



Staff Report

Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Subject: 2nd Reading- Zoning Map Amendment
Meeting Date: November 3, 2026
Application: VAR-26-33

Proposed Zoning: LI (Light Industrial)

Map & Parcel: 304-10

Parcel Size: ±99 acres out of ±280.50 acres

Applicant: Boltin Teeter
9040 Roswell Road Ste 420
Statesboro, GA 30458

Owner: Mark Cooper
P.O. Box 72
Furman, SC 29921

Commissioner District: First District

Location: 1180 Old River Road
Bloomingdale, GA 31302

Proposed Request:

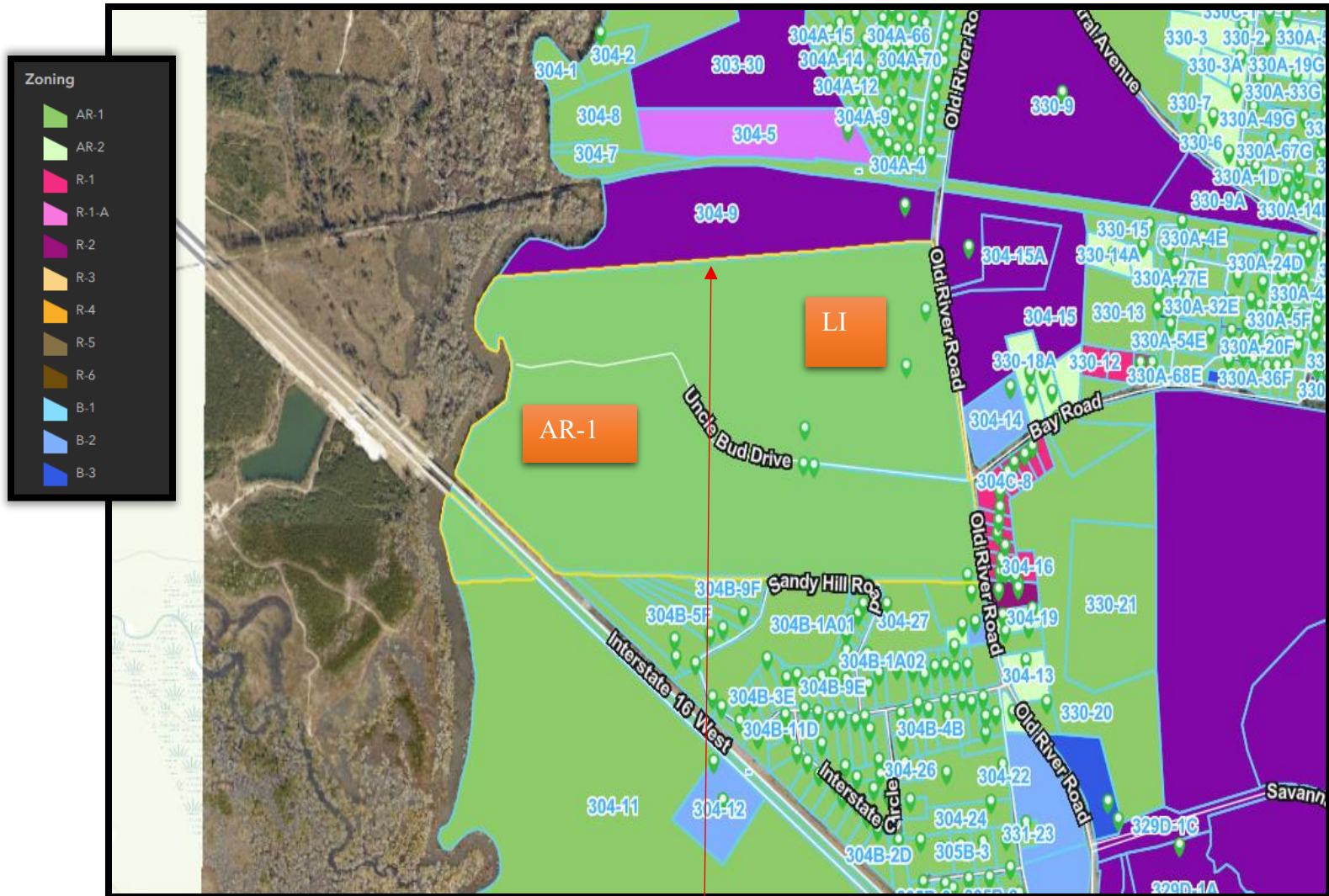
This **variance** request seeks relief from the vegetated buffer requirements applicable to the **LI (Light Industrial)** zoning district for a proposed warehouse on the subject property. Specifically, the applicant is requesting a 0-foot internal buffer between the proposed LI district and the remaining AR-1 portion of the property, which is intended to be donated. The applicant requests this to maintain access to the western wetland area on the portion proposed for donation.

Proposed Buffers:

<i>Location</i>	Zoning relationship	Current required buffer	Proposed buffer and landscaping
<i>Internal buffer from LI to AR-1</i>	LI to AR-1	150 ft	0 ft

Surrounding Neighborhood

- North: I-1 (Industrial Districts)
- South: AR-1 (Agricultural-Residential, 5 acres or more)
- East: R-1 (Single-Family Residential) & I-1 (Industrial Districts) & B-2 (General Commercial Districts) & AR-2 (Agricultural residential, 1 acre or more)
- West: Bryan County



Surrounding Development Pattern

Proposed
0ft Buffer

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Facts and Findings:

Existing Site Condition

The subject property consists of approximately **280.50 acres** with frontage along **Old River Road**. The property currently has four stick-built single-family residences, one mobile home, and several associated accessory structures.

County GIS mapping indicates identified wetlands and areas within FEMA Flood Zone AE on the subject property. A Level III soil study and wetlands delineation have been provided, and a traffic study has been completed for the site.

Zoning History

The subject property is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**. A prior zoning case is on record for the subject property. On April 9, 2024, a request to rezone approximately 280.5 acres from AR-1 to I-1 was postponed by the Planning Board and subsequently withdrawn prior to consideration by the Board of Commissioners.

Infrastructure and Services

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

Roadway Classification: Access to the proposed development is provided from Old River Road, which is classified as a Major Collector within Effingham County.

APPLICABLE ORDINANCE SECTIONS

5.14.1 Intent. The Light Industrial District (L-I) is established to promote and sustain economic growth and employment opportunities by providing dedicated areas for a broad range of industrial, manufacturing, processing, and distribution activities. This district is designed to accommodate industries that operate in a clean, efficient, and non-intrusive manner, ensuring compatibility with adjacent commercial and residential areas while supporting the needs of industrial businesses. Serving as a hub for businesses that require flexible operational space but do not generate excessive noise, pollution, vibration, or other nuisances that could negatively impact surrounding properties.

Variance Criteria- Article IX- 9.1: The board of commissioners shall not grant such variances unless it finds based on the evidence presented to it in each specific case that:

a. The granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public safety, health, or welfare or injurious to other property, and;

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b. The conditions upon which the request is based are unique to the property for which the relief is sought and are not applicable generally to other property, and;

c. Because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific property involved, a particular hardship to the owner would result, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of these regulations is carried out, and;

d. The relief sought will not in any manner vary the provisions of the zoning ordinance or comprehensive plan, except that those documents may be amended in the manner prescribed by law.

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

Staff Analysis of Variance Criteria

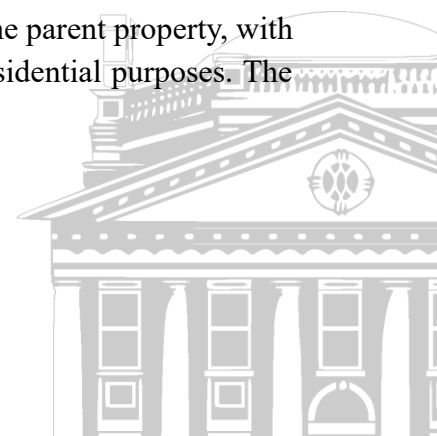
(a) Public Safety and Welfare

Staff has reviewed the requested variance to allow a zero (0) foot internal buffer between the proposed LI (Light Industrial) portion of the property and the remaining AR-1 (Agricultural Residential) portion, with consideration given to public safety and general welfare.

The buffer in this instance would occur internally between two portions of the same parent property, with the remaining AR-1 acreage intended to be donated rather than developed for residential purposes. The

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applicant has indicated that maintaining the area without the required vegetated buffer is necessary to preserve access to the western wetland area located within the portion proposed for donation.

Based on these considerations, staff finds that the requested zero-foot internal buffer is not anticipated to affect public safety or general welfare adversely, provided the remaining AR-1 property is maintained for the proposed public or conservation-related use, and all required external buffers and other applicable development standards are satisfied.

(b) Unique Conditions

The subject property contains a substantial wetland area along the western portion of the parent tract. The proposed LI zoning would apply only to a portion of the larger tract. At the same time, the remaining AR-1 acreage, including the western wetland area, is intended to be donated and maintained for public or conservation-related purposes. The wetlands' location and the proposed internal zoning boundary create conditions that differ from a typical LI-to-AR-1 adjacency involving separately owned and independently developed properties.

(c) Hardship

The required internal buffer could restrict practical access to the portion of the property intended for donation and interfere with the continued management and maintenance of the wetland area.

(d) Consistency with the Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan

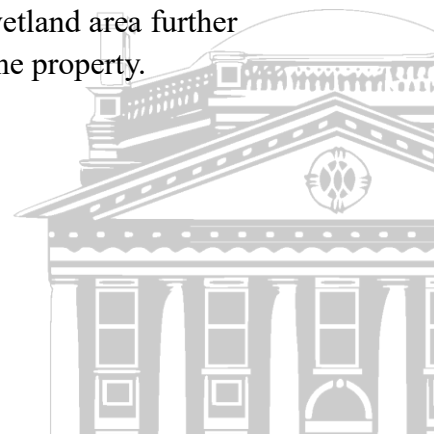
The subject property is located within areas designated **Transitional** and **Conservation** on the Future Land Use Map. The portion proposed for LI (Light Industrial) zoning is designated Transitional, while the remaining AR-1 portion of the property, which is intended to be donated, is designated Conservation.

The proposed LI development is generally consistent with the Transitional designation, which provides for an appropriate transition between differing land uses and development intensities. Retaining the remaining AR-1 acreage, including the western wetland area, also aligns with the Conservation designation by protecting environmentally sensitive land and limiting development in that portion of the property.

Although the requested zero (0) foot internal buffer does not meet the zoning ordinance's specific dimensional requirements, the circumstances differ from a typical LI-to-AR-1 adjacency. The buffer would occur along an internal zoning boundary between the proposed warehouse development and property intended for donation and conservation rather than between the industrial development and an independently developed residential property. Maintaining access to the western wetland area further supports the intended conservation and long-term management of that portion of the property.

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Comprehensive Plan:

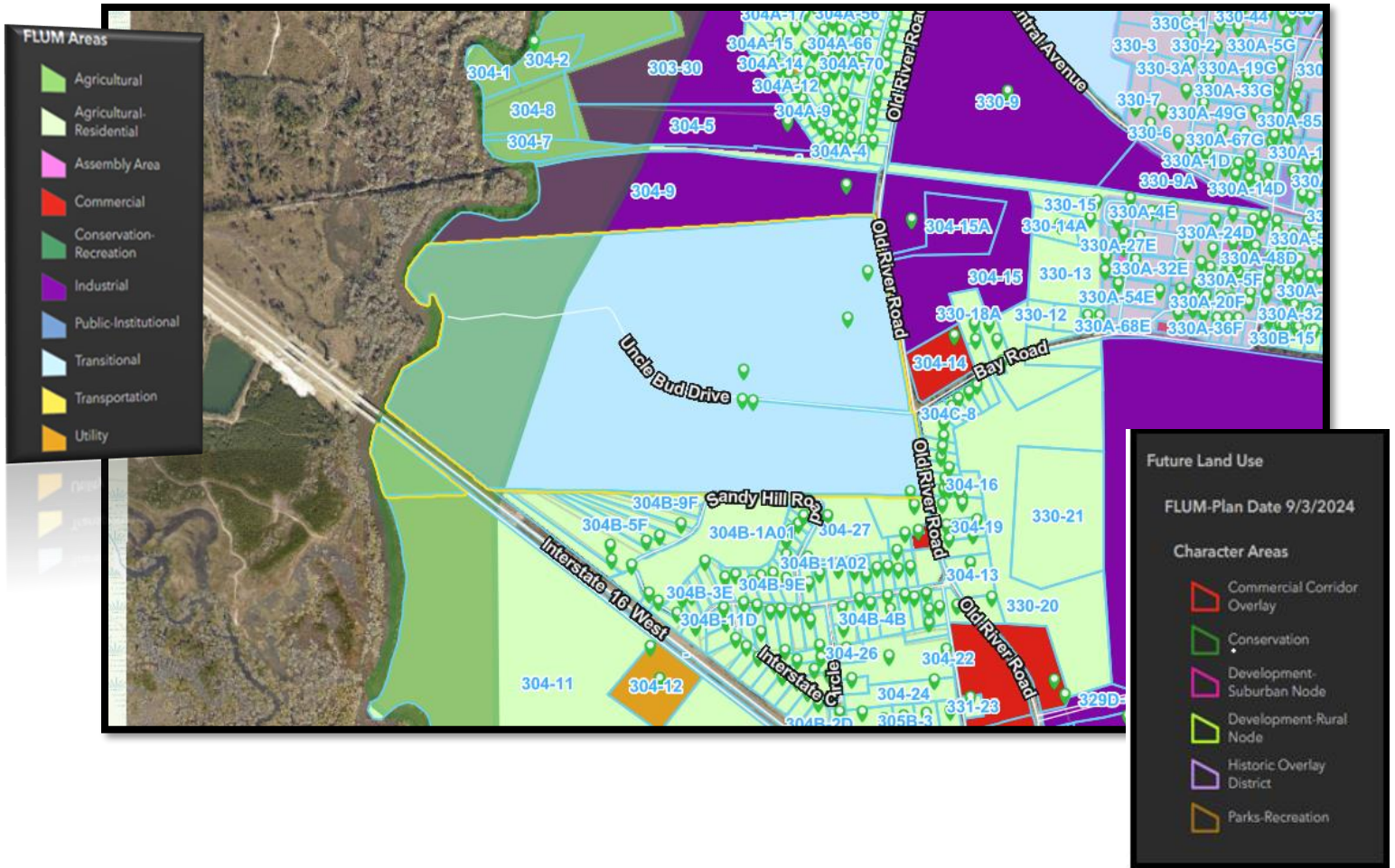
*This parcel is designated **Transitional** on the **Future Land Use Map**, which is an area that buffers between commercial, Industrial, and less intense residential areas and allows for development opportunities. Future development will allow for mixed use and adaptive use opportunities. This area is designed to allow for transition from residential uses to compatible nonresidential developments. Transitional areas often exhibit characteristics of neighboring zones and may undergo changes in land use, density, or character over time. A blend of residential, commercial, or industrial uses that bridge the gap between adjacent zones. (Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, p. 37).*

*This parcel is designated **Conservation** in the **Character Area** on the **Future Land Use Map**, which is **Environmentally Sensitive Areas** refers to the management and protection of natural areas and resources to preserve habitats and species, protect ecosystems, and maintain environmental quality. Areas of open space that follow natural and manmade linear features for recreation and conservation purposes that link ecological, cultural, and recreational amenities. Conservation land use may involve activities such as wildlife conservation, sustainable agriculture, and protection of water resources. These lands are characterized by low-impact development and recreation. Some of these areas represent 100-year floodplains along river and stream corridor and identified wetlands. (Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, p. 41).*

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Staff Summary

The Future Land Use Map designates the property as Transitional and Conservation, making the proposed use consistent with the Future Land Use Map designation and Industrial zoning district.

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