



Staff Report

Subject: Rezoning
Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Application: RZN-26-44
Meeting Date: October 13, 2026

Existing Zoning: **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)**
Proposed Zoning: **B-1 (Neighborhood Commercial)**

Map & Parcel(s): 466B-8
Total Acreage Affected: ± 1.07 acres
Location: 207 Goshen Road
Commissioner District: Second District

Proposed Use: Commercial Use

Applicant/Owner: Justin Austin
9 Lakeview Drive
Guyton, GA 31312

Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Request	Rezone ± 1.07 acres from AR-1 to B-1
Proposed Use	Commercial Use
Existing Use	One stick-built home
Future Land Use	Agricultural Residential
Utilities	Private well & septic system
Access	Goshen Road



Project Summary:

The applicant is requesting to **rezone** approximately **±1.07 acres** from **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)** to **B-1 (Neighborhood Commercial)** to allow for future commercial development.

The conceptual layout illustrates the potential reuse of the existing residence for office purposes and areas for future commercial development; however, no specific commercial use or site plan is proposed for approval as part of this rezoning request.

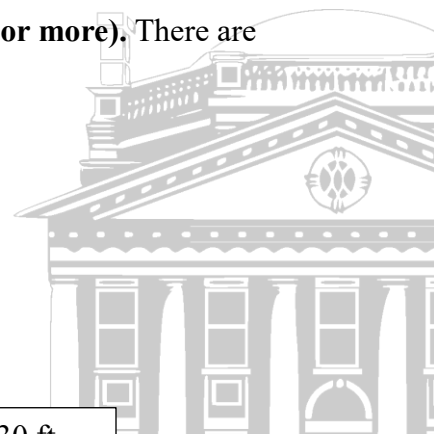


Zoning History

The subject property is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)**. There are no prior zoning cases on this property.

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Existing Site Condition

The subject property consists of approximately **1.07 acres** and is located along Goshen Road with direct access. The property is currently developed with one stick-built residence. Future development of the property would be required to comply with applicable sidewalk requirements of the County's development regulations.

The subject parcel is a legal nonconforming lot of record. The parcel was created prior to the adoption of the current AR-1 zoning district standards, which require a minimum lot size of five (5) acres. The existing parcel contains approximately 1.07 acres and therefore does not meet the current minimum lot size requirement.

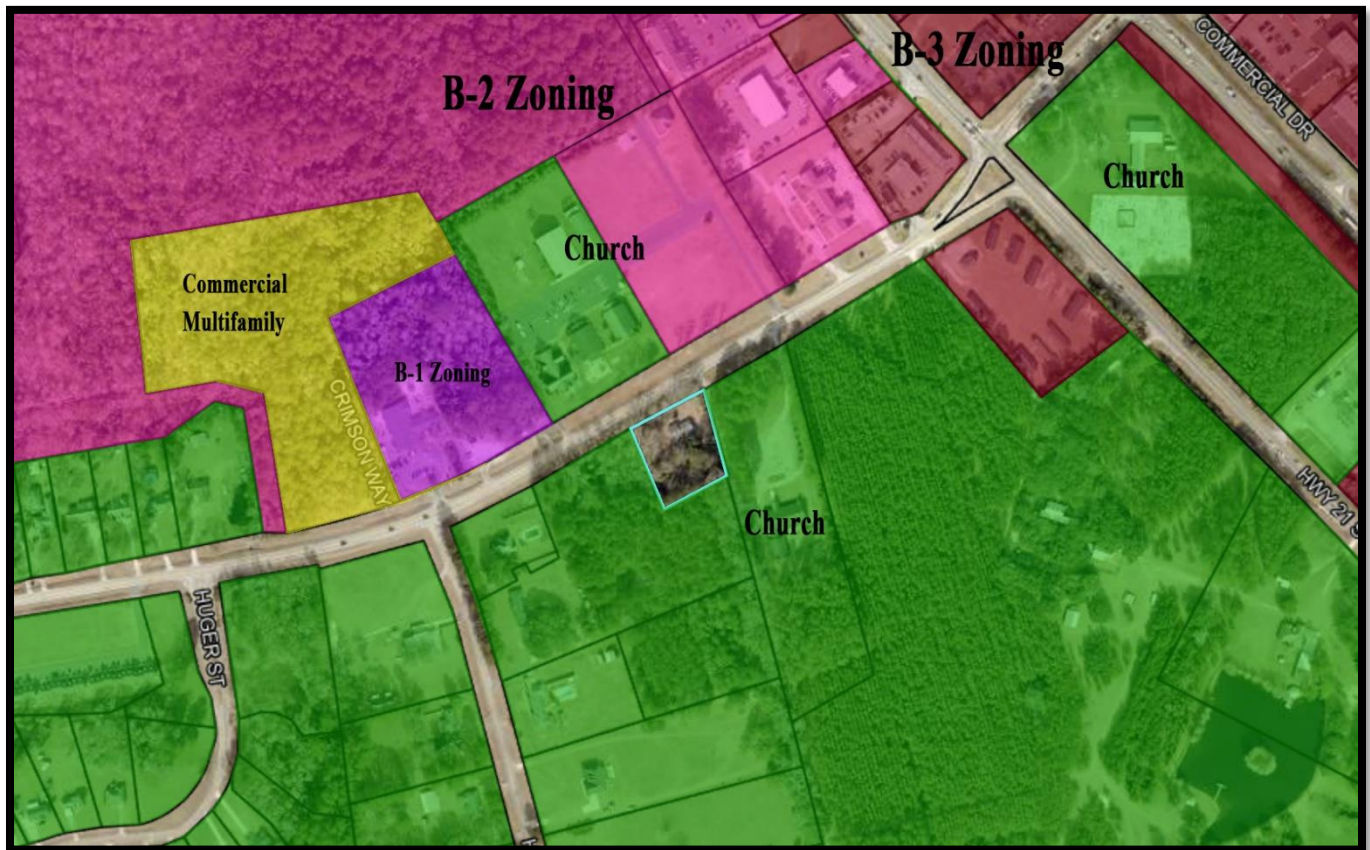
Based on **County GIS mapping**, the parcel contains no identified **wetlands, FEMA-designated flood hazard areas, or other known environmental constraints**.

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Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern



Surrounding Neighborhood

- North: B-2 (General Commercial) & AR-1 (Agricultural Residential, 5 acres or more)
- South: AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential, 5 acres or more)
- East: AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential, 5 acres or more) & AR-2 (Agricultural-Residential, 1 acre or more)
- West: AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential, 5 acres or more)

A mix of single-family residential neighborhoods, multifamily residential developments, rural residential homesteads, commercial uses, and industrial development characterizes the surrounding area. Based on the zoning map provided, the surrounding area reflects a mixed but transitioning zoning pattern, described as follows:

North/ Northwest/ Northeast

- ✚ Agricultural- residential homesteads (AR-1)
- ✚ The Learning Treehouse (B-1 & AR-1)

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- ✚ Church (B-1)
- ✚ Barn at Goshen Apartments (B-1)
- ✚ Automotive shop (B-1)
- ✚ Enmarket gas station (B-3)
- ✚ Waterford Apartments (R-3)
- ✚ Waterford Subdivision (R-1)

East

- ✚ Church (AR-2)
- ✚ Connor Homes (B-3)
- ✚ Agricultural- residential homesteads (AR-1)

South

- ✚ Westwood Farms Subdivision (AR-1)
- ✚ Exley Industrial Tract (PD)

West

- ✚ Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1)
- ✚ Goshen Villa Subdivision (R-1)
- ✚ Townhomes (R-2)

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Zoning Development Standards for B-1

Requirement	Standard
Greenspace	Minimum 20% of site area
Sidewalks	Required along all public street frontages
Buffers	30-foot vegetated buffer required on all sides
Parking	Determined by proposed use
Lighting	Must be designed to reflect light away from adjacent residentially zoned properties
Max sq. footage for building	8,000 sq ft

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Applicable Ordinance Sections

Section 3.4.2 – Adjacent Public Street Buffers:

“All development excluding industrial development shall maintain a ten-foot-wide landscaped buffer between any parking or loading area and an adjacent accessed public right-of-way (ROW).”

Section 5.11.3 – Sidewalk Requirement:

“Sidewalks shall be required along all public street frontages within commercial districts. If no existing sidewalk or pedestrian network is located within 500 feet of the subject property, the developer may provide a payment in lieu of construction. The payment shall be equal to the estimated cost of sidewalk installation and shall be used by the County for future pedestrian infrastructure improvements in the area.”

Buffer Reduction Provision (Section 3.4, Fence-Based Reduction):

“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.”

Buffer Chart																
	AR-1	AR-2	AR-3	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	R-6	B-1	B-2	B-3	PD	I-1	LI	HI
AR-1	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
AR-2	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
AR-3	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
R-1	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft
R-2	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
R-3	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
R-4	30 ft	30 ft	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	300 ft
R-5	30 ft	30 ft	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	300 ft
R-6	30 ft	30 ft	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	300 ft
B-1	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	150 ft	50 ft	150 ft
B-2	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	150 ft	50 ft	150 ft
B-3	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	20 ft	20 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	150 ft	50 ft	150 ft
PD	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	15 ft	15 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	10 ft	300 ft	150 ft	300 ft
I-1	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft	300 ft	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft
LI	150 ft	150 ft	150 ft	300 ft	150 ft	150 ft	300 ft	300 ft	300 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	25 ft	50 ft	50 ft
HI	300 ft	300 ft	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	25 ft

Zoning Classification

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*The **Neighborhood Commercial Districts (B-1)** are intended to accommodate small-scale commercial uses that primarily serve the daily needs of nearby residential areas. These businesses provide convenient shopping, dining, and personal services that enhance the livability of surrounding neighborhoods without generating excessive traffic, noise, or other disruptions. Due to their close proximity to residences, businesses within this district are expected to operate at a low-intensity level, maintaining a scale and character that harmonizes with adjacent residential development. Design and site standards emphasize compatibility with the neighborhood, encouraging pedestrian-friendly environments, attractive landscaping, and architectural styles that blend with residential surroundings. Public service demands, including infrastructure, utilities, and transportation impacts, remain minimal, ensuring that the district supports economic activity without overburdening community resources.*

Intensity of Use

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **B-1 (Neighborhood Commercial)** represents an increase in land-use intensity by allowing a broader range of commercial uses than are permitted under the existing residential zoning district. While no specific development has been proposed, the B-1 district is intended to accommodate neighborhood-scale commercial uses that serve nearby residential areas.

The subject property is located in an area that has experienced significant growth, including the development of residential, existing commercial uses, and recently constructed multifamily residential neighborhoods. As the area continues to transition from predominantly agricultural and residential uses to a more mixed-use development pattern, the requested zoning would provide an opportunity for future commercial development that could support the surrounding community. Any future development of the property would remain subject to the County's development regulations, including site plan review and compliance with all applicable zoning and design standards.

Infrastructure

The property is served by a **private well and septic system, consistent with the** surrounding development.

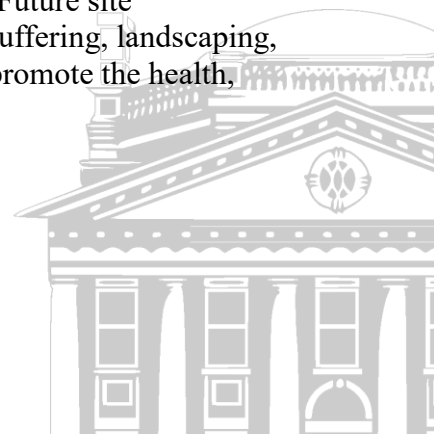
Roadway Classification: The proposed development will access Goshen Road, which is classified as a Major Collector within Effingham County.

Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

The requested rezoning is not anticipated to affect public health, safety, or welfare adversely. Although no specific commercial use has been identified, any future development on the property will be required to comply with the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance, development standards, stormwater management regulations, and all applicable local, state, and federal requirements. Future site development will also be reviewed to ensure adequate access, traffic circulation, buffering, landscaping, and infrastructure improvements, as necessary, to protect adjacent properties and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

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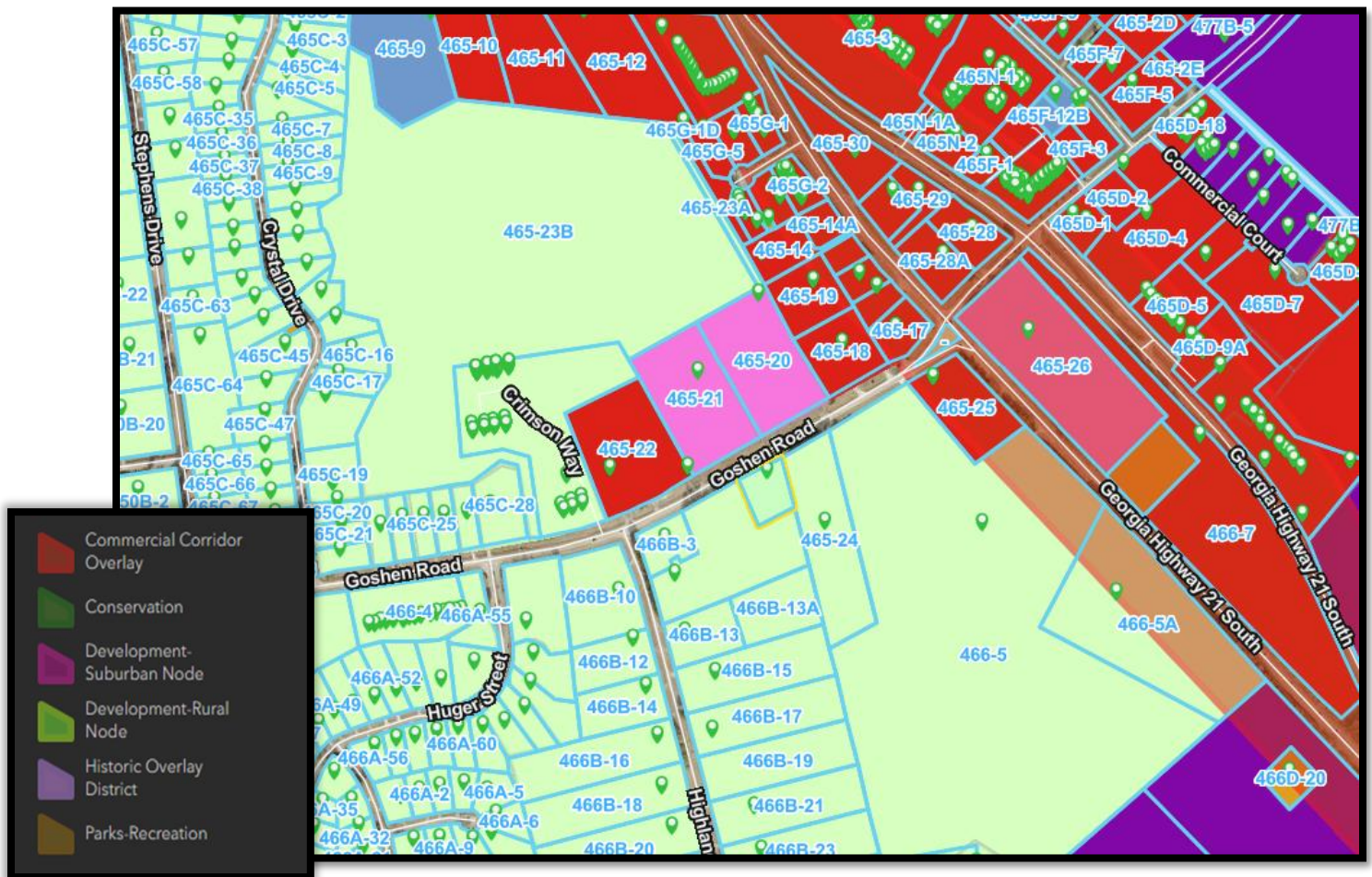
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Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

The subject property is designated **Agricultural Residential** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**, which generally supports agricultural activities and low-density residential development. Therefore, the requested **B-1 (Neighborhood Commercial)** zoning is **not consistent** with the Agricultural Residential land use designation.

*The subject parcel is designated **Agricultural-Residential** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**. This category supports single-family and multifamily residential uses arranged within general net-density ranges. The intent is to ensure residential development patterns that are compatible with surrounding densities, building types, and established neighborhood character (Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, p. 37).*



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Staff Summary

Staff finds that the requested rezoning is generally compatible with the surrounding development pattern and the intent of the **B-1 (Neighborhood Commercial)** zoning district. The request is not consistent with the Agricultural Residential designation on the Future Land Use Map.

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