HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Applicant	William Greene
Request	**Special Use** |for vehicle repair, minor in GCOD
Proposed Use	Vehicle repair, minor
Size	3.79± acres
Zoning	Highway Business (H-B)
Location	**954 Gainesville Highway |** Tax Parcel 08158 002004
Commission District	One
Planning Commission Date	December 8, 2026
Staff Recommendation	**Approval, with conditions,** as the proposed use meets all minimum standards of the Highway Business (H-B) zoning district.
Record Number	HZCU26-0045

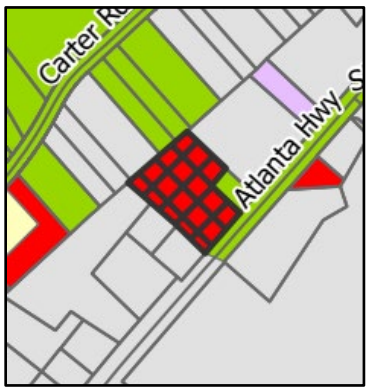
Staff recommends <u>APPROVAL</u> of the applicant's request with the following conditions:

1. The property shall be developed in accordance with the site plan dated October 6, 2026, and narrative dated August 7, 2026, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
2. No further development shall be permitted until a combination plat is approved by the County.
3. Any further development shall comply with Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) standards.
4. No variances or development exceptions are granted as part of this request that are not explicitly granted by board approval.
5. 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 a Special Use to allow minor vehicle repair on a commercially developed 3.79± acre parcel zoned Highway Business (H-B) and located within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD).

The surrounding properties are zoned and developed as outlined below:



North: Agricultural Residential (AR-1): single-family residences; Buford Agricultural-Residential (RA-200): single-family residences
East: Agricultural Residential (AR-1): single-family residence; Buford Office Institutional (O-I)
South: Buford General Business (C-2); Buford Light Industrial (M-1): Amazon distribution facility
West: Buford General Business (C-2): undeveloped & indoor self-storage)

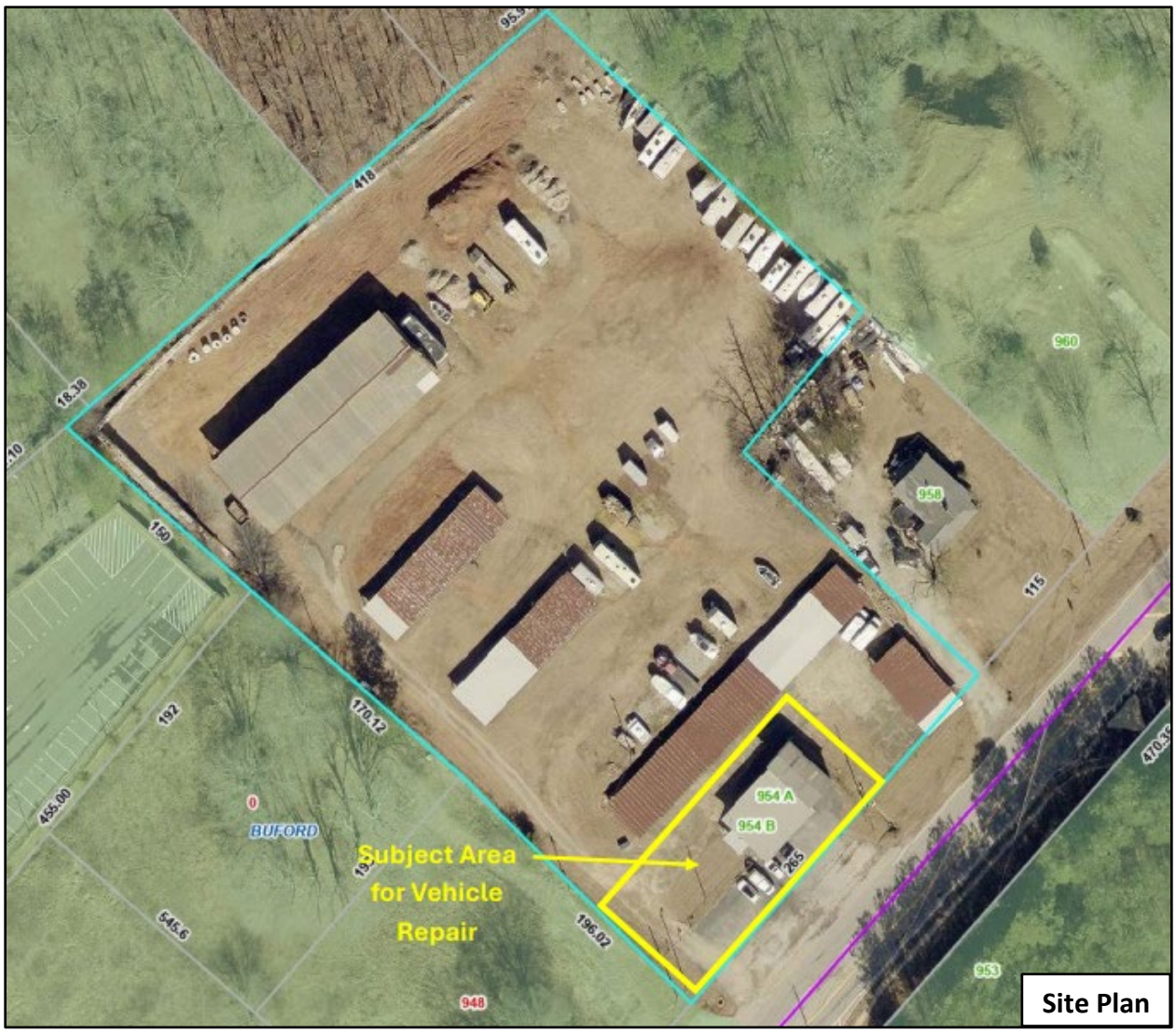
The subject property was rezoned to Highway Business (H-B) in 1983 to recognize an existing boat and outdoor storage operation. According to Hall County Tax Assessor records, the property is currently developed with a 1,896-square-foot commercial building constructed in 1947 and five vehicle storage canopies installed in 1987. The principal commercial building was most recently occupied by a sign company from 2009 through 2025 and is proposed to serve as the location of the requested minor vehicle repair business.



Per the submitted narrative, the applicant is requesting a Special Use permit to allow a minor vehicle repair use within the existing commercial building. The proposed business specializes in the installation of vehicle radios, audio systems, and related electronic equipment. The majority of work will be conducted within the enclosed garage area. As proposed, the operation meets the Unified Development Code (UDC) definition of Vehicle Repair, Minor (Section 7.5.12.H).

The submitted site plan demonstrates adequate space to accommodate the required off-street parking spaces, as illustrated in the Site Plan Detail exhibit below.

Water service is provided by the City of Gainesville, and sanitary sewer services are provided by an on-site septic system.



GCOD Analysis

The property was developed in its current configuration prior to 1983 and predates the establishment of the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) in 2008. As a result, the existing development does not conform to current GCOD design and development standards. While the existing site may continue as a legal nonconforming development, any future site modifications, expansions, or improvements must be designed to comply with applicable GCOD requirements to the extent required by the Unified Development Code (UDC).



Site Plan Detail

The subject property, outlined in turquoise below, consists of multiple platted lots (shown by the green lines) that have not been formally combined into a single lot of record. Prior to any additional development, a combination plat must be prepared and submitted to the County for review and approval, and subsequently recorded, to establish a unified parcel and correct the existing lot configuration.



Zoning Analysis

When considering a use subject to approval by 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 proposed use is suitable in view of the historical use of the subject property and development of adjacent and nearby properties along Gainesville Highway.**

b) Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **The proposed use does not appear to adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent properties.**

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 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 future land use designation of Business Nodes & Corridors within the South Hall 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. 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 was developed with a commercial building in 1947 and the boat and RV storage has been in existence prior to the rezoning of the property in 1983.**

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; **This special use would not create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding zoning districts.**

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 or the immediate neighborhood.**

n) Whether it is impossible to find adequate sites for the proposed use in districts permitting such use and already appropriately zoned; **The subject property is already zoned Highway Business (H-B), a zoning classification that supports the proposed minor vehicle repair use. However, because the property is located within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD), the use is subject to Special Use approval by the Board of Commissioners in accordance with the Unified Development Code (UDC). Therefore, rezoning is not necessary to accommodate the proposed use**

o) Whether the need for rezoning could be handled instead by a variance request to the Planning Commission; **The request is not related to a dimensional standard or development requirement that could be addressed through the variance process. Rather, the proposed minor vehicle repair use within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) requires Special Use approval by the Board of Commissioners pursuant to the Unified Development Code (UDC). As such, a variance would not provide the necessary authorization for the proposed use**

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.**

Development Support and Constraints

Hall County Environmental Health
In a memorandum dated November 3, 2026, the Hall County Environmental Health Department stated, "Must meet all Environmental Health commercial septic system permitting requirements. Further determination will be made during the civil plan review process. 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. Please note that BOC approval does not imply approval from other county departments"

Georgia Department of Transportation
In an email dated October 27, 2026, Christopher Hash, P.E., D1 Traffic Operations Supervisor, stated "On-System, coordination required for consideration of commercial driveway access."

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

Engineering:
No comment.

Traffic:
Access is from State Route 13 (Atlanta Hwy). An approval letter from the Georgia Department of Transportation is required.

Utilities
Property is located within the Buford sewer service district.

Hall County Fire Marshal
In a memorandum dated October 27, 2026, the Hall County Fire Marshal's Office stated, "The Hall County Fire Marshal's Office has no comments as proposed."

Hall County Business License
In a memorandum dated November 2, 2026, Brandi Smith, Business License Director, stated, "If the above item is approved, applicant must apply for a Hall County Business License before any business is conducted onsite."

Hall County Building Inspections
In a memorandum dated November 9, 2026, Barry Shaw, Interim Director of Development Services, stated, "No comment."