

# Staff Report – Variance

Public Hearing Date: March 20, 2025

**Case:** VAR-2025-03

**Current Zoning:** GZ – GILLEM DISTRICT

**Ward:** 3

**Proposed Request:** Stream Buffer Variance Request to construct a driveway and extend a box culvert within the 22.40 +/- acre lot for stream one (1), for the construction of a 281,880 square foot +/-, Class A warehouse distribution facility within the Gillem District (GZ).

**Staff Report Compiled By:** SaVaughn Irons-Kumassah, Principal Planner

**Staff Recommendation:** Approval of Variance

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

**Owner of Record:**

**Name:** Blue Star Fort Gillem LLC  
2000 Anvil Block RD  
Forest Park, GA 30297

**Applicant:**

Scannell Properties, LLC (Jacob Holdeman)  
4386 Foster St.  
Forest Park, GA 30297

## PROPERTY INFORMATION

**Parcel Number:** 12204 204004

**Acreage:** 22.40 +/-

**Address:** 2000 Anvil Block Rd.

**FLU:** Institutional

## ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS OF CONTIGUOUS PROPERTIES

Direction	Zoning & Use	Direction	Zoning & Use
North	GZ: Gillem District	East	Outside of City Limits
South	GZ: Gillem District	West	GZ: Gillem District

## SUMMARY & BACKGROUND

The subject property is approximately 22.40 +/- acres and is located on the west side of Moreland Avenue and south of Anvil Block Road within the City of Forest Park. The property is bordered to the north by vacant land zoned Gillem District (GZ), to the east by Moreland Avenue, to the south by a stream and a neighboring warehouse development's detention pond, and to the west by a recently constructed warehouse and production studio. The site is gently sloped and primarily consists of low-growth grass, bushes, and a partially wooded area containing primarily younger pine trees that were likely planted around 2008. Additionally, the property features dilapidated asphalt roads, a power line easement, an inactive railroad bridge, and an existing detention pond. The soil on the property is a mix of topsoil, fill materials, residual soil, and partially weathered rock.

### **Stream Features**

There are two streams located on the property. Stream one (1) runs through the northeastern corner of the property, moving southeast into a culvert that flows beneath Moreland Avenue. Stream two (2) runs along the southern and southwestern borders of the property. The applicant is requesting a variance for the Forest Park Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance in relation to Stream one (1). Stream two (2) will maintain full protection as required by the ordinance.

### **Request for Variance and Extent of Infringement**

The applicant is requesting a variance for two specific areas of stream buffer infringement:

1. **0'-50' Undisturbed Buffer (Stream one (1)):** The applicant seeks approximately 4,600 square feet of total infringement, which includes 1,900 square feet of impervious surface and 2,700 square feet of pervious area (landscaping/grading). This infringement is necessary for the construction of a small section of the site's driveway, which involves primarily landscaping and grading work, as well as the extension of a box culvert to further protect Stream one (1). The area proposed for infringement contains low-density, sparse vegetation and trees, as Stream one (1) is a man-made, stone-lined channel.
2. **50'-75' Impervious Buffer (Stream one (1)):** The applicant also seeks approximately 4,900 square feet of total infringement, including 3,400 square feet of impervious surface and 1,500 square feet of pervious area. This area is needed for the construction of the site driveway and associated improvements. Efforts have been made to shift the driveway as far south as possible; however, the driveway cannot shift further south due to safety concerns arising from misalignment with the curb cut for the truck terminal on the east side of Moreland Avenue.

### **Hardship and Alternative Design**

The applicant has carefully considered alternative designs to minimize buffer infringement. However, the proposed design is the most practical and reflects careful coordination with the property's shape, stream locations, and Georgia Department of Transportation (GA DOT) requirements. The driveway and requested buffer infringements are critical to provide safe and efficient access to the property, which is in line with Forest Park Stream Buffer Protection Ordinance Per Sec 8-9-4. (c).1.c. This section permits intrusions necessary to provide access to a property.

### **Water Quality Impacts and Resource Protection**

To mitigate potential water quality impacts, all on-site drainage will be directed away from Stream one (1) and into an existing detention pond, which will be expanded to include a bio-

retention feature. This stormwater infrastructure will reduce runoff reaching the stream and provide additional resource protection. The applicant will also coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the City of Forest Park, and Clayton County, as necessary, to minimize impacts to Stream one (1) during construction. As noted, the area surrounding Stream one (1) is generally open with sparse vegetation and trees, further minimizing environmental disruption.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the requested stream buffer variance is essential to facilitate the development of the property while balancing environmental protection and site access. The applicant has made significant efforts to minimize the environmental impact, and the proposed design includes measures to protect water quality and manage stormwater runoff.

The approval of this variance will allow the applicant to move forward with their construction plans to build a warehouse/distribution center, driveway, and extend the box culvert within the Gillem District (GZ).

## AERIAL MAP



## ZONING MAP





**SITE PHOTOS**







On site Public Notice Signage

## VARIANCE JUSTIFICATION

The Planning Commission may grant a variance from the development standards of this chapter in permittance under this chapter, if, after a public hearing, it makes findings of facts in writing, that:

1. The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community, per Sec. 8-8-193. (a) (1) of the Code of Ordinances.



2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner per Sec. 8-8-193. (a) (2) of the Code of Ordinances; and
3. The strict application of the terms of this ordinance will result in practical difficulty in the use of the property. This situation shall not be self-imposed, nor be based on a perceived reduction of, or restriction on, economic gain, per Sec. 8-8-193. (a) (3) of the Code of Ordinances.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the Stream Buffer Variance Request to construct a driveway and extend a box culvert within the 22.40 +/- acre lot for stream one (1), for the construction of a 281,880 square foot +/-, Class A warehouse distribution facility within the Gillem District (GZ).. The requested variance will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community, and the use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.

#### Attachments Included

- Justification Letter