



Staff Report

Subject: Rezoning
Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Application: RZN-26-37
Meeting Date: August 11, 2026

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

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

Map & Parcel: 451-55
Parcel Size: +/- 45.5 acres
Location: 557 Goshen Road
Commissioner District: Second District

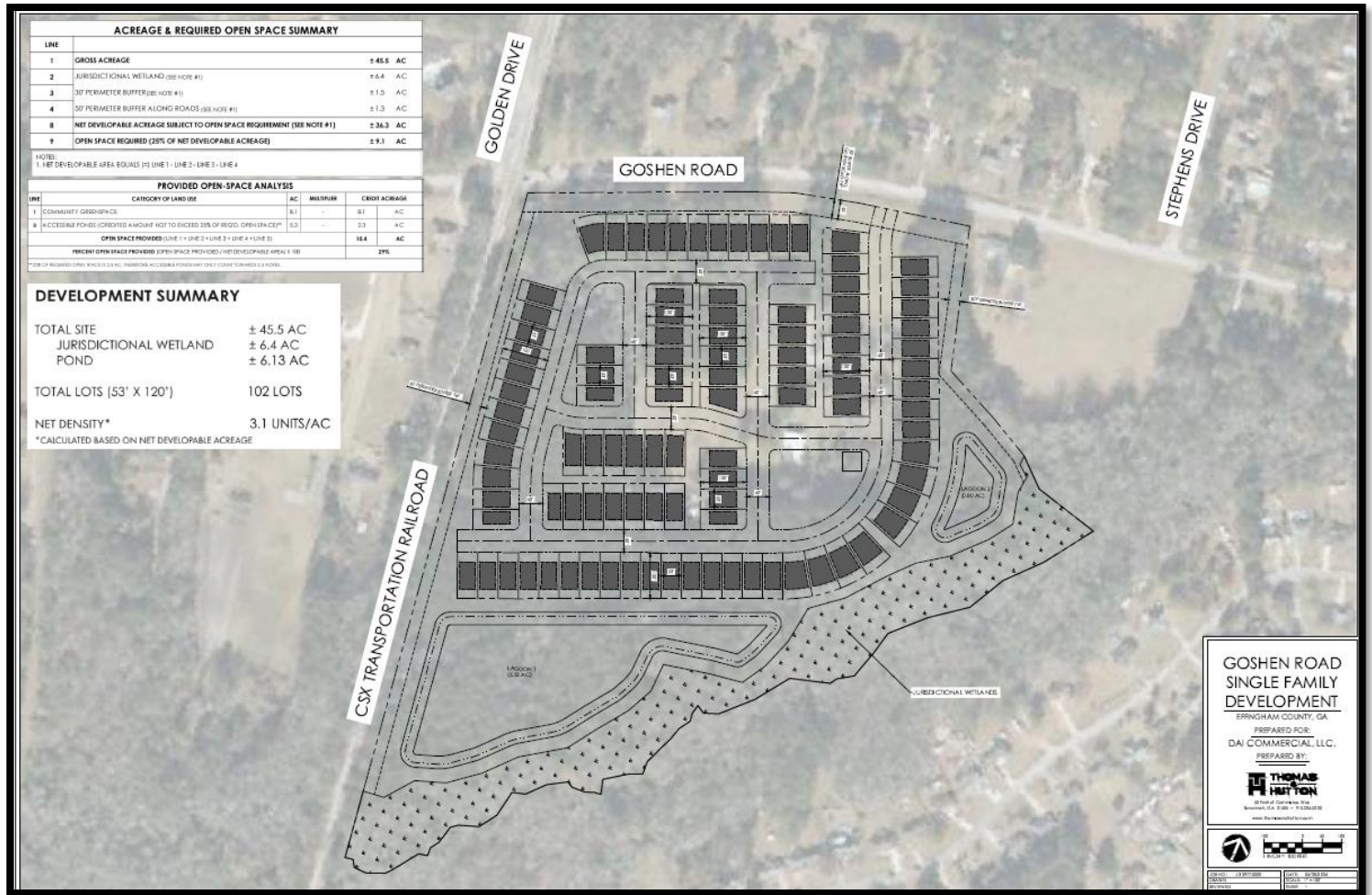
Proposed Use: Residential Development

Agent: Guy Davidson
110 Park of Commerce Drive
Savannah, GA 31405

Owner: Joan Helen Akins
557 Goshen Road
Rincon, GA 31326

Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Project Name	Goshen Road Single Family Development
Applicant Request	Rezone approximately 45.5 acres from AR-1 to R-5
Current Use	Two homesites
Proposed Development	Single- Family Detached lots
Proposed Density	Approximately 102 Residential Units
Housing Types	Single-Family Homes
Utilities	Effingham County Public Water & Sewer
Future Land Use Map	Agricultural-Residential
Access	Goshen Road



Project Summary:

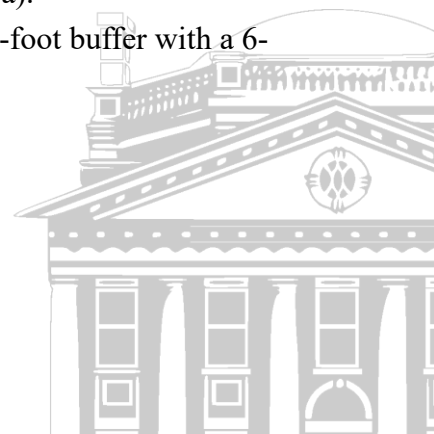
The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately +/-45.5 acres from **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)** to **R-5 (Single-family traditional neighborhood)** to develop a single-family detached-lot subdivision.

According to the concept plan, the development includes:

- 102 single-family lots (53' X 120') 6,360 square feet
- Pond area (+/- 6.13 acres)
- Community open space: approximately 8.1 acres (29% of the gross site area).
- 30-foot perimeter vegetated buffer around the development, including a 50-foot buffer with a 6-foot berm along Goshen Road where rear-facing lots are proposed.

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Zoning History

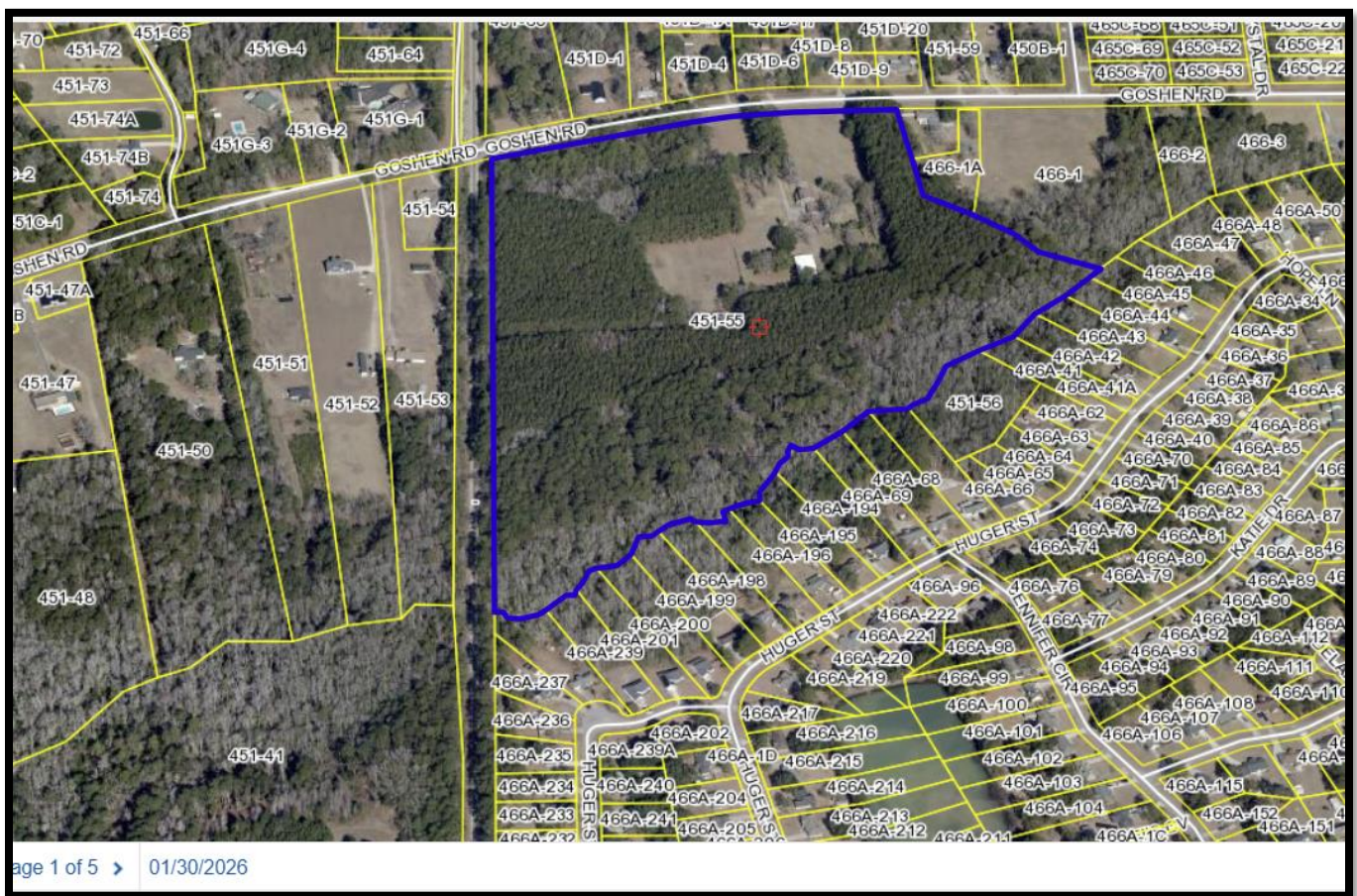
The subject property is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**. There are a few prior zoning cases on record for this parcel.

March 2, 2010- A conditional use was granted to operate a retail nursery.

March 2, 2010- Rezoning from AR-1 to B-1 .50 acres

December 11, 2012- Rezoning B-1 to AR-1 .50 ac res

April 18, 2026- The conditional use was removed from the property for inactivity.



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Existing Site Condition

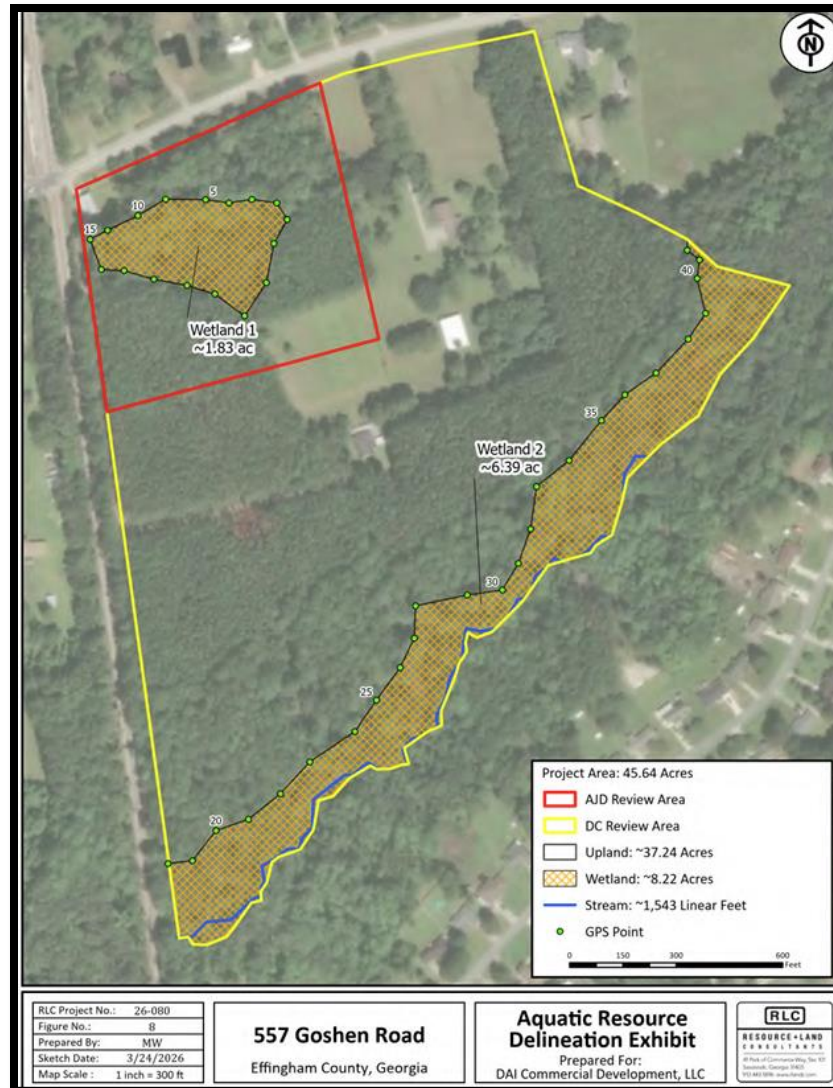
The subject property is located along Goshen Road. There are currently two stick-built homes and accessory structures on the property. The remainder of the property is currently undeveloped and wooded, with no existing structures or site improvements.

County GIS mapping indicates the property contains **freshwater wetlands but no identified FEMA flood hazard areas. A wetlands delineation has been submitted for review.**

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Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern

Surrounding Neighborhood
North: R-1 (Single-Family Residential) & AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential, 5 acres or more)
South: R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
East: AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential, 5 acres or more) & R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
West: AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential, 5 acres or more) & AR-2 (Agricultural-Residential, 1 acre or more)

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North/ Northwest

- ✚ Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1 & R-1& AR-2)
- ✚ Clary Acres subdivision (R-1)
- ✚ Pine Point Estates Subdivision (AR-1)
- ✚ Waterford Subdivision (R-1)
- ✚ Waterford Apartments (R-3)
- ✚ The Learning Treehouse Day Care (B-1)

East

- ✚ Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1 & R-1)

South

- ✚ Goshen Villa Subdivision (R-1)

West

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



Buffers:

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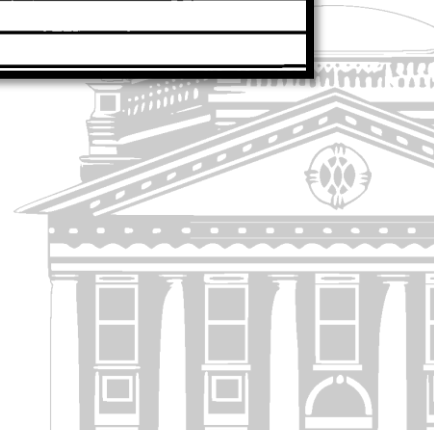
R-5 Development Standards

Development Standard	Ordinance Requirement	Proposed Development
Perimeter Buffers	Based on adjacent zoning	30-foot vegetated buffer
Goshen 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	29% open space provided
Minimum Lot Area	6,000 square feet	6,360 square feet
On-Street Parking (1 space per every five units) w/ street trees	21 spaces required	To be provided in accordance with the approved preliminary plat.
Sidewalks	Shall be ADA compliant	To be provided in accordance with the approved preliminary plat.
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

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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 102-lot single-family subdivision represents an increase in density relative to surrounding homesteads.

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 29% open space, perimeter buffering, 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.

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Although the proposal represents a substantial increase in residential density, the property is located within an area that has experienced continued residential growth and is served by public water and sewer. The surrounding area already contains multiple residential subdivisions, multifamily development, public road infrastructure, and community services, making the site suitable for a traditional neighborhood development at the proposed density.

Infrastructure

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

Road Routes: The development will access Goshen Road, a County Major Collector roadway designed to accommodate higher traffic volumes than local residential streets.

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. Any future subdivision will remain subject to County engineering review, stormwater review, utility approval, traffic review, and preliminary and final plat approval prior to development.

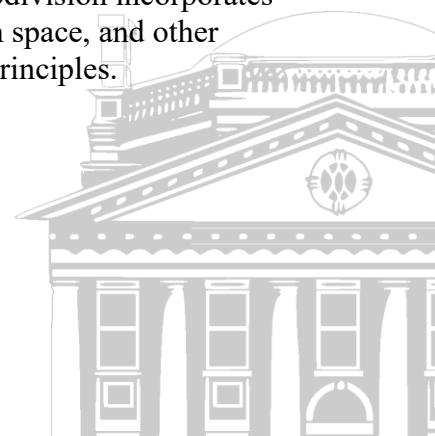
Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

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 types, including single-family homes, townhouses, multifamily dwellings, and mixed-use developments. The Plan further states that higher residential densities may be appropriate where adequate infrastructure is available to support the development.

The proposed **R-5 (Single-Family Traditional Neighborhood)** zoning is **consistent** with the residential component as it provides single-family residential development. The proposed subdivision incorporates public infrastructure, an interconnected street network, sidewalks, significant open space, and other neighborhood amenities that are consistent with traditional neighborhood design principles.

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*The 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).*

