



Staff Report

Subject: 2nd Reading - Zoning Map Amendment
 Author: Jennifer Rose, Planner I
 Department: Development Services
 Application: RZN-26-7
 Meeting Date: May 5, 2026

Existing Zoning: AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres)

Proposed Zoning: B-2 (General Commercial)

Map & Parcel: 355B-7
 Parcel Size: ±0.70 Acres
 Location: 2744 US Highway 80
 Commissioner District: District 1 – Commissioner Floyd

Proposed Use: Corporate administrative office for a Crane and Rigging company (no equipment storage)

Applicant/Owner: Heather Sitton
 89 Hopeful Acres Lane
 Pembroke, GA 31321

Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Request	Rezone ±0.70 acres from AR-1 to B-2
Proposed Use	Corporate office (±3,000 sq. ft.)
Existing Use	Single-family residence (to be demolished)
Future Land Use	Agricultural-Residential / Commercial Corridor Overlay
Utilities	Private Well & Septic
Access	2744 US Highway 80
Planning Board Recommendation	Approval with conditions (April 14, 2026)



Request Overview:

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **0.70 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to B-2 (General Commercial)** to allow for redevelopment of the property with a **low-intensity office use for a Crane and Rigging Company**. The proposed office will serve as a corporate administrative location and will not involve any field operations, equipment storage, or industrial activity.

The property is currently developed with a **single-family residential structure, workshop, and associated site improvements**. If approved, the applicant intends to **demolish the existing home and redevelop the site** with an approximately **3,000 square foot, two-story office building**.

The proposed use is limited in scale and is expected to employ approximately **3–5 employees**, with minimal customer traffic.

This request represents a **transition from residential use to low-intensity commercial use** along the US Highway 80 corridor.

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The subject property consists of approximately **0.70 acres** and is located along **US Highway 80**, a primary transportation corridor.

The parcel is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)** and is developed with:

- An existing **single-family residential dwelling**
- Direct driveway access to US Highway 80
- Private well and septic system (installed in the 1970s)

While the property has historically functioned as a residence, its location along a major corridor limits its long-term suitability for residential use.

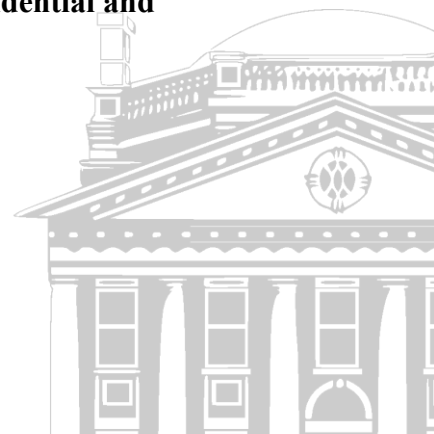
The proposed rezoning would facilitate the **removal of the existing residential structure and redevelopment of the site for commercial purposes**.

Surrounding Development Pattern:

The subject property is located within an area characterized by a **mix of rural residential and emerging commercial uses** along the US Highway 80 corridor.

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A review of the Effingham County zoning map indicates the following surrounding zoning pattern:

- **North: AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**
- **South: AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**
- **East: B-2 / B-3 (Commercial corridor uses)**
- **West: AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**



(Zoning Map)



(Zoning Legend)

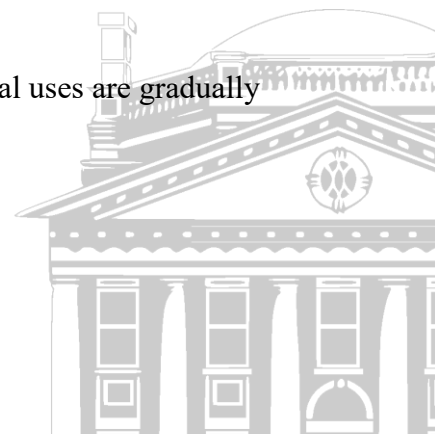
Development within the surrounding area consists primarily of:

- Single-family homes on large rural lots
- Scattered commercial uses along Highway 80
- Emerging corridor-based development

The overall pattern reflects a **transitional corridor environment**, where residential uses are gradually being replaced or supplemented by low-intensity commercial development.

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Site Description:

The subject property includes:

- An existing **single-family residence (to be demolished)**
- Accessory structures and improved yard area
- Direct frontage and driveway access onto US Highway 80

The site is relatively flat and suitable for redevelopment.

Proposed Use and Operations:

The applicant proposes to construct a **two-story corporate office building** for a **Crane and Rigging company** with the following characteristics:

- Approximately **3,000 square feet**
- **3–5 employees**
- Limited visitor traffic (approximately 1–2 visitors per week)
- Hours of operation: Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

The proposed use is strictly **administrative in nature** and will function as a **corporate office only**.

No cranes, rigging equipment, or commercial machinery will be stored on-site, as equipment is typically **rented and utilized out of state**.

The use will not involve:

- Outdoor storage
- Equipment staging
- Industrial operations
- Repair or maintenance activities

As proposed, the use is consistent with a **low-intensity office use permitted within the B-2 zoning district**.

Pre-Application Review:

Staff met with the applicant on **February 23, 2026** to discuss the proposed rezoning and redevelopment of the property.

Key items discussed include:

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- The property is currently developed with a **single-family residence, workshop, well, and septic system**
- The applicant intends to **demolish the existing home** and construct a **±3,000 sq. ft. office building**
- Existing driveway access to **US Highway 80 will be utilized**, with additional parking to be constructed
- The business is expected to operate with **3–5 employees and minimal visitor traffic**
- Hours of operation will be **Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

Staff provided the following guidance:

- A **30-foot front buffer and 15-foot side/rear buffers** may be required
- Any additional access to Highway 80 would require **GDOT approval**
- The applicant should coordinate with **Environmental Health (DPH)** regarding the existing well and septic system due to the change in use

Staff also confirmed that the property is located within the **Commercial Corridor Overlay**, and that the proposed use is generally consistent with the intent of corridor-oriented development.

Buffer Requirements:

Per Effingham County Code of Ordinances - Article III, Section 3.4 Buffers

Proposed Zoning	AR-1	AR-2	R-1	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3	MXD	LI	HI
AR-1	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	150 ft	300 ft
AR-2	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	150 ft	300 ft
R-1	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft
R-3	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	150 ft	300 ft
R-4	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft
R-5	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft
R-6	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft
B-1	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	50 ft	150 ft
B-2	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	50 ft	150 ft
B-3	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	50 ft	150 ft
MXD	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	10 ft	150 ft	300 ft
LI	150 ft	150 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft
HI	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft	25 ft	25 ft

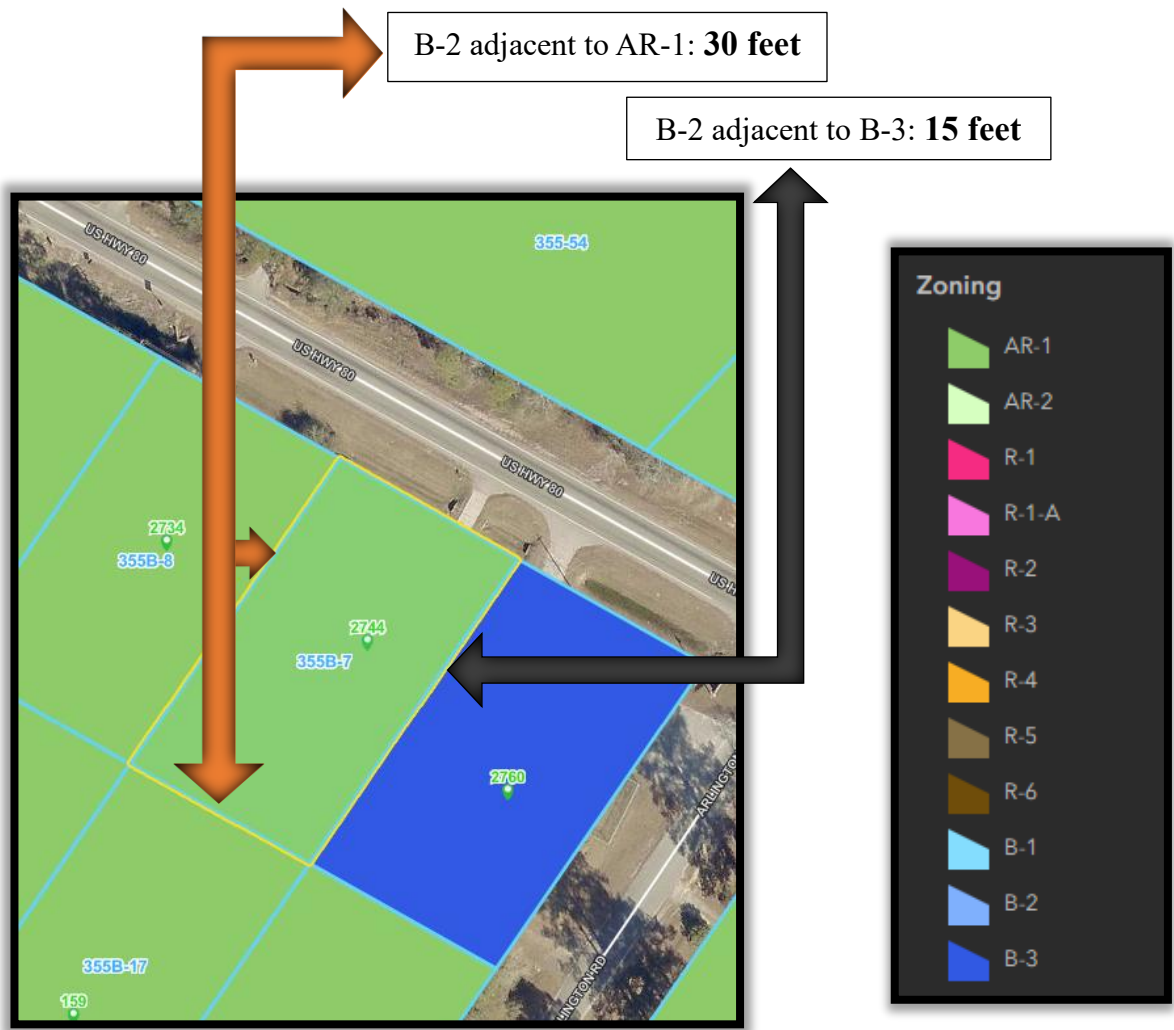
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- A minimum 30-foot buffer is required where the property abuts AR-1 zoning.
- A 15-foot buffer is required where the property abuts commercial zoning districts.

If a **privacy fence** is used, the material needs approval by Development Services, the fence maximum height is seven (7) feet in height, **then the adjacent buffer may be reduced by ten (10) feet-30 feet to 20 feet for residential required buffers only.**

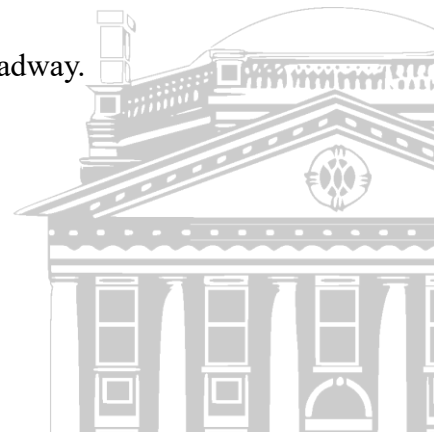
Additional buffering, landscaping, and site development standards will be reviewed during the site plan review and permitting process, where applicable.

Access and Transportation:

The subject property is currently accessed via **US Highway 80**, a major arterial roadway.

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- Existing driveway access will be utilized or improved
- Additional parking, including ADA spaces, will be provided
- Traffic generation is expected to be minimal
- The proposed use will not significantly impact roadway capacity

Any required access improvements or modifications will be subject to **GDOT review and approval.**

Environmental Considerations:

A review of the Effingham County GIS Interactive Map indicates:

- **No wetlands present on the property**
- **No FEMA-designated floodplain areas present**

The site is suitable for redevelopment without environmental constraints.

Infrastructure and Services:

The property is currently served by:

- Private well
- Private septic system

Any redevelopment must comply with:

- Environmental Health requirements
- Effingham County development standards

Comprehensive Plan Consistency:

The subject property is designated **Agricultural-Residential** on the Future Land Use Map and is located within the **Commercial Corridor Overlay.**

The overlay supports:

- Corridor-oriented development
- Low-intensity commercial uses
- Transitional land use patterns along major roadways

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While the base FLUM designation supports residential use, the proposed rezoning is **consistent with the intent of the Commercial Corridor Overlay**, particularly given the property's location and surrounding development pattern.

Future Land Use











FLUM-Plan Date 9/3/2024

Character Areas

-  Commercial Corridor Overlay
-  Conservation
-  Development-Suburban Node
-  Development-Rural Node
-  Historic Overlay District
-  Parks-Recreation



FLUM Areas

-  Agricultural
-  Agricultural-Residential
-  Assembly Area
-  Commercial
-  Conservation-Recreation
-  Industrial
-  Public-Institutional
-  Transitional
-  Transportation
-  Utility

(FLUM Node Legend)

Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

(FLUM Legend)

Rezoning Decision Criteria:

Staff evaluated the request based on the following zoning considerations.

1. Existing Use of the Property

The property is currently developed with a single-family residence and accessory structures. The applicant proposes to remove the residential structure and redevelop the site with a low-intensity office use.

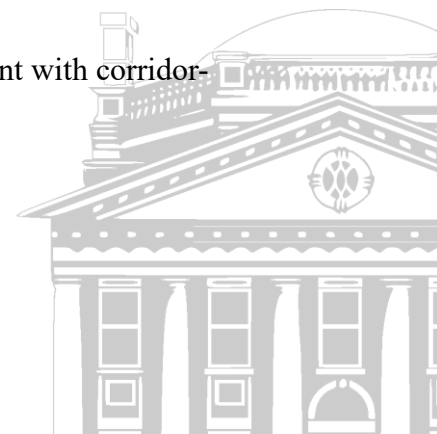
2. Suitability of the Property for the Current Zoning

While the property is zoned AR-1, its location along **US Highway 80**, a major transportation corridor, limits its long-term suitability for residential use.

The site is more appropriate for **low-intensity commercial development** consistent with corridor-oriented land uses.

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3. Suitability of the Property for the Proposed Zoning

The requested B-2 zoning is appropriate for the site given:

- Direct frontage along a major corridor
- Existing commercial and industrial zoning nearby
- The proposed use being **low-impact and office-based**

The proposed corporate office use is **less intensive than many uses permitted in B-2** and does not include outdoor storage or operational impacts.

4. Compatibility with Surrounding Development

The surrounding area consists of a mix of:

- Rural residential properties
- Commercial uses along Highway 80

The proposed office use is compatible with both patterns, as it:

- Maintains a small scale
- Does not introduce noise, heavy traffic, or industrial activity
- Functions similarly to professional office uses

5. Impact on Adjacent Properties

Potential impacts are expected to be minimal due to:

- Limited number of employees
- Minimal customer traffic
- No outdoor storage or equipment staging
- Absence of industrial operations

With appropriate buffering and site design, the use will remain compatible with adjacent residential properties.

6. Impact on Traffic and Infrastructure

The proposed office use will generate minimal traffic and is not expected to impact roadway capacity. The site has direct access to US Highway 80, and any improvements will be subject to GDOT approval.

7. Environmental Considerations

A review of the GIS Interactive Map indicates:

- No wetlands present
- No floodplain present

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The site is suitable for redevelopment without environmental constraints.

8. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

While the base Agricultural-Residential FLUM designation supports residential uses, the property is located within the **Commercial Corridor Overlay**, which supports:

- Low-intensity commercial development
- Transitional uses along major roadways

The proposed corporate office use is consistent with the **intent of the overlay and the evolving development pattern along Highway 80**.

Planning Board Recommendation:

At the **April 14, 2026 Planning Board meeting**, the Planning Board conducted a public hearing on the requested rezoning application.

Public Hearing Summary:

Staff presented the request to rezone approximately **0.70 acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to B-2 (General Commercial)** to allow for redevelopment of the property with a **low-intensity corporate office use**.

Staff outlined the proposed conditions of approval, which included limitations on **outdoor storage, industrial activity, traffic intensity, access, and operational characteristics** to ensure compatibility with surrounding properties.

Planning Board Action:

Following discussion regarding zoning classification, traffic, and operational characteristics, the Planning Board voted to **recommend approval** of the rezoning request.

- **Motion by:** Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Seconded by:** Mr. Neal Kessler
- **Vote:** 4–0 (Approval)

Staff Analysis and Recommendation:

Staff has reviewed the request in relation to the existing use of the property, surrounding development pattern, infrastructure availability, and the policies of the Effingham County Comprehensive Plan.

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The subject property is currently developed with a residential structure; however, its location along **US Highway 80** makes it increasingly incompatible with surrounding corridor conditions. The proposed rezoning would allow for redevelopment of the site with a low-intensity office use that is consistent with emerging commercial activity along the corridor.

The request represents a **measured transition from residential to commercial use**, rather than the introduction of a higher intensity or incompatible land use.

The proposed use, as a **corporate office for a Crane and Rigging company**, is strictly administrative in nature. No cranes, rigging equipment, or materials will be stored on-site, and no industrial operations are proposed.

As such, the use represents a significantly lower intensity than many uses permitted within the B-2 zoning district and is not expected to generate adverse impacts typically associated with commercial or industrial operations.

The proposed development is limited in scale, generates minimal traffic, and is compatible with surrounding residential properties. Additionally, the request aligns with the intent of the **Commercial Corridor Overlay**, which supports transitional and low-intensity commercial uses along major roadways.

Based on these factors, staff finds the request to be appropriate and recommends approval subject to conditions.

The Board may approve the request, approve the request with conditions, or deny the request

Recommended Conditions (If Approved):

If the Board elects to approve the rezoning request, staff recommends the following condition:

- 1. Prohibition of Equipment and Outdoor Storage**

No cranes, rigging equipment, heavy machinery, commercial vehicles (other than standard passenger vehicles), materials, or supplies shall be stored, staged, or operated on-site.

- 2. Prohibition of Industrial Activity**

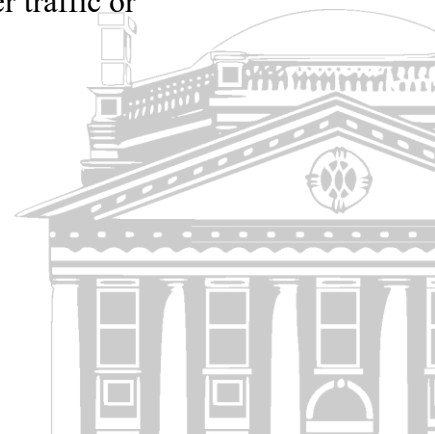
The property shall not be used for any industrial, manufacturing, repair, maintenance, or equipment servicing activities.

- 3. Traffic and Operational Limitations**

The use shall remain low-intensity in nature, with no high-volume customer traffic or commercial delivery operations beyond typical office use.

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4. **Access Management**

Access to US Highway 80 shall be limited to the existing driveway location unless otherwise approved by **GDOT**. Any modifications to access shall require applicable state approvals.

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