



METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: October 11, 2022
TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH
FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERNCED:

Petitioner: Harold Yellin, Agent for Cowen Investments, LLC
Owner: Savannah Economic Development Authority
Aldermanic District: 5 - Alderman Dr. Estella Shabazz
County Commission District: 7 - Commissioner Dean Kicklighter
Neighborhood/Subdivision: Newton
Current Zoning District: I-L (Light Industrial)
Future Land Use (FLU) Category: Planned Development
File No. 22-000807-ZA
Location: 500 John Carter Road
PIN: 21047 02001 **Acreage:** 631.51 acres

MPC ACTION:

Denial of the request to rezone approximately 513 acres from I-L to I-H.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the request to rezone approximately 513 acres from I-L to I-H with the following condition: (1) A master plan shall be required to come back to the Metropolitan Planning Commission prior to a site development plan approval.

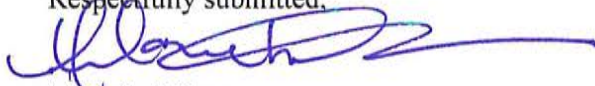
MEMBERS PRESENT: 8 + Chairman

Joseph Welch, Chairman
Laureen Boles
Shedrick Coleman
Travis Coles
Elizabeth Epstein
Karen Jarrett
Wayne Noha
Jeff Notrica
Dwayne Stephens

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Denies staff recommendation (9-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 5	DENIAL Votes: 4	ABSENT
Boles Epstein Jarrett Notrica Welch	Coles Stephens Coleman Noah	Ervin Kaigler Melder Watkins Woiwode

Respectfully submitted,



Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

MW/sh

Enclosure

cc: Mark Massey, Clerk of Council
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney
Zarina Davis, Department of Inspections
Bridget Lidy, Department of Inspections
Candra Teshome, Department of Inspections





Savannah City Council Agenda Item Information Sheet

Date of MPC Hearing: October 11, 2022

Type of Petition: Rezoning Map Amendment

Staff Generated Petition: Y/N

Petitioner (File No. 22-000807-ZA) is requesting approximately 118 acres to remain a I-L (Light-Industrial) classification, and to rezone approximately 513 acres to be a I-H (Heavy-Industrial) zoning classification. The property is approximately 632 acres, with 243 acres of wetland area, and 389 acres of upland. The property abuts Interstate 16 and is accessed from Old River Road and Four Lakes Boulevard.

The subject property is located northeast of the intersection of John Carter Road and Old River Road and abuts Interstate 95 to the east. The property is currently vacant. The property was purchased by SEDA – Savannah Economic Development Authority in 2016 because of a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. The project was a joint venture between Chatham County and the City of Savannah with the intent of establishing a manufacturing center. The initial phases of development have been completed to include construction of the primary spine road Four Lakes Boulevard, stormwater detention and wetland mitigation.

The subject property was planned to be an industrial park through the partnership of Chatham County and the City of Savannah. The front portion of the property is currently classified as Heavy Industrial. The petitioner is proposing additional Heavy - Industrial property. The portion of the property closest to the residential uses is proposed to remain Light – Industrial.

The Planning Commission recommended **denial** of the petition to rezone approximately 513 acres from I-L to I-H at 500 John Carter Road.



CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
"Planning the Future, Respecting the Past"

STAFF REPORT



Figure 1 Location Map

File No. 22-000807-ZA

Location: 500 John Carter Road

PIN: 21047 02001 Acreage: 631.51

Prepared by Melissa Leto, Senior Planner

Petitioner: Harold Yellin, Agent for property owner

Owner: Savannah Economic Development Authority

Aldermanic District: 5 - Alderman Dr. Estella Shabazz

County Commission District: 7 - Commissioner Dean Kicklighter

Neighborhood/Subdivision: Newton

Current Zoning District: I-L (Light Industrial)

Future Land Use (FLU) Category: Planned Development

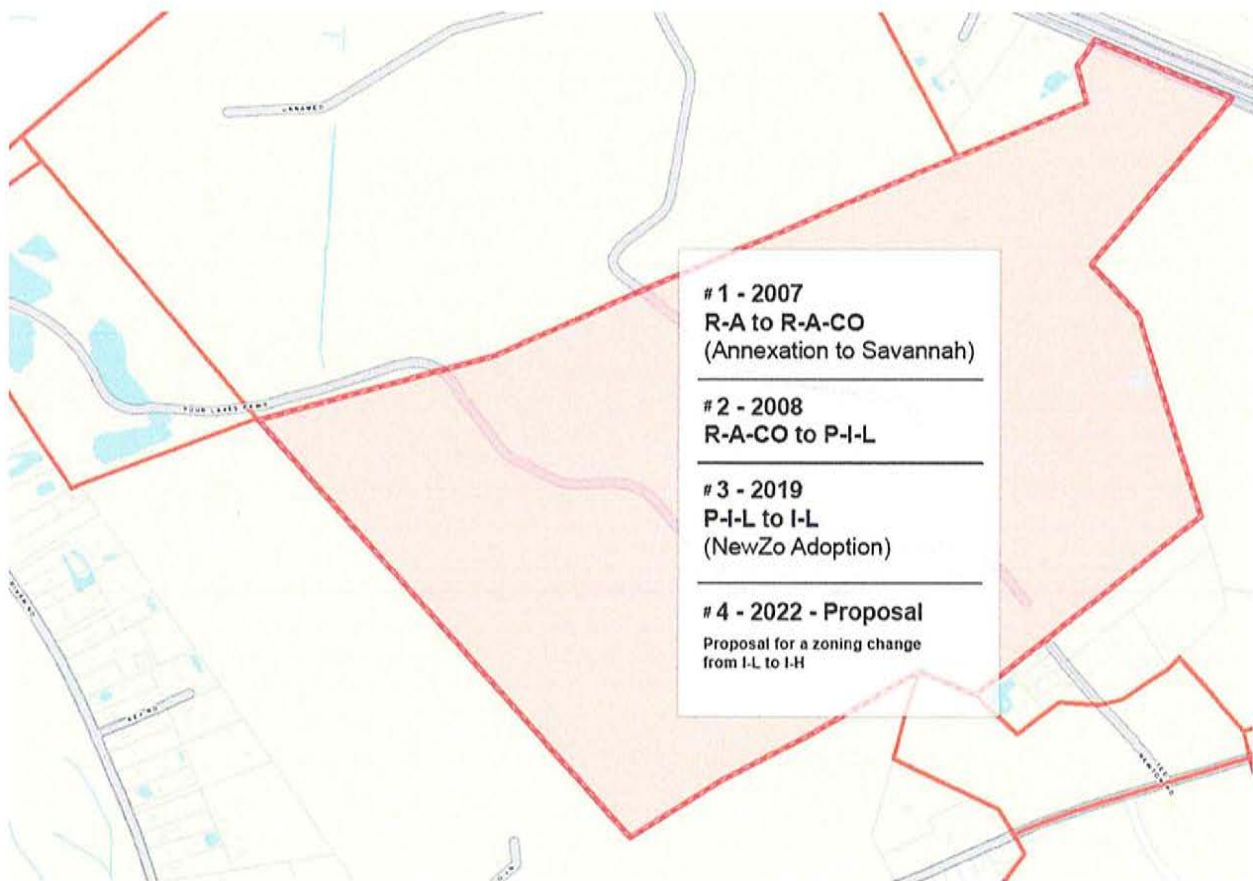
Request:

The petitioner, Harold Yellin, agent for the Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA), is requesting approximately 118 acres to remain a I-L (Light-Industrial) classification, and to rezone approximately 513 acres to be a I-H (Heavy-Industrial) zoning classification. The property is approximately 632 acres, with 243 acres of wetland area, and 389 acres of upland. The property abuts Interstate 16 and is accessed from Old River Road and Four Lakes Boulevard. The property identification number is 21047 02001.

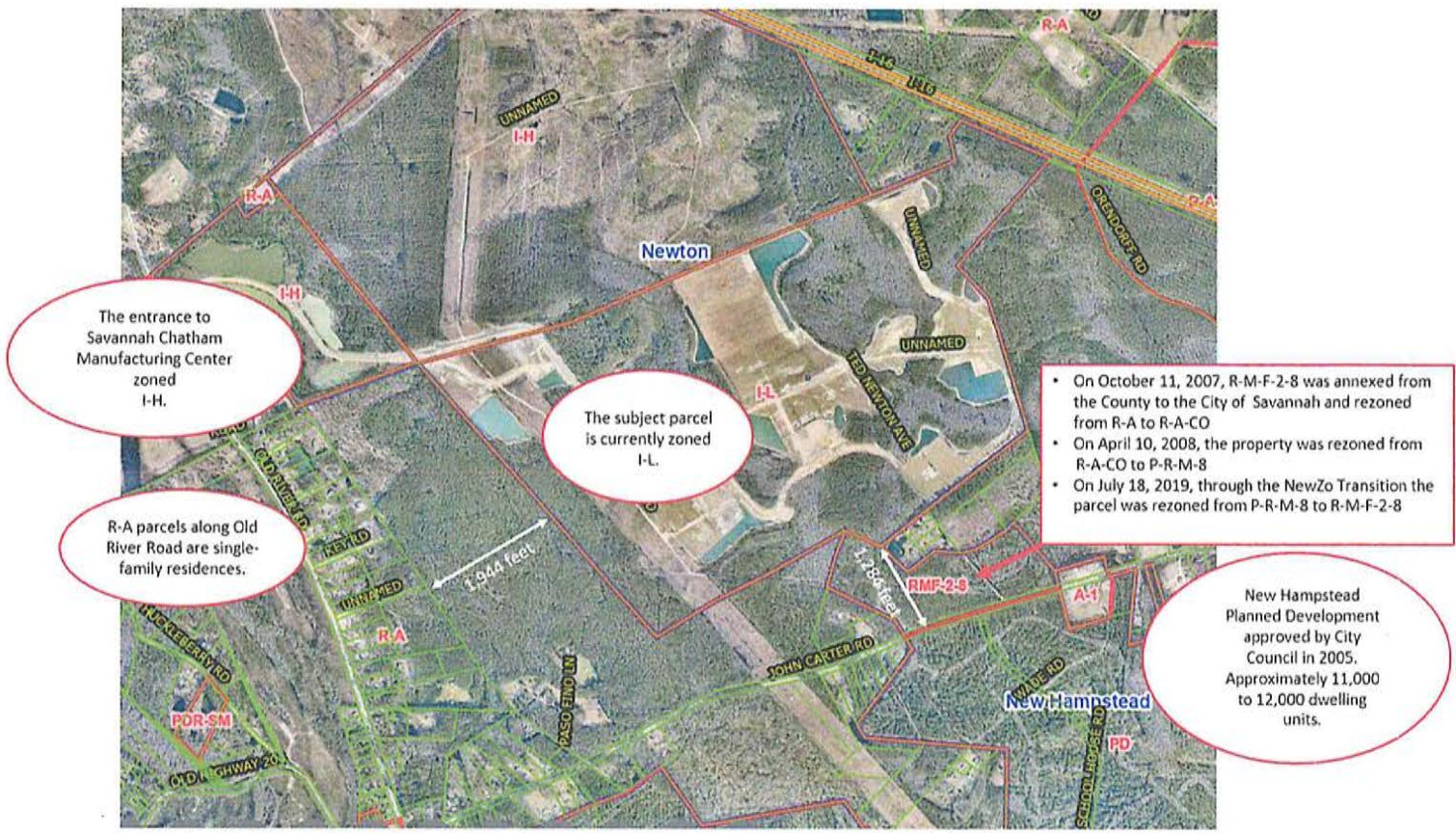
Background:

The subject property is located northeast of the intersection of John Carter Road and Old River Road and abuts Interstate 95 to the east. The property is currently vacant.

- On October 11, 2007, the parcel was annexed from the County to the City of Savannah and subsequently rezoned from R-A (Residential – Agricultural) to R-A-CO (Residential – Agricultural – County).
- On April 10, 2008, the subject parcel was rezoned from R-A-CO to a P-I-L zoning classification.
- On July 18, 2019, the City of Savannah through the NewZo Transition rezoned the property from P-I-L to I-L.
- The property was purchased by SEDA – Savannah Economic Development Authority in 2016 as a result of a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. The project was a joint venture between Chatham County and the City of Savannah with the intent of establishing a manufacturing center. The initial phases of development have been completed to include construction of the primary spine road Four Lakes Boulevard, stormwater detention and wetland mitigation.



For the property to have manufacturing uses within Savannah Chatham Manufacturing Center, the petitioner would need to rezone the property from the I-L (Light - Industrial) zoning district to the I-H (Heavy - Industrial) zoning district.



Surrounding uses around 500 John Carter

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Undeveloped	R-A
South	Undeveloped	R-A
East	Single family & multi-family	R-A & RMF-2-8
West	Vacant	I-H

This item was heard at the May 24th MPC meeting and was continued for 90 days for the petitioner to reach out to the communities involved.

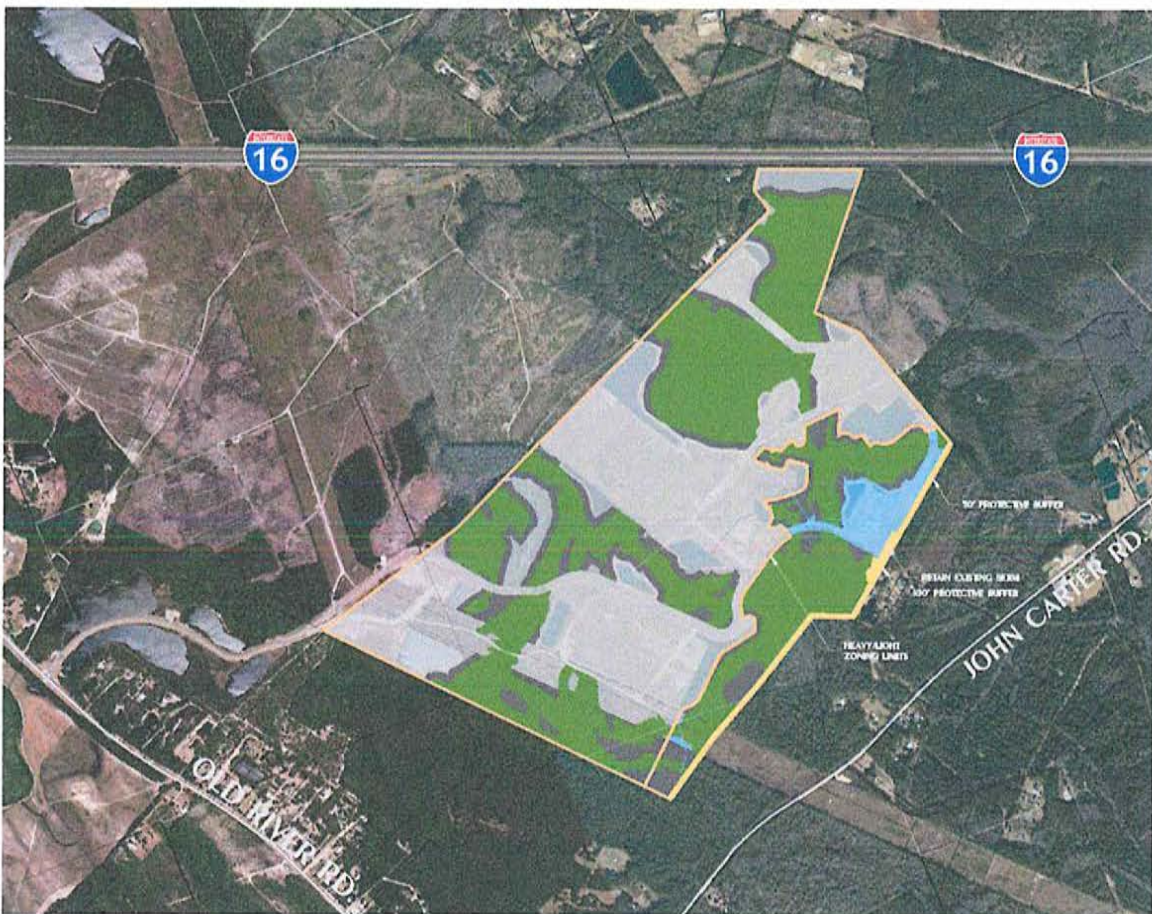
Public Notice:

As required by the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance, all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property were sent notices of the proposed rezoning. Four public notice signs were posted at various locations around the site.

The petitioner met, on four occasions, with different community members in the area. MPC staff also met on Friday, September 16, 2022, with the residents of the adjacent property on Ted Newton Avenue.

Impact and Suitability:

1. **Transportation Network:** The site is 1.8 miles from Interstate 16 and is also accessed from Old River Road. The proposed Savannah Chatham Manufacturing Center would be an Industrial Park. There is no public transit available in the immediate vicinity.
2. **Public Services and Facilities:** The subject parcel has access to the City's public water, sewer, and stormwater systems.
3. **Chatham Area Transit (CAT):** The property and surrounding area is currently not served by CAT.
4. **Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element:** The Chatham County-Savannah Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designates the subject property as *Planned Development*. The proposed Heavy Industrial zoning district is *compatible* with the *Planned Development* land use designation.



The map indicates the boundaries between the Light Industrial zoned area and the proposed Heavy Industrial portion. The portions colored in grey would be the upland portion for the proposed Heavy Industrial portion. The thick yellow line near the single-family residences on Ted Newton Avenue would have a 100-foot buffer including a berm and an 8-foot-high fence. The petitioner is proposing a 50-foot buffer on the remaining eastern portion of the parcel.

5. Existing I-L Zoning District:

- a. **Intent of the I-L District:** “The I-L district is established to provide for a wide range of research and development, light manufacturing and assembly, warehousing, and wholesaling activities as well as some support services. These uses are subject to standards intended to ensure such development is compatible with adjacent and nearby non-industrial areas. Development must be operated in a clean and quiet manner, with most activities occurring indoors, and should not be a nuisance to nearby non-industrial uses”
- b. **Allowed Uses:** The I-L district is a nonresidential zoning classification with a variety of light industrial uses. A list of the permitted uses allowed within the I-L district is attached (**Refer to Table 2**).
- c. **Development Standards:** The development standards for the I-L district appear in the attached table (**Refer to Table 1**) of this report.

6. Proposed I-H Zoning District:

- a. **Intent of the I-H District:** “The I-H district is established to provide sites for activities which involve large-scale warehousing, processing, manufacturing facilities, major transportation terminals and waste-related facilities that have a greater impact on the surrounding area than industries found in the IL-T and I-L districts. It is the intent of this district to provide an environment for industries that is unencumbered by nearby non-industrial development.”
- b. **Allowed Uses:** A list of the permitted uses allowed within the I-H district is attached (**Refer to Table 2**).
- c. **Development Standards:** The development standards for the I-H district appear in the attached table (**Refer to Table 1**).

Zoning Ordinance Review

The following review criteria for rezoning are prescribed in the Savannah Zoning Ordinance Sec. 3.5.8

- a. Suitability and Community Need
 - i. Whether the range of uses permitted by the proposed zoning district is more suitable than the range of uses that is permitted by the current zoning district.

MPC Comment: The range of uses permitted under the current and proposed zoning districts have similar uses except for four additional uses that are allowed in the I-H classification. The proposed I-H zoning district would allow for the following more intensive uses than what the Light Industrial classification offers as listed below:

- Intensive manufacturing
- Solid waste, and industrial landfill facility
(**Petitioner is excluding**)

- Mulch or compost processing, Class 3, 4 or 5
(Petitioner is excluding)
- Waste incinerator uses
(Petitioner is excluding)

The petitioner is excluding three out of the four additional uses that are permitted in the I-H district and are not permitted in the I-L zoning district. However, the one permitted use the petitioner has not excluded is Intensive Manufacturing.

Intensive Manufacturing is included as a permitted use in the Heavy Industrial zoning district.

- ii. Whether the proposed zoning district addresses a specific need in the county or city.

MPC Comment: The role of SEDA is to seek out economic development opportunities that benefit Savannah – Chatham County and the region. The County and City have envisioned the proposed Industrial Park will generate jobs, as well as other revenue and opportunities to lead in the areas of innovation that will benefit the community at large.

b. Compatibility

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

MPC Comment: Based on the location, the rezoning of this parcel may adversely affect the existing surrounding uses. The property would have a 100-foot buffer from the residential uses to the south. The scale of the development is significant, and the proposed buffer may be inadequate to protect adjacent residential uses.

- ii. Whether the zoning proposal is compatible with the present zoning pattern and conforming uses of nearby property and the character of the surrounding area.

MPC Comment: The present zoning pattern is sparse and includes a mix of Heavy Industrial zoning classifications, as well as single-family and multi-family classifications. The large tracks of heavy industrial classifications have intended to be used toward manufacturing, which is in alignment with the proposed Industrial Park. There are single-family and multi-family classifications mixed into the development pattern, as the area is generally rural in nature. In addition, the New Hampstead development has many phases under construction and will increase the residential population in that area.

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

MPC Comment: SEDA purchased the land in 2016, funded largely from SPLOST VI. The City of Savannah annexed the two parcels. The front parcel is currently zoned Heavy Industrial, while the large parcel to the rear is currently zoned Light Industrial. The

intention for the purchasing of the parcels was for SEDA to create an industrial park that allows for light industrial, as well as heavy industrial uses. However, these uses will likely have impacts on the existing residential as well as future planned residential nearby.

c. Consistency

Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans, such as a redevelopment plan or small area plan.

MPC Comment: The subject property has a Planned Development land use designation. The proposed development is an industrial park with a mix of light and heavy industrial uses. Like other industrial parks, this development would operate as a master planned area with internal road networks, common detention ponds, and shared infrastructure. These features are consistent with the intent of a planned development.

d. Reasonable Use

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

MPC Comment: The property has reasonable use under the current zoning but will not accommodate intensive manufacturing.

e. Adequate Public Services

Whether adequate school, public safety and emergency facilities, road, ingress and egress, parks, wastewater treatment, water supply and stormwater drainage facilities are available for the uses and densities that are permitted in the proposed zoning district.

MPC Comment: Adequate services are available. However, based on evidence presented by adjoining property owners there are existing storm water runoff issues in the vicinity. A regional review of storm water is under way that involves two adjacent counties.

f. Proximity to a Military Base, Installation or Airport

MPC Comment: The subject parcel is not located near a military base, installation, or airport.

Policy Analysis

The subject property was planned to be an industrial park through the partnership of Chatham County and the City of Savannah. The front portion of the property is currently classified as Heavy Industrial. However, the large parcel in the rear is currently zoned Light Industrial. The parcel to the rear is the subject parcel requesting to be rezoned Heavy Industrial with a portion remaining Light-Industrial. Intensive manufacturing which is allowed in the Heavy -Industrial classification

is likely to create impacts on adjacent residences. These impacts could include noise, heavy vehicle traffic, pollutants, and damage from storm water runoff. Based on these findings, the Planning Commission finds that the zoning shall remain Light – Industrial.

The I-L district includes similar uses as the proposed I-H zoning district with four distinct additional uses that I-H allows:

- Intensive manufacturing
- Solid waste, and industrial landfill facility
- Mulch or compost processing, Class 3, 4 or 5
- Waste incinerator uses

The petitioner is requesting to exclude the following uses from I-H:

- College, university, seminary
- Consumer Fireworks Retail Sales Facility
- Fuel, gas station
- Crematorium
- Event Venue
- Dry Cleaner / Laundry, Neighborhood
- Distillery, craft
- Bar; tavern
- Nightclub
- Restaurant
- Food Truck Park
- Retail consumption dealer (on premise consumption of alcohol)
- Winery; Meadery; Cidery
- Brewery, Micro
- Vehicle towing and impound facility
- Watercraft sales, repair, and service
- All adult-oriented businesses
- Boat Yard
- Watercraft Launch/Ramp
- Solid waste and industrial landfill facility
- Mulch or compost processing, Class 2
- Mulch or compost processing, Class 3, 4, or 5
- Mulch or compost processing, Class 6
- Recycling collection facility
- Waste incinerator
- Solid waste transfer station
- Airport, airfield; Heliport
- Railyard

Recommendation

Based the findings of the report and in the review criteria, the Planning Commission recommends **denial** of the request to rezone approximately 513 acres from I-L to I-H at 500 John Carter Road.

Note: Staff's recommendation is based upon information contained in the application and discussions with the Applicant. This recommendation could change based on information gathered during the public hearing.

**Table 1: Comparison of Development Standards for the I-L (Existing),
and I-H Zoning District (Proposed)**

Standards	I-L	Standards	I-H
Lot Dimensions (min)		Lot Dimensions (min)	
Lot area (sq. ft)	--	Lot area (sq. ft)	--
Lot width (ft)	--	Lot width (ft)	--
Building (max)		Building (max)	
Building Coverage	80%	Building Coverage	80%
Height (ft)	--	Height (ft)	--
Ground floor area (sq. ft)	--	Ground floor area (sq. ft)	--
Building Setback (min ft)		Building Setback (min ft)	
Front yard	25	Front yard	25
Side (street) yard	30	Side (street) yard	40
Side (interior) yard	20	Side (interior) yard	25
Rear yard	20	Rear yard	25
Rear Yard (adjacent to street/lane)	5	Rear Yard (adjacent to street/lane)	5
Parking Area Setback (min ft)		Parking Area Setback (min ft)	
From collector and arterial street rights-of-way	15	From collector and arterial street rights-of-way	15
From local street rights-of-way	10	From local street rights-of-way	10
From lane, property line or access easement	5	From lane, property line or access easement	5

Table 2: Comparison of Principal Uses for the I-L (Existing), and I-H Zoning Districts (Proposed)

X = Permitted Use

L = Limited Use

S = Special Use

I-L	I-H
<p>X - Agriculture, personal</p> <p>X - Agricultural, restricted</p> <p>X - Community Garden</p> <p>X - Park, general</p> <p>X - Post office</p> <p>X - Police / fire station or substation</p> <p>X - Emergency Medical Services (EMS) substation / Ambulance Service</p> <p>L - Shelter, emergency</p> <p>L - Shelter, transitional</p> <p>L - Soup kitchen</p> <p>X - College, university, seminary</p> <p>X - Educational building used by a college, university, or seminary</p> <p>X - School, trade, vocational or business</p> <p>L - All detention and correctional facilities except as listed below;</p> <p>S - Correctional transition facility</p> <p>X - Office, general</p> <p>L - Day labor employment center</p> <p>X - Office, utility / contractor</p> <p>X - Studio / multimedia production facility</p> <p>L - Indoor firearm range</p> <p>L - Consumer Fireworks Retail Sales Facility</p> <p>L - Convenience Store</p> <p>L - Fuel / gas station</p> <p>X - Garden Center</p>	<p>X - Agriculture, personal</p> <p>X - Park, general</p> <p>X - Police / fire station or substation</p> <p>X - Emergency Medical Services (EMS) substation / Ambulance Service</p> <p>X - College, university, seminary</p> <p>X - Educational building used by a college, university, or seminary</p> <p>X - School, trade, vocational or business</p> <p>X - Office, general</p> <p>L - Consumer Fireworks Retail Sales Facility</p> <p>L - Fuel / gas station</p> <p>X - Warehouse or Office Showroom / Flex Space</p> <p>L - Crematorium</p> <p>X - Event Venue</p> <p>X - Dry Cleaner / Laundry, Neighborhood</p> <p>X - Distillery, craft,</p> <p>L - Bar, tavern</p> <p>L - Nightclub</p> <p>L - Restaurant</p> <p>L - Food Truck Park</p> <p>L - Retail consumption dealer (on premise consumption of alcohol)</p> <p>X - Winery; Meadry; Cidery</p> <p>X - Brewery, Micro</p> <p>L - Vehicle Service, Heavy equipment / Heavy vehicle</p>

Table 2: Comparison of Principal Uses for the I-L (Existing), and I-H Zoning Districts (Proposed)

X = Permitted Use

L = Limited Use

S = Special Use

I-L	I-H
X - Plant nursery	L - Vehicle towing and impound facility
X - Truck Stop	L - Watercraft sales, repair, and service
X - Warehouse or Office Showroom / Flex Space	L - All adult-oriented business
L - Crematorium	X - Dock, Commercial
X - Event Venue	L - Boat Yard
X - Dry Cleaner / Laundry, Neighborhood	X - Watercraft Launch / Ramp
L - Self – service storage facility	L - Container Storage Yard
X - Tour company terminal	L - Outdoor Storage Yard
X - Distillery, craft,	X - Warehousing
L - Bar, tavern	X - Dry cleaning / Laundry plant
S - Nightclub	S - Salvage yard / Recycling facility
L - Restaurant	L - Manufacturing, Limited / Light
L - Food Truck Park	L - Manufacturing, General
L - Retail consumption dealer (on premise consumption of alcohol)	L – Manufacturing, Intensive
X - Ancillary retail dealer (off-premises consumption of alcohol)	L - Research, testing and development laboratory
X - Winery; Meadry; Cidery	X – Solid waste and industrial landfill facility
X - Brewery, Micro	S - Mulch or compost processing, Class 2
L - Heavy equipment / Heavy vehicle sales, rentals, and leasing	S – Mulch or compost processing, Class 3, 4 or 5
L - Vehicle Service, Heavy equipment / Heavy vehicle	L - Mulch or compost processing, Class 6
L - Vehicle service, minor	X- Recycling collection facility
L - Vehicle service, major	S – Waste incinerator
L - Vehicle towing and impound facility	S - Solid waste transfer facility
L - Vehicle wash, full or self-service	S - Airport, airfield; Heliport
	X - Intermodal freight yard
	X - Passenger terminal

Table 2: Comparison of Principal Uses for the I-L (Existing), and I-H Zoning Districts (Proposed)

X = Permitted Use
L = Limited Use
S = Special Use

I-L	I-H
L - Watercraft sales, repair, and service	X - Railyard
L - All adult-oriented business	X - Transportation dispatch and storage
X - Dock, Commercial	X - Vehicle and freight terminal
L - Boat Yard	S - Broadcast transmission tower
X - Watercraft Launch / Ramp	X - Utilities, major
L - Container Storage Yard	X - Utilities, minor
L - Outdoor Storage Yard	
X - Warehousing	
X - Dry cleaning / Laundry plant	
S - Salvage yard / Recycling facility	
L - Manufacturing, Artisan / Craft	
L - Manufacturing, Limited / Light	
L - Manufacturing, General	
L - Research, testing and development laboratory	
S - Mulch or compost processing, Class 2	
L - Mulch or compost processing, Class 6	
X - Recycling collection facility	
S - Solid waste transfer facility	
S - Airport, airfield; Heliport	
X - Intermodal freight yard	
X - Passenger terminal	
X - Railyard	
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X - Vehicle and freight terminal	
S - Broadcast transmission tower	

Table 2: Comparison of Principal Uses for the I-L (Existing), and I-H Zoning Districts (Proposed)

X = Permitted Use

L = Limited Use

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I-L	I-H
X - Utilities, major	
X - Utilities, minor	