

**HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

**Applicant**..... STORsquare Atlanta, LLC

**Request**..... Use Subject to County Commission approval

**Proposed Use**..... Outdoor storage

**Size**..... 2.96± acres

**Zoning**..... I-II

**Location**..... At the intersection of Technology Parkway and Winder Highway; a.k.a. 5407 Technology Parkway & 5472 Winder Highway; Zoned I-II; Tax Parcel 15028F000025 & 000026.

**Commission District**..... One

**Planning Commission Date**..... August 1, 2022

**Staff Recommendation**..... **Approval, with conditions**

**Planning Commission Recommendation: Approval, with conditions**

**Vote: 5-0**

**Conditions:**

1. *The development shall conform substantially with the proposed narrative and site plan.*
2. *All previous conditions of zoning as approved March 12, 1990 for Raceway Technology Park (Phase 1- PB 286, Page 207A) shall apply. This includes the following:*

*Minimum Setbacks: (All setbacks to be measured from property line)*

	<i>front</i>	<i>side</i>	<i>rear</i>
<i>"5 acre" lots</i>	75	50	50
<i>"1.5 acre" lots</i>	50	30	30

*Minimum Lot Coverage:*

1. *"5 acre" lots*  
*No more than 50% of the lot may be occupied by structures. A minimum of 25% of the lot must be reserved for open space. No improvements other than landscaping will be permitted in the open space.*
2. *"1.5 acre" lots*

*No more than 60% of the lot may be occupied by structures. A minimum of 15% of the lot must be reserved for open space. No improvements other than landscaping will be permitted in the open space.*

**Buffers:**

*A vegetative buffer strip of a minimum of 25 feet shall be maintained along property lines where the adjacent property contains a residential structure within 200 feet of the I-II zone area. Should said adjacent property cease to be used for residential purposes, and be rezoned to a commercial or industrial zone, the require buffer may be eliminated.*

**Landscaping along S.R. 53:**

*The frontage of the subject area that lies along S.R. 53 shall be landscaped to a depth of at least 30 feet, as well all entrances into the subject property from Winder Highway (S.R. 53).*

- 3. There shall be a 30 foot landscape buffer along S.R. 53. The applicant shall install a 6 foot berm with dents and alternating tree screening in accordance with Gateway Corridor Standards. Along Technology Parkway there shall be a 25 foot landscape buffer with alternating tree screening and no berms.*
- 4. The development shall be consistent with §17.420.050 of the Official Code of Hall County, except for the following variance:
  - a) The applicant shall be allowed to have a gravel parking area for the 81,000 sq. ft.**
- 5. A combination plat shall be recorded prior to the LDP being issued for the site.*
- 6. Access to the development shall be approved by Hall County Traffic Engineering and/or the Georgia Department of Transportation.*
- 7. All conditions of zoning shall be made part of any plat created for the property.*
- 8. If any change or additional building and development occur, it shall be presented back in front of the Planning Commission.*
- 9. Applicant shall not be allowed to stack more than two storage containers at a time.*

**Applicant Proposal**

The applicant is requesting a use subject to County Commission approval on 2.96± acres currently zoned Heavy Industrial (I-II) for the purpose of developing the parcels for a portable storage container company. The company provides movable storage units for their customers. The storage containers will be stored at the subject property.

The submitted site plan shows an 81,000 square foot gravel lot, a proposed 6 foot unreinforced concrete entrance, an 8 foot tall opaque solid fence, and a stormwater detention pond. The narrative continues that a ground-mounted monument sign may be proposed in the future, which will meet Hall County regulations.

The applicant's narrative states that there are no proposed structures or buildings for the operation. The lot will not be open to the public and no retail services are proposed. Operating hours for the property will be 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Employees will access the site for delivery and pick up of storage containers, an estimated 10 trips a day. The containers are transported by medium duty flatbed trucks or trailers.

The narrative continues to describe the proposed development standards for the project based on the conditions of zoning for Raceway Technology Park, of which the property is a part of, and the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) standards. The proposed standards are as follows:

1. No structure or building will be constructed on the subject properties;
2. There will be no property entrances to/from Winder Highway (S.R. 53);
3. A minimum of 15% of the lot will be reserved for open space;
4. All street frontages will include a 10-foot-wide landscape strip with required shade trees and shrubbery planted at the specified intervals;
5. Frontage along Winder Highway (S.R. 53) will be landscaped to a depth of 30 feet.
6. The site will be screened by a permanent opaque enclosure consisting of an eight-foot high solid fence;
7. Cuts and fills will be terraced to blend into the natural terrain;
8. Site and security lighting will be semi-cutoff luminary fixtures designed to avoid intrusion on adjacent properties and adjacent thoroughfares, and will be less than 35 feet in height in accordance with GCOD regulations; and
9. Future site plans may include one ground mounted, monument sign to be design, located, and constructed in accordance with GCOD regulations.

The applicant has requested a variance from §17.420.050.E.3 (Paving Materials for Parking Lots) and §17.420.050.E.4 (Parking Lot Landscaping) for the 81,000 square foot area on which the storage containers are proposed. §17.420.050.E.3 states that “all parking areas shall be paved with asphalt, concrete (or pervious materials approved by the director.)” §17.420.050.E.4 details the requirements for landscaping within parking lots.

### **History and Existing Land Uses**

The subject parcels are zoned Heavy Industrial (I-II) and totals 2.96± acres in size. The parcels are lots 25 and 26 of the Raceway Technology Park, which was approved with conditions for rezoning on March 12, 1990. The industrial park was recorded with the Hall County Clerk of Court in 1993 with a total of 31 lots. Lots 25 and 26 front on Winder Highway, at its intersection with Technology Parkway. The site is undeveloped and there is no history of code violations on the parcels.

As part of the March 12, 1990 rezoning approval, the following conditions were applied to the development:

- Minimum Lot Size:
  1. The minimum lot size for tracts which will contain an industrial use involving the manufacturing, processing, or assembly shall be 5 acres. Such lots will be hereby referred to as a “5 acre” lot.
  2. The minimum lot size for tracts which will contain other industrial uses shall be 1.5 acres. Such lots will be hereby referred to as a “1.5 acre” lot.
- Minimum lot frontage: (Measured along the front street line thereof or if said front street line is curved, along the chord of the arc):

1. For a "5 acre" lot will be 200 feet\*
2. For a "1.5 acre" lot will be 100 feet

\*May be reduced to 100 feet for lots at the end of a cul-de-sac.

- Minimum Setbacks: (All setbacks to be measured from property line)
 

front	side	rear
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"5 acre" lots	75	50	50
"1.5 acre" lots	50	30	30

- Minimum Lot Coverage:
  1. "5 acre" lots
    - No more than 50% of the lot may be occupied by structures. A minimum of 25% of the lot must be reserved for open space. No improvements other than landscaping will be permitted in the open space.
  2. "1.5 acre" lots
    - No more than 60% of the lot may be occupied by structures. A minimum of 15% of the lot must be reserved for open space. No improvements other than landscaping will be permitted in the open space.
- Buffers:
  1. A vegetative buffer strip of a minimum of 25 feet shall be maintained along property lines where the adjacent property contains a residential structure within 200 feet of the I-II zone area. Should said adjacent property cease to be used for residential purposes, and be rezoned to a commercial or industrial zone, the require buffer may be eliminated.
- Landscaping along S.R. 53:
  1. The frontage of the subject area that lies along S.R. 53 shall be landscaped to a depth of at least 30 feet, as well all entrances into the subject property from Winder Highway (S.R. 53).

Zoning surrounding the subject property is a mixture of non-residential, agricultural, and residential uses. The parcels to the west, south, and east of the subject property are all part of Raceway Technology Park, which is zoned I-II. To the north, across Winder Highway (S.R. 53) are properties zoned Agricultural Residential IV (AR-IV) and I-II.

The subject parcel falls within the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD) which provides supplemental design standards for non-residential property development.

**Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation**

The subject property is located within a "Mixed Use Corridor" and "Rural Residential" character area within the Future Development Guide of the Hall County Comprehensive Plan.

The Rural Residential Area is characterized by low-density single-family residential uses with deep setbacks from the road. Future development should continue to reflect lower density detached single-family residential uses, and neighborhood design should incorporate a high percentage of open space (i.e. 'Conservation Subdivision' design).

Additionally, Mixed-Use Corridors generally consist of retail activities, office-based employment, civic uses, and single family residential developments. Low-impact industrial or higher density residential only where the same is found on adjacent properties.

The applicant's request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Development Support and Constraints**

#### *Hall County Environmental Health*

In an email dated July 7, 2022, Emily McGahee with Hall County Environmental Health, 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 may be required after review of business plan. Tourist Accommodation permit/plan review and/or Food Service permit/plan review may be required after review of business plan."

#### *Hall County Fire Services*

In an email dated July 13, 2022, Lieutenant John Hornick with Hall County Fire Rescue, stated that there no preliminary comments.

The subject parcel is located approximately 2.6 miles from Hall County Fire Station #12, located at 4890 Winder Highway. The nearest fire hydrant is located across the street at 4164 Nopone Road.

#### *Hall County Public Works and Utilities*

In a memo dated July 14, 2022, Srikanth Yamala, Director of Hall County Public Works and Utilities, provided the following comments:

##### Engineering

The 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.

##### Traffic

Driveway must meet Hall County commercial standards. Proposed entry gate must be positioned to allow vehicles to stage without protruding into Technology Parkway.

##### Utilities

No Hall County Sewer.

### Gainesville Water Resources

The Hall County GIS shows that public water is available to the subject property along both Technology Parkway and Winder Highway from the City of Gainesville Water Resources Department.

### Georgia Department of Transportation

In an email dated July 13, 2022, Parker Niebauer, DITO Traffic Operations Supervisor, stated: "GDOT Coordination Required. Ensure design vehicle and truck/trailer can stage between Technology Parkway and gate. Recommend shifting drive south to minimize potential for queueing into SR 53. Any work in GDOT R/W will require a GDOT permit."

### Zoning Analysis

- The applicant is requesting a use subject to County Commission approval for the purpose of developing the parcels for a storage yard for portable storage container company.
- The subject property falls within the Rural Residential character area and is part of a Mixed-Use Corridor along Winder Highway (S.R. 53).
  - The Rural Residential Areas are characterized by low-density single-family residential uses with deep setbacks from the road. Future development should continue to reflect lower density detached single-family residential uses, and neighborhood design should incorporate a high percentage of open space (i.e. 'Conservation Subdivision' design).
  - Additionally, Mixed-Use Corridors generally consist of retail activities, office-based employment, civic uses, and single family residential developments. Low-impact industrial or higher density residential only where the same is found on adjacent properties.
    - The proposed use of a storage yard for a portable storage container company is consistent with this land use classification as there are adjacent industrially zoned properties.
- The applicant has the proposed specific development standards for the project based on the conditions of zoning for Raceway Technology Park, of which the property is a part of, and the Gateway Corridor Overlay District (GCOD) standards. The proposed standards are as follows:
  1. No structure or building will be constructed on the subject properties;
  2. There will be no property entrances to/from Winder Highway (S.R. 53);
  3. A minimum of 15% of the lot will be reserved for open space;
  4. All street frontages will include a 10-foot-wide landscape strip with required shade trees and shrubbery planted at the specified intervals;
  5. Frontage along Winder Highway (S.R. 53) will be landscaped to a depth of 30 feet.
  6. The site will be screened by a permanent opaque enclosure consisting of an eight-foot high solid fence;
  7. Cuts and fills will be terraced to blend into the natural terrain;
  8. Site and security lighting will be semi-cutoff luminary fixtures designed to avoid intrusion on adjacent properties and adjacent thoroughfares, and will be less than 35 feet in height in accordance with GCOD regulations; and

9. Future site plans may include one ground mounted, monument sign to be designed, located, and constructed in accordance with GCOD regulations.
- The applicant has requested a variance from §17.420.050.E.3 (Paving Materials for Parking Lots) and §17.420.050.E.4 (Parking Lot Landscaping) for the 81,000 square foot area on which the storage containers are proposed.
    - §17.420.050.E.3 states that “all parking areas shall be paved with asphalt, concrete (or pervious materials approved by the director.)”
    - §17.420.050.E.4 details the requirements for landscaping within parking lots, including landscape islands and parking lot trees.
  - In 2007, the Hall County Board of Commissioners adopted the Gateway Corridors Overlay District (GCOD) standards as part of the Official Code of Hall County. The GCOD governs non-residential property development standards.
    - 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.
  - Outdoor storage is a conditional use subject to County Commissioner approval within the Gateway Corridors Overlay District. This application is a result of this requirement.
  - As per §17.420.050.D.4.d, outdoor storage or sales displays shall be screened from view from public streets and adjacent property by a permanent opaque enclosure consisting of a minimum eight-foot high solid fence or wall.
    - The proposed development **meets** this standard.
  - §17.420.050.E (Parking Lot Design) outlines the standards required for parking lots within the GCOD. Subsection 3 requires that all parking areas shall be paved with asphalt, concrete, or pervious materials approved by the director.
    - The applicant has requested a variance to this standard, and proposes to use gravel within the 81,000 square foot lot.
      - This **does not meet** the standard.
  - Per §17.420.050.F (Outdoor Lighting), streetlights shall be provided on all public streets.
    - It **cannot be determined** if this standard is met.
  - 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. (§17.420.050.H)
    - There are no proposed structures for this development. This standard **does not apply**.
  - §17.420.060. of the Official Code of Hall County discusses sign standards for the Gateway Corridors Overlay district.
    - The narrative states that the project will comply with the signage requirements of the GCOD.
      - The maximum height of the sign and square footage of the sign face based upon gross floor area of the building:

- 0—10,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area
    - 32 sq. ft. (each side)
    - 8 ft. above street grade
  - 10,001—50,000 sq. ft.
    - 48 sq. ft. (each side)
    - 8 ft. above street grade
  - 50,001—100,000 sq. ft.
    - 64 sq. ft. (each side)
    - 10 ft. above street grade
  - Over 100,000 sq. ft.
    - 96 sq. ft. (each side)
    - 12 ft. above street grade
- The applicant has not provided detailed sign information but has stated GCOD standards **will be met**.

**Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends **denial** of the requested variance from §17.420.050.E (Parking Lot Design). Should the Commissioners elect to approve the variance request, staff recommends the following conditions be added:

- A. Any change in use of the site or building addition shall require the gravel lot to be paved per the GCOD requirements.
- B. The areas for emergency vehicle access shall have curb and gutter to prevent any storage units blocking designated drive aisles.
- C. A driveway and vehicle circulation pattern shall be established to be approved by the Planning Director in consultation with Hall County Departments.

Staff recommends **approval** of the applicant's with the following conditions:

- 1. The development shall conform substantially with the proposed narrative and site plan, modified as necessary for compliance with current development standards at time of application.
- 2. All previous conditions of zoning as approved March 12, 1990 for Raceway Technology Park (Phase 1- PB 286, Page 207A) shall apply. This includes the following:

Minimum Setbacks: (All setbacks to be measured from property line)

front    side    rear

"5 acre" lots	75	50	50
"1.5 acre" lots	50	30	30

Minimum Lot Coverage:

- 1. "5 acre" lots



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2. "1.5 acre" lots

No more than 60% of the lot may be occupied by structures. A minimum of 15% of the lot must be reserved for open space. No improvements other than landscaping will be permitted in the open space.

**Buffers:**

A vegetative buffer strip of a minimum of 25 feet shall be maintained along property lines where the adjacent property contains a residential structure within 200 feet of the I-II zone area. Should said adjacent property cease to be used for residential purposes, and be rezoned to a commercial or industrial zone, the require buffer may be eliminated.

**Landscaping along S.R. 53:**

The frontage of the subject area that lies along S.R. 53 shall be landscaped to a depth of at least 30 feet, as well all entrances into the subject property from Winder Highway (S.R. 53).

3. The development shall be consistent with §17.420.050 of the Official Code of Hall County. No variances to the development are approved as a part of this request.
4. A combination plat shall be recorded prior to the LDP being issued for the site.
5. Access to the development shall be approved by Hall County Traffic Engineering and/or the Georgia Department of Transportation.
6. All conditions of zoning shall be made part of any plat created for the property.

**Excerpts from the minutes of the August 1, 2022 meeting**

**Applicant's Presentation:**

**Randi Doveton, Planning Director**, presented a summary of the request.

**Michael Paupeck, 1105 Shana Court, Marietta**, presented the request. The applicant stated that the site will only be used for storage containers on top of a gravel lot. The applicant stated that adding asphalt or concrete would cause wear and tear issues on the forklifts and machinery used. The applicant stated that there would be ten to eleven lights for security.

**Public Forum:**

*There were no comments in support or opposition.*

**Planning Commission Comments:**

Mr. Bell questioned the height of the stacks. The applicant stated that each pod is 8 feet tall and they would only stack two for a total height of 16 feet. Mr. Braswell stated that the concern was the height of the pods facing Winder Highway. Mr. Bell stated that he wouldn't like for the pods to be visible from the road. Mr. Bell stated that if screening was reached there wouldn't be any issue

to have a gravel lot. Mr. Hunt stated that fast growth trees could help cover the site along with a six to eight foot berm. Mr. Bell questioned the gate security. The applicant stated it would just be a standard metal gate. Mr. Braswell stated that the Fire Marshal might have comments regarding the gate and the stacking.

**Motion: A motion to approve, with conditions was made by Mr. Bell and seconded by Mr. Hunt. Vote: 5-0**

Conditions:

3. The development shall conform substantially with the proposed narrative and site plan.
4. All previous conditions of zoning as approved March 12, 1990 for Raceway Technology Park (Phase 1- PB 286, Page 207A) shall apply. This includes the following:

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  - b) *The applicant shall be allowed to have a gravel parking area for the 81,000 sq. ft.*
5. *A combination plat shall be recorded prior to the LDP being issued for the site.*
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