



PLANNING & ZONING STAFF REPORT

AX-21-003

Meeting Date January 4, 2022

GENERAL INFORMATION

Petition Number:	AX-21-003
Applicant:	Battle Law PC. for Shaw DeKalb Properties,
Owners:	Shaw DeKalb Properties, LLC
Project Location:	2931 and 2939 Miller Road (16 024 07 004 and 16 009 01 012), Decatur, GA 30035
City Council District:	District 2 – Rob Turner
Acreage:	19.01 acres
Existing Zoning:	Light Industrial (M – DeKalb County) and Office Institutional (OI- DeKalb County), I-20 Highway Overlay District, Tier 2 (DeKalb County)
Proposed Zoning:	Light Industrial (M – City of Stonecrest)
Comprehensive Plan Character Area Designation:	Highway Corridor (HC) (DeKalb County 2035 Future Land Use Map, 5-year update, adopted March 2021)
Proposed Development/Request:	The applicant is requesting to annex into the City of Stonecrest for the purpose of developing a Movie Studio. As part of this annexation the subject property would be rezoned to Light Industrial (M – City of Stonecrest) and would be designated on the Stonecrest Future Land Use Map as Light Industrial Character area.
Staff Recommendations:	Approval with Conditions



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Location. The subject property is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of I-20 Highway (aka Purple Heart Highway) and Miller Road. Address 2931 Miller Road is currently undeveloped and address 2939 is developed with two vacant buildings.

The surrounding area consists of single-family detached dwellings and light industrial uses, Georgia United Credit Union and The Academy of Scholars- Atlanta Christian School. Longview subdivision in unincorporated DeKalb County is to the northwest.

Shaw DeKalb Properties, LLC, is seeking a annexation for the development of Stonecrest Studios, a movie studio complex. The studio complex will consist of a 65,760 sf sound stage, a 20,000-sf. mill space, and 67,515 sf of office space. These facilities will consist of a one- story warehouse building, a two-story frame office building and a three-story metal office building, with a total of 700 parking spaces (14 handicap and 686 spaces). A heavy duty underground storm water ponds will also be installed.

The subject properties are zoned M - light industrial and O-I Office-Institutional, in DeKalb County. The properties to the North and East are used for light industrial purposes. The properties to the west are residential. Topography of the site slopes down to the west towards Walden Lake.

A boundary survey showing the existing features of the site can be found in Figure 3.

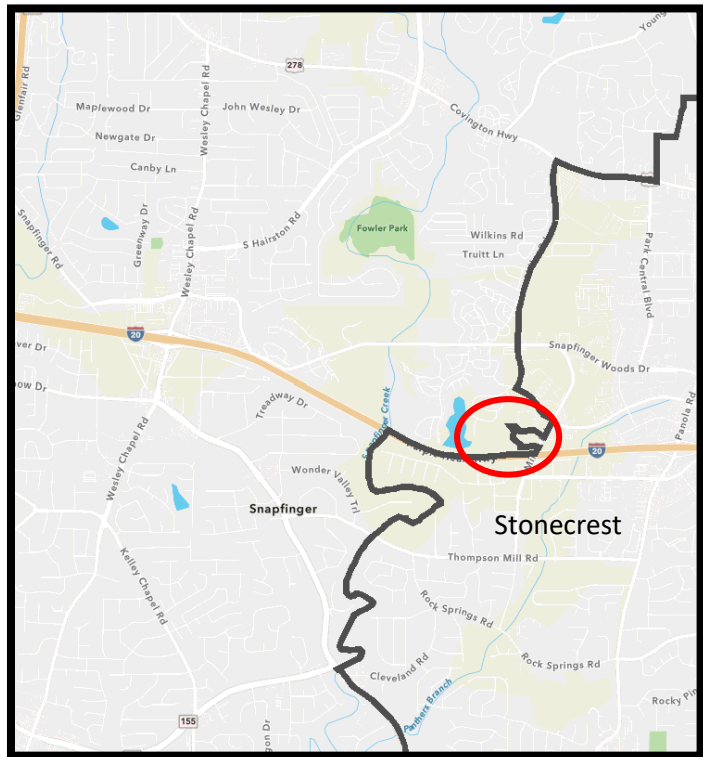


Figure 1: AX-21-003 Location Map

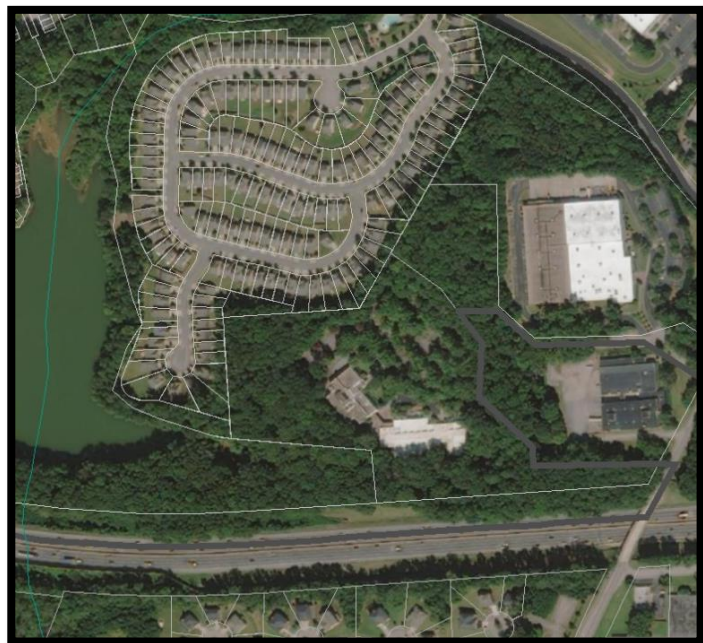


Figure 2: Aerial Map

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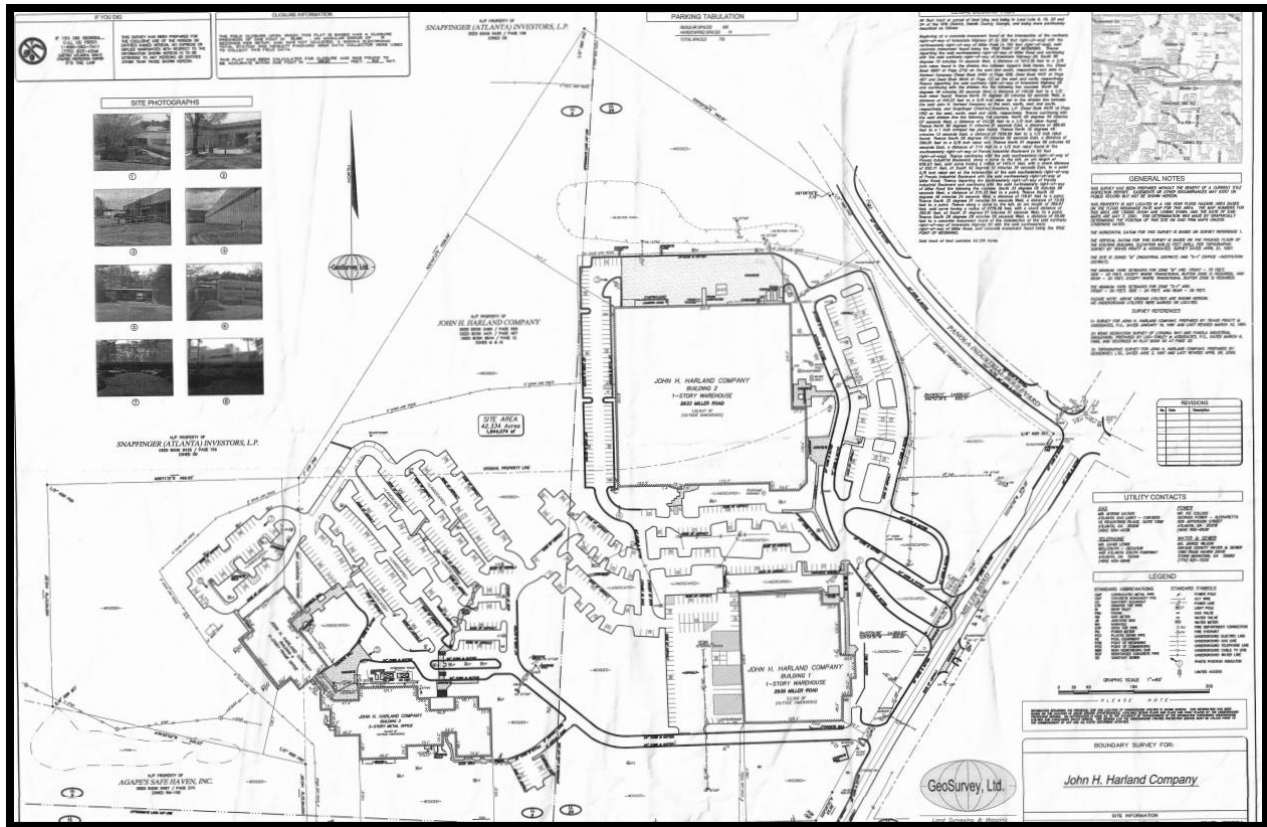


Figure 3: Boundary Survey



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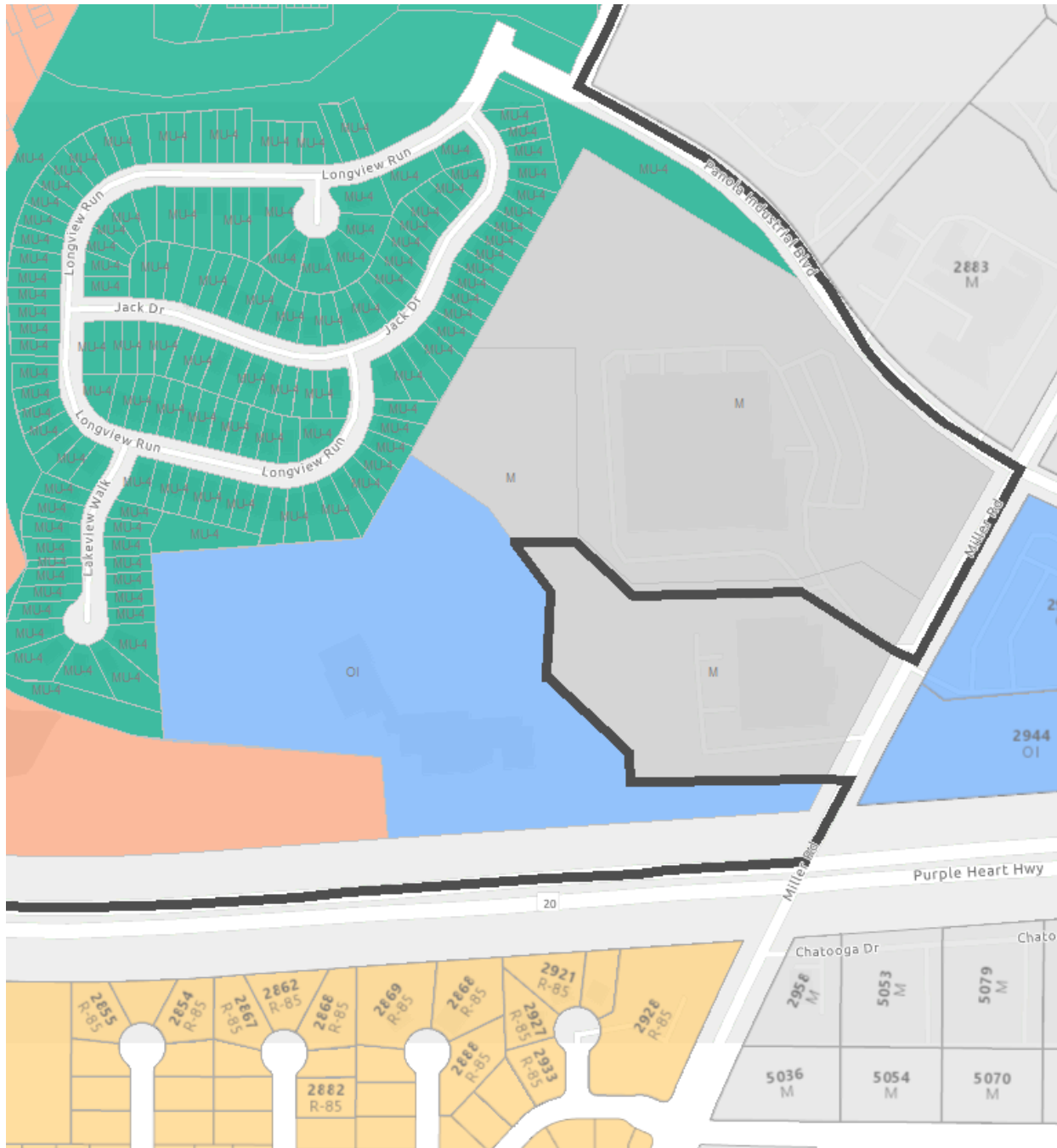


Figure 4: Combined Zoning Map - DeKalb County and City of Stonecrest

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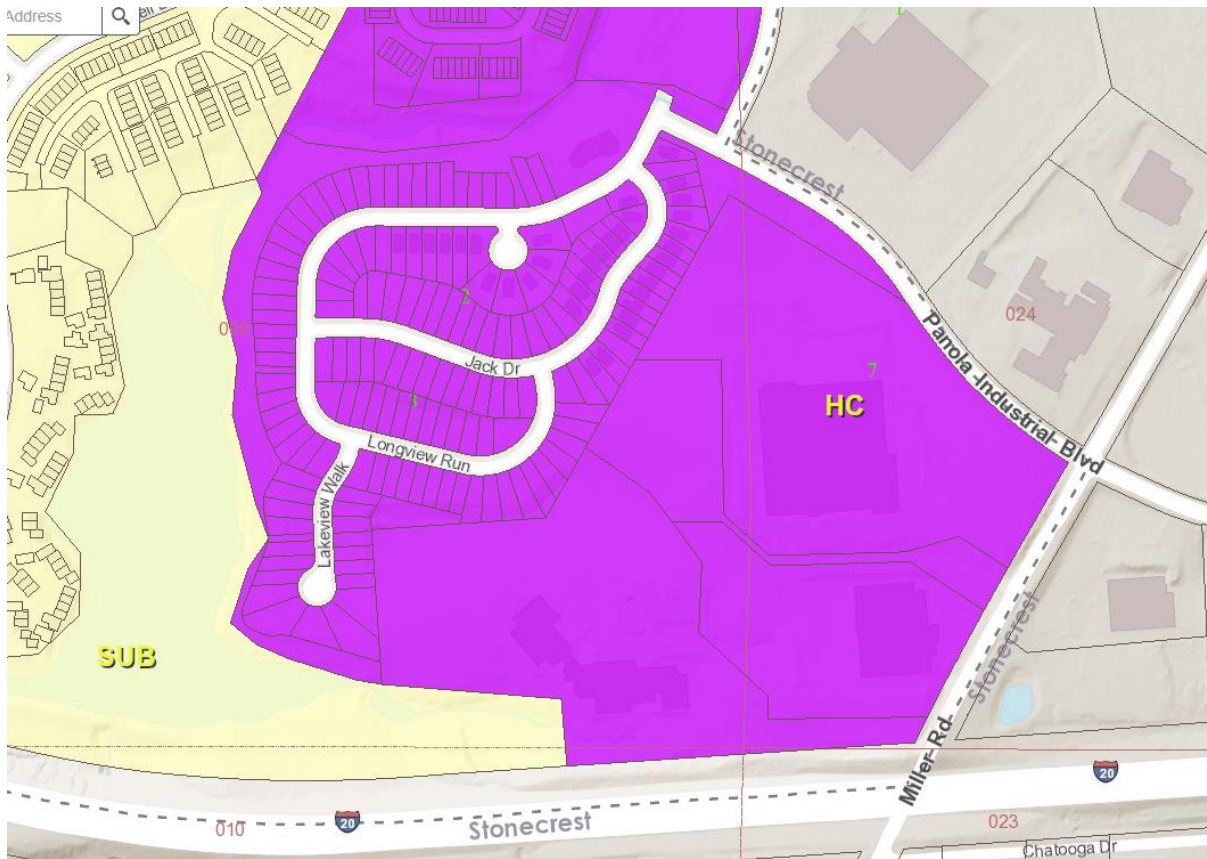


Figure 5: DeKalb County Future Land Use Map, HC stands for Highway Corridor, and SUB stands for Suburban.

The future land use map for DeKalb County shows this property as Highway Corridor (HC), while the future land use in the City of Stonecrest designate this area as Light Industrial (LIND). The Highway Corridor designation supports light industrial uses, so the two designations are compatible.

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Annexation Request

Annexation involves a comprehensive land use change as well as a rezoning. The subject properties land use will be designated as light industrial on the Future Land Use Map and rezoned to M -light industrial if annexed into the city. The property is in Dekalb County's I-20 Overlay District, Tier 2. Just like the annexation approved in April, AX-21-001, which this request surrounds, if annexed into the city, the subject property will not be part of the City of Stonecrest I-20 Overlay. The proposed concept plan by which this annexation will be conditioned if approved is shown in Figure 6, below.

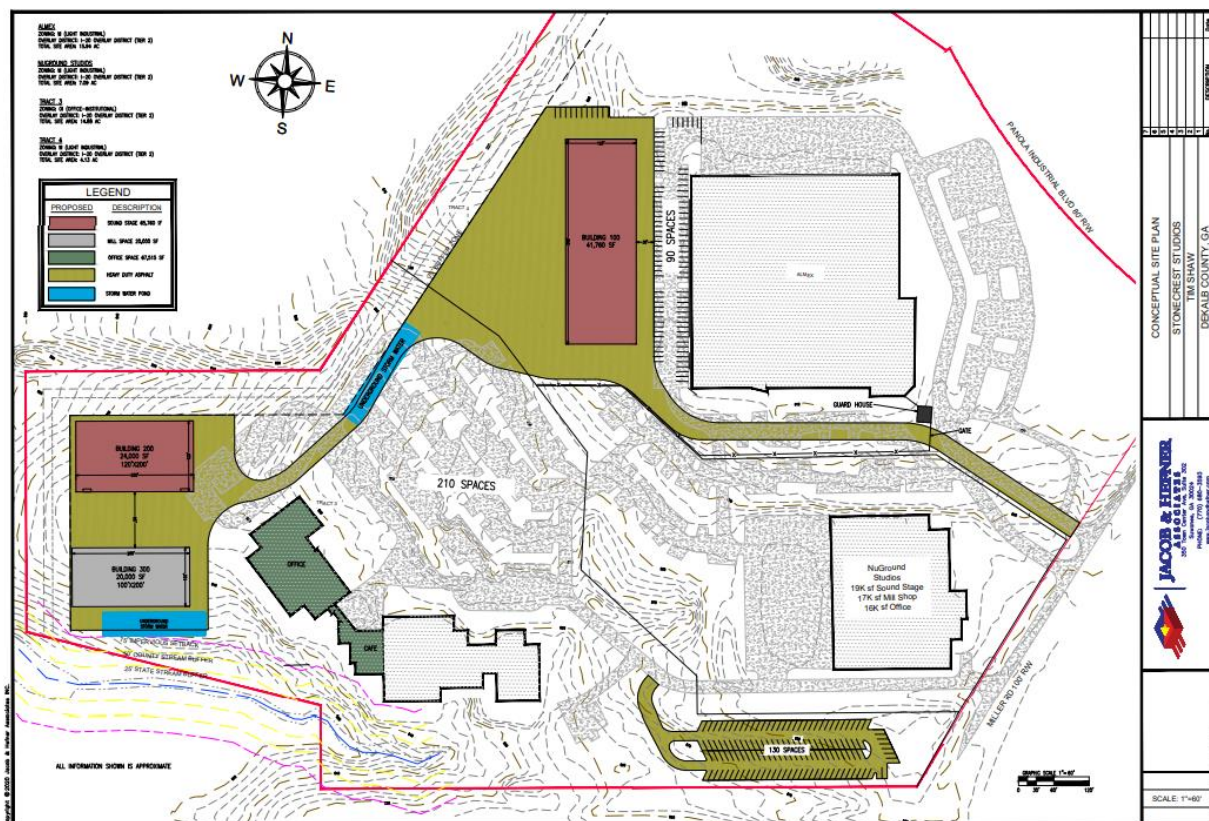


Figure 6: Proposed Concept Plan

The city has notified Dekalb County of the proposed annexation, and to date no objections have been raised. The proposed parking facility will have no impact on area schools or County water and sewer infrastructure.



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Public Participation

A Community Planning Information Meeting was held on December 15, 2021 at 6 PM when the proposed annexation was discussed. The meeting was hosted by the City on Zoom and broadcasted on YouTube. Merits of the case that were brought up include:

- The layout of the buildings and the proposed use for each building.
- The applicant shared a 3D tutorial of the subject property and the amenities.
- The parking lot would expand the city's commercial tax base benefiting the city's budget

There was no opposition to the case.

STANDARDS OF ANNEXATION REVIEW

An annexation request includes both a comprehensive plan amendment and a rezoning. Section 7.3.4 of the Zoning Ordinances lists seven factors to be considered in a technical review of a comprehensive plan amendment and Section 7.3.5 of the Stonecrest Zoning Ordinance list eight factors to be considered in a technical review of a zoning case. The two sets of factors are basically identical with the exception that in reviewing a rezoning, decision makers need to consider the conformity with the policies and intent of the comprehensive plan. Each of the eight rezoning standards for review are listed with staff analysis below.

A. Whether the proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the comprehensive plan.

The subject property is located within the Highway Corridor character area of the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan, and is in keeping with the surrounding uses and current zoning, and in similar fashion the proposed land use designation on the Stonecrest Future Land Use Plan would be Light Industrial. The economic policies of the City's plan encourage the attraction of and recruitment of new businesses (Goal ED-1), and the goals and policies for industrial uses call for locating industrial development away from environmentally sensitive areas, minimizing the encroaching effect of industrial development and expansion in areas already developed for industrial uses with existing public infrastructure, and the encourage development of vacant industrial land (Goal LU-8).

The Light Industrial character area intends to identify areas that are appropriate for industrial type uses. The location of these areas shall preserve the appeal and appearance of residential and commercial areas from the prospective intrusion of light industrial land uses. These areas consist of areas used in low intensity manufacturing, including wholesale trade, and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, vibration, air pollution or other nuisance characteristics.

The proposed movie studio is in keeping with existing character and use of the area, the City's zoning map, and the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and its Future Land Use Map.



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B. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property or properties.

The area surrounding the site is industrial and residential, and the proposed use is in keeping with the existing development of adjacent and nearby properties. The residential uses to the west should not be impacted by the movie studio, as it is a low impact use, low noise with no harmful emissions.

C. Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has a reasonable economic use as currently zoned.

The existing zoning in the county does not currently allow the development of a movie studio and is split between M and OI. As such it does not support the intended economic use. The applicant is seeking to come into Stonecrest so that all the properties will be under one zoning category and one jurisdiction.

D. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property or properties.

The proposed zoning proposal is low impact and is not anticipated to have a negative impact on the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby properties. A 75 foot buffer zone will be maintained between the studio and the western property line, as shown on the concept plan.

E. Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property, which gives supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal.

There are no known changing conditions affecting the use and development of the subject property.

F. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect historic buildings, sites, districts, or archaeological resources.

There are currently no identified historic buildings, sites, districts, or archaeological resources on the subject property.

G. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use that will or could cause excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities, or schools.

Due to the low impact nature of the intended use, which contains no housing. The proposal will not cause an excessive or burdensome on utilities or have any demands on schools. Roads access to the property is already designed for truck traffic, and no transportation improvements are necessary to accommodate the use.



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H. Whether the zoning proposal adversely impacts the environment or surrounding natural resources.

If the proposed use is designed and maintained as required by city and state regulations, the use should not have adverse impact on the environment or surrounding resources.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The applicant meets all the criteria for approval. Therefore, staff recommends **APPROVAL with Condition of AX-21-003, with a zoning of M – Light Industrial, and the character area designation of Industrial on the Future Land Use map.**

1. The applicant is subject to comply with the conceptual site plan submitted as part of the annexation application titled “Stonecrest Studios” prepared by Jacob and Hefner Associates, submitted in December 2021, and cited as Figure 6 in this staff report.

Attachments:

1 – AX-21-003 Application