

**LETTER OF INTENT
For Revision of a Current
SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

Applicant: LRF Milton LLC

Current Ordinance Number 17-04-308

**Property Address: 14505 Batesville Rd.
Milton, GA 30004**

Tax PIN: 22-3650-0661-005-0

THE APPLICATION

The Applicant: The Applicant, LRF Milton LLC is a limited liability company wholly owned by beneficiaries/spouses of the Property owner, the George H. Ivey, Jr. Dynasty Trust (the “Trust”).

Special Use: The Applicant is seeking a revision of its current Special Use Permit to operate a Rural or Agricultural Event Facility under Milton Code Section 64-1842 (now Unified Development Code Section 8.7.1.H.) at historical “Little River Farms” by decreasing the total acreage covered by the current Special Use Permit. The Applicant has been operating a Rural/Agricultural Event Facility at Little River Farms for almost 11 years since 2014, hosting hundreds of weddings and other special events on the Property without any material issues or public concerns.

Proposed SUP Revision: The Applicant seeks to decrease the number of acres which is subject to its Special Use Permit by approximately 11.5 acres, from 47.7 acres to approximately 36 acres. The proposed revision greatly exceeds the 5-acre minimum lot size required for a Rural or Agricultural Event Facility under UDC Section 8.7.1.H. by over 30 acres

Conditions and Operations to Remain the Same: The Applicant does not seek revision of any conditions in its existing Special Use Permit; the Applicant is only seeking to reduce the total acreage covered by the Special Use Permit. The proposed revision does not seek an expansion of operating hours or guest capacity, or change the size and scope of the operations on the Property in any other respect. Because the operations on the Property will not change in any respect, the proposed revision will not change the impact on neighboring properties.

The Property: The Property subject to the current Special Use Permit totals 47.7 acres, comprised of pristine farmland, wooded areas and landscaped grounds. The Property includes a beautiful rural viewshed along Batesville and Taylor Roads of almost 3,000 feet of combined road frontage enjoyed daily by those driving this stretch of Milton’s roadways (please see Exhibits B and C). The Property is located at a point on Batesville Road designated as a “Gateway Location” to the City when entering from Cherokee County¹. Adjacent residential properties/neighborhoods are screened visually by thousands of evergreen and hardwood trees planted on the property by the Applicant over the last decade, which also have proved to soften the impact of any sound emanating from the special events held on the Property.

The 16.5-acre tract proposed to be excluded from the current Special Use Permit by this revision is located at the northwest section of the Property adjacent to the Little River Estates and Taylor Glenn subdivisions, and along

¹ Please see “Future Community Map” on page 27 of the 2040 Milton Comprehensive Plan.

Little River/Cherokee County. The tract to be excluded does not have public road frontage/viewsheds and cannot be seen from Batesville or Taylor Roads. This 16.5-acre tract has never been employed in any capacity by the special event operations conducted on the Property.

Current Event Facility Operations: The Applicant has operated the special events business at the Property for almost eleven (11) years without any incidents of violations of the Milton Code or any conditions originally imposed on the venue in 2014. As mentioned above, the reduction in size of the Property will not affect the operations of the venue nor will it affect the current conditions imposed on the Property's use.

Applicants' Property Preservation Plan: Applicant has always intended to preserve the nature and character of the Property and make it available for the enjoyment of the members of the community. This proposed Special Use Permit revision is consistent with this intent. The Applicant has maintained the property in pristine condition since initially receiving its Special Use Permit in 2014 and since then, has created a beautiful tree farm/rural viewshed along much of the public roads adjoining the Property. The Applicant will continue to operate the special events operations on the Property in a responsible and professional manner, consistent with past practices.

The Applicant's plan for the revision of the Special Use Permit allows the Ivey family to meet the current financial support needs of several aging Ivey family members/heirs (as discussed below), while still preserving approximately 36 acres of pristine property containing almost 3,000 feet of rural viewshed into the future, maintaining the historical, agricultural use and character of the Property (please see Exhibits A, B, and C). The Applicant respectfully requests that the City join with this legacy Milton farm and family (one of the few Milton family farms still operating) to preserve Little River Farms while also meeting the needs of certain family members. The preservation of an historical family farm/property such as Little River Farms helps set Milton apart from other sprawling North Atlanta cities like John's Creek or Alpharetta, and the Applicant has a proven track record of successful stewardship and management of this beautiful property.

LITTLE RIVER FARMS HISTORY; IVEY FAMILY

Little River Farms is an integral part of Milton's agricultural history and roots. This family farm was founded in the 1950s by George H. Ivey, Jr., when he moved his livestock and dairy farm from North Buckhead to North Fulton County. Throughout much of its history, Little River Farms has produced commercial livestock (e.g., cattle and pork). During the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, the farm was a high-volume milk and egg producer, serving retail and wholesale customers around the metro Atlanta area and beyond, customers that included the local county school systems. (Please see Exhibit A).

The Little River Farms special event operations have been professionally managed since 2014 by George's grandson Joe Ivey (who grew up on the Property) and his wife Jennifer. Joe and Jennifer have been in the special events business for over 15 years. Before founding the special event business at Little River Farms, Jennifer Ivey managed hundreds of special events annually for (at that time) John Portman's AmericasMart in downtown Atlanta, one of the largest wholesale markets in the world.

Little River Farms has been named a finalist for the "Best Wedding Reception Venue" in all of Metro Atlanta multiple times, and two years ago won the award for the "Best Wedding Reception Venue" in the Milton/Alpharetta/John's Creek area. The "Wildflower Barn" building at Little River Farms has a metal frame that

is over 100 years old and is featured in the book “Barns of Old Milton County”. Many, many Milton families over the years have experienced the joy of hosting their daughters’ and sons’ weddings/receptions on the Little River Farms property.

In addition to hosting many weddings and other special events such as charity fundraisers, Little River Farms is also an ornamental tree farm and in 2024 began providing Christmas Trees and related holiday items to the surrounding community during the holidays. Little River Farms is truly an asset to the City of Milton that proudly represents the rural history and character of the City.

REASON FOR REVISION REQUEST

The Little River Farms property is currently owned in trust for the benefit of the heirs of George H. Ivey, Jr., which are his two children and six grandchildren and their families. The land currently owned by the Ivey family Trust encompasses 2 tracts:

- 1) a **47.7-acre tract** which holds the current Rural or Agricultural Event Facility Special Use Permit, upon which the special event operations are located, and
- 2) a **5-acre tract** on the corner of Batesville and Taylor Roads (please see Exhibit B) which is **not part of the current events Special Use Permit** and is utilized for ornamental and Christmas Tree farming only.

Several heirs of George Ivey, Jr. are advanced in age and have current significant financial needs for their care/support. Also, one of George’s six grandchildren is permanently disabled. These heirs have recently submitted requests to the Applicant and trustees that all or a portion of the Little River Farms Property should be sold as soon as possible to meet their current financial needs.

The Applicant wishes to maintain its stewardship and management of Little River Farms well into the future, preserving this idyllic and picturesque property for the enjoyment of the surrounding community. However, the Applicant and trustees have a responsibility to fulfill the Ivey family members’ requests to assist with their current personal financial needs.

The Applicant could subdivide the 5-acre tract on the corner of Batesville and Taylor Roads without revising its current Special Use Permit, or wind up the special events business and sell some or all of the 47.7-acre tract to raise funds necessary to meet family members’ needs. However, the Applicant would prefer for the corner 5-acre tract, along with the full viewshed along Batesville and Taylor Roads, to remain undeveloped and in the stewardship of the Applicant for years to come, while the Applicant continues managing the operations of the special events business and tree farm on the Property.

The Applicant’s proposal in this application will preserve the historical core of the Little River Farms property (including its historical Wildflower Barn) with the associated almost 3,000 feet of rural viewshed along Milton’s public roads, while also satisfying the needs of the Ivey family members. The Applicant’s proposed revised Special Use Permit site in this application involves two components:

- 1) Removing a 16.5-acre tract in the northwest corner of Little River Farms not visible from public roadways and not used in event operations from the current Special Use Permit site plan, and

- 2) Adding for the first time, the 5-acre picturesque tract on the corner of Batesville and Taylor (please see Exhibit B) into the revised Special Use Permit boundary.

The revision would result in a net decrease of the land subject to the Special Use Permit of 11.5 acres, but as stated above, the Applicant will still greatly exceed the minimum lot size required in UDC Section 8.7.1.H. by over 30 acres.

This proposal will allow the Ivey family to eventually sell a portion of the Little River Farms property located away from the Batesville and Taylor Road viewsheds that is not used by the special event business to a third party to satisfy family members' financial needs, while preserving the highly visible 5-acre tract on the corner of Batesville and Taylor Roads by including it in the tract subject to Special Use Permit, and also preserving the current Batesville and Taylor Road viewsheds. The Applicant believes this is a "win win" scenario for all parties as the new 36-acre Little River Farms footprint along with its almost 3,000 foot viewshed will remain undeveloped into the future.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE MILTON 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND UDC SECTION 8.7.1.H.

On page 10 of the City of Milton 2040 Comprehensive Plan (the "Comprehensive Plan"), the Comprehensive Plan states that the City will strive to "respect our rural heritage" and "create a strong sense of community and place". Page 12 of the Comprehensive Plan further states that "rural character preservation" is "affirmed as a top priority" of the Plan. Land Use Policy #1 on page 14 of the Comprehensive Plan states that "[The City] will encourage development that is sensitive to the overall setting of the community and will contribute to our community's character and sense of place." Page 123 lists several strategies the City should pursue to achieve Land Use Policy #1, which includes encouraging the preservation of agricultural areas with large tracts of land to maintain the City's rural character through "[land]owner incentives and updates to zoning designations".

The Applicant's proposal for the "next generation" of Little River Farms with a new 36-acre footprint fits squarely within the land use vision, goals, and strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The almost 3,000 feet of white picket fence along Batesville and Taylor Roads has been an identifying characteristic of Little River Farms and this Batesville Road Gateway to the City for many years (please see Exhibits B and C). Under the proposal, members of the Ivey family will continue to manage the operations on this 70-year-old historical family farm, continuing the rural heritage of the Property into the future. The special events held on the Property further the history and tradition of sharing the property with the local community and metro Atlanta residents (please see Exhibit A).

The UDC clearly contemplates this type of proposed land use within AG-1 zoning in the City, and Applicant's revised Special Use Permit proposal complies with the requirements in UDC Section 8.7.1.H. As stated earlier, the Applicant is not requesting an expansion of its operations or to broaden the impact on the neighboring properties. The Applicant will exceed (and in some cases far exceed) the Use Standards required by the UDC. Our revised footprint exceeds the minimum lot size by over 30 acres and will include a new significant wooded buffer and screening zone between the Property and certain neighboring lots/homes (the Taylor Road 5-acre tract).

With Little River Farms' location and inherent characteristics, including its large 36-acre footprint and dense wooded screening of neighboring properties, coupled with an 11-year history of operating without violation of

the parameters in the UDC or the conditions within its current Special Use Permit, it is hard to imagine another property within the City that would be a better fit for a Special Use Permit under UDC Section 8.7.1.H. The Applicant's plan and revised proposed Special Use Permit furthers the City of Milton's strategy of rural character preservation that sets the City apart from other cities in North Fulton.

The economic realities faced by some of George Ivey's aging and special-needs heirs prohibit the Ivey family from continuing to hold and maintain the entire 52-acres of the Property, especially the unused area of the land. The Applicant believes the proposed new 36-acre Little River Farms footprint is a viable solution that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the UDC by allowing the preservation of the core of the Property with its green space, wooded areas, and viewshed enjoyed by the community to be maintained for years to come, while satisfying the current needs of George Ivey's heirs.

Exhibit A

Little River Farms in the 1960s

BE SURE TO SEE
TWO BELLS
T-V Edition
THIS SUNDAY AFTERNOON
WHEN SKIP THOMAS TAKES YOU ON A TOUR OF
LITTLE RIVER FARMS
FOR A SPRINGTIME VISIT WITH ALL THE FARM ANIMALS



YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN WILL SEE -

- HOW GRASS IS GROWN INDOORS AT LITTLE RIVER FARMS . . . AND WHY.
- 50,000 CHICKENS THAT WEAR "GLASSES"
- THE SOUTH'S MOST MODERN COW FEEDING AND MILKING PROCESS.
- A RARE SET OF TWIN PUREBRED GUERNSEY CALVES.
- ALL THE OTHER FARM ANIMALS INCLUDING BABY PIGS, DUCKS, SHEEP, PONIES AND HORSES.

THIS SUNDAY • APRIL 24 • 6:00 P. M.
waga-tv • channel 5

Exhibit B

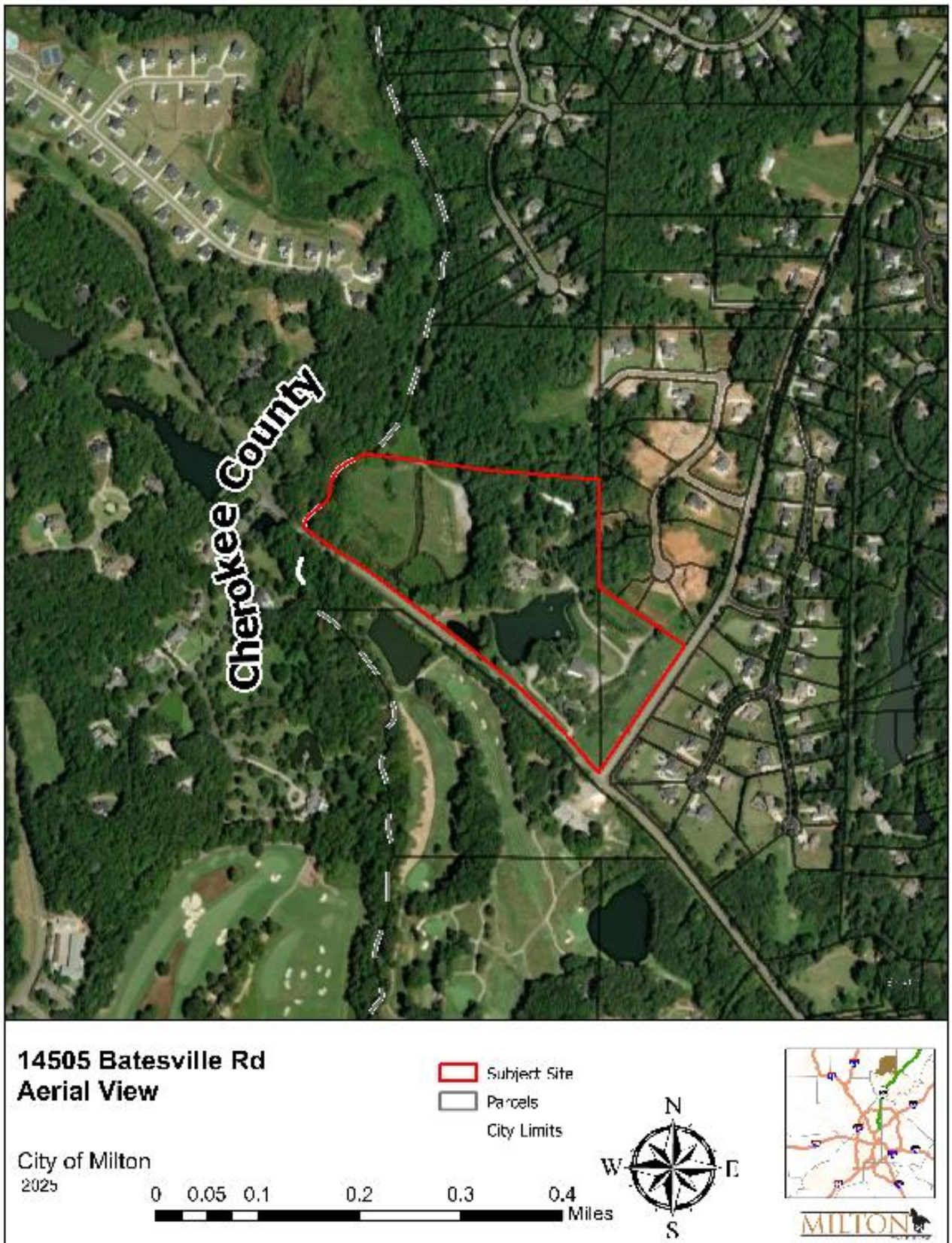
**Viewshed of 5-acre Tract on Taylor Road
(Wildflower Barn Event Venue in Background)**



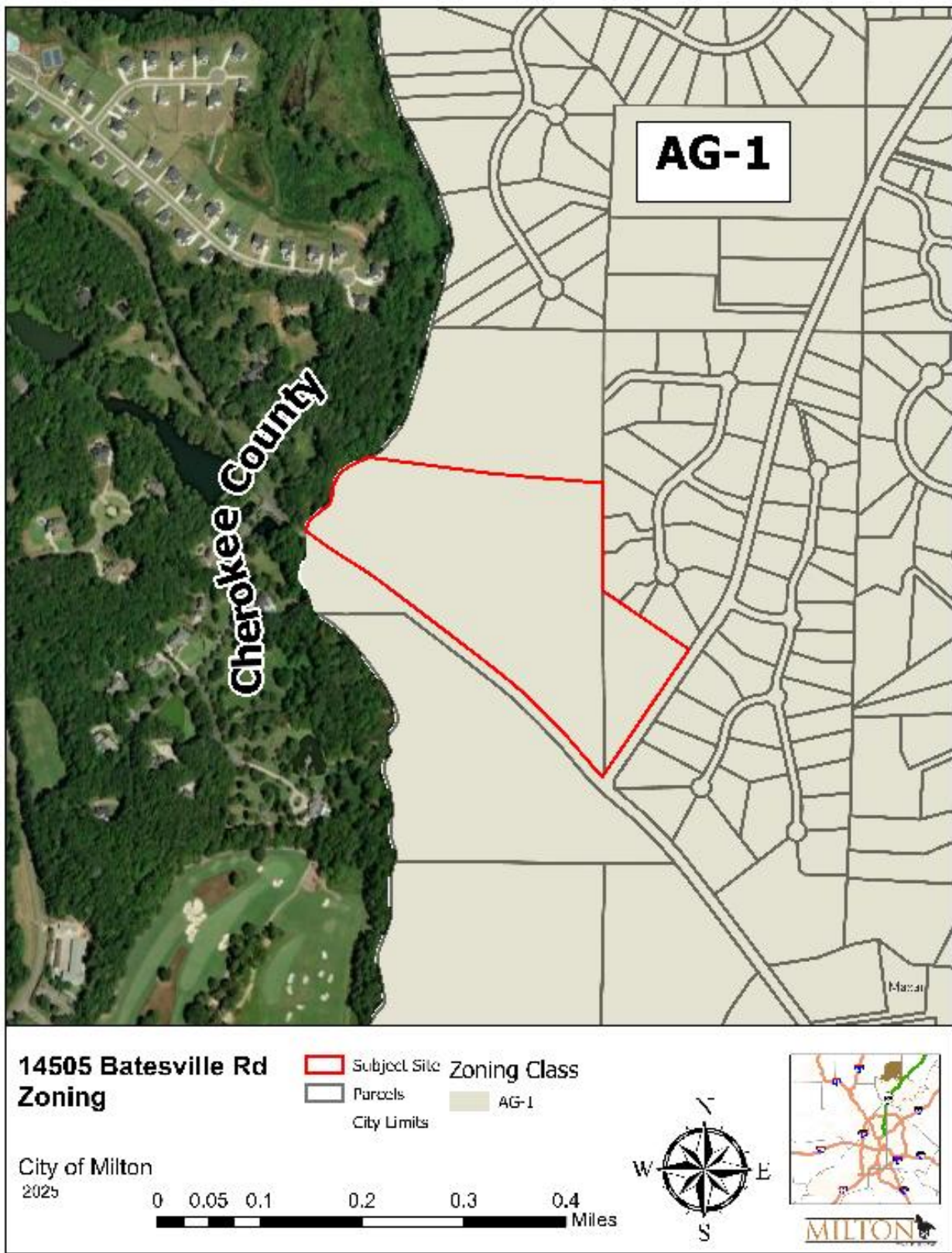
Exhibit C

Little River Farms Batesville Road Viewshed





LOCATION MAP



ZONING