



Staff Report

Subject: 2nd Reading - Zoning Map Amendment
 Author: Jennifer Rose, Planner I
 Department: Development Services
 Application: RZN-26-9
 Meeting Date: May 19, 2026

Existing Zoning: B-3 (Major Commercial)

Proposed Zoning: HI (Heavy Industrial)

Map & Parcel No: 466C-4
 Parcel Size: ±8.61 Acres
 Location: 109 Commerce Court
 Commissioner District: District 5 – Commissioner Kieffer

Proposed Use: Wrecked Vehicle Import/Export Activities

Applicant/Owner: Javed Mujaddidi agent for Bright Auto World, LLC
 109 Commerce Court
 Rincon, GA 31326

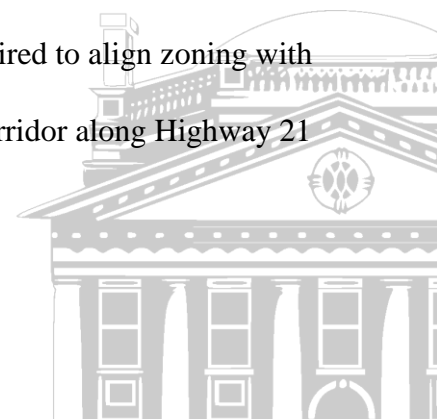
Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Applicant Request	Rezone ±8.61 acres from B-3 (Major Commercial) to HI (Heavy Industrial)
Proposed Use	Vehicle export, storage, and logistics operations
Existing Use	Wrecked vehicle export yard (operating since approximately 2019)
FLUM Designation	Commercial / Commercial Corridor Overlay
Access	Commerce Court (existing)

- **Existing operation** includes wrecked vehicle import/export activities **not permitted** within the B-3 zoning district
- Business license obtained in 2025 **under a classification** that **does not fully** reflect current operations

- Key Considerations**
- **Code Enforcement case (June 18, 2024)** related to storage of vehicles on state property (violation corrected)
 - Rezoning to HI with a Conditional Use Permit is required to align zoning with the existing use
 - Property is located within an established industrial corridor along Highway 21

Planning Board



Recommendation **Denial** (April 14,2026)
Request Overview:

The applicant is requesting to **rezone** approximately 8.61 acres from **B-3** (Major Commercial) to **HI** (Heavy Industrial) to bring an existing vehicle storage and export operation into compliance with the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance.

The property is currently developed with a warehouse building and outdoor storage areas and has been operating as a vehicle staging, storage, and export site since approximately 2019.

Staff also notes that while the applicant has indicated operations have been ongoing since approximately 2019, an **Effingham County Business License was not obtained until 2025**. The business license application identified the operation as “**loading cars,**” which is consistent with uses permitted within the B-3 zoning district under the category of road and ground transportation services.

However, based on staff review and site conditions, the current operation involves the storage and handling of **new, used, and wrecked vehicles for import/export purposes**. This activity is **not permitted** within the B-3 zoning district and is classified as a heavy industrial use, which is only allowed within the HI zoning district with approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

Staff further notes that on **June 18, 2024**, Effingham County **Code Enforcement** responded to a complaint regarding junk vehicles being parked on state-owned property adjacent to the site. The violation was addressed at that time, and the vehicles were removed.

This prior enforcement action, along with subsequent review of the business operations, contributed to staff’s determination that the current use of the property exceeds what is permitted within the B-3 zoning district.

Based on staff review and pre-application discussions, the operational characteristics of the site, including the storage and handling of new, used and wrecked vehicles, meet the criteria of a heavy industrial use under the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance, requiring rezoning and approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

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The subject property is located at 109 Commerce Court within the Effingham Park of Commerce and consists of approximately 8.61 acres.

The parcel is currently zoned B-3 (Major Commercial).

The site is developed with:

- An existing warehouse building
- Outdoor storage and staging areas
- Internal circulation designed for truck access
- Secured perimeter fencing

The property is served by public water and sewer, which supports higher intensity commercial and industrial uses within this corridor.

The site is currently being utilized as a vehicle storage, staging, and export facility, which includes the handling of **new, used, and wrecked vehicles**.

Surrounding Development Pattern:

The subject property is located within an area characterized by **industrial and commercial development** associated with the Highway 21 corridor.

A review of the Effingham County zoning map indicates that the surrounding properties are predominantly zoned **I-1 (Light Industrial)**, with additional **planned development (PD) and commercial zoning** located along Highway 21.

The surrounding zoning pattern is as follows:

- **North:** I-1 (Light Industrial)
- **South:** PD (Planned Development) and commercial zoning along Highway 21
- **East:** I-1 (Light Industrial)
- **West:** I-1 (Light Industrial)

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- Hours of operation: Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- Two access points and loading areas

The proposed use is consistent with logistics-oriented operations commonly found within industrial corridors.

Access and Transportation:

The subject property is currently accessed from **Commerce Court**, which connects to the surrounding industrial roadway network and provides access to Highway 21.

The property also has frontage along **Highway 21**; however:

- No direct access is currently permitted
- Any future access would require review and approval by the **Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)**

Based on the existing roadway network and site conditions, staff finds that **current access is adequate to support the proposed use.**

Pre-Application Meeting Summary:

Staff met with the applicant on **March 5, 2026** to discuss the existing operation and zoning compliance. Key items discussed include:

- The operation has been active since approximately 2019
- Code Enforcement initiated review of the use
- Staff advised that the use meets the criteria of a **Heavy Industrial use** under the zoning ordinance
- A **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)** will be required for continued operation

Staff also noted that **buffer requirements and site conditions** will be evaluated as part of the process.

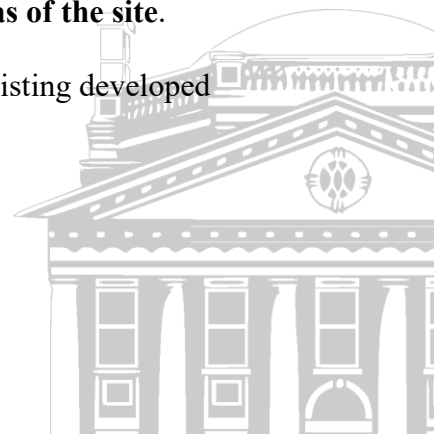
Environmental Considerations:

A review of the Effingham County GIS Interactive Map indicates the presence of **wetland areas on portions of the property**, primarily located within the **central and southern areas of the site.**

These areas appear to follow a natural drainage feature across the property. The existing developed portions of the site are generally located outside of these mapped areas.

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(Wetlands Map)

Any disturbance of wetlands may require:

- Jurisdictional determination by the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**
- State and federal permitting
- Compliance with applicable environmental regulations

Based on available GIS data, **no FEMA floodplain areas are located on the subject property.** The mapped wetlands are provided for planning purposes only and would require **field verification and formal delineation** if impacted by future development.

Infrastructure and Services:

The property is served by:

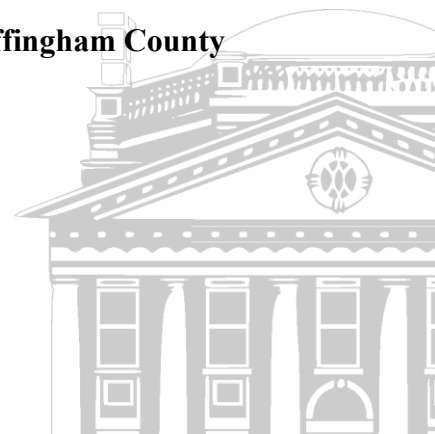
- Public water and sewer
- Established industrial roadway network
- Proximity to Highway 21

The site is currently functioning as a **logistics-oriented operation**, and existing infrastructure appears adequate to support the proposed use.

Any continued operation or site improvements must comply with all applicable **Effingham County regulations and State requirements.**

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Comprehensive Plan Consistency:

The subject property is designated **Commercial** on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and is located within the **Commercial Corridor Overlay** of the Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan.

This designation is intended to support:

- Commercial and employment-based uses
- Corridor-oriented development along major transportation routes
- Uses that benefit from visibility and access to arterial roadways



(FLUM Node Legend)

Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

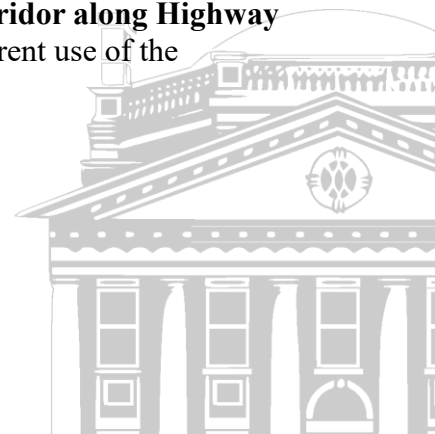
(FLUM Legend)

The requested **HI (Heavy Industrial)** zoning classification represents a higher intensity use than typically envisioned under the Commercial designation.

However, staff notes that the property is located within an **existing industrial corridor along Highway 21**, where surrounding development is predominantly industrial in nature. The current use of the property is consistent with this development pattern.

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While the request is not fully aligned with the Commercial FLUM designation in terms of intensity, the **existing land use pattern and corridor context** provide support for consideration of the request.

Buffer Requirements:

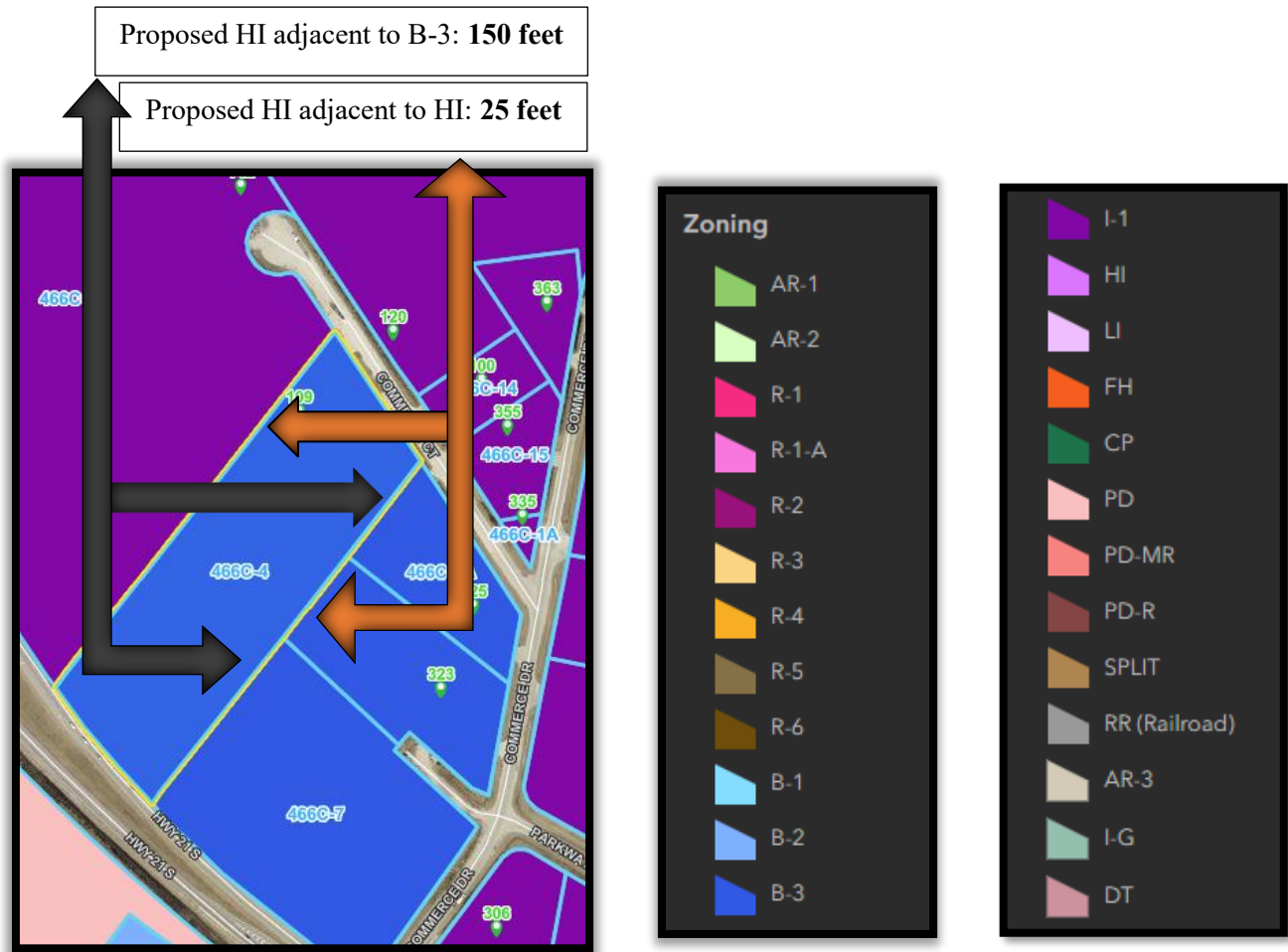
Per Effingham County Code of Ordinances - Article III, Section 3.4 Buffers

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 150-foot buffer is required where the property abuts commercial zoning districts.
- A 25-foot buffer is required where the property abuts industrial zoning districts.

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

Rezoning Decision Criteria:

Staff evaluated the request based on standard zoning considerations.

Existing Use of the Property

The property is currently used for vehicle storage, staging, and export operations, including the handling of new, used, and wrecked vehicles.

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Suitability of the Property for the Current Zoning

The current operation appears to exceed the intensity permitted within the B-3 zoning district.

Suitability of the Property for the Proposed Zoning

The requested HI (Heavy Industrial) zoning classification would allow the existing operation to function within a zoning district that is intended to accommodate higher intensity industrial uses, including outdoor storage and logistics-related activities, subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

Compatibility with Surrounding Development

The surrounding area is predominantly industrial in nature, consisting of warehouse, distribution, and logistics-related uses. The proposed zoning classification is consistent with this established development pattern.

Impact on Adjacent Properties

Potential impacts include noise, truck traffic, and visual impacts associated with outdoor storage. These impacts are characteristic of industrial uses and are mitigated by the surrounding industrial context and existing site conditions.

Traffic and Infrastructure

The property is adequately served by existing infrastructure, including public water and sewer and access via Commerce Court.

Traffic generated by the use is generally consistent with industrial and logistics-oriented operations within the surrounding corridor. However, truck traffic associated with the use may represent a potential consideration, particularly with respect to site access, circulation, and impacts to adjacent roadways.

Any future modifications to access or operational intensity may require additional review and coordination with applicable agencies, including the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), where applicable.

Environmental Considerations

Wetlands are present on portions of the property and may require additional review and permitting if impacted. No FEMA-designated floodplain areas are located on the site based on available GIS data.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The Future Land Use Map designates the property as Commercial within the Commercial Corridor Overlay. While the requested HI zoning represents a higher intensity classification than typically envisioned under the Commercial designation, the surrounding area is characterized by industrial development, and the existing use is consistent with this development pattern.

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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 **8.61 acres from B-3 (Major Commercial) to HI (Heavy Industrial)** to bring an existing **vehicle storage, staging, and export operation into compliance with the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance.**

Staff also outlined recommended conditions addressing **on-site operations, outdoor storage, security fencing, and operational limitations.**

Public Comment:

In Support:

Speakers in favor stated that the business operates similarly to surrounding industrial uses and has made efforts to maintain the site and comply with regulations.

In Opposition:

Multiple speakers expressed concerns related to:

- **Truck traffic and roadway congestion**
- Vehicles being **loaded/unloaded within public roadways**
- **Public safety concerns** associated with truck activity
- **Damage to roadways and surrounding infrastructure**
- **Unauthorized use of adjacent properties** for staging or unloading
- Potential **environmental impacts**, including fluid leakage and proximity to wetlands

Planning Board Discussion:

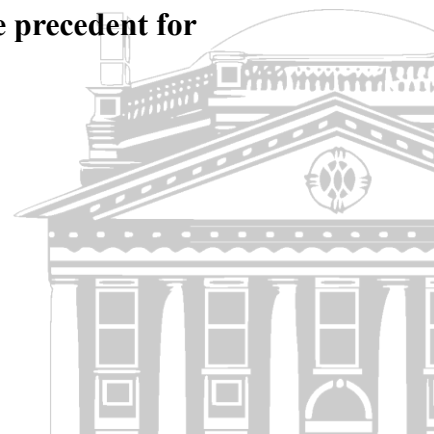
During deliberation, the Planning Board discussed **operational impacts, traffic concerns, environmental considerations, and compliance with zoning regulations.**

The Board also discussed **required buffer standards between industrial and adjacent zoning districts**, noting that the site may have difficulty meeting the required buffer widths. It was acknowledged that approval of the request could require a **variance from buffer requirements**, and concerns were raised that granting such a variance could **establish an undesirable precedent for similar properties.**

Additional concerns included:

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- Ongoing truck activity and roadway obstruction
- Adequacy of the site to support industrial-scale operations
- Impacts to adjacent businesses and public safety
- Enforcement challenges related to off-site loading and staging

Planning Board Action:

Following discussion, the Planning Board voted to **recommend denial** of the rezoning request based on concerns related to **traffic, environmental impacts, operational intensity, and buffer compliance**.

- **Motion by:** Ms. Lyndsay Smith
- **Seconded by:** Mr. Walter Boykin
- **Vote:** Unanimous (Denial)

Staff Analysis and Recommendation:

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

The subject property is currently developed and operating in a manner that appears to exceed the intensity permitted under the existing zoning classification. The requested rezoning would align the zoning classification with the existing use and the surrounding industrial development pattern.

Staff further notes that the existing use of the property has not been fully consistent with the permitted uses of the B-3 zoning district. While the applicant obtained a business license in 2025 under the classification of vehicle loading, the current operation includes wrecked vehicle import/export activities, which are not permitted within B-3 zoning.

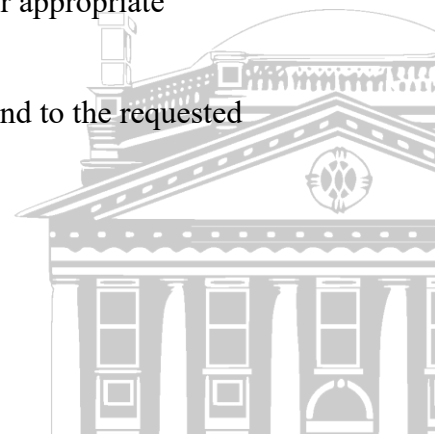
Additionally, a **Code Enforcement case from June 18, 2024** identified the presence of junk vehicles being stored on state property associated with the operation. **The violation was corrected**; however, this incident indicates that the operational characteristics of the site extend beyond those permitted within the B-3 zoning district.

These findings indicate that rezoning to HI, along with a Conditional Use Permit, would provide a regulatory framework consistent with the existing use of the property and allow for appropriate oversight in accordance with the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance.

Staff recognizes that the Future Land Use Map designation may not fully correspond to the requested

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zoning classification in every respect. However, land use decisions should also consider the existing development pattern, corridor function, access to infrastructure, and the broader context of surrounding properties.

The request represents a zoning correction rather than the introduction of a new or more intensive land use and does not **appear** to create a substantial change in the character of the area, as the site is already developed and operating in a manner consistent with surrounding properties. With appropriate conditions related to site operations, access, buffering, lighting, and environmental compliance, staff finds that potential operational impacts can be reasonably addressed when 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 conditions:

1. All loading, unloading, and operational activities shall occur on-site. No vehicles, equipment, or materials shall be staged, loaded, or unloaded within public roadways, rights-of-way, or on adjacent properties.
2. A **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)** shall be required.
3. Required buffers shall be installed per ordinance unless modified through an approved variance.
4. All outdoor storage areas shall be **fully enclosed with security fencing**.
5. No vehicle dismantling, salvage processing, or hazardous material handling shall occur unless separately approved.
6. Hours of operation shall be limited to **Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**. All operations shall comply with applicable environmental regulations.

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