



Staff Report

Subject: Rezoning
Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Application: RZN-26-31
Meeting Date: July 14, 2026

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

Proposed Zoning: R-5 (Single- family traditional neighborhood)

Map & Parcel: 413-8
Parcel Size: +/- 136 acres
Location: McCall Road
Commissioner District: Fourth District

Proposed Use: Residential Development

Applicant/Owner: Gary Wiggin/ GW Investments
600 E. 39th St.
Savannah, GA 31401

Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Project Name	Johnson Tract Development
Applicant Request	Rezone approximately 136 acres from AR-1 to R-5
Current Use	Undeveloped Woodland
Proposed Development	Single- Family Detached lots
Proposed Density	Approximately 303 Residential Units
Housing Types	Single-Family Homes
Utilities	Effingham County Public Water & Sewer
Future Land Use Map	Agricultural-Residential
Access	McCall Road



The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately +/-136 of the +/-146-acre parent tract from **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)** to **R-5 (Single-family traditional neighborhood)** to develop a single-family detached-lot subdivision. Approximately 10 acres will remain AR-1.



- 303 single-family lots measuring approximately 50 feet by 120 feet, with a minimum lot area of 6,000 square feet
 - .Pond area (+/- 8.00 acres)
 - Community green space (+/- 14.8 acres)
 - Amenity site (1.1 acres)
 - Walking trails (0.47 acres)
- 

effinghamcounty.org



- Covered mailbox kiosks
- Covered bus stops
- 50-foot perimeter vegetated buffer around the development, including a 50-foot buffer with a 6-foot berm along McCall Road where rear-facing lots are proposed.



Zoning History

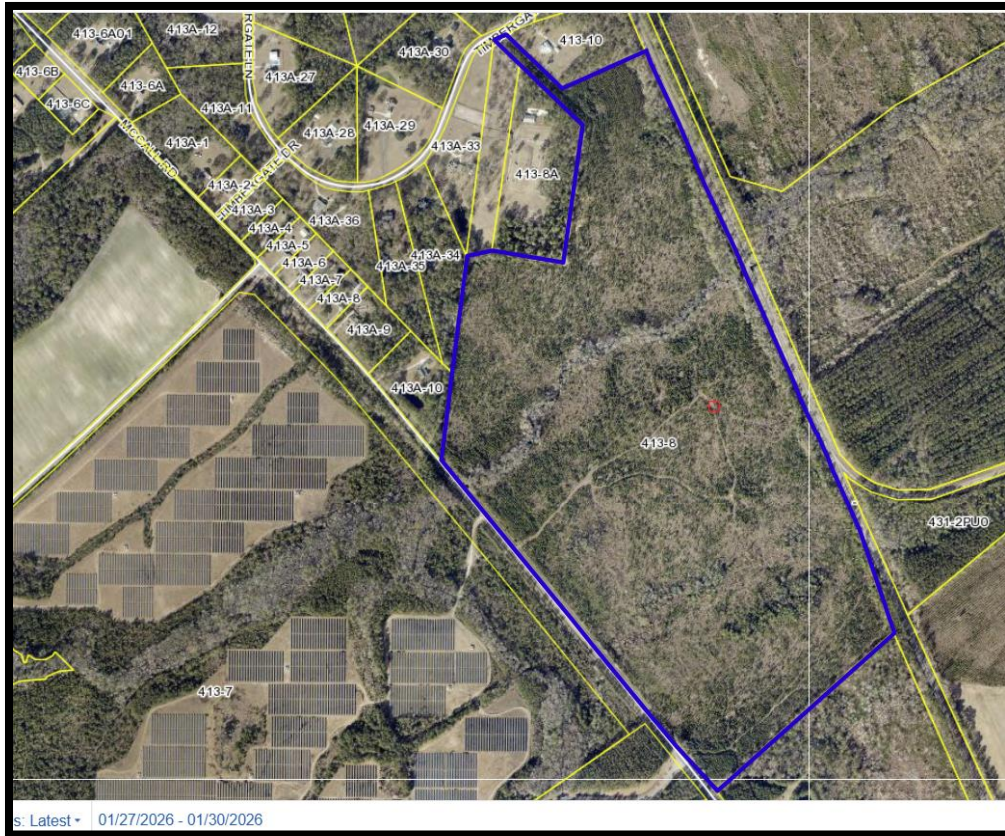
The subject property is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**. There is one prior zoning case on record for this parcel. On January 13, 2026, the applicant submitted a request to rezone the property to R-5 (Single-Family Residential). The Planning Board voted to recommend denial of the request, and the applicant subsequently withdrew the application prior to the March 3, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting.

Planning and Zoning Services

804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Georgia 31329
(912) 754-2128
effinghamcounty.org



The previous proposal consisted of a higher-density residential development, including approximately 342 dwelling units, comprising both townhomes and single-family detached homes. The current request reflects a revised development proposal with a reduced overall density.



Existing Site Condition

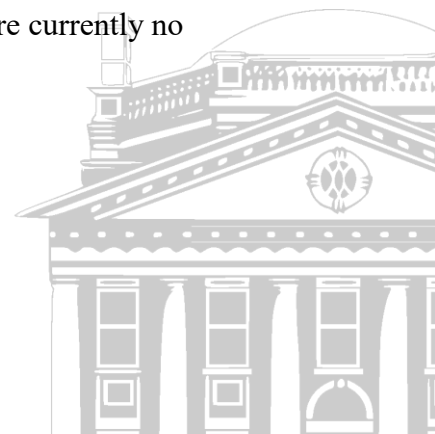
The subject property consists of approximately +/-**146 acres** and is located along McCall Road. As part of the proposed development, an approximately **10-acre parcel** will be subdivided from the parent tract and will remain zoned AR-1 (Agricultural Residential). This parcel will have access from Timbergate Trail and will not be included as part of the proposed subdivision.

The remainder of the property is currently undeveloped and wooded, with no existing structures or site improvements.

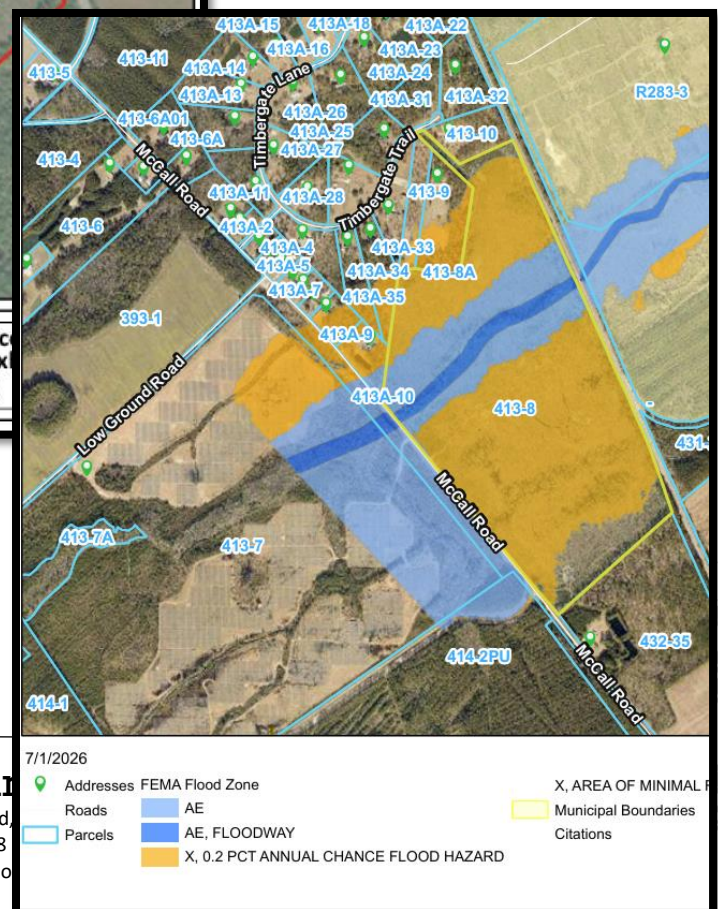
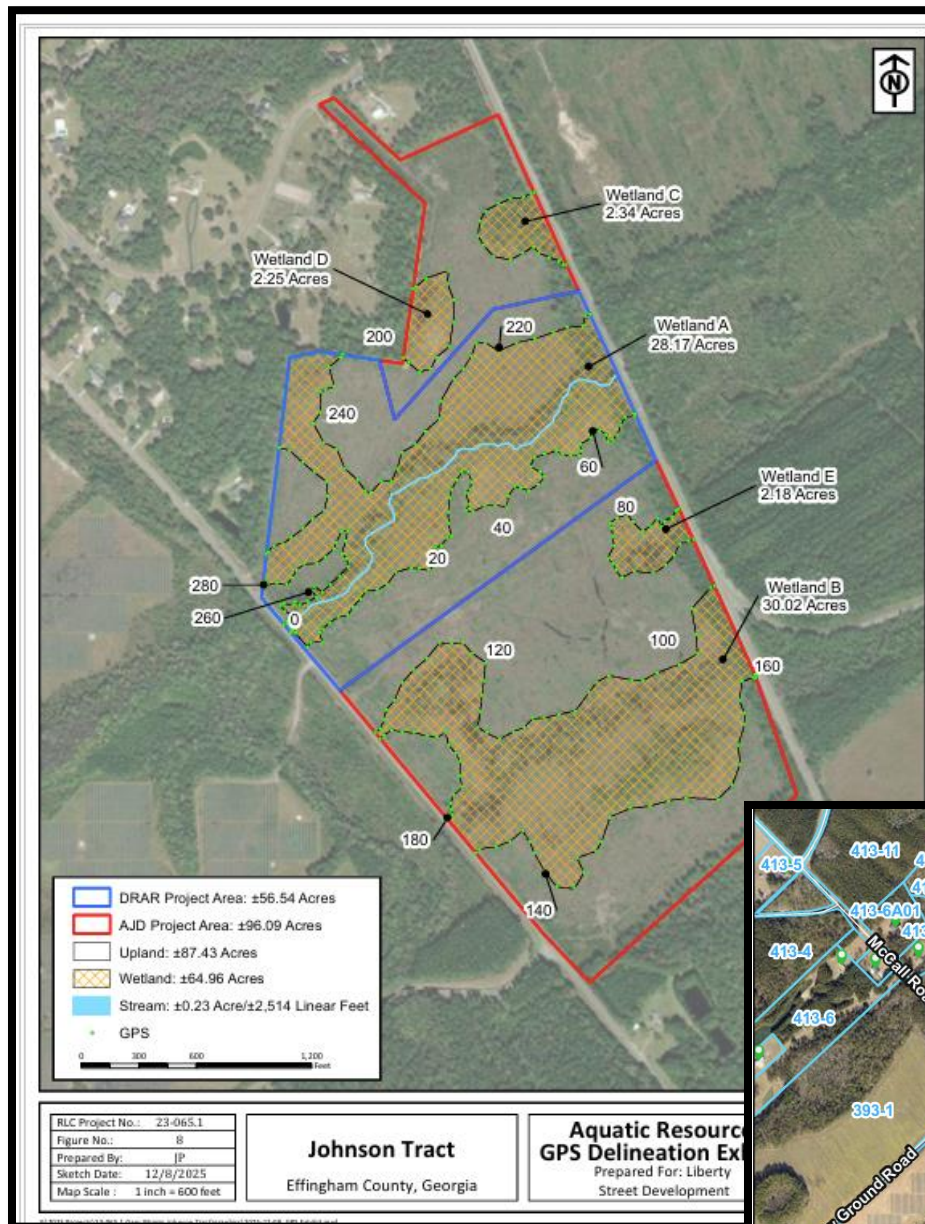
McCall Road serves as a designated truck route within Effingham County; there are currently no sidewalks along the roadway frontage.

Planning and Zoning Services

804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Georgia 31329
(912) 754-2128
effinghamcounty.org



Wetland mapping and floodplain mapping indicate the presence of freshwater wetlands and FEMA flood hazard areas throughout portions of the property. A wetlands delineation has been provided to the county.

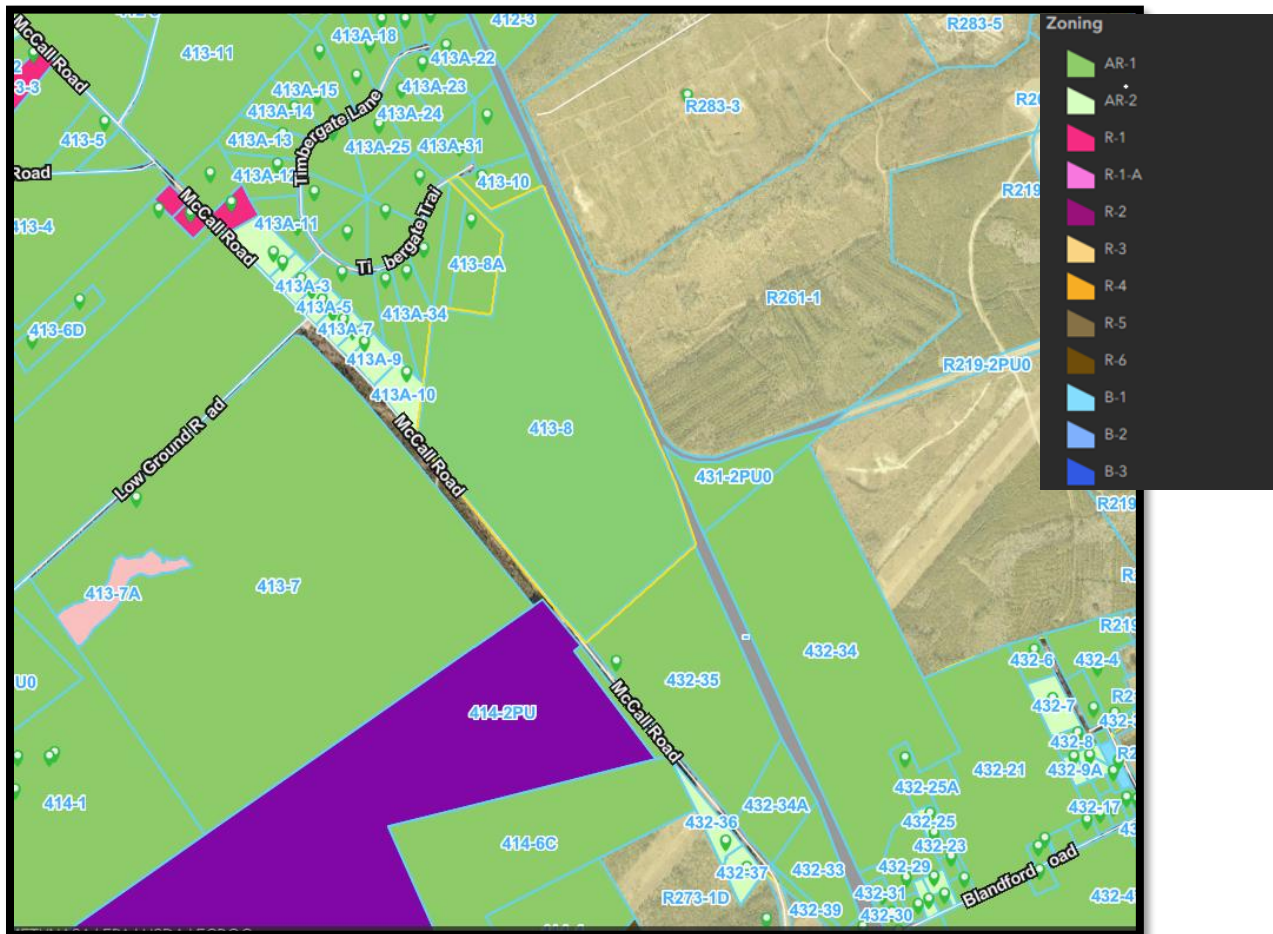


Planning and Zoning

804 South Laurel St., Springfield,
(912) 754-2128
effinghamcounty.org

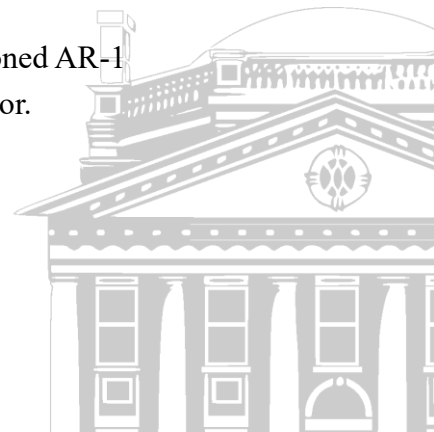
Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern

Surrounding Neighborhood	
North:	Light Industrial (City of Rincon jurisdiction)
South:	AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
East:	AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
West:	AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more) & AR-2 (Agricultural-Residential, 1 acre or more)



The surrounding area is characterized by agricultural land, rural residential properties, and subdivisions, as well as public utility facilities.

A review of the zoning map indicates surrounding properties are predominantly zoned AR-1 (Agricultural Residential), with residential growth occurring throughout the corridor.



North

- ✚ Light Industrial Park (City of Rincon)

East / Southwest

- ✚ Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1 & R-1 & AR-2)
- ✚ Timbergate Subdivision (AR-1 & AR-2)

South

- ✚ Agricultural Residential homesteads and large agricultural lots (AR-1)
- ✚ Solar Farm (AR-1)
- ✚ Energy plant (I-1)

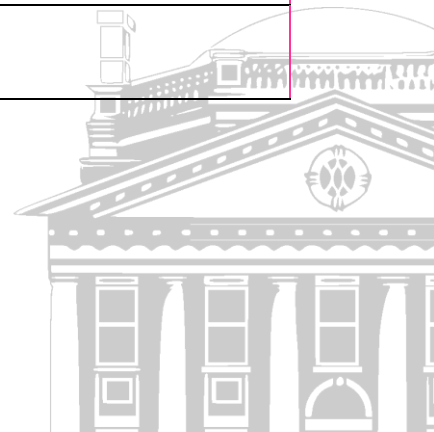
West/ Southwest

- ✚ Agricultural-Residential homesteads (AR-1)
- ✚ Gas Station & Convenience store (B-2) (City of Rincon)

R-5 Development Standards		
Development Standard	Ordinance Requirement	Proposed Development
Perimeter Buffers	30-foot vegetated buffer	50-foot vegetated buffer (an additional 20 feet beyond the minimum requirement)
McCall Road Buffer (Rear-Facing Lots)	50-foot buffer with a 6-foot berm	50-foot buffer with a 6-foot berm (meets requirement)
Open Space	Minimum 25% of gross site area	57% open space provided
Minimum Lot Area	6,000 square feet	6,000 square feet
On-Street Parking (1 space per every five units) w/ street trees	61 spaces required	41 spaces proposed (61 required; additional overflow parking to be provided at the amenity area in accordance with the ordinance).
Sidewalks	Shall be ADA compliant	

Planning and Zoning Services

804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Georgia 31329
(912) 754-2128
effinghamcounty.org



Utilities	Public water & sewer	Effingham County water and sewer
-----------	-------------------------	----------------------------------

Minimum lot area	6,000 sq. feet (0.14 acres)
Maximum number of principal residences	1
Maximum number of accessory dwelling units	1
Minimum Road Frontage	N/A
Minimum lot width at building line	50 feet
Minimum front yard setback	10 feet (building) 25 feet (attached garage)
Minimum rear yard setback	25 feet
Minimum side yard (interior) setback	6 feet (or 3 feet, provided minimum building separation of 12 feet is maintained)
Minimum side yard (street/road easement) setback	15 feet
Minimum side yard (secondary street) setback	15 feet
Maximum building height	35 feet

Zoning Classification

*The **R-5 District** represents a balanced trade-off—allowing for increased residential density in exchange for thoughtfully designed and accessible open space, ensuring that growth is compact yet livable, and community-oriented.*

The intent of the R-5 Single-Family Traditional Neighborhood Design Residential District is to promote compact, higher-density residential development that reflects the principles of traditional neighborhood design. This district encourages walkable, interconnected communities, smaller lot sizes, and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. The R-5 District is designed to accommodate single-family detached dwellings in a pattern that fosters a strong sense of community and efficient land use. Key features may include reduced setbacks, alley access, front porches, and integrated open spaces contributing to neighborhood character and livability. This district supports long-term planning goals related to housing diversity, affordability, and sustainable growth by offering an alternative to conventional suburban development patterns, while still preserving the identity of single-family neighborhoods in a higher-density format.

Intensity of Use

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **R-5 (Single-family traditional neighborhood)** for the development of a 303-lot single-family subdivision represents an increase in density relative to surrounding homesteads.

Planning and Zoning Services

804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Georgia 31329
(912) 754-2128
effinghamcounty.org



The current Agricultural Residential designation is intended for low-density residential and agricultural activities, which typically generate minimal traffic and require limited site improvements, limited public infrastructure, and relatively modest demands on public services and utilities.

In contrast, the proposed R-5 development would introduce a residential neighborhood with an interconnected street network, sidewalks, public utilities, stormwater management areas, and neighborhood amenities. The increase in the number of dwelling units will result in higher daily traffic volumes, increased demand on public infrastructure, utilities, schools, emergency services, and other public facilities.

The proposal represents a substantial increase in development intensity; the applicant has incorporated design elements intended to mitigate potential impacts, including the preservation of approximately 57% open space, perimeter buffering exceeding ordinance requirements in several locations, internal sidewalks, and compliance with subdivision design standards. These features help reduce visual impacts, provide recreational opportunities, and improve connectivity within the development.

The proposed rezoning represents a transition from a rural, low-density land-use pattern to a traditional neighborhood development that is significantly more intensive in residential density, infrastructure requirements, and service demands.

Infrastructure

The property will be served by **County water and sewer**, consistent with the surrounding development.

Road Routes: McCall Road is classified as a Minor Collector Road and a designated truck route within Effingham County.

Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

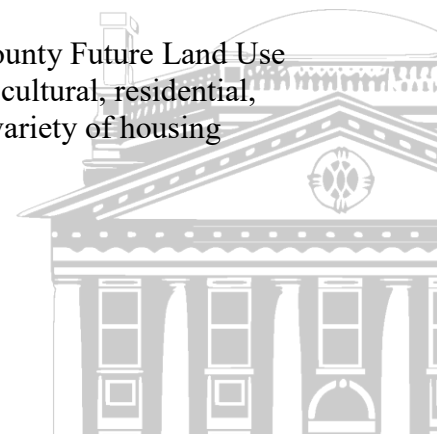
The proposed rezoning to **R-5 (Single-Family Traditional Neighborhood)** has the potential to promote the public health, safety, and welfare by providing additional housing opportunities within the county while requiring development that meets current subdivision and engineering standards. The proposed subdivision will include public streets, sidewalks, stormwater management facilities, utility infrastructure, and other required improvements designed to protect public safety and accommodate future residents. The proposed development will also provide sidewalks, buffering, stormwater management, and public infrastructure improvements that are intended to enhance pedestrian safety and neighborhood compatibility.

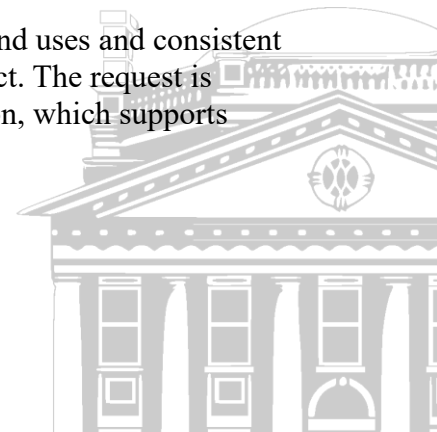
Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

The subject property is designated **Agricultural/Residential** on the Effingham County Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The Comprehensive Plan identifies this category as supporting agricultural, residential, and mixed-use zoning districts. Residential areas are intended to accommodate a variety of housing

Planning and Zoning Services

804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Georgia 31329
(912) 754-2128
effinghamcounty.org





residential development where adequate infrastructure is available. Although the proposal represents a higher residential density than the surrounding rural development pattern, the proposed subdivision incorporates substantial buffering, open space, public infrastructure, sidewalks, and amenities designed to minimize impacts on adjacent properties and protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

Planning and Zoning Services

804 South Laurel St., Springfield, Georgia 31329
(912) 754-2128
effinghamcounty.org

