

**HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

**Applicant** ..... Diane Schermerhorn

**Request** ..... Conditional Use to allow self-storage and boat & RV storage

**Proposed Use** ..... self-storage and boat & RV storage

**Size** ..... 8.67± acres

**Zoning** ..... Light Industrial

**Location** ..... **6580 Cleveland Highway | Tax Parcel 12083 000003B.**

**Commission District** ..... Three

**Planning Commission Date** ..... November 7, 2022

**Staff Recommendation** ..... **Approval, based on the findings that the request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that it meets the criteria of non-residential property development standards for outdoor storage ([17.420.050.D.4.d](#))**

**Planning Commission Recommendation**.....**Approval, with conditions**  
**Vote: 5-0**

1. *The conditions of zoning from approved on May 11, 2006 shall apply, with modifications to meet current regulations, as stated below:*
  - 1.1. *The development shall generally occur as substantially depicted on the site plan dated 9-9-2022 and described in the project narrative.*
  - 1.2. *The development shall be subject to the standards of the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, 17.420). No variances are granted from these standards other than those specifically approved in this motion.*
  - 1.3. *The applicant shall coordinate with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to obtain a commercial driveway permit as part of the land development process. Any cost associated with these improvements shall be the responsibility of the developer.*
  - 1.4. *A 50 foot vegetated buffer shall be installed along all interior property lines per the requirements of 17.420.050.*

2. *Hours of operations shall be from 6 a.m. - 11 p.m., Monday – Sunday. There shall be no tenant entrance between 11 p.m. – 6 a.m.*
3. *Standing seam architectural panel shall be allowed on the building and canopy roofs with the color to be approved by the Director of Planning and Development.*
4. *All end walls of the open air storage shall be of approved material noted on Gateway Corridor Standard. Metal posts shall be allowed in between the storage bays.*
5. *All other gateway corridor requirements for fencing and buildings shall be adhered to.*
6. *This approval shall be effective for 12 months after Board of Commission approval unless the permitting process is initiated.*

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**Public Forum:**

*There were no comments in support or opposition.*

**Summary Analysis**

The applicant is requesting conditional use approval from the Hall County Board of Commissioners for boat & RV and self-storage facility on a 8.67± Light Industrial (I-I, [17.160](#)) parcel. The narrative submitted by the applicant states that the development will provide between 102-163 parking spaces and 20,000 square feet of climate controlled self-storage space.

The property was rezoned to Light Industrial (I-I) on May 11 2006, with 7 conditions:

1. Development shall be as generally depicted on the proposed plan, modified for compliance with new development standards as necessary at time of plan approval.
2. The Corridor Development Standards shall apply to the development of this property. The façade for three sides (front and sides) of the building shall be something other than metal.
3. Driveway design and placement are submitted to approval by the Hall County Engineering Department and the Georgia Department of Transportation.
4. The following uses are prohibited: auto repair garages, junk yard, storage yard (including outside storage or manufacturing), tuck terminal, or adult entertainment.
5. Any outdoor lighting on the premises shall be of a non-spill type.
6. The vehicle parking areas shall be paved with either asphalt or concrete.
7. A buffer consisting of Leyland Cypress shall be established at the rear of the building along the southern boundary lines of the property.

The applicants proposed use of boat & RV storage requires an amendment of condition four (4), which states that storage yards (including outside storage) are prohibited. Additionally, the property falls within the

Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD, [17.420](#)) which requires self-storage warehouse facilities and outdoor storage uses to receive conditional use approval ([17.420.050](#)). **It should be noted that the applicant has submitted a request to amend the conditions of the 2006 rezoning, running concurrent with this request. *The Planning Commission can hear these items simultaneously but must vote on them separately.***

The subject property is located in the northern most part of the county, on the east side of Cleveland Highway / US Route 129, just north of the Town of Clermont. The narrative states that access to the development will be provided through a commercial driveway with a deceleration and turning lane, to be approved and permitted by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

The facility will be developed in two phases. The first phase will consist of six (6) boat & RV storage buildings, the buildings will be arranged in 3 rows, 2 buildings each. The narrative and site plan describe the boat and RV storage buildings as having standing-seam metal roofs. Buildings 1 & 2, the buildings closest to Cleveland Highway, will be enclosed on 3 sides with brick and stucco and have regularly spaced faux window shutters for visual variety. The narrative states that the center building's roof will have a cupola to reflect the rural setting. The second and third rows of boat & RV storage buildings will have brick endcaps; landscaped planting areas will be located on the outside ends of buildings 3 through 6 as shown on the site plan. The second phase will be comprised of two (2) climate controlled self-storage buildings with a maximum storage area of 20,000 square feet. **The narrative and site plan include a 10 foot landscape strip adjacent to Cleveland Highway and 25 foot vegetated buffer along all interior property lines. Note, the transitional buffer requirements within the GCOD ([17.420.050](#)) requires a 50 foot buffer where industrial property is adjacent to agricultural or residentially zoned property. The regulations allow the transitional buffer to be reduced by 10 feet if an opaque 6FT fence is installed *unless*, the fence is required to screen outdoor storage ([17.420.050.D.4.d](#)). Should the Planning Commission choose to approve the use and site plan as presented, a variance to [17.420.050.C.4.b](#) is required.**

The proposed development meets the requirements of the GCOD, non-residential property development standards for outdoor storage ([17.420.050.D.4.d](#)).

### **Zoning Analysis**

When considering a conditional use certain criteria must be considered.

(a) The existing land use pattern. **The current land use pattern is a mixture of single family residential, undeveloped properties, agricultural property, and various commercial uses that include a creamery, and a boat storage facility.**

(b) Whether the proposed use would have an adverse effect on the comprehensive land development plan. **The proposed use is consistent with the Future Land Use map which indicates the property to be within a mixed-use/revitalization corridor. Mixed-use corridors are located along roadways which are intended to accommodate a variety of non-residential retail activities without encroaching upon or replacing adjacent residential uses, [2022-Comprehensive-Plan, page 35](#).**

(c) Whether all proposed structures, equipment or material will be readily accessible for fire and police protection. **The proposed development must follow the Development Review process to obtain**

**a land disturbance permit (LDP) and will be required to meet all applicable life safety regulations prior to permit issuance.**

(d) Whether the proposed use will be of such location, size, and character that, in general, it will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the area in which it is proposed to be situated and will not be detrimental to the orderly development of adjacent properties or a deterrent to the improvement of adjacent properties in accordance with the zoning classification of such properties, the existing land use pattern, or the comprehensive land development plan. **The proposal is consistent with the mixed-use corridor characteristics and is compatible with the nearby boat storage facility, and creamery.**

(e) Whether, in the case of any use located in, or directly adjacent to, a residential district or area:

(i) The nature and intensity of operations will be such that both pedestrian and vehicular traffic to and from the use and the assembly of persons in connection therewith will not be hazardous or inconvenient to, or incongruous with, said residential district or area, or conflict with the normal traffic of the neighborhood; and **The existing highway does not have sidewalks, so none should be required in front of the subject property. The internal drives should provide striped and marked crosswalks.**

(ii) The location and height of buildings, and other structures, and the crosswalks or pedestrian ways are nature and extent of screening, buffering or landscaping on the site will be such that the use will not hinder or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent land and buildings in conformance with existing zoning districts and development pattern. **The applicant shall submit architectural elevations, fence detail, and landscape plan for the Planning Director's approval prior to issuance of the LDP. At present it appears the applicant will require a variance in section [17.420.050.C.4.b](#) to allow a 25FT buffer, and a variance in [17.420.050.H.2.c](#).**

(f) Whether the proposed use will increase the population density resulting in the increase or overtaxing of the load on public facilities such as utilities, streets, etc.; or approval of the use would encourage adjacent areas to develop at higher densities than provided in the comprehensive plan resulting in the overtaxing of such public facilities. **The proposed development is not residential and thus will not increase the population density resulting in the increase or overtaxing of the load on public facilities such as schools, utilities, streets, etc.; nor will the approval of the use encourage adjacent areas to develop at higher densities than provided in the comprehensive plan resulting in the overtaxing of such public facilities.**

(g) Whether the proposed use will cause a health hazard, a public safety problem, or nuisance created or excessively increasing traffic and associated congestion; creating a drainage problem; generating unnecessary disturbances due to noise, the emittance of smoke or other contaminants, odor, electrical interference or causing pollution to land, air and/or water. **The proposed boat and RV storage with climate controlled storage should not cause a health hazard, a public safety problem, or nuisance created or excessively increasing traffic and associated congestion; creating a drainage problem; generating unnecessary disturbances due to noise, the emittance of smoke or other contaminants, odor, electrical interference or causing pollution to land, air and/or water. The access is subject to GDOT requirements and standard Hall County Development Review by Public Works, Planning, and Fire prior to issuance of any permits.**

(h) Whether the proposed change will adversely affect property values in adjacent areas. **Multiple factors impact property value including construction types, proposed uses, and maintenance. Often it is difficult to determine the effect of a development on adjacent properties until the development is complete.**

(i) Whether there are substantial reasons why the property cannot be used for a permitted use in the district where the property is located. **The property lies within the GCOD and outside storage and self-storage facilities are uses subject to approval by the Board of Commissioners. There are other uses that do not require conditional use approval.**

Per Planning Commission and Hall County Commission consideration and decision ([17.380.060](#)) the planning commission shall study the need and justification for the change based on a determination of the facts applicable to the particular case, and the following general lines of inquiry shall be considered, to wit:

1. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property; **The use, a boat & RV and self-storage facility, is proposed on previously zoned I-I property land, which is undeveloped. Adjacent properties to the north and east are zoned Planned Commercial Farm District (PCFD, [17.180.100](#)). Property to the south and across Cleveland Highway to the west are zoned Agricultural Residential IV (AR-IV, [17.120](#)). Directly across Cleveland Highway from the property is a Highway Business (H-B, [17.150](#)) zoned parcel (12083 00004B) developed with a boat sale, repair, and storage business, which was rezoned in 2005. Of the possible uses permitted in the I-I zoning district, the proposed use is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby properties.**
2. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **The site is currently undeveloped. If approved, the proposed boat & RV and self-storage facility would be required to meet all applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The site plan shows a 25 foot buffer along all interior property lines, where the property is adjacent to agricultural or residentially zoned properties. It is unlikely that the proposed development would adversely impact adjacent or nearby properties. If approved, the Planning Commission will need to specifically grant a variance allowing the 25FT buffer instead of the required 50FT buffer.**
3. Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has reasonable economic use as currently zoned. **The property is zoned I-I and as such has reasonable economic use as currently zoned; however, the 2006 condition prohibiting outside storage does limit the allowable uses within the district. The current request is for a conditional use permit to allow a boat and RV storage with climate controlled self-storage and is not a rezoning request; Section [17.420.050.B.1](#) and [17.420.050.B.6](#).**
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, or utilities; **The proposed development should have minimal impact on of existing streets, transportation facilities, or utilities.**
5. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the land use plan for the physical development of the area; **The Comprehensive Plan's future land use designation for the subject parcel is rural and it is part of a mixed-use corridor. Mixed-use**

corridors are located along roadways which are intended to accommodate a variety of non-residential retail activities without encroaching upon or replacing adjacent residential uses.

6. The extent to which property values are diminished by the existing zoning restrictions; **Multiple factors impact property value including construction types, proposed uses, and maintenance. Often it is difficult to determine the effect of a development on adjacent properties until the development is complete.**
7. The extent to which the destruction of the subject property's value under the existing zoning promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public; **Staff has not identified that the existing property values have been impacted by the existing zoning.**
8. The relative gain to the public as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner; **Staff has not identified a hardship imposed on the property owner as the property is currently zoned. The current request is for a conditional use permit to allow a boat and RV storage with climate controlled self-storage and is not a rezoning request; Section 17.420.050.B.1 and 17.420.050.B.6.**
9. The length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the area in the vicinity of the property; **The property was rezoned to I-I in 2006 and has remained undeveloped since. No permits have been submitted to the county for development of the parcel.**
10. 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. **Staff is not aware of any changing conditions that affect the use and development of the property.**
11. Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts, such as "spot zoning." **The property has already been rezoned to Light Industrial. As such, staff does find the conditional use request for a boat and RV storage with climate controlled self-storage to be an appropriate use for the subject property. The current request is for a conditional use permit to allow a boat and RV storage with climate controlled self-storage and is not a rezoning request; Section 17.420.050.B.1 and 17.420.050.B.6.**
12. Whether the present zoning district boundaries are illogically drawn in relation to existing conditions in the area; **The existing I-I zoning was established in 2006. A parcel zoned H-B is located across Cleveland Highway from the subject property. Other adjacent and nearby properties are a mixture of agricultural and residential uses.**
13. Whether the change requested is out of scale with the needs of the county as a whole or the immediate neighborhood; **The request does not appear to be out of scale with the needs of the County as a whole, as there is a need for additional storage facilities in the northern portion of the county.**
14. Whether it is impossible to find adequate sites for the proposed use in districts permitting such use and already appropriately zoned; **This is a conditional use, not a rezoning or amendment to a previous rezoning, therefore this question is not applicable to the application. This question is relevant to the concurrent request to amend the conditions of the 2006 rezoning request.**

15. Whether the need for rezoning could be handled instead by a variance request to the [Planning Commission]; **The current request is for a conditional use permit to allow a boat and RV storage with climate controlled self-storage and is not a rezoning request; Section [17.420.050.B.1](#) and [17.420.050.B.6.](#); therefore, the question is not applicable. Uses subject to Planning Commission or Board of Commissioners cannot be handled by a variance.**
16. Whether there would be an ecological or pollution impact resulting from major modifications to the land if the request is granted; **The proposed boat & RV and self-storage facility would be required to meet all applicable local, state, and federal regulations during the development permitting process.**
17. Whether there is reasonable evidence based upon existing and anticipated land use that would indicate a mistake was made in the original zoning of the property; **The current request is for a conditional use permit to allow a boat and RV storage with climate controlled self-storage and is not a rezoning request; Section [17.420.050.B.1](#) and [17.420.050.B.6.](#); therefore, the question is not applicable.**

[Chapter 17.160](#) provides the standards and allowable uses for the Light Industrial Districts within Hall County. Section [17.420.010](#) provides the purpose of the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD).

- A. To promote the general health, safety and welfare of the community.
- B. To improve the efficient operation of traffic around the county.
- C. To promote safe and efficient movement within the Overlay District for persons using all modes of travel - motorized vehicles, bicycles and walking.
- D. To create a sense of place that is aesthetically appealing and environmentally responsible.
- E. To encourage innovative development projects that set standards for landscaping, community design and aesthetics.
- F. To establish consistent and harmonious design standards for public improvements and private property development within the Overlay District so as to unify the distinctive visual quality of the Gateway Corridors.

#### **Development Support and Constraints –Departmental /agency comments**

##### ***Hall County Environmental Health***

An email dated October 18, 2022 from Emily McGahee states “Must meet all Environmental Health commercial septic system permitting requirements. A detailed business plan must be submitted to Hall County Environmental Health for review. Additional items, including, but not limited to: recorded plat, soil evaluation, and septic system installation may be required after review of business plan.”

##### ***Hall County Fire Rescue***

In an email dated October 20, 2022, Lieutenant John Hornick, NPQ Fire Inspector 1, Plans Review, provided the following comments:

1. IFC Section 507, all storage buildings must be within the 400’ hose lay distance requirements from a fire hydrant as the truck travels. Fire hydrant(s) may have to be installed along the fire access route to meet the hose lay distance requirements.

2. IFC Section 903, 20,000 SF climate controlled storage building exceeds the 12,000 SF sprinkler threshold requirements and may be required to have a fire suppression system installed.
3. IFC Section 506.1, access controlled gate will require a Knox key switch override device for fire department access into the gated development.
4. Note: water will be supplied by Gainesville Water not Hall County.

***Hall County Public Works and Utilities***

In a memo dated October 20, 2022, from Srikanth Yamala, Director of Public Works and Utilities, the following comments were provided:

**Engineering:**

The site may require a stormwater management report, should the site plan indicate the proposed development meets stormwater thresholds for impervious surfaces and/or disturbed acreage.

**Traffic:**

GDOT permit required.

**Utilities:**

Septic proposed, requires Environmental Health approval.

***Hall County Tax Assessors***

No comments were provided.

***Gainesville Water Resources***

No comments were provided.

***Georgia Department of Transportation***

Per an email dated October 20, 2022, Parker Niebauer, District 1 Traffic Operations Supervisor, states: "GDOT Coordination In Progress – See Page 12/21 of this application package for initial GDOT comments."

**As noted in the application materials submitted by the applicant, GDOT recommends the gated entrance to be a minimum of 100 feet from the edge of travel lane.**

➤ **Excerpts from the minutes of the November 7, 2022 meeting**

**Applicant's Presentation:**

**Randi Doveton, Planning Director**, presented a summary of the request.

**Diane Schermerhorn, 6147 Grand Marina Circle, Gainesville**, presented the request. The applicant stated that the façade of the buildings will be quality built. The applicant stated that the building will not have heavy traffic or noise. The buildings will have evergreen shrubs landscaped as well as decorative chain fencing along the highway frontage.

**Planning Commission Comments:**



Mr. Braswell questioned if the two parallel front buildings facing the road would be brick on the three sides and the remaining buildings behind it would be brick from the two sides only. The applicant said yes. Mr. Hunt questioned if in between the bays it would be metal material. The applicant said yes. Mr. Braswell questioned hours of operation. The applicant stated that the hours of operation would be from 6 a.m. – 11 p.m.

***Motion: A motion to approve, with conditions was made by Mr. Hunt and seconded by Ms. Pilcher. Vote: 5-0***

*Conditions:*

1. *The conditions of zoning from approved on May 11, 2006 shall apply, with modifications to meet current regulations, as stated below:*
  - 1.1. *The development shall generally occur as substantially depicted on the site plan dated 9-9-2022 and described in the project narrative.*
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