



Staff Report

Subject: Variance: US Highway 80

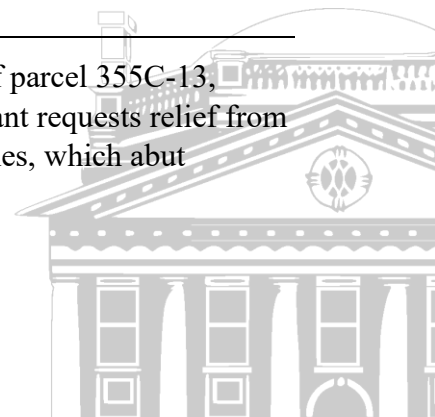
Author: Akela Wright, MPA, Planning Manager
Department: Development Services
Meeting Date: September 1, 2026

PROJECT INFORMATION

Parcel ID:	355C-13
Site Address:	US Highway 80
Commission District:	First District
Applicant:	Jeremy Hill
Lot Size:	1.02 acres
Current Zoning:	B-3 (Highway Business District)
Future Land Use Map (FLUM):	Commercial; located within the Commercial Corridor Overlay District
Wetlands:	None present on the subject parcel
Adjacent Zoning:	North: Commercial South: AR-1 East: AR-1 West: AR-1

REQUEST

The applicant, Jeremy Hill, requests approval of a site plan for the development of parcel 355C-13, located on US Highway 80 in the First District. As part of the site plan, the applicant requests relief from the required perimeter buffer standards along the south, east, and west property lines, which abut property zoned AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential).



Per the Effingham County ordinance, the standard buffer adjacent to residential zoning is thirty (30) feet. The ordinance permits an automatic ten-foot (10') reduction — from 30 feet to 20 feet — where an approved privacy fence is installed, subject to Development Services approval of the fence material and a maximum fence height of seven (7) feet. This reduction applies to residential-adjacent required buffers only.

The applicant proposes to utilize the fence-based reduction (30 ft → 20 ft) and is additionally requesting a further ten-foot (10') reduction beyond what the ordinance allows administratively, resulting in a proposed 10-foot buffer (rather than 20 feet) along the south, east, and west property lines, in conjunction with the required 7-foot privacy fence.

SITE PLAN

The submitted site plan is provided below for reference.

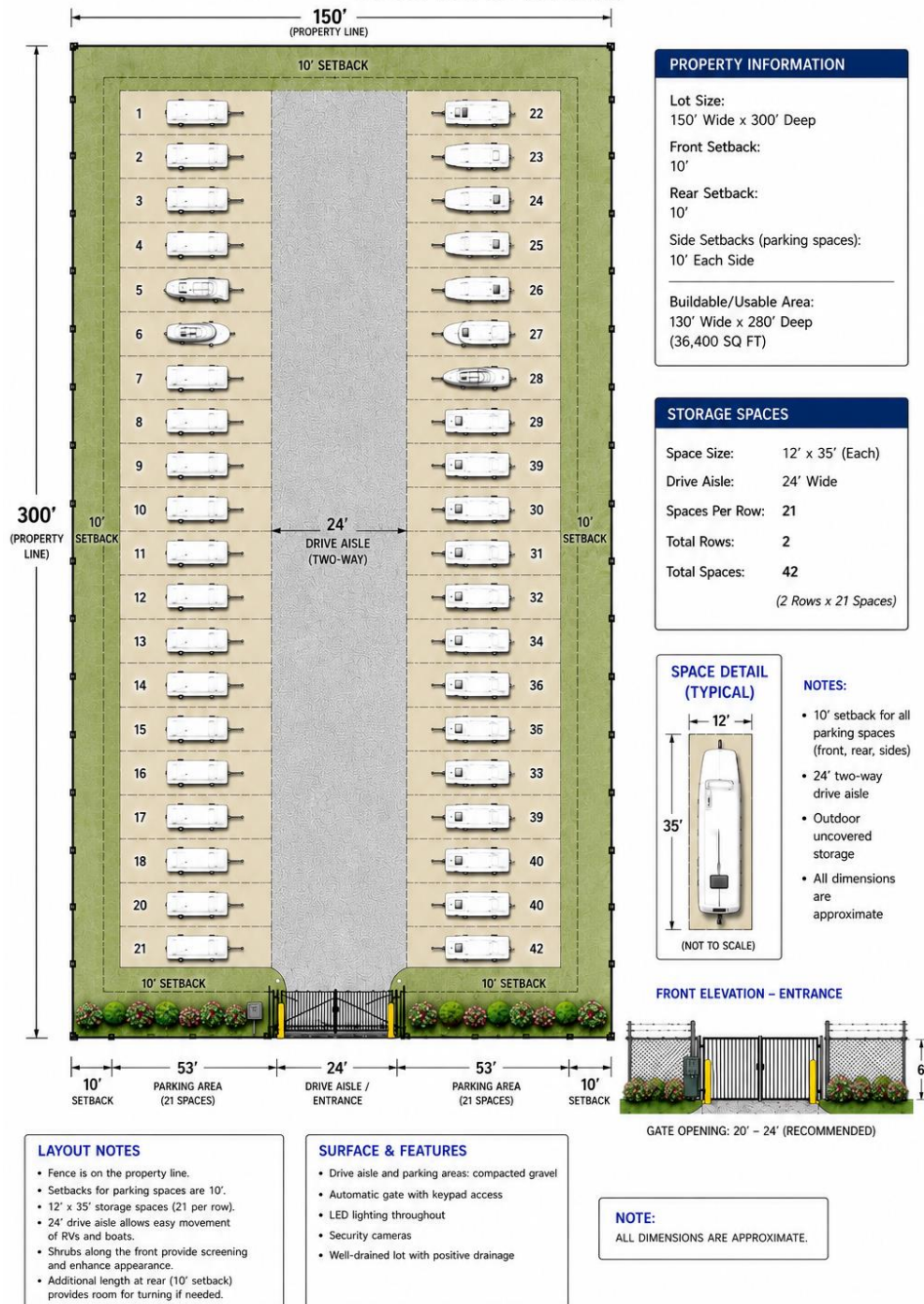
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RV / BOAT STORAGE PLAN – 10' SETBACK FOR PARKING SPACES

BLOOMINGDALE, GA
LOT SIZE: 150' x 300' (1.03 ACRES)



BACKGROUND

The subject property is a 1.02-acre parcel located on US Highway 80, identified as parcel 355C-13, and is currently zoned B-3 (Highway Business). No wetlands are present on the site. The Future Land Use

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Map (FLUM) designates the property as Commercial, and the parcel is further located within the County's Commercial Corridor Overlay District. Property to the north is zoned and used for commercial purposes, consistent with the subject parcel. Property to the south, east, and west is zoned AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential).

ZONING & LAND USE ANALYSIS

Zoning: B-3 (Highway Business District)

FLUM Designation: Commercial — Commercial Corridor Overlay

Adjacent Zoning: North – Commercial; South, East, West – AR-1

Wetlands: None identified on the subject parcel

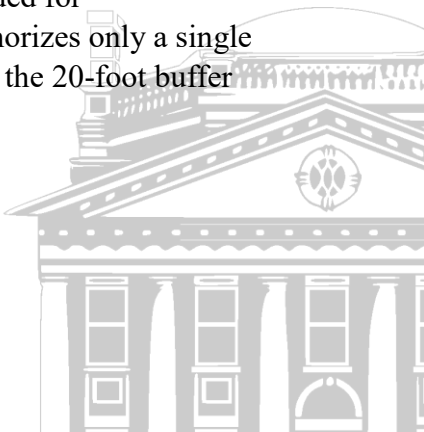
The proposed commercial use is consistent with both the underlying B-3 zoning and the Commercial FLUM designation. Because the property directly abuts AR-1-zoned land on three sides, the residential-adjacent buffer standards apply along the south, east, and west property lines.

BUFFER ANALYSIS

The table below summarizes the standard buffer requirement, the ordinance-permitted reduction, and the additional reduction requested by the applicant for each affected property line.

Property Line	Standard Required Buffer	Buffer as Requested
South (adj. AR-1)	30 ft (reducible to 20 ft with approved privacy fence)	10 ft, with 7-ft privacy fence
East (adj. AR-1)	30 ft (reducible to 20 ft with approved privacy fence)	10 ft, with 7-ft privacy fence
West (adj. AR-1)	30 ft (reducible to 20 ft with approved privacy fence)	10 ft, with 7-ft privacy fence

As designed, the applicant's proposal would first apply the ordinance-permitted 10-foot reduction (30 ft to 20 ft) in exchange for an approved 7-foot privacy fence, and then seeks an additional 10-foot reduction beyond that (20 ft to 10 ft). The additional 10-foot reduction is not provided for administratively under the buffer ordinance's fence-reduction provision, which authorizes only a single 10-foot reduction (30 ft to 20 ft) for residential-adjacent buffers. Any relief beyond the 20-foot buffer



therefore falls outside the administrative allowance and would require separate consideration and approval.

ADDITIONAL STAFF NOTES TO APPLICANT

Staff spoke with the applicant regarding the following outstanding site plan items, which the applicant understands must be addressed prior to final site plan approval:

- Front (ROW) Buffer – Section 3.4.2: A ten-foot (10') wide landscaped buffer is required between any parking or loading area and the adjacent, accessed public right-of-way (US Highway 80). The applicant has been advised that the site plan must be updated to show this required front buffer.
- Sidewalk – Section 5.11.3: A sidewalk is required along the property's public street frontage. If no existing sidewalk or pedestrian network is located within 500 feet of the subject property, the applicant may, in lieu of construction, provide a payment equal to the estimated cost of sidewalk installation, to be used by the County for future pedestrian infrastructure improvements in the area.

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.”

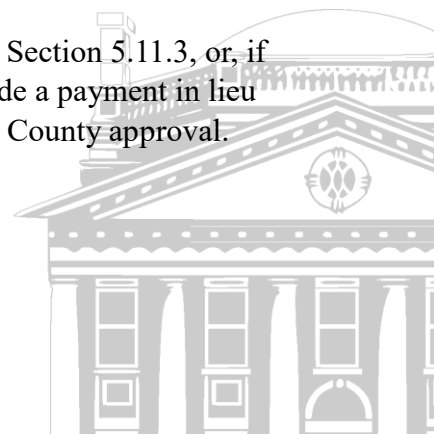
STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff supports approval of the site plan subject to the following stipulation:

- The applicant shall install a sidewalk along the US Highway 80 frontage per Section 5.11.3, or, if no sidewalk or pedestrian network exists within 500 feet of the property, provide a payment in lieu of construction in an amount equal to the estimated installation cost, subject to County approval.

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