HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Applicant ..... Chris Patton

Request ..... (A) **Rezone** | from Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) to Light Industrial (I-1)
(B) **Variance to Section 8.2** | to reduce the required buffer

Proposed Use ..... (A) & (B) Storage lot

Size ..... 41.98± acres

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

Location ..... **1555C Calvary Church Road** | Tax Parcel 15031 000027

Planning Commission District ..... Four

Commission Date ..... November 16, 2026

Staff Recommendation ..... (A) **Approval, with conditions,** as the proposed zoning is consistent with the "Employment Nodes & Corridors" future land use classification within the Comprehensive Plan in the Gainesville Character Area.
(B) **Approval, with conditions,** as hardship exists pursuant to the criteria of 11.1.1.D.11.

Record Number..... (A) HZON26-0038
(B) HVAR26-0048

(A) and (B) Staff recommends APPROVAL of the applicant's requests with the following conditions:

1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the site plan dated October 1, 2026, and narrative dated October 1, 2026, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.

2. The existing residence and driveway on Candler Road (SR60) shall be removed prior to issuance of a Land Disturbance Permit.

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.

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

Summary Analysis

The applicant proposes to rezone a 41.98± acre tract from Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1) to Light Industrial (I-1) to allow a storage lot for 401 truck trailer spaces.

According to Tax Assessor records, the property is developed with an 832-square-foot single-family residence built in 1942 (address of 1646 Candler Road), with access provided from its Candler Road (SR60) frontage. Per the applicant, both the residence and its associated driveway connection to Candler Road will be removed. An intermittent creek crosses the northern portion of the site, and another is located along the eastern property line. The area adjacent to the eastern property line is situated within a County-studied flood zone.

The surrounding properties are zoned and developed as outlined below:

- North: Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1): single-family dwellings
- East: Heavy Industrial (I-2): salvage yard; Light Industrial (I-1): truck yard & repair, utility contractor; Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1): single-family dwellings
- South: Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1): Cherokee Gun Club; Light Industrial (I-1): Cherokee Gun Club & trailer storage
- West: Agricultural Residential 1 (AR-1): single-family dwellings; Light Industrial (I-1): trailer storage; City of Gainesville R-I-A: Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve



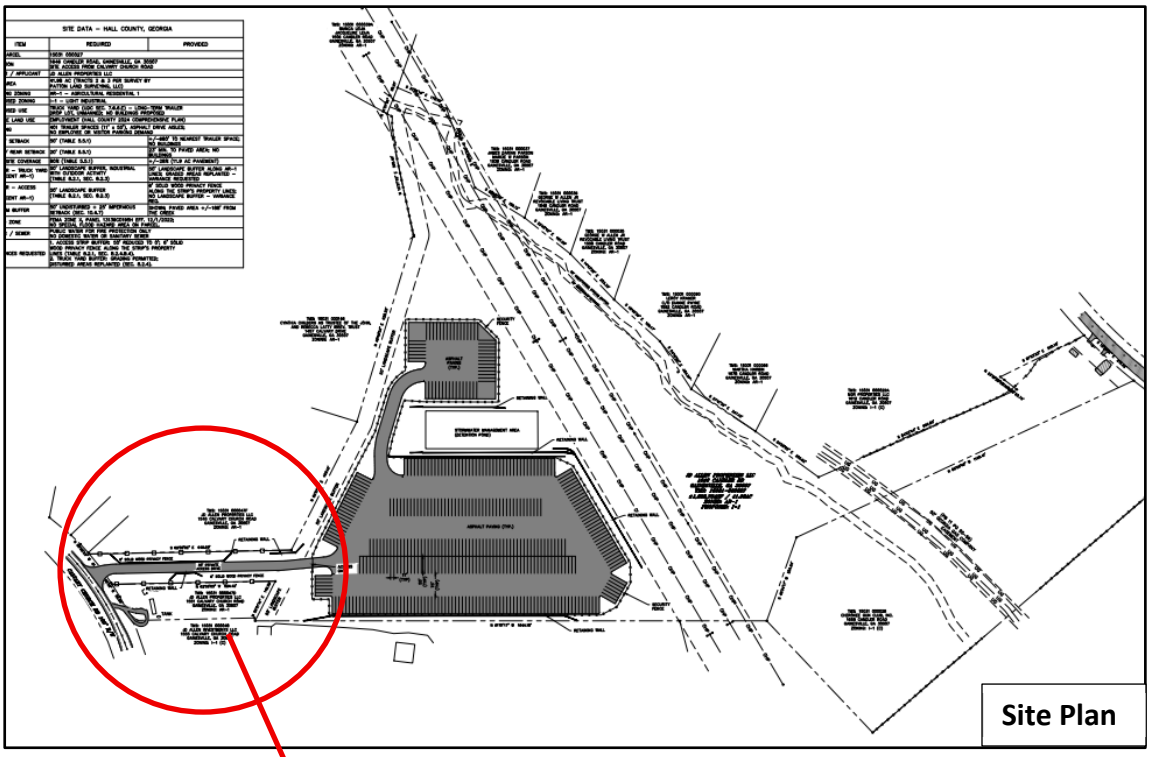
Per the narrative, the proposed project is a long-term trailer drop lot with 401 marked spaces for over-the-road trailers. Trailers will be stored and retrieved on an extended-duration basis rather than cycled daily. The storage lot will be unmanned and accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Proposed improvements include a perimeter security fence, security cameras, and a locked gate with keypad or key fob access. No buildings are proposed, and all parking and circulation areas will be paved with asphalt. Access to the storage lot will be exclusively from Calvary Church Road.

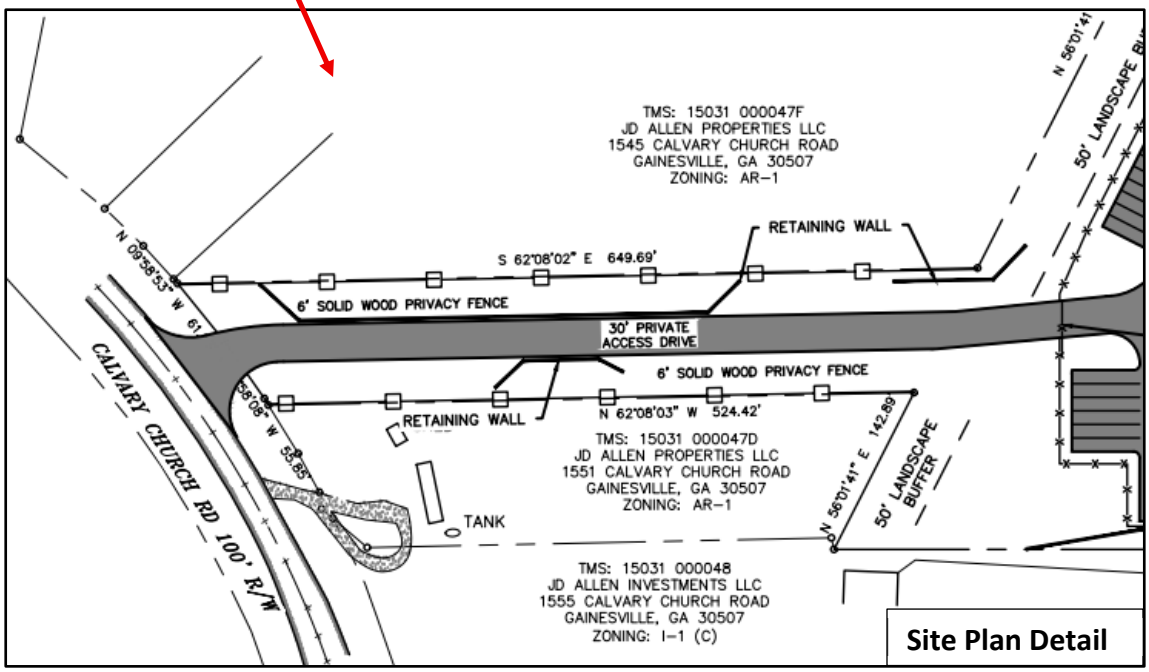
The site plan shows development occurring on the west side of a high-voltage transmission line easement that runs north to south through the property. All proposed parking and circulation areas, security fencing, and a stormwater detention pond are located within this western portion of the parcel, outside of required stream buffers and the County-studied flood zone.

A 50-foot vegetated buffer is required adjacent to all residentially zoned properties. The proposed development provides this buffer along all residential property lines except within an approximately 100-foot-wide, 600-foot-long access corridor that connects the main development area to Calvary Church Road. Because this corridor, or access strip, is only 100 feet wide, compliance with the required buffer on both sides would prohibit access to the development area. Accordingly, the applicant is requesting a variance from the buffer requirements to allow construction of the access drive. As shown on the detailed site plan below, the corridor will contain a 30-foot-wide private drive, retaining walls, and a 6-foot-high

wood fence along both the northern and southern property boundaries. The applicant's narrative and site plan indicate that no vegetated buffer is proposed within the access corridor.

Water and sanitary sewer services are not required as part of this development.





A Traffic Assessment Memorandum prepared by TTL, dated September 15, 2026, concluded that the peak-hour volumes do not approach the threshold for GDOT standard requirements for turn lane or driveway improvements. Hall County Public Works commented that "Public Works agrees with the findings of the traffic assessment/Trip generation memo. The driveway will be included in the LDP and must meet all applicable design criteria."

Development Standards Analysis

The development standards for the project are summarized in the table below and are compared against the Light Industrial (I-1) district standards and the applicable Article 8 Site Development standards of the Hall County Unified Development Code (UDC):

Development Standard (§)	Proposed	UDC Standard	Compliance
Lot Area (§5.5)	41.98± acres	15,000sf min	Complies
Lot Coverage (§5.5)	28% (11.9 ac pavement)	80% max	Complies
Front Yard (§5.5)	680 feet	50 feet	Complies
Side Yard (§5.5)	≥ 20 feet to paved area/no buildings	20 feet for buildings	Complies
Rear Yard (§5.5)	≥ 20 feet to paved area/no buildings	20 feet for buildings	Complies
Max. Building Height (§5.5)	No buildings	65 feet	Complies
Buffers (§8.2.3)	50 feet undisturbed adjacent to AR-1 except a Variance request for no landscape buffer on each side of the access strip	50 feet undisturbed adjacent to AR-1	Deficient
Frontage Landscape Strip (§8.2.5)	10-foot frontage landscape strip	10-foot frontage landscape strip	Complies
Tree Protection (§8.3)	Compliance with Tree Protection standards	Various	Complies
Open Space (§8.5)	72%	20% min	Complies

Comprehensive Plan Analysis

Based on the Hall County Comprehensive Plan, staff finds that the requested rezoning to Light Industrial (I-1) *is consistent* with the future land use designation of *Employment Nodes & Corridors* within the Gainesville Character Area. New employment nodes and corridors should consist of industrial and/or office uses housed in either formalized campuses or along major road corridors that have existing or future access to water and sewer.

(A) Zoning Analysis – Rezone

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 suitable in view of the use, development, and zoning of adjacent and nearby properties. It aligns with the Employment Nodes and Corridors future land use designation, and the parcel adjoins other light-industrial zoned and developed properties to the east and south, reinforcing the established industrial development pattern in the immediate area.**

b) Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **The zoning proposal is not anticipated to adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property as the proposed light industrial zoning is supported by the Employment Nodes and Corridors future land use designation and the Traffic Impact Assessment concluded that the peak-hour volumes for the proposed use do not approach the threshold for GDOT standard requirements for turn lane or driveway improvements.**

c) Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned; **The property appears to have 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; **Based on comments from County departments and State agencies, the proposed zoning is not expected to cause an excessive or burdensome use of 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 zoning district is compatible with the Employment Nodes and Corridors future land use designation within the Gainesville Character Area.**

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.**

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; **Per the Tax Assessor records, the property is currently developed with an 832 square foot single-family dwelling constructed in 1942.**

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; **The recent rezoning of the adjacent property to the east at 1546 and 1558 Candler Road to Light**

Industrial (HZON26-0026) reinforces the established industrial development pattern in the immediate area.

k) Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts; **The change in zoning would not create an isolated district, as the subject property is adjacent to established Light Industrial (I-1) zoning to the east and south, including a similar operation immediately south.**

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 is not out of scale with the needs of the county as a whole or the immediate neighborhood as the subject property is adjacent to established Light Industrial (I-1) zoning to the east and south, including a similar operation immediately south.**

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 proposed 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 for rezoning 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 8.2, Required Buffer Areas

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 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 extraordinary or exceptional conditions pertaining to the subject property due its size, shape, topography, or other physical characteristics that necessitate the requested variance. Specifically, access to Calvary Church Road is constrained to a 100-foot-wide corridor. Application of the required 50-foot buffers on each side would consume the entire width of this strip, leaving no feasible area for an access drive.**

2. The application of the requirements of this UDC to this particular piece of property would create an unusual hardship; **The application of the requirements of this UDC to this particular piece of property would create an unusual hardship, as the only available access to Calvary Church Road is limited to a 100-foot-wide strip of land. Strict application of the required 50-foot buffers on each side would consume the entire width of this strip, leaving no feasible area for an access drive. This physical constraint results in a hardship that is directly tied to the property's unique size, shape, and configuration.**

3. Such conditions are peculiar to the particular piece of property involved and are not common to other properties in the neighborhood; The conditions are not unique to this property. **Such conditions are peculiar to this particular piece of property, as the site's only access to Calvary Church Road is restricted to a 100-foot-wide strip of land. This constrained access configuration is not shared by nearby properties and is unique to the subject parcel**

4. Such conditions are not the result of any actions of the property owner**; While the rezoning that triggers the buffer requirement is an action of the property owner, the shape and configuration of the property are not.**

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; **Relief, if granted, would not cause substantial detriment to the public good or impair the purposes and intent of this UDC. The variance applies only to the configuration of the 100-foot-wide access corridor, which was established by a 2019 recorded plat and is necessary to provide access from Calvary Church Road to the remainder of the property. Allowing relief from the buffer requirement in this limited area enables reasonable access to the property without introducing any prohibited use or altering the overall intent of the UDC to protect adjacent residential areas.**

Development Support and Constraints

Hall County Environmental Health
In a memorandum dated October 19, 2026, the Hall County Environmental Health Department stated, "No comment."

Georgia Department of Transportation
In an email dated October 7, 2026, Christopher Hash, D1 Traffic Operations Supervisor, stated, "Since access will be from Calvary Church Rd. the accesses on SR60 should be removed."

Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization
In a memorandum dated October 6, 2026, Joseph Boyd, Director, provided the following comments:

> This parcel is along State Route 60/Candler Road, which is scheduled to be widened to four lanes in the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (GH-111B). Construction is currently not scheduled to begin until after 2055. Right-of-way impacts will not be known until the Preliminary Engineering (PE) phase is initiated, which is currently scheduled for 2042.

Hall County Public Works and Utilities
In a memorandum dated October 19, 2026, Jorge Gomez, 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.
Show stream buffer and impervious setback from wrested vegetation not centerline of stream.

Traffic:
Public Works agrees with the findings of the traffic assessment/Trip generation memo. The driveway will be included in the LDP and must meet all applicable design criteria.

Utilities
Property is in the Gainesville service district.

Hall County Fire Marshal
In a memorandum October 6, 2026, the Hall County Fire Marshal's Office stated, "The Hall County Fire Marshal's Office has no comments as proposed.

Hall County Building Inspections
In a memorandum dated October 19, 2026, Barry Shaw, Interim Director of Development Services, provided the following comments:

Applicants will be required to get demo permits for all structures from Building Inspections before building new structures. All structures were built prior to 1980 and will require asbestos inspections and reports by a state licensed asbestos inspector.