

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS SAVANNAH DISTRICT 100 WEST OGLETHORPE AVENUE SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3604

8 September 2023

Regulatory Division SAS-2016-00660

JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE Savannah District/State of Georgia

The Savannah District has received an application for a Department of the Army Permit, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344), as follows:

Application Number: SAS-2016-00660

Applicant: Mr. John Hoff, Land Development Manager

Lennar – Coastal Carolina 61 St. Andrews Crescent

Hardeeville, South Carolina 29927

Agent: Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Attn: Jeffrey Williams

31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B

Savannah, Georgia 31405

<u>Project Purpose as Proposed by Applicant</u>: The applicant's stated project purpose is to expand a residential development currently under construction. Specifically, the purpose of the proposed project would expand an existing residential development to create an additional 970 lots, amenities (community pavilion and nature trails), roads, infrastructure, and stormwater detention ponds.

<u>Location of Proposed Work</u>: The project site is located on the east side of Little Neck Road, approximately 2 miles south of Interstate (I)-16 and the Little Neck Road interchange, in the City of Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia (Latitude 32.0720, Longitude -81.3147). The aquatic resources located on-site drain to the Little Ogeechee River.

<u>Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</u>: The applicant is proposing to impact 2.62 acres of freshwater wetland and 0.21 acre of ditches associated with the construction of a 635.06-acre residential development expansion. Of the proposed 2.62 acres of freshwater wetland impacts, 1.23 acres of freshwater impact is for five road crossings, 0.83 acres of freshwater impact is

associated with eighteen stormwater pond outfall drainage structures, and 0.56 acres of freshwater impact is associated with slopes for general development fill and stormwater detention pond banks. To offset the loss in aquatic function associated with the above impacts, the applicant has proposed the purchase of 15.76 (legacy) wetland mitigation credits from an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved mitigation bank servicing the project area.

BACKGROUND

The 635.06-acre project area is a portion of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) for the New Hampstead Tract (formerly Carter Adams Tract) which was originally delineated by Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc. (SECI) in 2004. On behalf of International Paper Realty, the wetlands contained within the 4,393.7-acre Carter Adams Tract were verified on January 10, 2005 (SAS-2004-11310). Subsequent the sale to Rock Creek Capitol in 2011, the remaining 3,253.9-acre property was reverified on June 28, 2011 (SAS-2011-00164). The remaining portions of the New Hampstead PUD was sold to Figure 8 Georgia, LLC in 2017.

An 895.77-acre portion of the project area was delineated by SECI in 2016, and the wetlands contained within the property were verified on April 30, 2018 (SAS-2016-00660). In 2021, SECI re-delineated the 820.45 acre Parcel C-2-B and a portion of Parcel C-7 which contains the project area. The wetlands contained within the 820.45 acre parcels were verified on January 14, 2022. On behalf of Lennar, Carolinas, LLC, SECI obtained a Nationwide Permit (NWP) #29, dated February 10, 2022, for the construction of a 122-acre first phase of development for the Lennar residential development which is currently under construction. The NWP authorized impacts to 0.26 acres of freshwater wetland and 0.22 acres of ditch associated with roads and utilities. The NWP required the purchase of 1.6 wetland mitigation credits which were purchased on March 16, 2022, from the Yam Grandy Wetland and Stream Mitigation Bank.

According to the applicant, the expansion of the existing residential development is located near I-16 and within the PUD for the New Hampstead Tract. The New Hampstead PUD is an approximately 4,500 acre master planned development located within a rapidly growing portion of the City of Savannah. The New Hampstead PUD currently includes New Hampstead High School, New Hampstead k-8 school, and three residential communities that are under construction. The PUD is designed around a core Village Center that will provide nearly 10,000 multifamily and single-family homes, commercial retail, professional office space, recreational opportunities, and an 863-acre conservation easement green space for the City's passive recreation use.

According to the applicant, due to continued annual growth within Bryan and Chatham Counties, the need for new housing has also continued to increase. Chatham County's growth rate during 2022 was 2% and is expected to be near the same for 2023, which is an increase of approximately 6,032 new people calling the county their home. Bryan County has experienced the fastest growth rate within the state of Georgia at an average of 4.1% annually. Several factors are driving the local population

boom such as the continued growth and success of the Port of Savannah, the exuberant increase in warehousing and manufacturing jobs, and the growth of the logistic, support, and service industry. In addition, the construction of the 2,923 acre \$5.5 billion Mega Site located 11 miles from the proposed residential development is in full swing and expected to be completed in the first half of 2025. An additional 8,100 jobs will be added to the local market to staff the Hyundai electric vehicle assembly plant, electric battery factories, and support facilities. The factors outlined above demonstrate the need for additional affordable housing to satisfy the market's demand for the current and anticipated growth of the surrounding area.

The property was historically a portion of a larger silvicultural tract that was utilized for timber production on short harvest rotations. The project area is dominated with loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) approximately 25 years of age within the overstory which was heavily thinned in 2004 and in 2014. The understory is thickly vegetated with species such as sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), water oak (*Quercus nigra*), red bay (*Persea borbonia*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), wax myrtle (*Morella cerifera*), rusty staggerbush (*Lyonia ferruginea*), fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*), bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), cinnamon fern (*Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*), and Virginia chain fern (*Woodwardia virginica*).

This Joint Public Notice announces a request for authorizations from both the Corps and the State of Georgia. The applicant's proposed work may also require local governmental approval.

STATE OF GEORGIA

<u>Water Quality Certification</u>: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division will review the proposed project for water quality certification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Prior to issuance of a Department of the Army permit for a project location in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia, review for Water Quality Certification is required. A reasonable period of time, which shall not exceed one year, is established under the Clean Water Act for the State to act on a request for Water Quality Certification, after which, issuance of such a Department of the Army permit may proceed. The applicant request a pre-certification meeting with Georgia EPD prior to submitting their application for a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

<u>State-owned Property and Resources</u>: The applicant may also require assent from the State of Georgia, which may be in the form of a license, easement, lease, permit or other appropriate instrument.

<u>Georgia Coastal Management Program:</u> Prior to the Savannah District Corps of Engineers making a final permit decision on this application, the project must be certified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division, to be consistent with applicable provisions of the State of Georgia Coastal Management

Program (15 CFR 930). Anyone wishing to comment on Coastal Management Program certification of this project should submit comments in writing within 30 days of the date of this notice to the Federal Consistency Coordinator, Coastal Management Program, Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, One Conservation Way, Brunswick, Georgia 31523-8600 (Telephone 912-264-7218).

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The Savannah District must consider the purpose and the impacts of the applicant's proposed work, prior to a decision on issuance of a Department of the Army permit.

<u>Cultural Resources</u>: A review of Georgia's Natural Archaeological and Historic Resources GIS, indicates the property does not contain any known cultural or archaeological sites. The cultural resource information presented is under review.

<u>Endangered Species</u>: A preliminary review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Resource Divisions list of Endangered and Threatened Species (IPaC) indicates the following listed species may occur in the project area: Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), Eastern Back Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*), Pondberry (*Lindera melissifolia*).

Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), we request information from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; or, any other interested party, on whether any species listed or proposed for listing may be present in the area.

<u>Public Interest Review</u>: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

<u>Consideration of Public Comments</u>: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Native American Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties,

water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Application of Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines: The proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States. The Savannah District's evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act.

<u>Public Hearing</u>: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application for a Department of the Army permit. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for requesting a public hearing. The decision whether to hold a public hearing is at the discretion of the District Engineer, or his designated appointee, based on the need for additional substantial information necessary in evaluating the proposed project.

<u>Comment Period</u>: Anyone wishing to comment on this application for a Department of the Army permit should submit comments by email to Nicole.m.liette@usace.army.mil. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Ms. Nicole Liette, 4751 Best Road, Suite 140, College Park, Savannah, Georgia 30337, no later than 30 days from the date of this notice. Please refer to the applicant's name and the application number in your comments.

If you have any further questions concerning this matter, please contact Ms. Nicole Liette, Project Manager at 470-514-0501.

Enclosures:

- 1. Sheet P1- Parcel C-2-B -Site location map
- 2. Sheet P2 through P18 Parcel C-2-B Wetland impact plan

OTAL PROJECT LIMITS	635.06 AC.
TOTAL UPLAND ACREAGE	384.95 AC.
TOTAL JURISDICTIONAL WETLAND	248.70 AC.
TOTAL JURISDICTIONAL DITCH	I.41 AC.
URISDICTIONAL WETLAND IMPACTS	
JURISDICTIONAL WETLAND IMPACTS	2.62 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT AA	0.03 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT BB	0.07 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT CC	0.07 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT DD	0.05 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT EE	0.03 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT FF	0.0I AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT GG	0.03 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT HH	0.02 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT II	0.05 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT JJ	0.05 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT KK	0.08 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT LL	0.52 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT MM	0.04 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT NN	0.05 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT OO	0.04 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT PP	0,05 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT QQ	0.05 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT RR	0.49 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT SS	0.08 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT TT	0.04 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT UU	0.03 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT VV	0.03 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT WW	0.06 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT XX	0.04 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT YY	0.03 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT ZZ	0.04 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT AAA	0.04 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT BBB	0.08 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT CCC	0.04 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT DDD	0.04 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT EEE	0.04 AC
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT FFF	0.04 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT GGG	0.03 AC.
ETLAND #2 - IMPACT HHH	0.03 AC.
ETLAND #3 - IMPACT AA	0.02 AC.
ETLAND #4 - IMPACT AA	0.04 AC.
ETLAND #5 - IMPACT AA	0.02 AC.
ETLAND #IO - IMPACT AA	0.05 AC.
ETLAND #II - IMPACT AA	0.03 AC
ETLAND ≢I4 - IMPACT AA	0.04 AC
OTAL JURISDICTIONAL WETLAND IMPACTS	2.62 AC

JURISDICTIONAL DITCH IMPACTS	0.21 AC.
DITCH #I - IMPACT AA	0.02 AC.
DITCH #I - IMPACT BB	0.04 AC.
DITCH #2 - IMPACT AA	0.02 AC.
DITCH #2 - IMPACT BB	0.03 AC.
DITCH #2 - IMPACT CC	0.02 AC.
DITCH #2 - IMPACT DD	0.02 AC.
DITCH #2 - IMPACT EE	0.02 AC.
DITCH #3 - IMPACT AA	0.0I AC.
DITCH #3 - IMPACT BB	0.03 AC.
TOTAL JURISDICTIONAL DITCH IMPACTS	0.2I AC.
TOTAL JURISDICTIONAL IMPACTS	2.83 AC.

PARCEL C-2-B

WETLAND IMPACT PLAN

CLIENT:

LENNAR CAROLINAS, LLC

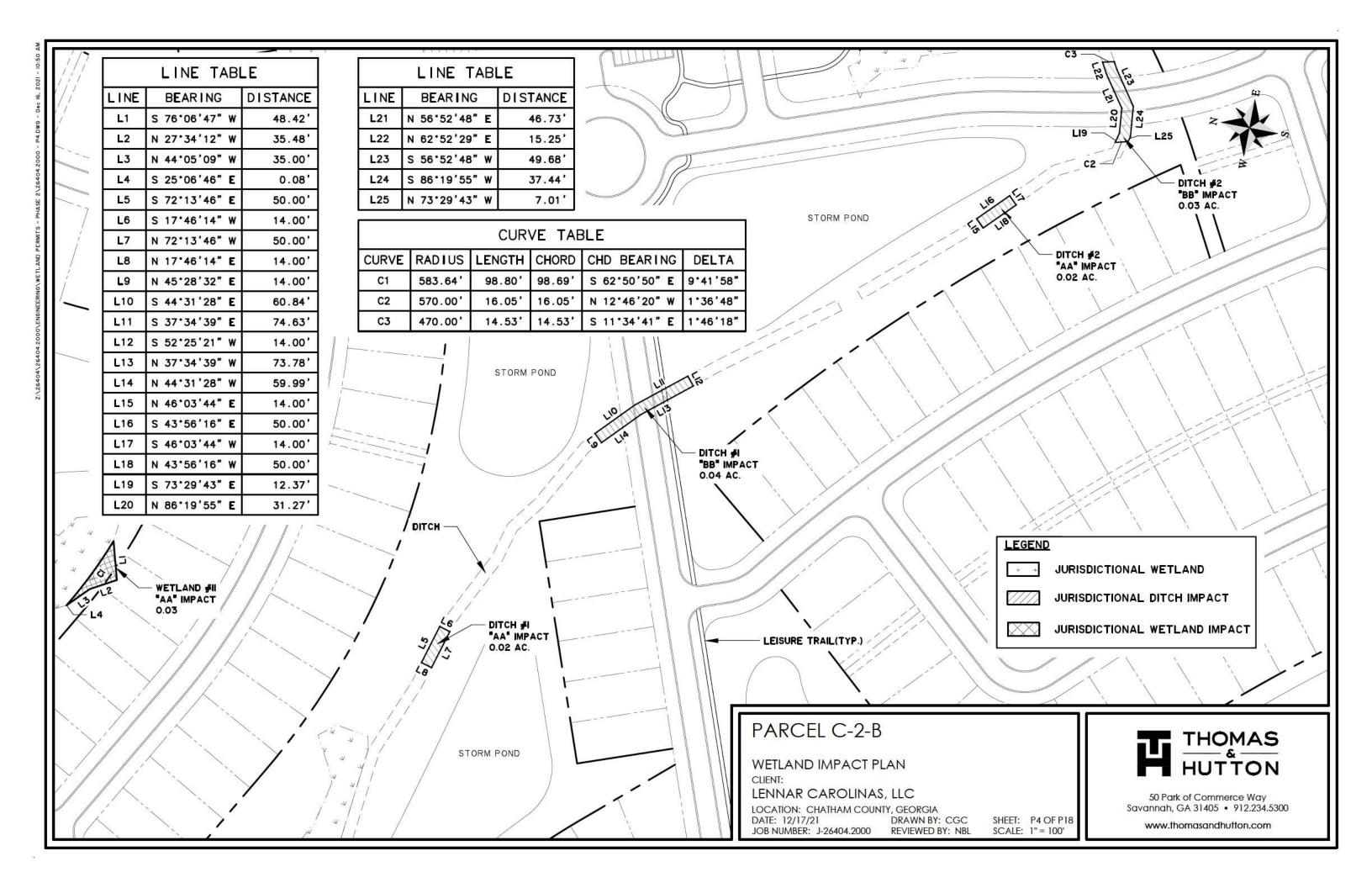
LOCATION: CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA
DATE: 12/17/21 DRAWN BY: CGC
JOB NUMBER: J-26404.2000 REVIEWED BY: NBL

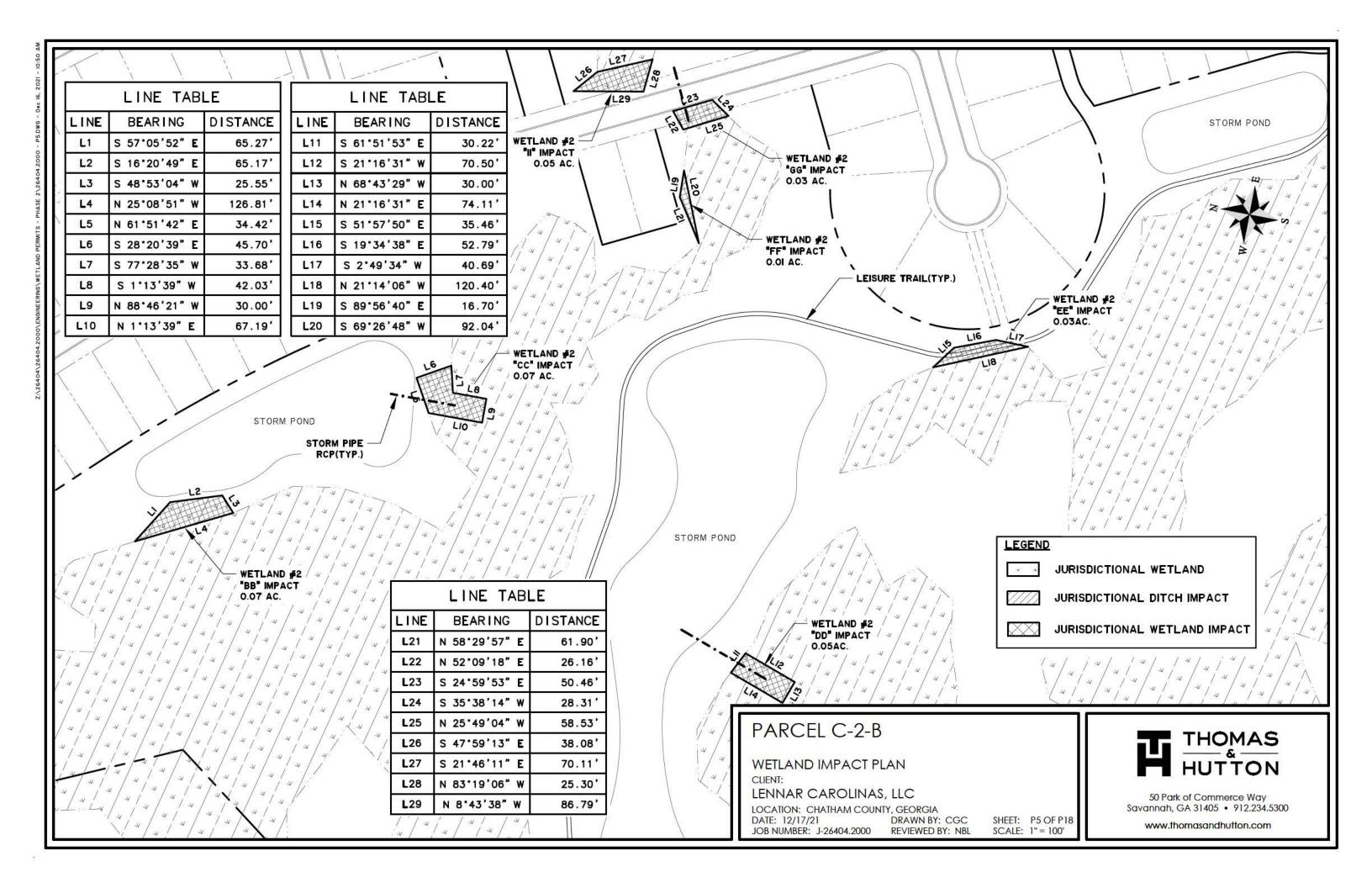
SHEET: P3 OF P18 SCALE: NTS

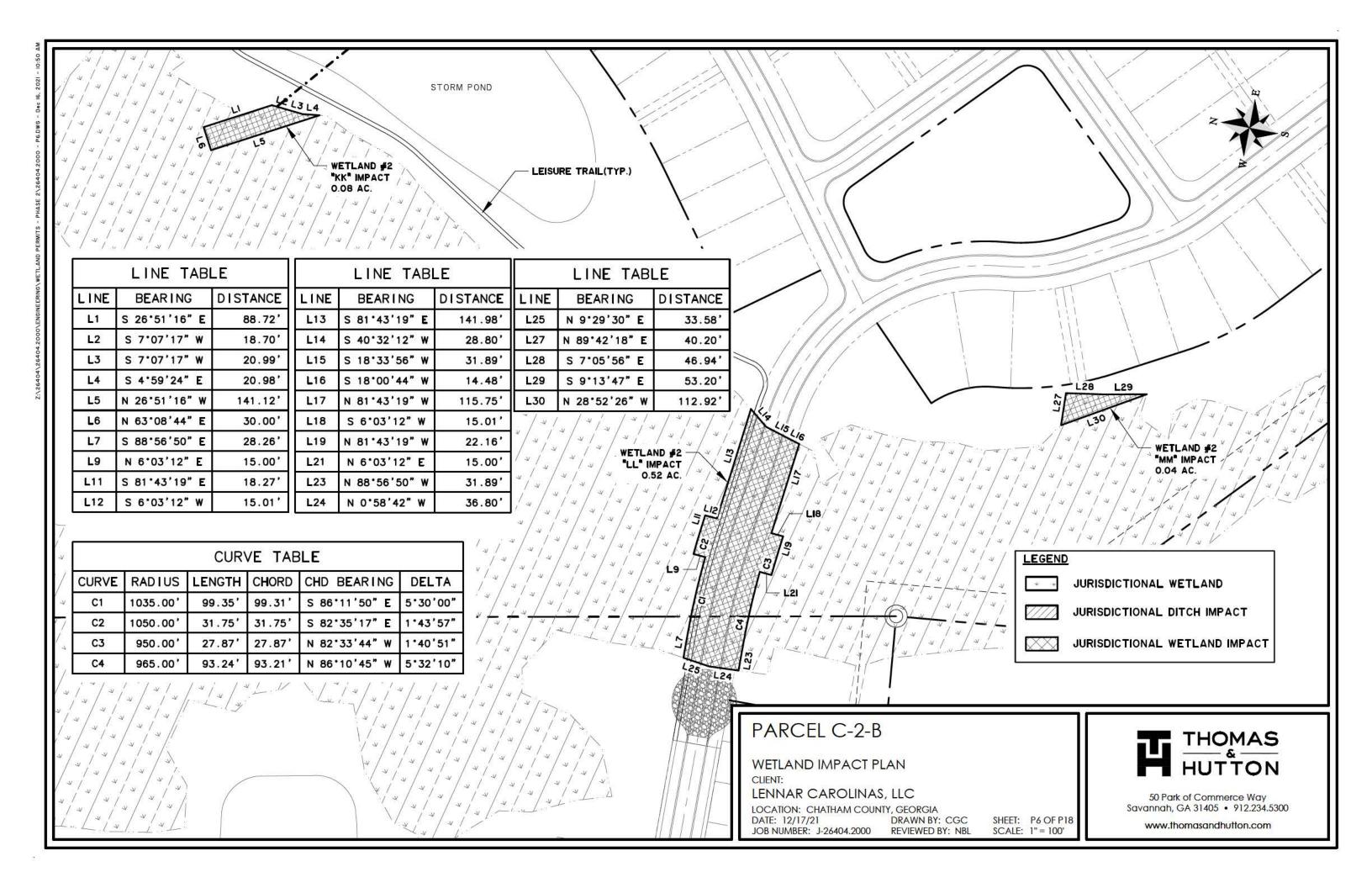


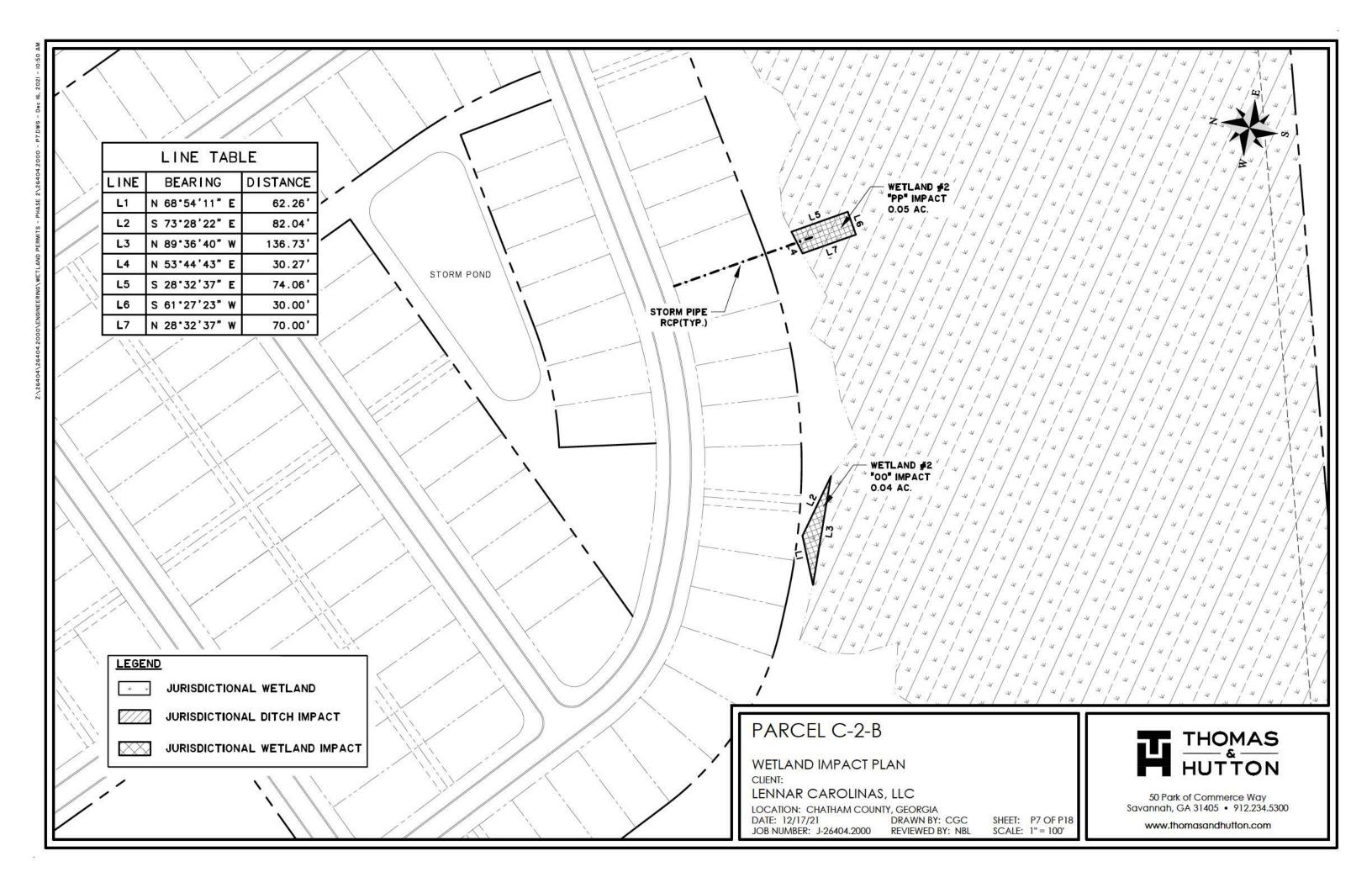
50 Park of Commerce Way Savannah, GA 31405 • 912.234.5300

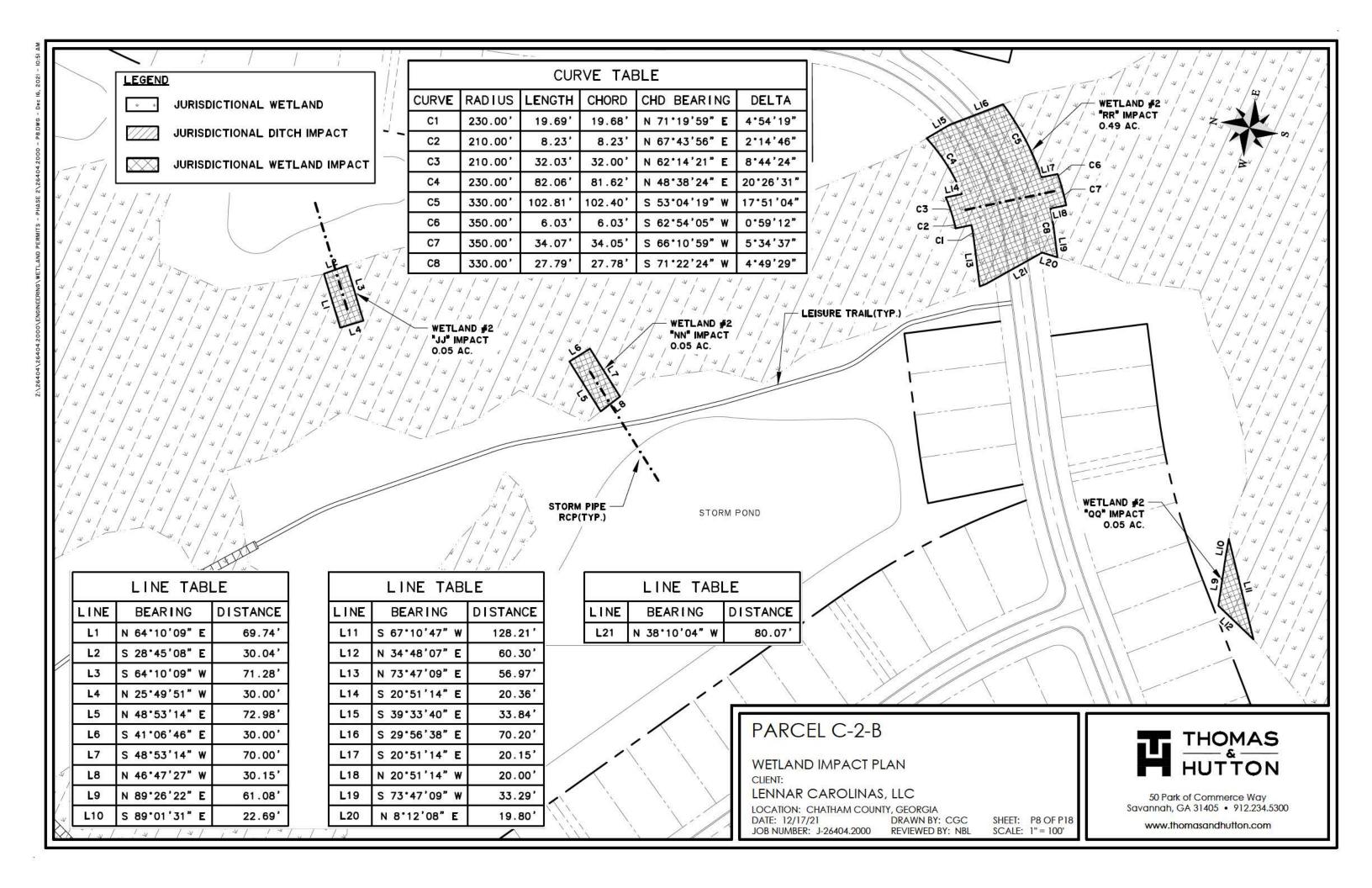
www.thomasandhutton.com

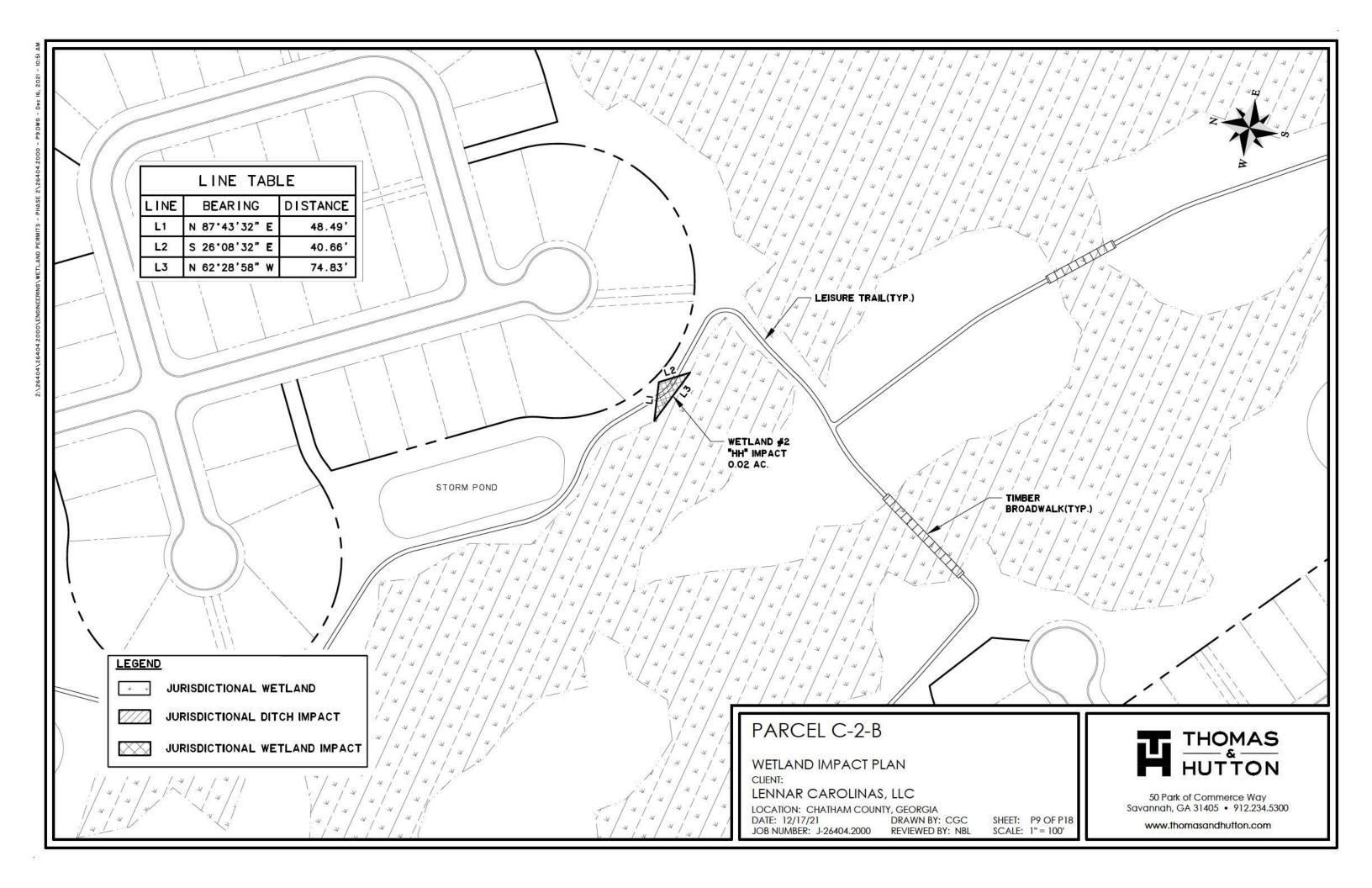


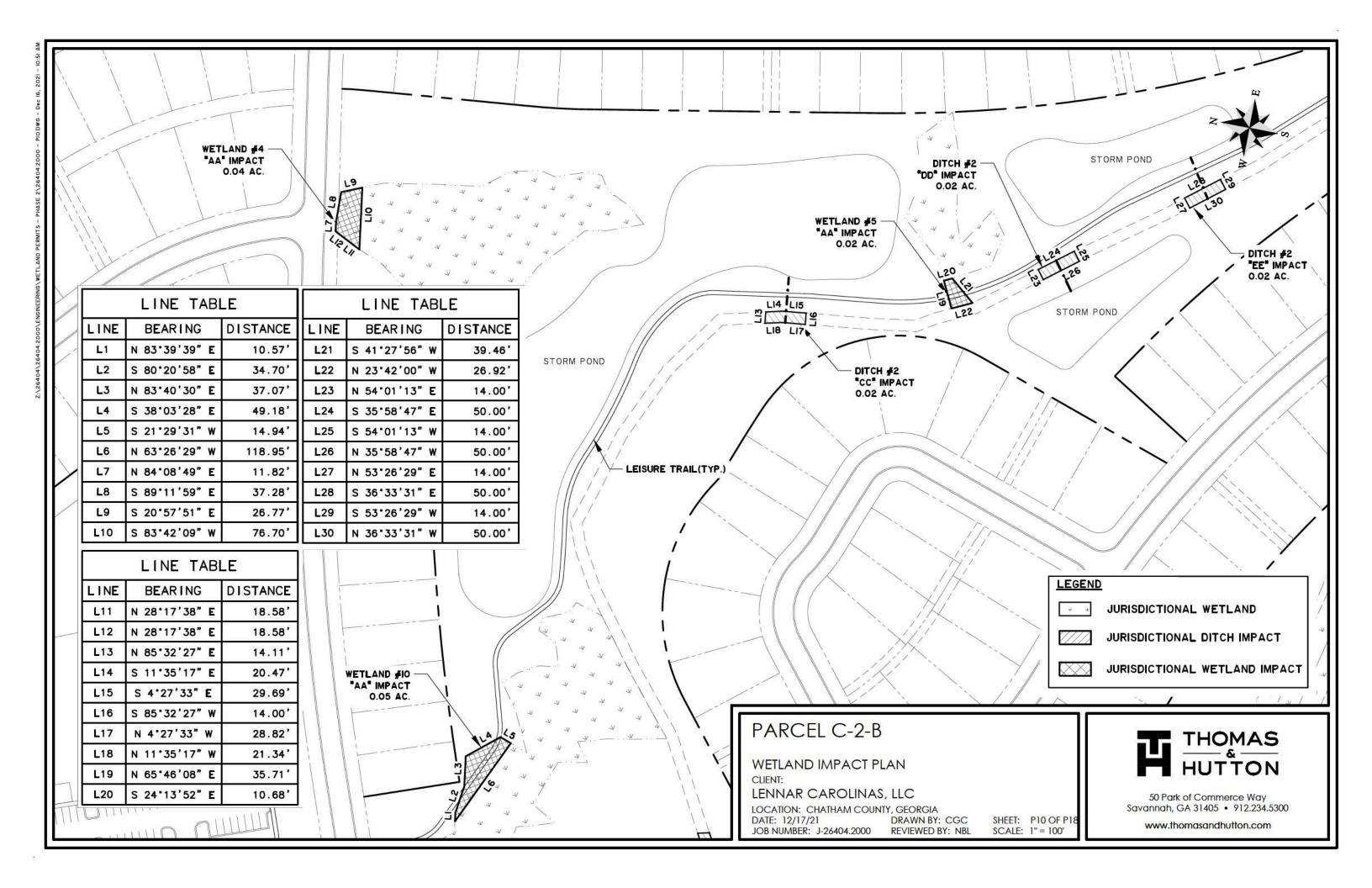


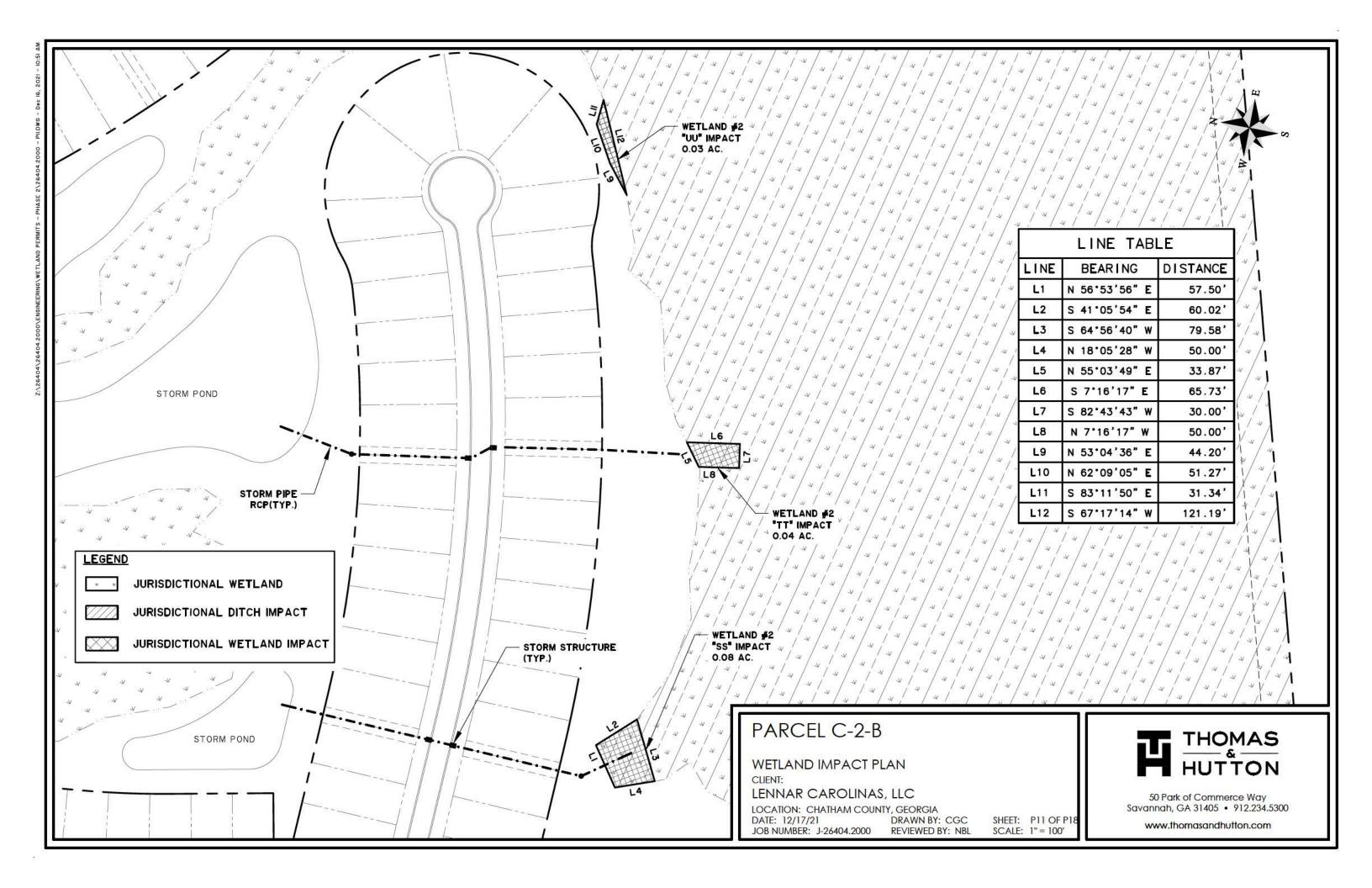


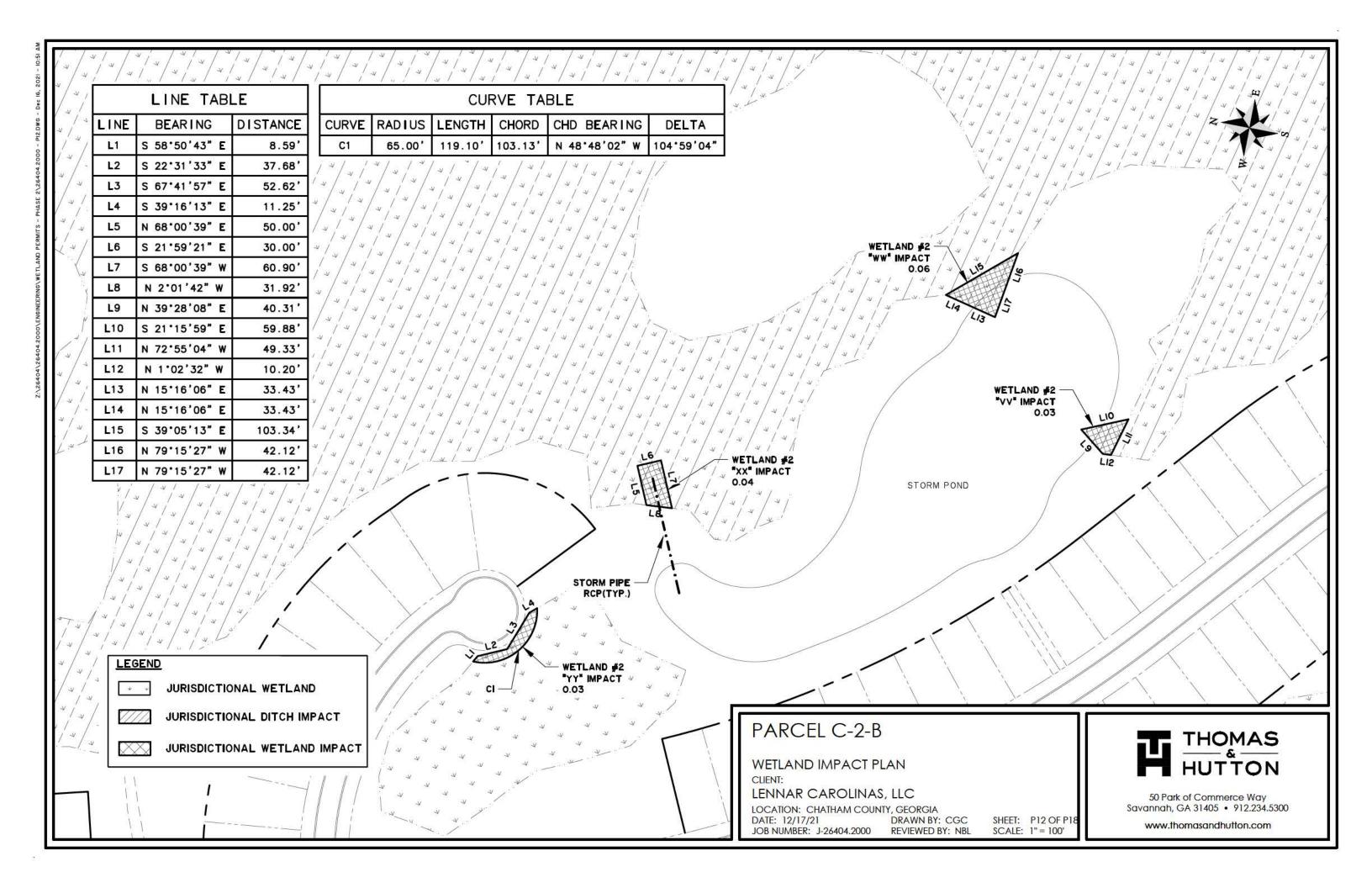


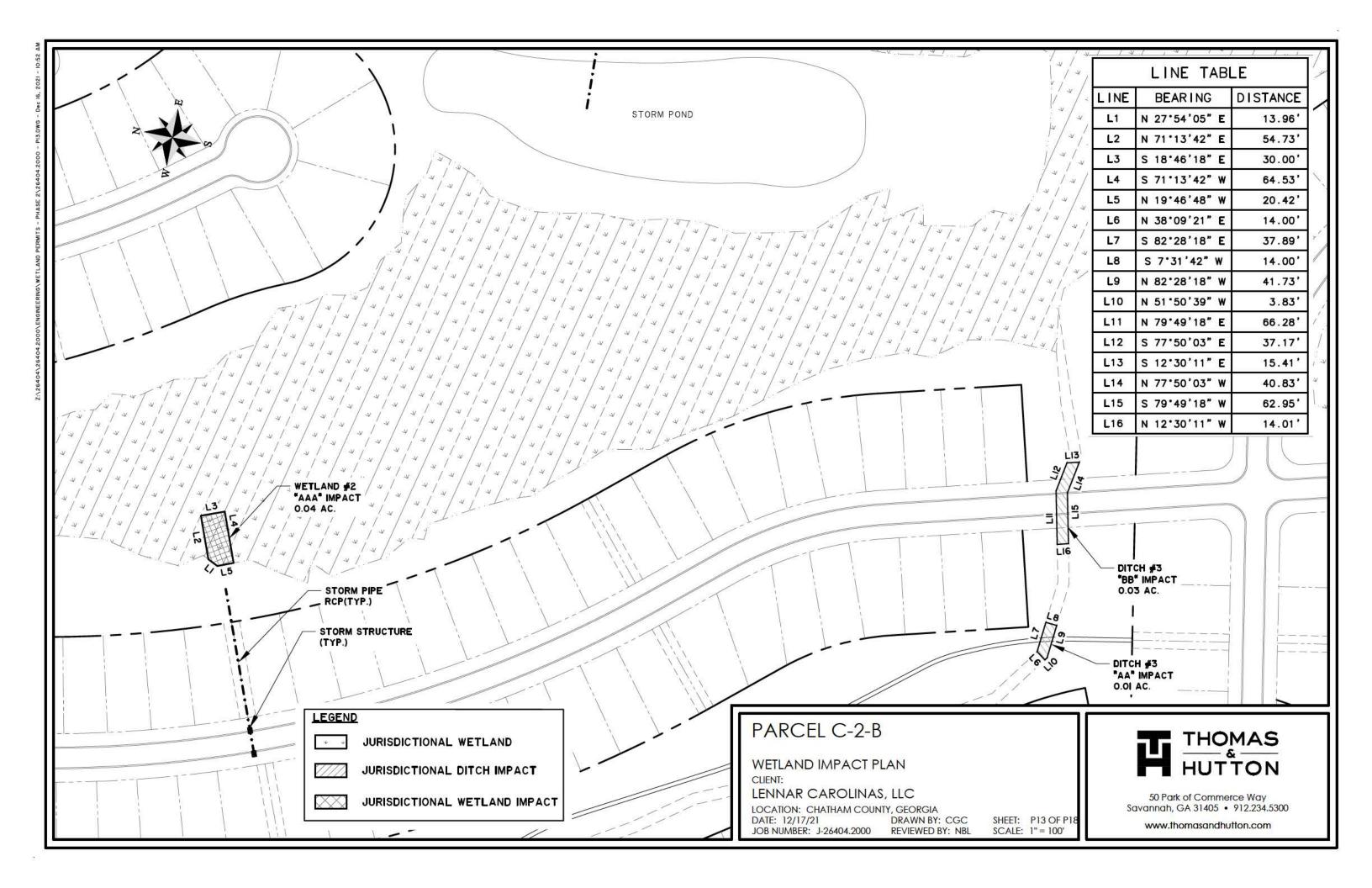


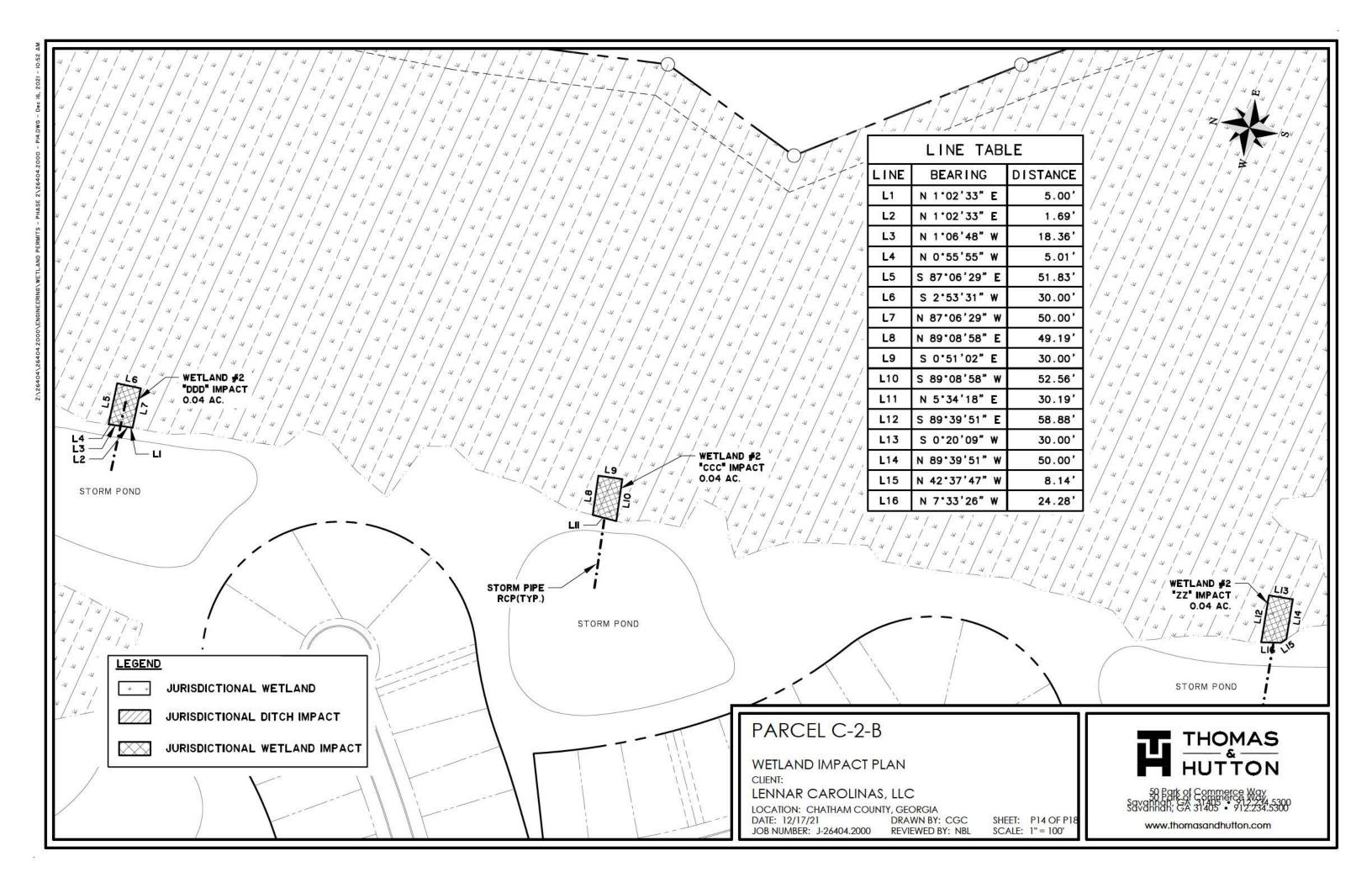


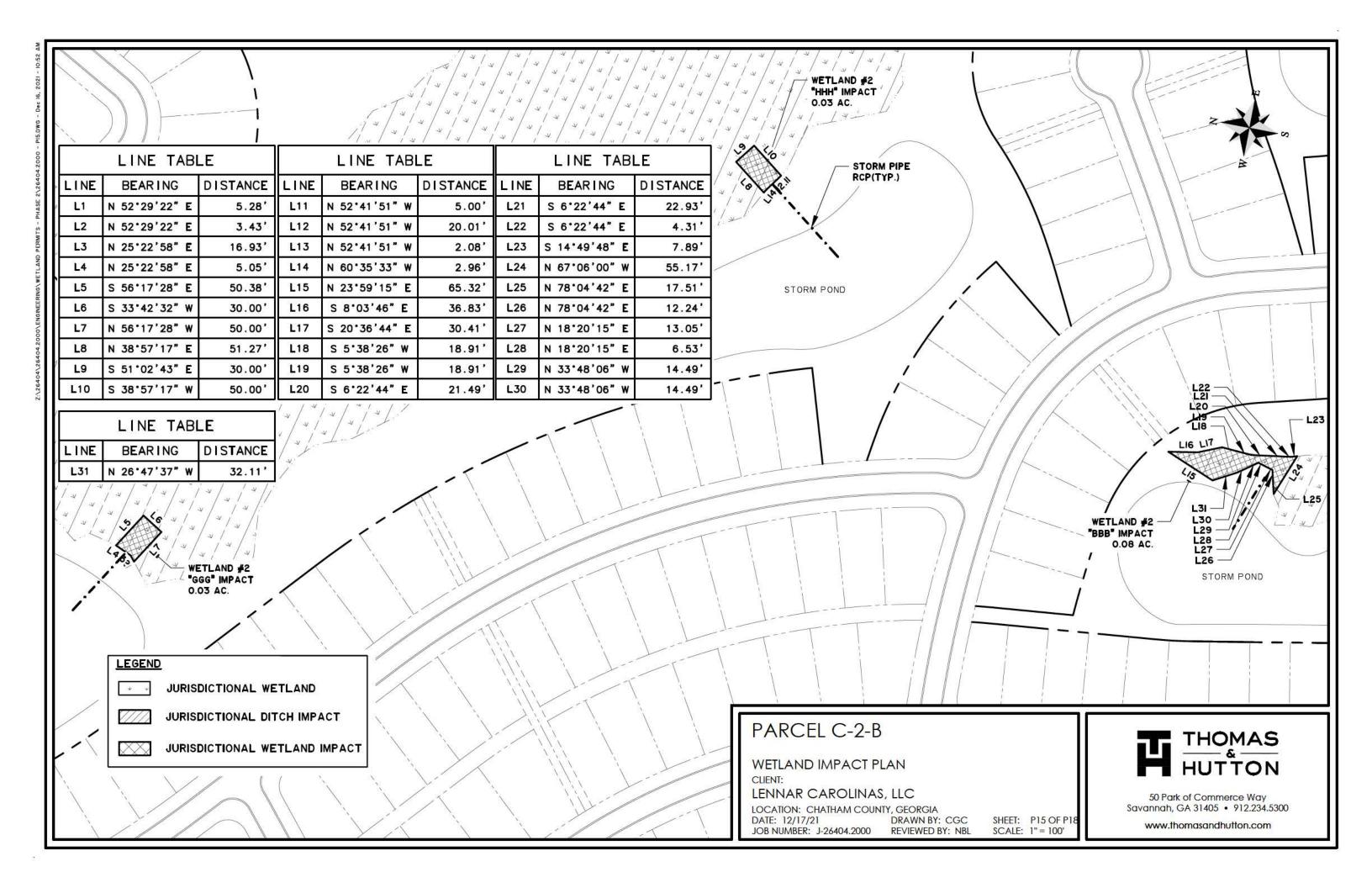


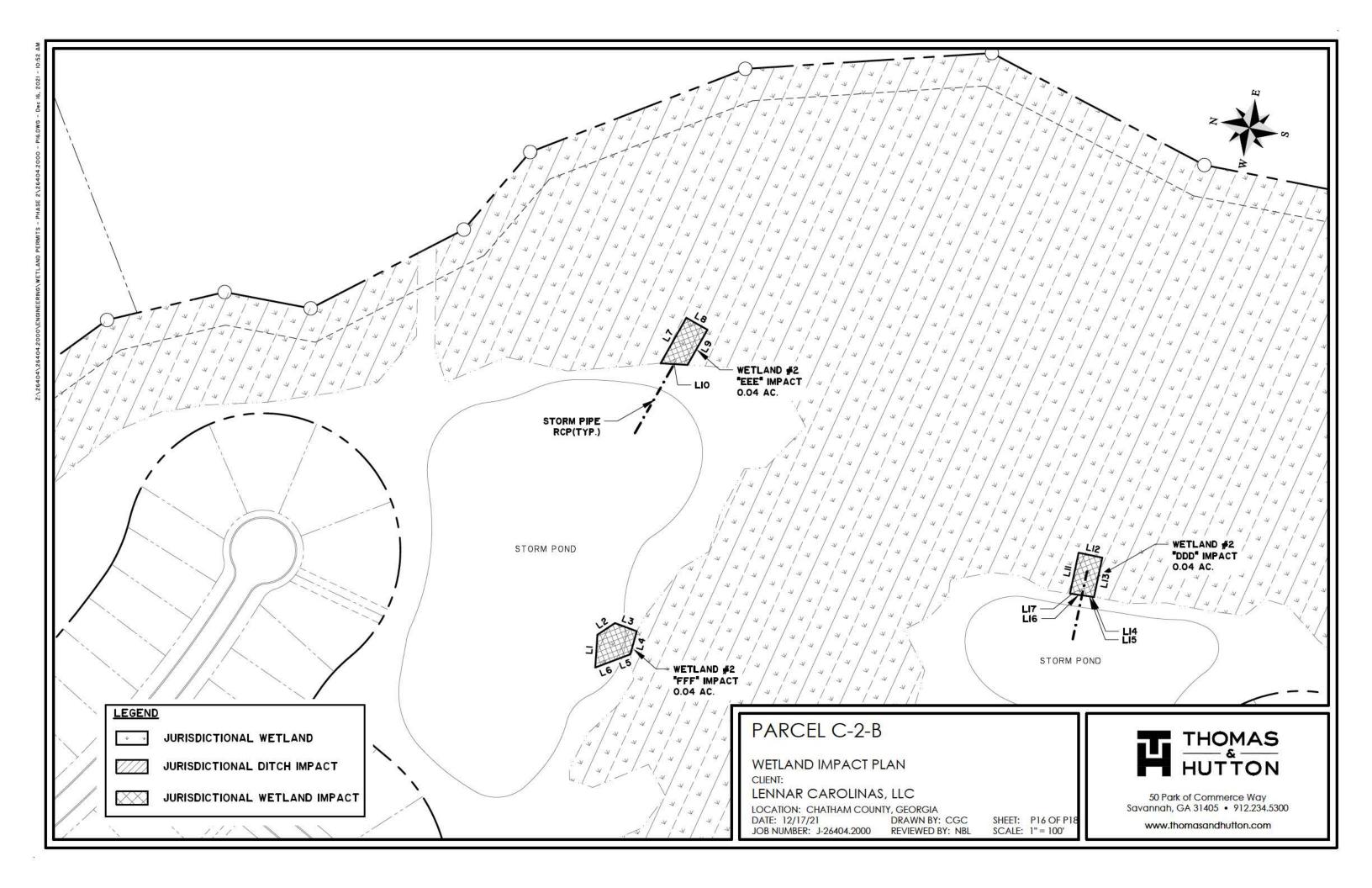


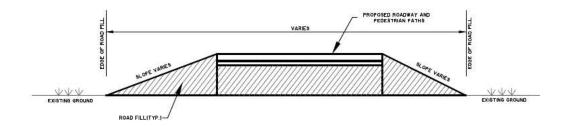




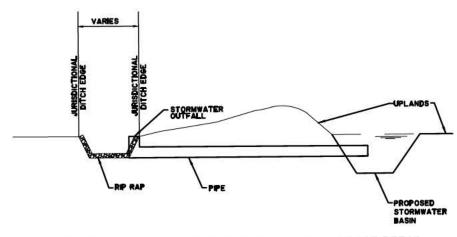




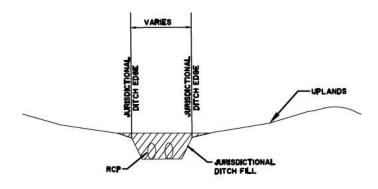




WETLAND FILL DETAIL



JURISDICTIONAL DITCH STORMWATER OUTFALL IMPACT DETAIL NOT TO SCALE



JURISDICTIONAL DITCH IMPACT DETAIL NOT TO SCALE

PARCEL C-2-B

WETLAND IMPACT PLAN

LENNAR CAROLINAS, LLC

LOCATION: CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA
DATE: 12/17/21 DRAWN BY: CGC
JOB NUMBER: J-26404.2000 REVIEWED BY: NBL

SHEET: P18 OF P18 SCALE: NTS

THOMAS HUTTON

50 Park of Commerce Way Savannah, GA 31405 • 912.234.5300

www.thomasandhutton.com