



**Staff Report**

Subject: 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Zoning Map Amendment  
 Author: Jennifer Rose, Planner I  
 Department: Development Services  
 Application: RZN-26-14  
 Meeting Date: June 2, 2026

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

Proposed Zoning: B-2 (General Commercial)

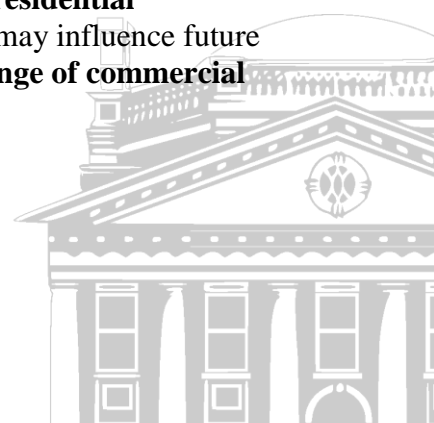
Map & Parcel(s): 415-34 & 415-15  
 Total Acreage Affected ± 34.85 acres  
 Location: Bluejay Road & Hodgeville Road  
 Commissioner District: 2<sup>nd</sup> District

Proposed Use: Commercial Development

Applicant: Doug Morgan – EMC Engineering Services, Inc.  
 Savannah, GA agent for Childrens LEZ/LBZ LLC

**Rezoning Summary:**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
<b>Request</b>	Rezone ±34.85 acres from <b>AR-1 to B-2</b>
<b>Proposed Use</b>	<b>Commercial</b>
<b>Future Land Use</b>	Agricultural-Residential
<b>Character Area</b>	Development-Suburban Node
<b>Access</b>	Bluejay Rd & Hodgeville Rd
<b>Key Considerations</b>	<b>Request establishes full B-2 commercial entitlements without a specific site plan.</b> Traffic and turning movement concerns along Bluejay Road. <b>Potential compatibility impacts to nearby residential development.</b> Wetlands and floodplain constraints may influence future development layout. <b>B-2 zoning allows a broad range of commercial uses with varying operation intensities</b>
<b>Planning Board Recommendation</b>	Approval (4-1)



## Rezoning Request Overview:

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately 34.85 acres from **AR-1** (Agricultural Residential) to **B-2** (General Commercial) for property located at the intersection of Bluejay Road and Hodgeville Road.

The subject property is currently undeveloped and primarily wooded. According to the applicant, **the request is intended to establish commercial zoning entitlements for future development opportunities within the corridor.** No specific site development plan or end user has been submitted as part of the rezoning application at this time.

If approved, the request would allow development in accordance with the uses permitted within the B-2 zoning district, subject to applicable development standards, access management requirements, environmental review, and future permitting processes.

The property is located within an area experiencing continued growth and transition associated with nearby residential, commercial, and industrial development patterns. The site is also located within the Development–Suburban Node Character Area identified in the Effingham County Comprehensive Plan, which anticipates increased development intensity at key intersections and along developing transportation corridors.

Because no specific development plan has been submitted, **the full scope of future development intensity, traffic generation, operational characteristics, and infrastructure demands associated with potential B-2 uses cannot be fully evaluated at this time.**

During the Planning Board public hearing held on May 12, 2026, discussion included concerns related to:

- Traffic and turning movements along Bluejay Road
- Wetlands and floodplain areas within the site vicinity
- Compatibility with nearby residential properties
- **The range and intensity of uses permitted within the B-2 zoning district**

Following discussion, the Planning Board voted 4–1 to recommend approval of the rezoning request.

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## Property & Site Conditions:

The subject properties are:

- Undeveloped and wooded
- Free of existing structures or site improvements
- Located at the intersection of Bluejay Road and Hodgeville Road
- A large, contiguous tract with frontage on both Bluejay Road and Hodgeville Road.

The site's location at an intersection provides **increased visibility and access potential**, which are characteristics supportive of future non-residential development.

## Surrounding Zoning Pattern:

Based on the zoning map provided, the surrounding area reflects a mixed but transitioning zoning pattern, described as follows:

### North (Along Bluejay Road)

- Predominantly R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
- Established residential subdivision pattern
- Smaller lot configuration compared to AR-1

### West

- Large tracts zoned AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)
- Undeveloped or low-intensity rural land uses
- Represents the remaining rural character of the area

### South

- Primarily AR-1 zoning with large undeveloped parcels
- Limited residential development
- Continuation of rural/agricultural land pattern

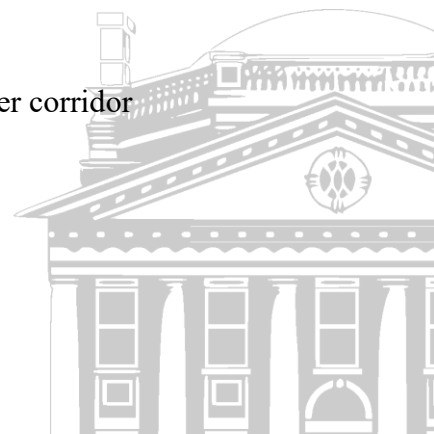
### East / Southeast

- Mix of:
  - AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)
  - R-1-A (Residential Transitional / larger lot residential)
  - B-2 (General Commercial) and B-3 / Industrial zoning in the broader corridor

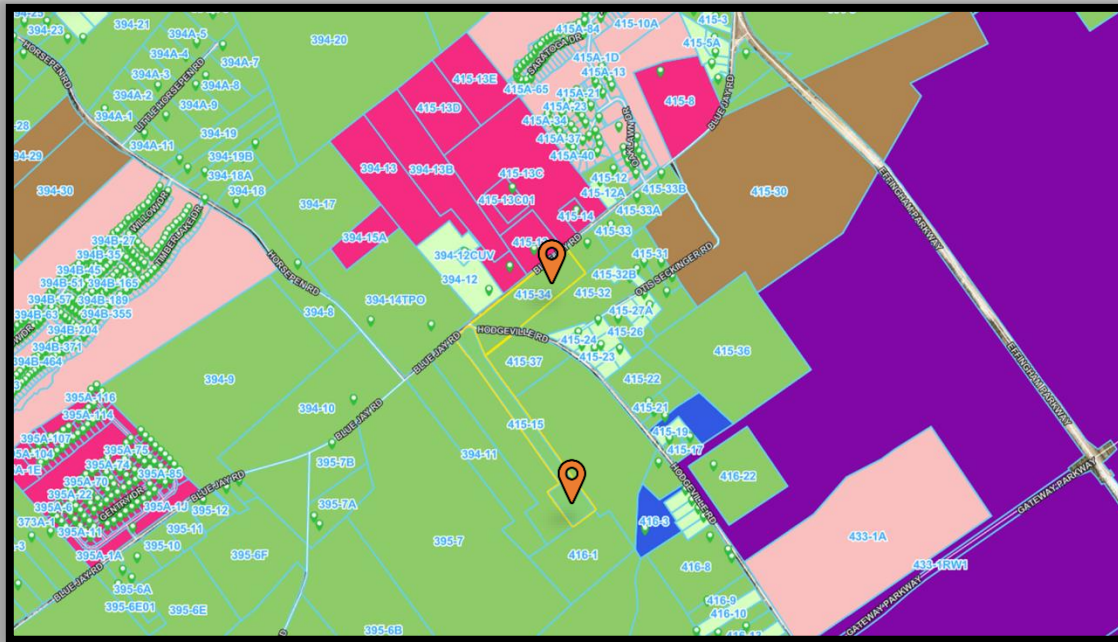
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- Notably, there is existing commercial and industrial zoning in proximity, particularly along the corridor extending southeast, indicating:
  - Emerging non-residential activity
  - Corridor-based development pressure



(Zoning Map)



(Zoning Legend)

## DEVELOPMENT PATTERN & TRANSITION CONTEXT

The surrounding zoning pattern reflects a transition between established residential development to the north, rural agricultural land to the west and south, and increasing commercial and industrial activity to the east and southeast.

## PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- The intersection of **Bluejay Road and Hodgeville Road** functions as a:
  - Logical **activity node**
  - Potential **future transition area for more intense uses**
- The presence of **existing B-3 and industrial zoning nearby** indicates:
  - Market pressure for non-residential uses

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- Gradual corridor evolution
- However, the immediate adjacency to **R-1 residential zoning to the north** introduces:
  - Compatibility considerations
  - Need for buffering and transition at time of development
- Protection of nearby residential character
- Access management at a developing intersection

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY

The Future Land Use Map designates the property as Agricultural–Residential, which supports low-density uses.

However, the property is also located within the Development – Suburban Node Character Area, which anticipates increased intensity at key intersections and allows for transitional growth.

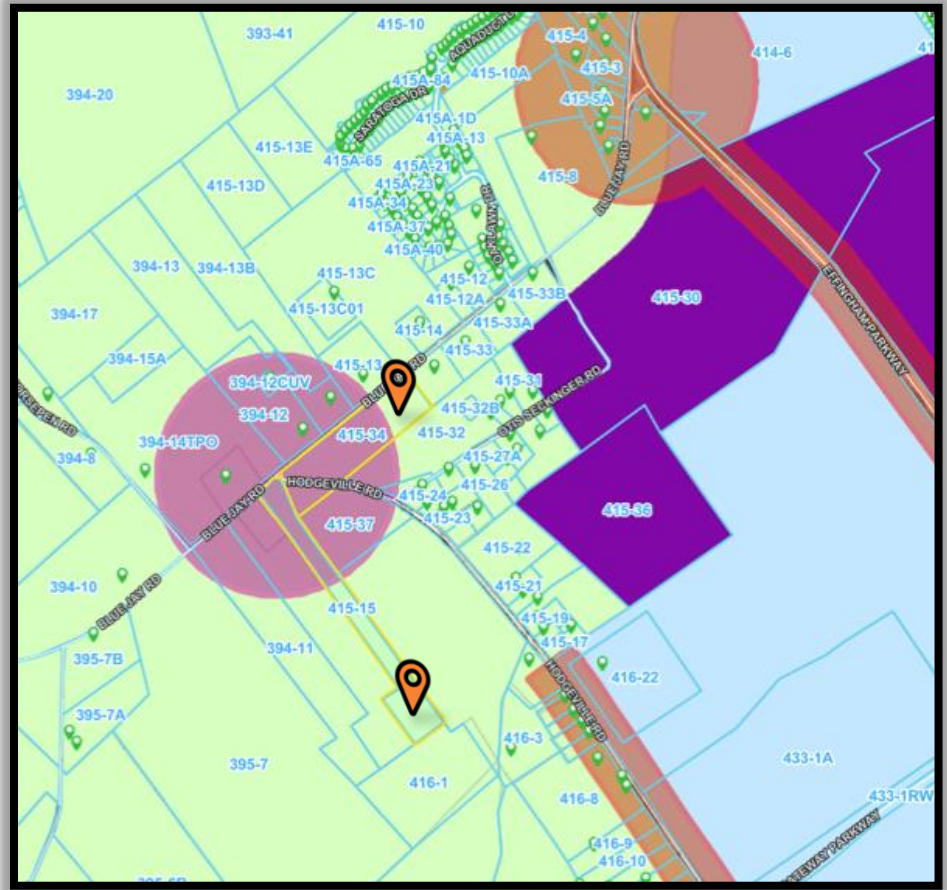
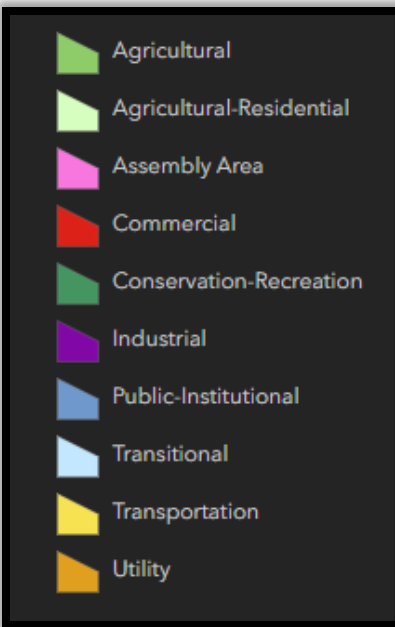
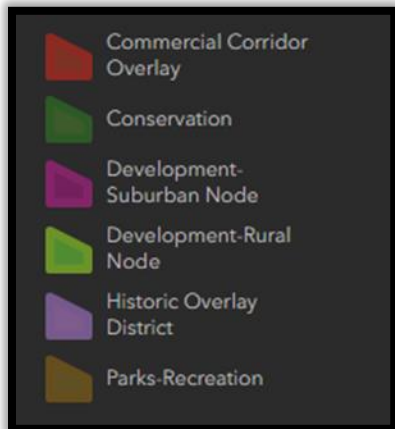
While the requested B-2 zoning exceeds the base FLUM designation, its location within the Suburban Node supports consideration of future commercial development.

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*(FLUM Legend)*

*Future Land Use Map (FLUM)*

As such, the request may be viewed as:

- **Inconsistent with the base FLUM designation,** but
- Generally aligned with the intent of the Suburban Node Character Area, which allows for transitional growth at appropriate locations.

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## INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICE CONTEXT

- The property has frontage on two roadways, supporting access flexibility
- The intersection of Bluejay Road and Hodgeville Road is identified for **future improvement (roundabout)**
- Public water service is available; sewer service has not been identified

In the absence of a specific development plan:

- Traffic impacts cannot be fully evaluated
- Utility demand is unknown
- Required infrastructure improvements will be determined at the time of development

Future development will be subject to:

- Access management standards
- Traffic Impact Study (if required)
- Coordination with County and GDOT (as applicable)

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Available mapping indicates the presence of wetlands and floodplain areas in the vicinity. In the absence of a site plan, the extent of impacts cannot be determined. Future development will require delineation, permitting, and compliance with all applicable regulations.



*(Wetlands)*

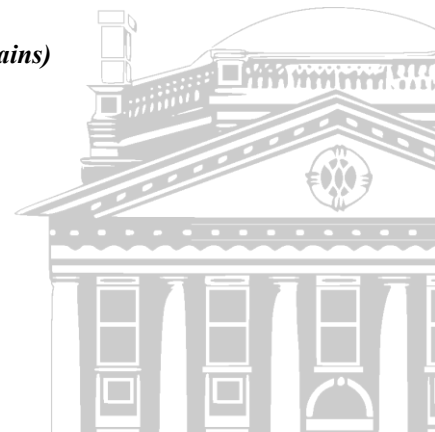


*(Floodplains)*

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## **PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE**

Rezoning to B-2 allows a range of commercial uses, which would allow:

- Increased traffic volumes
- Additional turning movements at the intersection
- Moderate noise and activity typical of commercial uses

The most significant compatibility consideration is the **proximity of residential development to the north.**

These impacts would be addressed during site plan review through buffering, access design, and operational controls.

## **PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

### **Planning Board Public Hearing – May 12, 2026**

The Effingham County Planning Board conducted a public hearing regarding the proposed rezoning request on May 12, 2026.

During the public hearing, the Board discussed several aspects of the proposed request, including:

- **Traffic concerns** associated with vehicles turning onto and off of Bluejay Road
- **Wetlands and floodplain** areas located within the site vicinity
- **The range and intensity of uses permitted within the B-2 zoning district**
- Compatibility with nearby residential development
- Long-term growth and corridor transition patterns within the area

Board discussion also included concerns regarding the fact that approval of the request would establish full B-2 commercial zoning entitlements without a specific site development plan being submitted at this time.

The Board discussed how future commercial uses permitted within the B-2 district could vary in intensity and operational characteristics depending on future development proposals.

### **Planning Board Action**

<b>Motion</b>	<b>Approval</b>
Vote	4–1

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## STAFF ANALYSIS / KEY CONSIDERATIONS

This request represents a policy-level rezoning of a large vacant tract and should be evaluated based on long-range land use considerations, future corridor development patterns, infrastructure capacity, and compatibility with surrounding uses.

The property is located at the intersection of Bluejay Road and Hodgeville Road within an area characterized by a transition between established residential development, rural agricultural land, and emerging commercial and industrial activity.

The subject property is also located within the Development–Suburban Node Character Area identified within the Effingham County Comprehensive Plan. This character area anticipates increased intensity and transitional growth at key intersections and developing corridors.

While the requested B-2 zoning **exceeds** the underlying Agricultural-Residential Future Land Use designation, the location of the property within the Suburban Node supports consideration of future commercial development at this intersection.

However, the request would establish **full B-2 commercial entitlements without a specific development plan**. As such, the full extent, operational intensity, traffic generation, infrastructure demands, and compatibility impacts associated with future development cannot be fully evaluated at this time.

### **Primary planning considerations associated with the request include:**

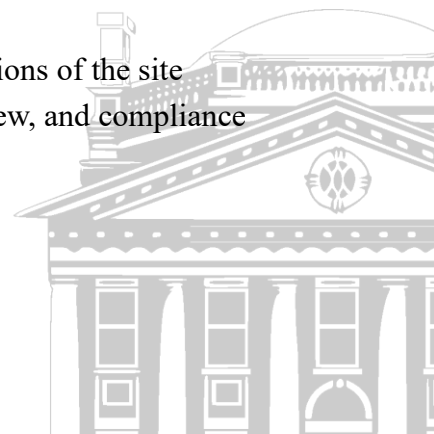
- **Compatibility with adjacent residential development located north of the property**
- **Traffic impacts and turning movement concerns along Bluejay Road**
- **Wetlands and floodplain constraints that may influence future development potential**
- **Access management and future roadway improvements at the intersection of Bluejay Road and Hodgeville Road**
- **The range and intensity of uses permitted within the B-2 zoning district**
- **Long-term corridor transition and future land use expectations within the Suburban Node area**

Available mapping indicates wetlands and floodplain areas are present within portions of the site vicinity. Future development may require delineation, permitting, stormwater review, and compliance

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with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Future development of the property will also be subject to access management standards, potential Traffic Impact Study requirements, and coordination with Effingham County and GDOT as applicable.

Ultimately, the request presents a policy decision regarding whether this intersection is appropriate for long-term commercial zoning given the surrounding development pattern, environmental constraints, transportation considerations, and future growth expectations.

The Board of Commissioners 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, the following conditions are recommended:

**1. Access Management**

All access points shall require County and GDOT approval. Shared access and internal circulation shall be required where feasible.

**2. Traffic Improvements**

The developer shall be responsible for any roadway and intersection improvements identified through a Traffic Impact Study.

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