

HALL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
STAFF REPORT

Applicant Jim Rizqallah

Request **Rezone** | from Agricultural Residential (AR-1) & Planned Industrial Development (PID) to Light Industrial (I-1)

Proposed Use Uses permitted in I-1

Size 14.11 acres

Zoning **Current:** Agricultural Residential (AR-1) & Planned Industrial Development (PID) | **Proposed:** Light Industrial (I-1)

Location **3294 & 3290 Athens Highway | Tax parcel 15014 000192**

Commission District Three

County Commission Date January 22, 2026

Staff Recommendation **Denial**, as the proposed zoning is not consistent with the “Suburban Neighborhood, Low-Density” future land use designation in the Comprehensive Plan.

Record Number HZON25-0054

Staff recommends DENIAL of the applicant’s request. However, if the County Commission chooses to approve this request, staff recommends the following conditions:

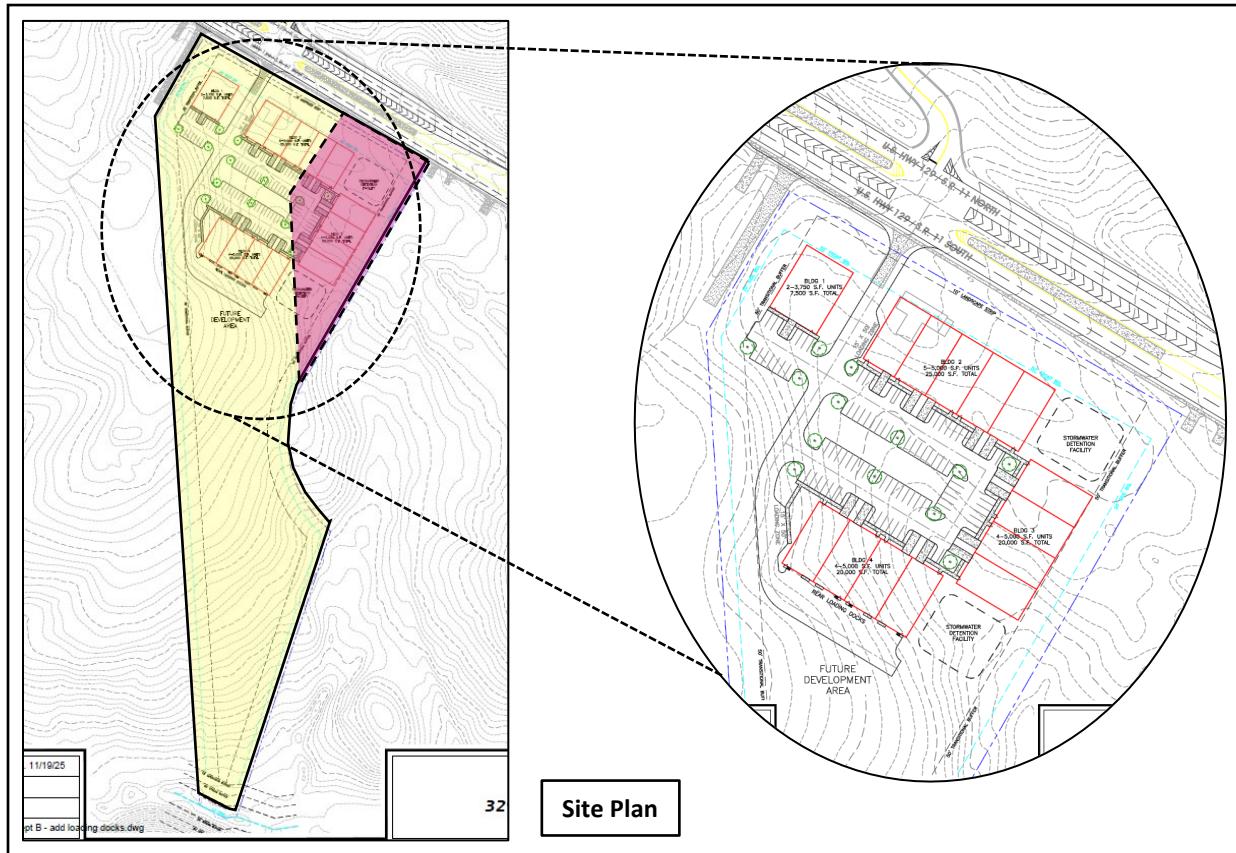
1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the site plan dated November 19, 2025, and as described in the project narrative dated November 20, 2025, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
2. All development shall meet Gateway Corridors Overlay District requirements of the Hall County Unified Development Code.
3. No variances or development exceptions are granted as part of this request that are not explicitly granted by board approval. The development shall be compliant with the Unified Development Code of Hall County, as well as any other agencies or reviewing departments,

including, but not limited to Environmental Health, the Fire Marshal, and Hall County Engineering.

4. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.

Summary Analysis

The applicant is requesting to rezone a 14.11± acre portion of a tract from Agricultural Residential (AR-1) & Planned Industrial Development (PID) to Light Industrial (I-1) to allow for uses permitted in the I-1 zoning district. Currently, the subject property is developed with one single-family residence, and two accessory structures used as a storage building and a pole barn.



A part of the subject property (shown in pink highlight) was approved by the Board of Commissioners to be rezoned to Planned Industrial Development (PID) on July 24, 2008, to allow mixed use commercial and manufacturing with the following conditions (ZON2008-00070):

1. The development of the site shall occur as generally depicted and described in the concept plan and project narrative, modified as necessary for compliance with development standards in force at the time of site plan approval.

2. Development shall be limited to a 13,200 sq. ft. manufacturing and repair building and 6,900 sq. ft. retail/office building.
3. The Applicant must connect to City of Gainesville water before the issuance of any permits.
4. All development shall meet Gateway Corridors Overlay District requirements section 17.420 of the Hall County Zoning Regulations.
5. Final driveway design and placement are subject to approval by the Hall County Engineering Department and/or the Georgia Department of Transportation.
6. Any access or adjacent intersection improvements required by the Hall County Engineering Department or the Georgia Department of Transportation are the financial responsibility of the Applicant/developer.
7. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plat created for the property.
8. The hours of operation will be Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The surrounding properties are zoned and developed as outlined below:

North:	Planned Industrial Development (PID) – Truck Terminal
	Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) – Sugar Hill Elementary School
East:	Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) – Vacant
South:	Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) – Developed with single-family residences
West:	Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) – Developed with single-family residences



Per the submitted narrative, the applicant is requesting to rezone the subject property from Agricultural Residential (AR-1) and Planned Industrial Development (PID) to Light Industrial (I-1) to allow uses permitted within the I-1 zoning district. The applicant specifically proposes the development of warehouse buildings with associated office space. The property also falls within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD).

The proposed development consist of multiple warehouse buildings totaling approximately 72,500 square feet across 4 buildings/15 units. The proposal includes one 7,500-square-foot building with the potential to be divided into two units; one 25,000-square-foot building containing five units; and two 20,000-square-foot buildings containing four units each. The associated site plan shows approximately 85 to 90 parking spaces.

Per the submitted narrative, the applicant states that each unit will be accessed by individual roll-up doors, which will also function as loading areas. Additional designated loading zones are also proposed throughout the site. The applicant also states, all GCOD standards will be met and no variances are being requested as part of this application.

Water service will be provided by the City of Gainesville Department of Water Resources as confirmed by an availability letter dated October 27, 2025, and sanitary sewer services will be provided by private on site septic.

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>Notes</u>	<u>Compliance</u>
6.2.5.A.– Transitional buffers	The submitted site plan indicates 50-foot buffers along the perimeter	Where an industrial zoning district abuts property zoned for residential or agricultural use, the width must be at least 50 feet.	Complies
6.2.5.B.5.d – Screening of storage and accessory equipment	No screening is proposed	Outdoor storage or sales displays must be screened from view from public streets and adjacent property by a solid fence or wall at least 8 feet in height	Unknown
6.2.5.C.1 – Parking Lot Design - Required number of Parking Spaces	85-90 parking spaces are proposed per site plan	1 per 300 sq. ft. of office plus 1 per 5,000 sq. ft. additional indoor area. The maximum number of parking spaces that may be constructed on impervious surfaces shall be no more than 125 percent of the minimum number of parking spaces	Unknown
6.2.5.C.2.d – Parking Lot Design - Surface	Paved with asphalt	All parking areas must be paved with asphalt, concrete or pervious materials approved by the director.	Complies
6.2.5.C.2.e – Parking Lot Design - Location	The proposed parking is located between buildings.	Off-street parking must be located to the side or rear of the principal building and may not be located between the building and the street.	Complies
6.2.6.A.4 – Architectural Standards	Unknown	Shall comply with GCOD standards.	Unknown
6.2.7 – Signs	Unknown	Signage shall comply with GCOD standards.	Unknown

Based on the future land use plan, staff finds the requested rezoning *is not consistent* with the Hall County Comprehensive Plan and the future land use designation of "Suburban Neighborhood, Low-Density". These areas consist of low-density, detached single-family housing. In less developed areas of the county, they should be focused where there is existing water and sewer infrastructure, or where future infrastructure is expected to be located. Future infrastructure may be driven by the Sewer System Master Plan & Rate Study or by developers willing to fund access where it isn't already planned. Depending on the character area and what zoning districts they allow, residential densities can be up to 2 dwellings per acre or up to 8 dwellings per acre.

(A) Zoning Analysis

When considering a zoning amendment to the zoning maps, the 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 rezoning is not consistent with the future land use designation identified in the Comprehensive Plan. However, the surrounding area contains a mix of residential, agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses, reflecting a diverse development pattern in the vicinity.**
- b) Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **It is not anticipated that the use would adversely affect adjacent or nearby property, provided required buffers are maintained.**
- c) Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned; **The property has reasonable economic use as currently zoned.**
- 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; **The proposed rezoning is not expected 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.**
- 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 not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan future land use designation of Suburban Neighborhood, Low-Density.**
- 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 affected 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 values 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; **A portion of the subject property is zoned Planned Industrial Development (PID); however, the site was never developed in accordance with the approved zoning. The property is currently developed with a single-family residence and a pole barn constructed in 1957, as well as a storage building constructed in 2018.**
- 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; **Staff is not aware of any changing conditions affecting the use or development of the property.**
- k) Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts; **The proposed Light Industrial (I-1) zoning would not create an isolated district, as portions of the subject parcel and adjacent properties are already zoned for similar industrial uses.**
- 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; **There are other properties within the County that support Light Industrial uses based on the Future Land Use Map and the current zoning map; however, the development as proposed requires rezoning approval by the Board of Commissioners.**
- 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 go through the land development permitting process, and as a result are subject to local, state, and federal regulations. As a result, there are no anticipated ecological or pollution impacts 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 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 December 16, 2025, Emily McGahee stated “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/modification may be required after review of business plan.”

Georgia Department of Transportation

In an email dated December 11, 2025, Christopher Hash, P.E. D1 Traffic Operations Supervisor, stated “Will need to permit with our office. Driveway will need to align, and a right turn lane will be required. Intersection will need to be studied.”

Hall County Public Works and Utilities

In a memorandum from Public Works and Utilities dated December 17, 2025, Assistant Director Jason Skarda stated the following:

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:

GDOT access Permit is required.

Utilities:

Hall County Sewer Service area – No infrastructure in vicinity.

Hall County Fire Marshal

In an email dated December 16, 2025, John Hornick, NPQ Fire Service Plans Examiner 1, stated, “The Hall County Fire Marshal’s Office considers the plan conceptual and if approved may require modifications during development review to meet fire code.”