



Staff Report

Subject: Rezoning
Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Application: RZN-26-33
Meeting Date: September 1, 2026

Existing Zoning: **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres or more)**
Proposed Zoning: **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential; 1 acre or more)**

Map & Parcel(s): 397-4 & 5
Total Acreage Affected: ± 8.29 acres
Location: 4372 & 4386 Midland Road
Commissioner District: Second District

Proposed Use: Residential Subdivision

Applicant/Owner: Scott Kessler
4386 Midland Road
Guyton, GA 31312

Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Request	Rezone ± 8.29 acres from AR-1 to AR-2
Proposed Use	Residential subdivision
Existing Use	Undeveloped Woodlands & Residential homesteads
Future Land Use	Agricultural Residential
Utilities	Private well & septic
Access	Midland Road
Planning Board Recommendation	(August 11, 2026) Approved – unanimously



Project Summary:

The applicant is requesting to rezone approximately **±8.29 acres** from **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)** to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)**. The purpose of the request is to allow the applicant to convey approximately **two acres** to each of his children while preserving the ability to divide the property further for future family needs.

The applicant also owns the surrounding parcels and is seeking flexibility to reconfigure existing property lines to better accommodate future family ownership and development.

Zoning History

The subject properties are currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**. No prior zoning cases are on record for either subject parcel.

Existing Site Condition

The subject properties consist of **Parcel 397-4**, containing approximately **6.29 acres**, and **Parcel 397-5**, containing approximately **2.00 acres**. Parcel 397-4 contains an existing accessory structure but no principal residence. As part of the proposed reconfiguration, the accessory structure currently located on Parcel 397-4 will be recombined with Parcel 397-5 so that it remains on the same parcel as the existing residence.

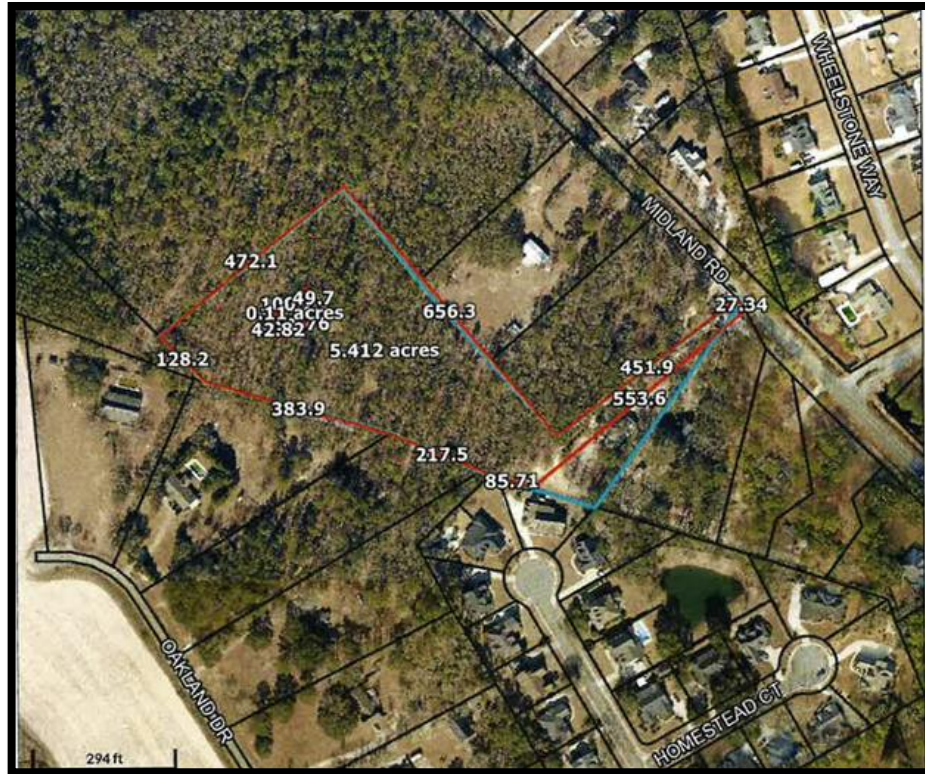
Additionally, the applicant owns the adjoining properties identified as Parcels 397-6A and 397-6. Although these parcels are not included in the rezoning request, they are proposed to be recombined and reconfigured through associated property-line adjustments.

County GIS mapping indicates the subject properties contain no identified **wetlands, FEMA flood hazard areas, or other known environmental constraints**.

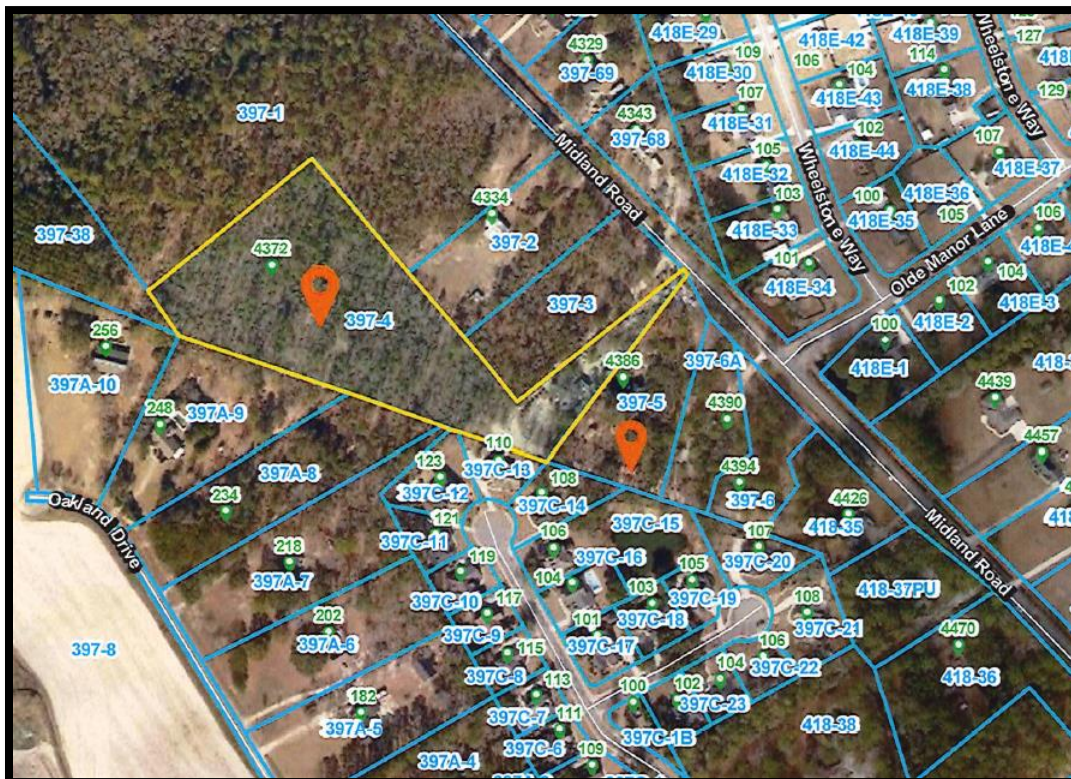
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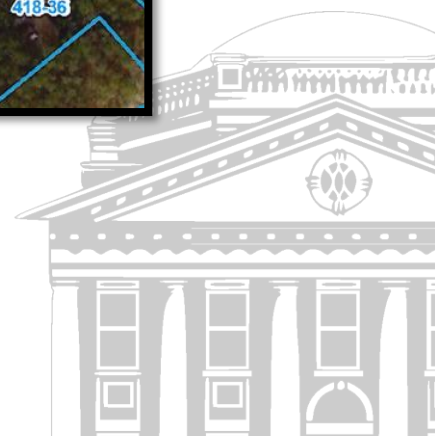


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Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern

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

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character and consists of a mix of established single-family dwellings and rural residential homesteads. The area has experienced continued residential growth, resulting in a broader range of lot sizes and increased residential density. Surrounding properties generally range from approximately one-quarter-acre parcels to larger rural tracts, reflecting an ongoing transition toward higher-density residential development patterns.

North

- ✚ Hunters Mill Subdivision (R-1)
- ✚ Sands at Midland Subdivision (PD-R)

East

- ✚ Agricultural -residential homesteads (AR-1)
- ✚ Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

South

- ✚ Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1)
- ✚ Settlers Point Subdivision (R-1)
- ✚ The Oaks Subdivision (AR-1)

West/ Southwest

- ✚ Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1 & AR-2)
- ✚ Coventry Plantation (R-1)
- ✚ Brunson Station (PD)

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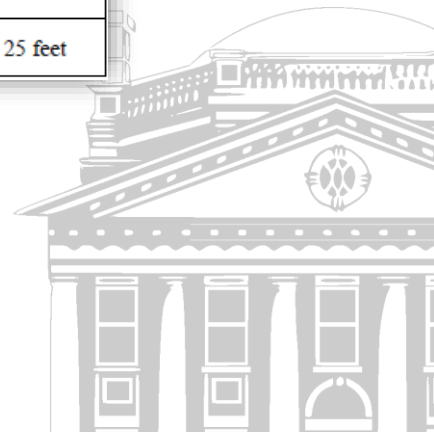


Zoning Development Standards for AR-2

Minimum lot area	1 acre
Maximum number of principal residences – one	1 unit
Maximum number of accessory dwelling units – one	1 unit
Minimum lot road frontage	100 feet
Minimum lot width at building line	100 feet
Minimum front yard setback	50 feet
Minimum rear yard setback	25 feet
Minimum side yard (interior) setback	15 feet
Minimum side yard (street/road easement) setback	50 feet
Minimum side yard (secondary street) setback	25 feet

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Zoning Classification

Agricultural Residential 2 is established to foster rural residential living while integrating open space and natural resource conservation. This district supports moderately sized lots (minimum 1 acre), encouraging low-density development that blends residential uses with the rural landscape. AR-2 provides a transitional zone between more intense development and larger-lot rural areas, maintaining moderate spacing between homes and limited pedestrian activity to preserve the rural atmosphere. This district is designated exclusively for family or estate subdivisions, ensuring development remains consistent with the rural character.

Intensity of Use

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential)** represents a minimal increase in land-use intensity. The purpose of the request is to subdivide the property into family lots, not to facilitate large-scale residential development. The proposed rezoning will allow the property to be divided into smaller parcels while maintaining a low-density residential character that is consistent with the surrounding area.

Although the requested zoning would permit additional residential development compared with the existing AR-1 classification, the anticipated intensity of use remains relatively low and compatible with the agricultural and rural residential character of the surrounding area. The proposed lots will remain consistent with the surrounding development pattern and are intended to accommodate family members rather than create a conventional residential subdivision.

Infrastructure

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

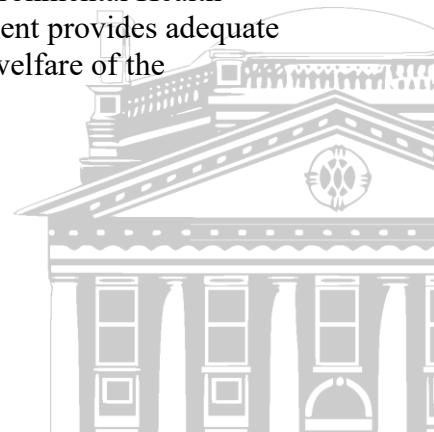
Road Routes: Midland Road is classified as a Minor Collector Road within Effingham County.

Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential)** is not anticipated to adversely affect public health, safety, or welfare. The request is intended to facilitate subdividing the property into family lots for residential use rather than a high-density residential development. The proposed increase in residential density remains consistent with the surrounding area's rural residential character. Any future subdivision and residential construction will be required to comply with the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Environmental Health requirements. Compliance with these standards will help ensure that the development provides adequate access, infrastructure, and public services while protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the surrounding community.

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The subject property is designated **Agricultural Residential** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**. This designation supports agricultural activities, rural residential development, and low-density housing while preserving the County's rural character. The requested rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) to AR-2 (Agricultural Residential) is generally consistent with the Agricultural Residential land use designation, as both zoning districts accommodate low-density residential development. Although AR-2 permits smaller minimum lot sizes than AR-1, the proposed rezoning remains compatible with the Comprehensive Plan's intent by supporting rural residential growth while maintaining the area's agricultural-residential character.



PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

At the **August 11, 2026**, Planning Board meeting, the Planning Board conducted a public hearing regarding the requested rezoning application to rezone approximately $\pm$ 8.29 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to allow for permitted uses in AR-2.

During its discussion, the Planning Board considered the proposed zoning classification, the possibility of AR-3 zoning, lot frontage requirements, the proposed family subdivision, easements, and access.

Public Comment: No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Planning Board Action

Following the discussion, the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the request.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff finds that the requested rezoning is compatible with the surrounding land use pattern and consistent with the intent of the AR-2 (Agricultural Residential) zoning district. The request is consistent with the Agricultural Residential designation of the Future Land Use Map. It supports the Comprehensive Plan's goal of accommodating low-density rural residential development while preserving the character of the surrounding area. The proposed rezoning will allow the property to be subdivided for family residential use, representing only a minimal increase in development intensity. The request is not anticipated to adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare of the surrounding community.

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