

**HALL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
STAFF REPORT**

Applicant Taylor & Mathis

Request (A) **Rezone** | from Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) to Light Industrial (I-1)
(B) **Variance** | GCOD standards

Proposed Use (A) & (B) Warehouse and distribution

Size 15.352± acres

Zoning **Current:** Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1)
Proposed: Light Industrial (I-1)

Location **866 Gainesville Highway** | Tax Parcel 07298 000009

Commission District One

Commission Date May 28, 2026

Staff Recommendation (A) **Approval, with conditions**, as the proposed zoning is consistent with the “Business Nodes & Corridors” future land use classification within the Comprehensive Plan.
(B) **Denial**, as no hardship exists pursuant to the criteria of 11.1.1.D.11.

Record Number..... (A) HZON26-0014
(B) HVAR26-0015

(A) 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 February 24, 2026, and as described in the project narrative received March 27, 2026, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
2. No variances or development exceptions are granted as part of this request that are not explicitly granted by board approval.
3. All conditions of zoning shall be made a part of any plats or construction plans created for the property.

(B) Staff recommends DENIAL of the applicant’s request.

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:

- **Section 6.2.5.C.2.e – Parking Lot Design – Location** - Off-street parking must be located to the side or rear of the principal building and may not be located between the principal building and the street.
 - Parking is proposed between the building and Gainesville Highway.

Summary Analysis

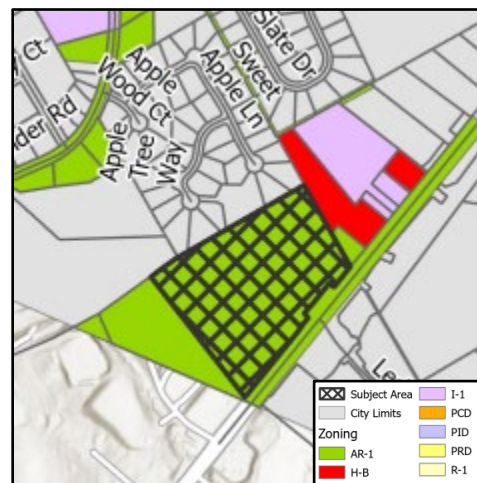
The applicant has submitted two concurrent requests: (A) to rezone a 15.352± acre tract from Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) to Light Industrial (I-1) for a warehouse and distribution facility and (B) a Variance to the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) standards.

According to the Hall County Tax Assessor records, the property is currently developed as follows:

- 1,474 square foot single-family residence built in 1953 and occupied by Global Imports Auto Sale since March 2, 2018.
- 2,580 square foot service repair garage built in 1950 and occupied by JP Tire Shop, LLC since May 8, 2017
- 732 square foot single-family residence built in 1950 and appears abandoned

The surrounding properties are zoned and developed as outlined below:

- North: City of Buford Single Family Residential (R-100): Single-family residences
City of Resthaven: inert landfill
- East: Highway Business (H-B): Auto sales; Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1)
- South: City of Resthaven; Gwinnett County
- West: Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) proposed to be rezoned to Light Industrial (I-1): Light industrial uses
City of Resthaven: inert landfill



Per the submitted narrative, the applicant is proposing to develop a 161,676 square foot building to be used as a warehouse and distribution facility for automotive parts. All existing structures on the property will be removed as part of the redevelopment.

Per the submitted site plan, the proposed building meets the Light Industrial district setbacks of 50 feet from the front and 20 feet from the side and rear property lines. Where a 50-foot transitional buffer is

required adjacent to residential uses along the northern property line, the applicant proposes a 75-foot landscape buffer. The site plan identifies the areas where existing trees are to remain, as well as areas where an enhanced buffer will be planted once grading activities are complete. Stream buffer requirements on the western side of the site are also met.



One driveway is proposed along Gainesville Highway, aligned with Ledford Road. Some vehicle parking and all truck parking/loading areas are located at the front of the property between the building and street. While the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) requires parking to be placed to the side or rear of the building, the applicant proposes to position the building between the adjacent subdivision and much of the parking and circulation areas in order to better screen nearby residences from on-site business activity.

Water service will be provided by the City of Buford as confirmed in a letter dated March 27, 2026. Sanitary sewer service will be provided by on-site septic.

Below is the elevation provided by the applicant. Per the narrative, the building will be constructed of architecturally designed cast-in-place (precast) concrete tilt walls with out-set entry features on either end of the front elevation of the building to add architectural character and interest. Storefront entry systems, punched window openings, and architectural metal canopies will be used for office entry features in complementary materials colors. An attractive, textured paint scheme will be used for the exterior finish of the building. All construction will be consistent with the provided building rendering and elevations.



Concurrently, the applicant requests a variance from the GCOD standards as identified in the table below.

GCOD Analysis

| <u>Standard</u> | <u>Proposed</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>Compliance</u> |
|--|--|--|--------------------------|
| 6.2.5.A.– Transitional buffers | 75-foot buffer along the northern property boundary. | 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.C.2.d – Parking Lot Design - Surface | Paved parking and circulation. | 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 – Off-street parking | Off-street parking area is identified between the building and the street. | Off-street parking must be located to the side or rear of the principal building and may not be located between the principal building and | Deficient |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---------------|
| | | the street | |
| 6.2.5.C.3.b – Perimeter Landscaping | Where parking lots abut public streets, a frontage landscape strip is required as provided in Section 8.1.3. The depth of such strip is 10 feet for industrial zoned property. | The site plan appears to comply. | Shall comply. |
| 6.2.7 – Signs | Not specified. | Signage shall comply with GCOD standards. | Shall comply |

Based on the future land use plan, staff finds the requested rezoning *is consistent* with the Hall County Comprehensive Plan and the future land use designation of Business Nodes and Corridors within the South Hall character area. Many of the county's major roadways have strong connections to infrastructure, employment, and housing, making them desirable for larger scale commercial development. New development along these major road corridors and intersections should consist of higher-intensity commercial uses, low-intensity, consumer-facing industrial uses that house businesses that serve nearby communities, and with some higher density residential, where appropriate. Site designs should use the Quality Development Principals, particularly natural resource protections and high quality landscape installations, to the fullest extent possible.

(A) Zoning Analysis – Rezone

When considering a zoning amendment to the zoning maps and use subject to approval of the County Commission, 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 requested use may be considered suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby properties as the surrounding area consists of a variety of development including industrial uses, warehouses and offices.**
- b) Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **No, it is not anticipated that the proposed rezoning or special use will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby properties as the buffer requirement from adjacent residential properties is being met.**
- 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, however, the applicant cannot develop the property as proposed without approval by the Board of Commissioners.**
- 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 and in compliance with all Georgia Department of Transportation and Hall County standards, 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.

- 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 intent of the Business Nodes and Corridors future land use designation in the Comprehensive Plan in that the proposed business is a consumer-facing industrial use that will serve nearby communities.**
- 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. **The property is developed with two residences and a commercial building built in the 1950's.**
- 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; **Several properties along Gainesville Highway have recently been, or are proposed to be, rezoned to Light Industrial (I-1) to reflect the long-standing development patterns of these parcels, which were previously believed to fall under the jurisdiction of Resthaven.**
- k) Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts; **The proposed zoning would not create an isolated district. The adjacent parcel to the southwest is proposed for rezoning to Light Industrial (I-1) to reflect its long-standing development pattern, and the parcel to the northeast is zoned Highway Business (H-B), with additional parcels further northeast recently rezoned to Light Industrial (I-1). Collectively, these districts establish a consistent pattern of commercial and light industrial uses along this corridor.**
- 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; **The request does not appear to be out of scale with the needs of the county.**
- 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; however, the current development 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.**

(B) Zoning Analysis – Variance to Section 6.2, Gateway Corridor Overlay District

The Commission may grant variances in individual cases of unnecessary hardship upon a finding of the board that:

1. There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular lot in question because of its size, shape, or topography (the hardship must relate to the physical character of the lot and not to a personal or economic hardship); **There are no extraordinary or exceptional conditions related to the lot's size, shape, or topography. The applicant's justification centers on operational preferences—such as placing loading docks and vehicle parking at the front of the site—not on any physical characteristics of the property.**
2. The application of the requirements of this UDC to this particular piece of property would create an unusual hardship; **Application of the UDC requirements does not create an unusual hardship as the parking location standards can be met through alternative site designs that do not rely on placing parking along the frontage.**
3. Such conditions are peculiar to the property involved and are not common to other properties in the neighborhood; **The proposal to orient the parking area along the property frontage is to buffer the residential neighborhood to the north from business activity, however, this is not a condition unique to this site.**
4. Such conditions are not the result of any actions of the property owner; **The situation prompting the variance request results from the applicant's site design preference, not from any physical conditions of the property.**

5. Relief, if granted, would not cause substantial detriment to the public good or impair the purposes and intent of this UDC; provided, however, that no variance may be granted for a use of land or building or structure that is prohibited by this UDC or for a Conditional Use Permit which has been denied by the Planning Commission; **Granting relief from the parking-location requirement could create detriment to the public good by placing parking areas prominently along the frontage, contrary to the UDC's intent to establish consistent and aesthetically pleasing design standards for development within the GCOD.**

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 a memorandum dated April 29, 2026, the Hall County Environmental Health stated: “Must meet all Environmental Health commercial septic system permitting requirements if public sewer is not available. Written documentation from Buford Utilities required stating sewer not available at time of plan review application. 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.”

Georgia Department of Transportation

In an email dated April 17, 2026, Christopher Hash, D1 Traffic Operations Supervisor, stated: “Applicant will need to coordinate with GDOT District 1 Traffic Operations Office for consideration of driveways.”

Hall County Public Works and Utilities

In a memorandum dated April 28, 2026, Jorge Gomez, Director of Public Works and Utilities, provided the following comments:

Engineering:

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

Traffic:

Access to the proposed development is from SR 13. A GDOT access permit will be required.

Utilities:

No Comment. Property is not located in the Hall County service delivery area.

Hall County Fire Marshal

In a memorandum dated April 20, 2026, the Hall County Fire Marshal’s Office provided the following comments:

1. The concept plan as proposed does not meet fire code, International Fire Code 503.1.1 approved fire apparatus access roads shall be provided for every facility, building, constructed or moved into within the jurisdiction. The fire apparatus access road shall comply with the requirements of this section and shall extend to within 150 feet of all portions of the facility and all portions of the exterior walls of the first story of the building as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the building. The left side and back of building do not meet the above code requirement. If approved modifications will have to be made to show fire access to the left side and back of building.
2. The building shall be tested for approved emergency responders radio coverage within the building based on existing coverage levels of the public safety communication system utilized by the jurisdiction.

Hall County Business License Division

In a memorandum dated April 21, 2026, Brandi Smith, Business License Director, provided the following comment:

- JP Tire Shop, LLC has had an active business license with Hall County since 05/08/2017.
- Global Imports Auto Sale 2, LLC has had an active business license with Hall County since 03/02/2018.