

**HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

Applicant Friendship 24, LLC

Request Rezone from Agricultural Residential-IV (AR-IV) to Planned Commercial Development (PCD).

Proposed Use Self-storage and recreational vehicle, boat and
..... box truck parking

Size 24.23± acres

Zoning AR-IV

Location On the north side of Friendship Road,
..... approximately 3,111 feet from its intersection
..... with Deaton Creek Parkway; a.k.a. 1639
..... Friendship Road; Tax Parcel 15039 000012B.

Commission District One

Planning Commission Date February 7, 2022

Staff Recommendation **Denial**

Planning Commission Recommendation – Deny
Vote: Vote: 4-0 (Pilcher absent)

Applicant Proposal

The applicant is seeking to rezone a 24.23± acre parcel from Agricultural Residential (AR-IV) and to Planned Commercial Development (PCD) for development of a self-storage and recreational vehicle, boat and box truck parking facility. The applicant’s narrative describes an upscale self-storage and recreational vehicle parking facility called Premier Storage at Friendship Road. The facility would contain approximately 243,500 square feet of self-storage buildings with approximately 10-acres of adjacent parking for recreational vehicles, boats, automobiles and box trucks. The applicant intends to operate Premier storage between the hours of 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM and install commercial lighting with the intent of minimizing light spill. A monument sign is proposed to be located at the entrance to the property off Friendship Road.

The applicant estimates that the construction, installation, and equipping of the facility would take approximately 2-4 years to complete. The property has access to public water and potential access to sanitary sewer if an easement is obtained over an adjoining property. If an easement cannot be obtained, the applicant states that the project could be served by a septic system. The application includes renderings of the proposed buildings, which include a combination of brick and stucco

exteriors. A portion of the buildings are proposed for climate controlled storage and would be conditioned using geothermal heating.

The narrative describes the site as having a unique shape that creates a natural buffer between the existing subdivisions and the proposed development of Premier Storage. Streams appear to run along the northwest and northeast property lines that result in significant buffers being required between neighboring homes and the proposed self-storage development.

History and Existing Land Uses

The subject property is zoned AR-IV and is currently developed with a single-family home constructed in 1983. A review of 2021 Aerial Imagery indicates several other structures on the property that serve unknown uses. The property is bounded to the east by the subdivision Chateau Corners, a 75-lot subdivision zoned Residential (R-1), and the Village at Deaton Creek subdivision, which is zoned Planned Residential Development (PRD). To the west and north is the Reunion subdivision, which is a large golf course community. Also to the west is a 17.19± tract that is zoned Agriculture Residential-IV (AR-IV).

Properties to the south, across Friendship Road, include a large tract owned by Northeast Georgia Health System and the Del Webb Chateau Elan residential subdivision, zoned residential in the City of Braselton.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation

The future land use map shows the subject property as “Residential”. The intent of the Residential future development guide is to preserve established neighborhoods and create new residential development that is consistent with surrounding suburban densities. The Residential land use category should be characterized by moderate-density residential development and neighborhoods. The appropriate land uses in the Residential category include residential subdivision design that sets aside a high percentage of open space, greenways and trails, and civic benefit uses such as community centers, libraries, places of worship, and schools.

Part of the property also falls within the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD). The GCOD is supplemental to the underlying zoning district classifications and governs non-residential property development standards, including signage.

The applicant’s use request **is not consistent** with the Future Land Use Designation found in the Comprehensive Plan.

Development Support and Constraints

Hall County Environmental Health

In an email dated January 19, 2022, Emily McGahee, Environmental Health Manager provided the following comment: “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 evaluation, or septic system installation/modification may be required after review of business plan. Any abandoned well shall be properly closed as per Water Well Standards Act. Any abandoned septic tank shall be pumped by a State certified pumper/hauler and crushed/filled.”

Hall County Fire Services

No Comments were provided.

Hall County Public Works and Utilities

A memo dated January 18, 2022 from Bill Nash, Interim Director of Hall County Public Works and Utilities, provided the following comments:

Engineering

Stormwater/land disturbance permit. Show stream buffers and flood areas and 75' setback.

Traffic Engineering

Limited access, right in, right out. Potential conflicts with adjacent driveway. GA DOT permit required.

Utilities

New sewer availability letter should be obtained. Sewer easements must be obtained to tap HC sewer.

Hall County Tax Assessors

No comments were provided.

Gainesville Water Resources

No comments were provided.

Georgia Department of Transportation

No comments were provided.

Zoning Analysis

- The proposed use is not residential in nature.
 - The proposed use **is not** consistent with the Hall County Comprehensive Plan.
- The subject property falls within the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) and is subject to design standard for non-residential development including: architectural, buffering, landscaping and signage requirements.
- The GCOD provides guidelines for non-residential property development. The guidelines apply to both permitted uses and development standards. Within the GCOD, the following uses are prohibited: adult entertainment, junk yards, and billboard signs. Uses subject to the approval of the Hall County Board of commissioners (BOC) include self-storage warehouses, vehicle sales lots (new or used), automobile repair and maintenance, commercial outdoor recreation, car washes and outdoor storage.
- Within the GCOD, the use of a common palette of building materials should be maintained for all four sides of principle buildings to create a consistent and traditional architectural identity. For large commercial/retail buildings, variations in building materials, texture, and depth should be employed to provide design variation. Building materials used for all four sides should consist of natural masonry materials.

- The applicant has provided examples of proposed building styles, which includes brick and stucco façade materials.
- Per 17.180.080.B.7. of the Official Code of Hall County, The development controls for the district shall be stated (lot coverage, setbacks, building heights, lot sizes, etc.). If standards are not specifically proposed, then the applicable standards in the suburban shopping district (S-S) shall apply. The required setbacks for S-S are: 55 feet from center line of road or 30 feet from property line, whichever is greater, 20 feet from side property lines, and 10 feet from the rear property line. Also, Browns Bridge Road is considered an arterial street, and no structure may be placed less than 100 feet from the center line of an arterial street.
 - Proposed setbacks are not clearly identified on the proposed site plan, however, it appears that the proposed setbacks **would meet** the above standards.
- Per 17.420.050.2.b. of the Official Code of Hall County, where a commercial zoning district abuts property zoned for residential or agricultural use, the minimum width shall be 25 feet.
 - The adjacent properties are zoned residential and/or agricultural, therefore there shall be a minimum 25-foot landscape buffer along the boundaries. This standard would be met along the majority of the property, however, due to the narrow width of the driveway that would serve the development, a 25-foot buffer would not be possible and the standard **has not been met**.
- Per 17.420.050.E.3 of the Official Code of Hall County, all parking areas shall be paved with asphalt, or concrete.
 - The site plan appears to show concrete curb/gutter with asphalt paving throughout the development and this standard **has been met**.
- Per 17.350.120. of the Official Code of Hall County provides the conditions for a caretaker residence, although it is unclear if one is proposed. This use is subject to the approval of the Planning Commission with the following conditions:
 1. The lot which contains the caretaker and/or employee residence shall be an approved, recorded lot and shall front a publicly maintained road or it shall be a lot of record as defined in chapter 17.20 of the zoning regulations.
 2. The proposed residence shall only be occupied by a bona fide caretaker, employee or the owner himself.
 3. The proposed residence shall meet all setback requirements for the zoning district in which it is located.
 4. The proposed residence shall be permitted only if the residence is necessary to the property's orderly operation or safety.
 5. Only one caretaker and/or employee residence is permitted on a piece of property at a time, except that in the AR-III and AR-IV zoning districts one caretaker and/or employee residence may be permitted for each five acres.
 6. The proposed residence shall only be of a type inherently permitted in the zoning district in which it is to be located, unless otherwise specified by the zoning regulations.
 7. If the proposed residence is for security purposes, this must be documented by evidence of police records or sheriff's reports of previous incidents.
 8. If the proposed residence is for caretaker purposes, the need, purpose and duties of the caretaker must be documented in writing.
 9. If the proposed residence is for employee purposes, the need, purpose and duties of the employee must be documented in writing.

10. The applicant for a caretaker/employee residence must demonstrate in writing how his circumstances are unique and different from those of other similar uses in the area to warrant approval of his application.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends **Denial** of the applicant's request. Should an approval be desired by the Commission, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. The development shall conform substantially with the proposed site plan and narrative, modified as necessary for compliance with current development standards at time of site plan approval.
2. Development shall conform to the standards set forth by the Gateway Corridors Overlay District. No variances are granted as part of this application.
3. For access to the development from Friendship Road, the following conditions shall apply:
 - a. Gated access, if proposed, shall be appropriately designed to allow vehicles to stage without protruding into Friendship Road.
 - b. It shall be the developer's responsibility to acquire any necessary permits from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).
 - c. Required improvements shall be constructed concurrently with site development.
 - d. All costs associated with improvements shall be the developer's responsibility.
4. A caretaker residence, if proposed, shall meet all conditions as provided in section 17.350.120. of the Official Code of Hall County.
5. All conditions of zoning shall be made part of any plat created for the property.

Excerpts from March 7, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

Motion: *A motion was made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Hunt to remove item from the table.*

1. **Application of Friendship 24, LLC to rezone from Agricultural Residential-IV (AR-IV) to Planned Commercial Development (PCD) on a 24.23± acre tract located on the north side of Friendship Road approximately 3,111 feet from its intersection with Deaton Creek Parkway; a.k.a. 1639 Friendship Road; Zoned AR-IV; Tax Parcel 15039 000012B. Proposed Use: self-storage, boat/RV/box truck parking. Commission District 1.**

Background Information:

The applicant is seeking to rezone a 24.23± acre parcel from Agricultural Residential (AR-IV) and to Planned Commercial Development (PCD) for development of a self-storage and recreational vehicle, boat and box truck parking facility. The applicant's narrative describes an upscale self-storage and recreational vehicle parking facility called Premier Storage at Friendship Road. The facility would contain approximately 243,500 square feet of self-storage buildings with approximately 10-acres of adjacent parking for recreational vehicles, boats, automobiles and box trucks. The applicant intends to operate Premier storage between the hours of 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM and install commercial lighting with the intent of minimizing light spill. A monument sign is proposed to be located at the entrance to the property off Friendship Road.

Applicant's Presentation:

Srikanth Yamala, Interim Planning Director, presented a summary of the request.

Tom LeFevre, 3064 Chattahoochee Trace, Gainesville, presented the request.

Ken Gary, 5550 Golf Club Drive, Braselton, presented the request. Stated that there is 24 acres on the property. The buildings and drive aisles take up half of the property. The rest will be left as greenspace. Applicant stated he is a builder and developer. This is a low density development in the community. Applicant showed photo renderings of the development. Stated he has met with all of the residential developments in the area. Plan to plant 30-35 foot evergreens to screen the areas around the driveway and adjacent properties. Stated Michael and Brenda Miles share a property line with the applicant and are in favor of the application. The Board of Directors of Deaton Creek sent in a support comment in favor of this application. Stated this project will have less impact on the community than other developments. Stated lower traffic, lower crime, lower noise, less impact on neighbors and an increased tax for schools. Stated self-storage will provide a much needed service for the community. Agree with conditions from Village of Deaton Creek and Reunion Homeowners Association. Mr. Braswell asked if development will be gated. Applicant stated the property will be gated with low intensity lighting. The gate will be open from 6 am to 10 pm daily, with hours changing to reflect daylight savings time. There will be a turn-around provided for trucks.

Rebuttal

There will be no structures along the 50 foot driveway. Asking for a smaller buffer than 25 feet. The portion of the project with buildings will have a greater buffer. The applicant could have requested an exemption from the Gateway Corridor requirements. The street size being proposed is 24 feet. The buffer being requested is 13 feet. Mr. Hunt questioned the trees being used as buffers. Applicant stated the trees being planted would be 8 foot tall. Applicant stated if a larger tree is needed, he would be negotiable.

Public Forum:

Gary Hodges, 7316 Grand Reunion Drive, Hoschton, spoke in support. Spoke of suggested conditions for the application.

Michael Miles, 1661 Friendship Road, Hoschton, spoke in support.

Kara Johanson, 5752 Community Lane, Hoschton, spoke in opposition. Concerns were commercial development in residential area and quality of life.

Kurt Johanson, 5752 Community Lane, Hoschton, spoke in opposition. Concerns were view of development and the development does not belong in the area.

John Mercer, 6320 Falling Water Lane, Hoschton, spoke in opposition. Concerns were zoning issues, quality of life and a precedent of spot zoning.

Carol Gentry, 5755 Community Lane, Hoschton, spoke in opposition. Concerns were quality of life, noise, lighting, criminal activity, traffic, creek bordering the area, wildlife, plants and pollution.

Charles Gridley, 5752 Corners Drive, Hoschton, spoke in opposition. Concerns were commercial zoning in residential area, barriers, traffic, accidents and the roadway.

Barry Straus, 5950 Creekside Lane, Hoschton, spoke in opposition. Concerns were environmental issues such as rain runoff on streams and rivers.

William Flavelle, 5816 Chalet Way, Hoschton, spoke in opposition. Concerns were type of zoning, type of proposed business, noise, privacy, overnight security, buffers, construction and blasting of rock.

Planning Commission Comments:

Mr. Braswell pointed out the area was not always residential as area is continuing to grow.

Motion: A motion to deny was made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Hunt. Vote: 4-0 (Pilcher absent)