

**HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

Applicant Reynolds-Hemmer Properties, LLC

Request **Special Use** | Outdoor storage within the
Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD)

Proposed Use Outdoor storage

Size 1.545± acres

Zoning Heavy Industrial (I-2)

Location **3038 Gateway Centre Parkway** | Tax Parcel
15020A000035

Commission District Three

Planning Commission Date March 17, 2025

Staff Recommendation **Approval, with conditions**, as the proposed use
is consistent with the “Inland Port” land use
designation in the Comprehensive Plan

Record Number..... HZCU25-0004

Planning Commission Recommendation..... Approval, with conditions

Vote: 5-0

Planning Commission Conditions:

1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the site plan dated January 16, 2025, and the project narrative dated January 17, 2025, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
2. The use shall be limited to trailer storage for a single lease tenant; any use as a commercial parking lot or intermodal facility shall be prohibited. No material or containers shall be allowed storage on the premises if not stored in an enclosed trailer or on a flatbed trailer.
3. All fencing along the entire length of Gateway Centre Parkway shall be 8 feet in height, opaque fencing of either PVC or wood and include a 10 foot planted landscape buffer. Fencing color and buffer requirements shall be approved by the Director of Planning and Zoning, or their designee prior to the land disturbance permitting process. All other

fencing shall be 8 foot tall black, vinyl-coated chain-link fence unless otherwise noted on the submitted site plan dated January 16, 2025.

4. A 25 foot wide undisturbed buffer adjacent to the right-of-way of Cornelia Highway shall be maintained. The existing mature landscaping shall be supplemented with additional planted evergreens with an installation height of no less than 6 feet to provide sufficient screening of the development. Final review and approval of the landscape plan is subject to the Director of Planning and Zoning or their designee.
5. No variances to GCOD standards and no additional variances or development exceptions are granted as part of this request that are not explicitly granted herein. The development shall comply with the Unified Development Code of Hall County, as well as any other agencies or reviewing departments, including, but not limited to the Fire Marshal and Hall County Engineering. Where there are discrepancies between the proposed standards and County regulations, the County regulations shall overrule unless otherwise approved.
6. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.
7. The site plan shall be approved as presented with gravel parking and a reduction in the left side yard buffer to 5 feet as presented on the site plan dated January 16, 2025.

Excerpts from the minutes of the March 17, 2025 meeting

Applicant's Presentation:

Katie Greenway, Planning and Zoning Administrator, presented a summary of the request.

Lee Hemmer, 3945 Reynolds Road, Gainesville, presented the request. The applicant is requesting approval of a special use for outdoor storage within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) on a 1.545± acre tract zoned Heavy Industrial (I-2). The property is currently undeveloped and wooded, with a County Studied flood zone bisecting the property along the frontage of Gateway Centre Parkway. The property was rezoned from Agricultural Residential (AR-1) to Heavy Industrial (I-2) in 2014 (ZON2014-00049), subject to one condition.

Public Forum:

There were no comments in support or opposition.

Motion: A motion to approve, with conditions was made by Stan Hunt and seconded by Frank Sosebee and Johnny Varner. Vote: 5-0

Conditions:

1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the site plan dated January 16, 2025, and the project narrative dated January 17, 2025, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.

2. The use shall be limited to trailer storage for a single lease tenant; any use as a commercial parking lot or intermodal facility shall be prohibited. No material or containers shall be allowed storage on the premises if not stored in an enclosed trailer or on a flatbed trailer.
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6. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.
7. The site plan shall be approved as presented with gravel parking and a reduction in the left side yard buffer to 5 feet as presented on the site plan dated January 16, 2025.

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the applicant's request with the following conditions:

1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the site plan dated January 16, 2025, and the project narrative dated January 17, 2025, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
2. The use shall be limited to trailer storage for a single lease tenant; any use as a commercial parking lot or intermodal facility shall be prohibited. No material or containers shall be allowed storage on the premises if not stored in an enclosed trailer or on a flatbed trailer.
3. All fencing along the entire length of Gateway Centre Parkway shall be 8 feet in height, PVC, opaque, and include a 10 foot planted landscape buffer. Fencing color and buffer requirements shall be approved by the Director of Planning and Zoning, or their designee prior to the land disturbance permitting process. All other fencing shall be 8 foot tall black, vinyl-coated chain-link fence.

4. A 25 foot wide undisturbed buffer adjacent to the right-of-way of Cornelia Highway shall be maintained. The existing mature landscaping shall be supplemented with additional planted evergreens with an installation height of no less than 6 feet to provide sufficient screening of the development. Final review and approval of the landscape plan is subject to the Director of Planning and Zoning or their designee.
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6. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.

The following should be considered as exceptions to the Unified Development Code of Hall County, and shall warrant further determination by the Board should it choose to approve the submitted narrative and site plan:

1. **Section 6.2.5.C.d – Parking Lot Design** - All parking areas shall be paved with asphalt, concrete or pervious materials approved by the Director.
 - The applicant proposes gravel surface for parking and outdoor storage areas. **This does not meet the standard.**
 - Per section 6.2.2.C, this exception may be considered under an administrative variance upon written request, or at the Board's discretion.

Summary Analysis

The applicant is requesting approval of a Special Use for outdoor storage within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) on a 1.545± acre tract zoned Heavy Industrial (I-2). The property is currently undeveloped and wooded, with a County Studied flood zone bisecting the property along the frontage of Gateway Centre Parkway.

The surrounding properties are zoned and developed as outlined below:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| North: | Gateway Industrial Centre, with a mix of Light Industrial (I-1) and Heavy Industrial (I-2) zoned parcels |
| South: | Planned Commercial Development (PCD): Approved for an agricultural market (HZON24-0025) |
| East: | Agricultural Residential (AR-1): Developed with single-family residences |
| West: | Heavy Industrial (I-2): Approved and developed for Office/Warehousing (HZON2014-0049) |

The property was rezoned from Agricultural Residential (AR-1) to Heavy Industrial (I-2) in 2014 (ZON2014-00049), subject to the following condition:

1. A staggered double row of evergreen trees at least six feet in height shall be planted to the rear of the proposed future expansion to provide a transitional buffer and protect the integrity of GCOD standards.

Per the narrative, the applicant is requesting approval of a Special Use to utilize the subject property as trailer storage with a gravel parking surface. According to the site plan, access to the development will be off Gateway Centre Parkway. The applicant states the development will have a gate, security fence, and LED security non-spill lighting. The site plan shows an eight (8) foot high opaque chain-link fence along the perimeter and a ten foot wide landscape strip along Gateway Centre Parkway and Cornelia Highway. Per the narrative, the property is part of the Gateway Centre Industrial Park and intends to utilize existing stormwater management facilities.

The development standards for the project are identified in the table below and compared to the GCOD requirements:

GCOD Analysis

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Compliance</u>	<u>Notes</u>
6.2.5.A – Transitional buffers	None proposed	Deficient	Abuts county owned property utilized for drainage
6.2.5.B.2 – Other landscape and screening standards	10-foot-wide landscape strip proposed along street frontage on Gateway Centre Parkway	Complies	
6.2.5.C.2.d – Parking lot design	Gravel proposed for outdoor storage areas.	Deficient	Administrative variance option applicable per 6.2.2.C
6.2.5.D – Outdoor lighting	LED security non-spill lighting	Complies	Shall comply with GCOD standards.
17.420.050.G – Interparcel access	Not applicable	Not applicable	
6.2.6.B.3– Architectural standards for non-residential buildings	Not applicable	Not applicable	No structures are proposed.
6.2.7 – Signs	None proposed	Unknown	Shall comply with GCOD standards.

Based on the future land-use plan, staff finds the request *is consistent* with the Comprehensive Plan and future land use designation of Inland Port. This area surrounding the incoming Inland Port (designated as the Blue Ridge Connector by the Georgia Ports Authority) includes the intermodal yard as well as the major freight corridors supporting the flow of goods. Primary future land uses within the Inland Port designation specifically include industrial uses, commercial uses, and other supporting uses for the port.

Zoning Analysis

When considering an application for a Special Use, the Planning Commission must 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 must be considered:

- a) Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use, development and zoning of adjacent and nearby property; **The proposed use is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby properties along Gateway Centre Parkway as there are other light and heavy industrial zoning and uses adjacent.**
- b) Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **It is not anticipated that an industrial development would adversely affect adjacent or nearby property.**
- c) Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has reasonable economic use as currently zoned; **Yes, the property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned, Heavy Industrial (I-2); however, outdoor storage within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District requires Board of Commissioners approval.**
- d) 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, schools, police protection, fire protection, public health facilities or emergency medical service; **If approved, the use is not anticipated to cause an excessive or burdensome use of the existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, schools, police protection, fire protection, public facilities, or emergency medical service. The property is served by Hall County sewer and water from the City of Gainesville.**
- e) Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the future land use plan for the physical development of the area; **The proposed use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Inland Port future land use designation.**
- f) The extent to which property values are diminished by the existing zoning restrictions; **Staff is unable to determine the extent to which property values are diminished by the existing zoning restrictions.**
- g) 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 is unable to comment on the impact of property values without a full market analysis. 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 completed.**
- h) 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.**

- i) 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 subject property is zoned Heavy Industrial (I-2). The site is currently graded (HDV2019-00027) with no structures.**
- j) Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use or development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal; **There are no known changing conditions affecting the use or development of the property.**
- k) Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts; **This question is not applicable as there are no proposed changes to the zoning classification.**
- l) Whether the present zoning district boundaries are illogically drawn in relation to existing conditions in the area; **There is no evidence that the present zoning district boundaries are illogically drawn.**
- m) Whether the change requested is out of scale with the needs of the county as a whole or the immediate neighborhood; **No, the request is not out of scale with the needs of the county as a whole.**
- n) Whether it is impossible to find adequate sites for the proposed use in districts permitting such use and already appropriately zoned; **Outdoor storage is permitted in Heavy Industrial I-2 zoning; however, outdoor storage within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) requires Board of Commissioner approval.**
- o) Whether the need for rezoning could be handled instead by a variance request to the Planning Commission; **The request could not be handled alternatively as a variance.**
- p) Whether there would be an ecological or pollution impact resulting from major modifications to the land if the request is granted; **Any land disturbance activities on the property shall be required to adhere to the land development permitting process, and as a result, are subject to local, state, and federal regulations. There should not be an ecological or pollution impact resulting from any modification to the land if the request is granted.**
- q) 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; **There is no indication that a mistake was made in the original zoning.**

11.2.6.E - Submission requirements

1. Any person or persons requesting a change in the official zoning map or use subject to approval of the County Commission must file an application with a plat or map of the property attached thereto, together with payment of such fees set forth in this Sec 11.2. to cover administrative and advertising costs, in the Planning and Zoning Department office. Such person or persons or their authorized agent must appear in person at the public hearing held to consider the district change. **The proposal meets the requirement. The applicant has paid the appropriate fees and understands that someone must be present at both the Hall County Planning Commission meeting and the voting meeting of the Hall County Board of Commissioners.**

2. All applications for a change of zoning classification or use subject to approval of the County Commission must include:
 - a. A narrative statement identifying the existing and proposed use of the property and addressing each of the criteria set forth in this Sec. 11.2. **The proposal provides a narrative outlining the intent of the development; however, the applicant has not prepared a response to each of the criteria listed in 11.2.6.E.2.**
 - b. A site plan drawn to scale designating the area covered by the application and identifying existing and proposed buildings and uses, adjacent existing land uses, zoning on contiguous parcels, including those across an abutting public right-of-way, and any other significant site improvements proposed to accommodate the proposed use or buffer adjacent uses, etc., or a plat of the subject property where no specific land use is proposed. In cases where only a plat or map is provided and no land use is proposed, the Planning Commission and County Commission may evaluate the application based on the most intense possible land use permitted in the proposed district. **The proposal meets the requirement.**
 - c. For any application for a slow rate land treatment system as defined in 7.6.9.D.1, additional requirements apply. **This standard is not applicable to the applicant's request.**
 - d. For any application proposing the development of 100 or more residential dwelling units, a traffic impact study must be submitted prior to consideration of the application by the County Commission. At the applicant's expense, the traffic impact study must be prepared by a professional engineer in accordance with requirements established by the Hall County Engineering Department. The Engineering Department must review the traffic impact study and forward any comments to the County Commission. **This standard is not applicable to the applicant's request.**

Development Support and Constraints

Hall County Environmental Health

In an email dated February 12, 2025, Emily McGahee stated "No comment. Public Sewer"

Hall County Fire Marshal

In an email dated February 10, 2025, John Hornick, NPQ Fire Service Plans Examiner 1, stated that

"The Hall County Fire Marshal's Office has no comments as proposed."

Hall County Public Works and Utilities

In a memo dated February 13, 2025, Bill Nash, Director of Public Works and Utilities, provided the following comments:

Engineering:

This 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.

Show FEMA and Hall County studied Flood plains that are present on site.

Traffic:

Commercial driveway standards will apply.

Utilities:

Hall County 8" gravity sewer on Gateway Centre Parkway

Georgia Department of Transportation

In an email dated February 6, 2025, Henry Stevens, GDOT Civil Engineer 2, stated that GDOT coordination is not required.