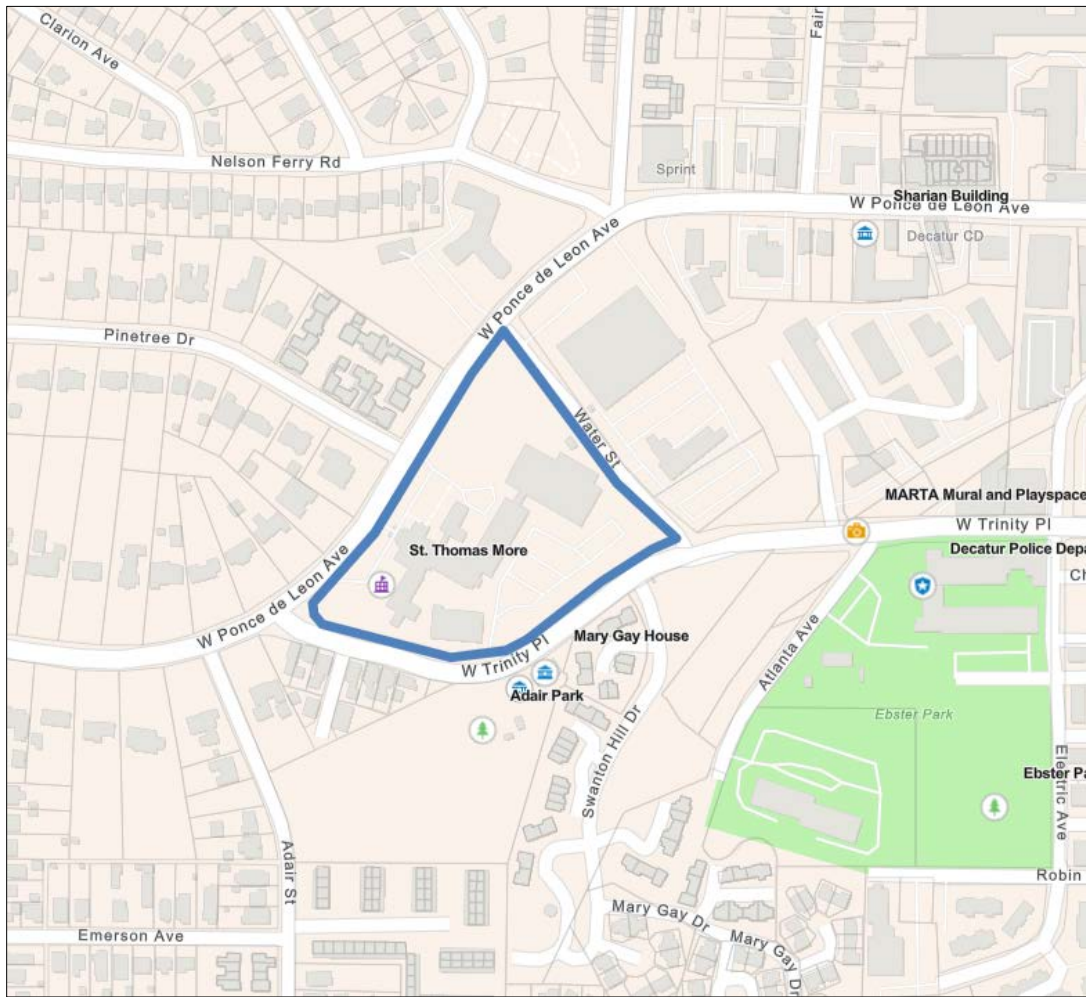
4. Project Summary: The applicant has proposed to construct a 19,000 SF two-story school building for kindergarten through fifth grade to unify the elementary school building. proposed landscaping will incorporate a pathway from the sidewalk to the field for sports, activity and fellowship. The activity field will be reconstructed with natural or artificial turf to improve drainage. The proposed development abides by setback standards in Section 6.4 of the UDO and does not extend closer to the site's property line than the existing building along West Ponce De Leon Avenue. The applicant has indicated that there is no increase in school enrollment with the addition of the proposed building. The classrooms currently on the third floor of the worship hall and below the parish offices will be converted into needed meeting space for the existing population of the Church. In addition, the school entry and carpool will remain on the Trinity Avenue parking lot and have no impact on current carpool circulation. There is a future proposed worship building, however details have not been fully developed for this expansion except for site location and setbacks; building height is unknown.
5. Per the Allowed Use Table in Section 6.2. of the UDO, a K-12 private school is allowed within the I – Institutional district with a conditional use permit. The existing private school was established prior to the adoption of the conditional use permit requirement for K-12 private schools.
6. At the time of the rezoning to the I – Institutional zoning district a comprehensive site development plan of 618 West Ponce De Leon Avenue was required to be adopted. It is commonplace that properties which are already developed and that are considered for rezoning to institutional use their existing site plan as the comprehensive site development plan. The comprehensive site development plan becomes the regulations governing the development of the institutional zoning district upon establishment of the district, along with the other applicable provisions of the UDO. Amendments to the comprehensive site development plan must be made by following the same procedure, which is after consideration by the Planning Commission and approval by the City Commission. Any changes proposed in the development or use of the property must be clearly indicated on a comprehensive site development plan. The applicant has submitted an amended comprehensive site development plan, which shows new building additions and expansion of the surface parking lot to accommodate more vehicular parking.

7. *Other requirements.* If approved, the project remains subject to current local life safety and fire codes, site development, local soil erosion, drainage, and tree preservation ordinances, as well as a multi-modal transportation study. Information about drainage, tree preservation and removal plan, and a traffic analysis was provided in the application materials.

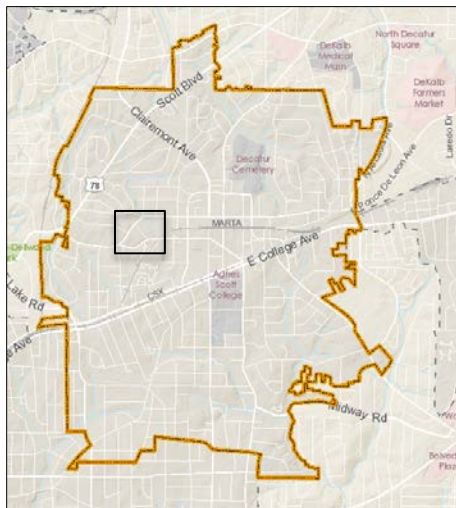
Amending a Comprehensive Site Development Plan

8. Per Section 5.1.2.B. of the UDO, the following standards of Section 11.2.2.F.1. of the UDO, shall be considered when an amendment to the comprehensive site development plan is requested:
 - a. Does the zoning proposal permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property?
 - b. Does the zoning proposal adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property?
 - c. Does the property to be affected by the zoning proposal have a reasonable economic use as currently zoned?
 - d. Does the zoning proposal result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools?
 - e. Does the zoning proposal conform with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan?
 - f. Are there other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property which, because of their impact on the public health, safety, morality and general welfare of the community, give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal?

Exhibit "A" Location Map



Source: City of Decatur OneMap



City of Decatur boundary with location outlined
Source: Decatur OneMap

Exhibit "B" Zoning Map

