



# METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

*"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"*

M E M O R A N D U M

**DATE:** August 26, 2025  
**TO:** THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH  
**FROM:** METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION  
**SUBJECT:** Text Amendment

**PETITION REFERENCED:**

**Petitioner:** Glynda M. Jones

**Petition File Number:** 25-003914-ZA

**MPC ACTION:**

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the requested text amendment to require issuance of a Special Use Permit for the establishment of a Vehicle and Freight Terminal or Vehicle Towing and Impound Facility in the IL-R zoning district, and to permit modifications of the following sections:

- 'Outdoor Storage' in the IL-R (Sec. 5.17.9.b.ii)
- Configuration of 'Outdoor Sales' display areas and associated structures (Sec. 8.4.18)
- Standards regulating the operation and configuration of Vehicle and Freight Terminals (Sec. 8.6)
- Clarification regarding Outdoor Display Areas (Sec. 8.7.12.b.)
- Clarification regarding Principal Use Outdoor Storage Areas (Sec. 9.7)
- Establishment of a new minimum fence and buffer standard for Principal Use Outdoor Storage Areas (Sec. 9.7.4)

**MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

MPC Staff recommends **approval** of the requested text amendment to require issuance of a Special Use Permit for the establishment of a Vehicle and Freight Terminal or Vehicle Towing and Impound Facility in the IL-R zoning district, and to permit modifications of the following sections:

- 'Outdoor Storage' in the IL-R (Sec. 5.17.9.b.ii)
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- Establishment of a new minimum fence and buffer standard for Principal Use Outdoor Storage Areas (Sec. 9.7.4)

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** 13

Traci Amick  
Laureen Boles  
Travis Coles – Vice Chair, ONLINE  
Karen Jarrett – Chairwoman  
Michael Kaigler  
Jay Melder  
Jeff Notrica  
Stephen Plunk  
Coren Ross  
Dwayne Stephens  
Joseph Welch  
Amanda Wilson  
Tom Woiwode

**PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:** Approve Staff Recommendation. (13-0)

<b>APPROVAL Votes: 13</b>	<b>DENIAL Votes:</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Recused</b>
Amick Boles Coles Jarrett Kaigler Melder Notrica Plunk Ross Stephens Welch Wilson Woiwode		Ervin		



Respectfully submitted,  
*Melanie Wilson/PE*  
Melanie Wilson  
Executive Director and CEO

MW/sh

Enclosure

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



# CHATHAM COUNTY-SAVANNAH METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

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*“Planning the Future, Respecting the Past”*

## **Council Report**

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Planning Commission

**DATE:** August 26, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Text Amendment to the City of Savannah Zoning Ordinance  
Re: Amendment of Zoning Ordinance Articles 5 (Base Standards), 8 (Use Standards), and 9 (General Site Standards) pertaining to the regulation of Vehicle and Freight Terminals and Vehicle Towing and Impound Facilities

Applicant: Glynda M. Jones, President – Liberty City-Richfield-Southover Community Improvement Association, Inc.

**MPC FILE NO:** 25-003914-ZA-TEXT

### **REQUEST:**

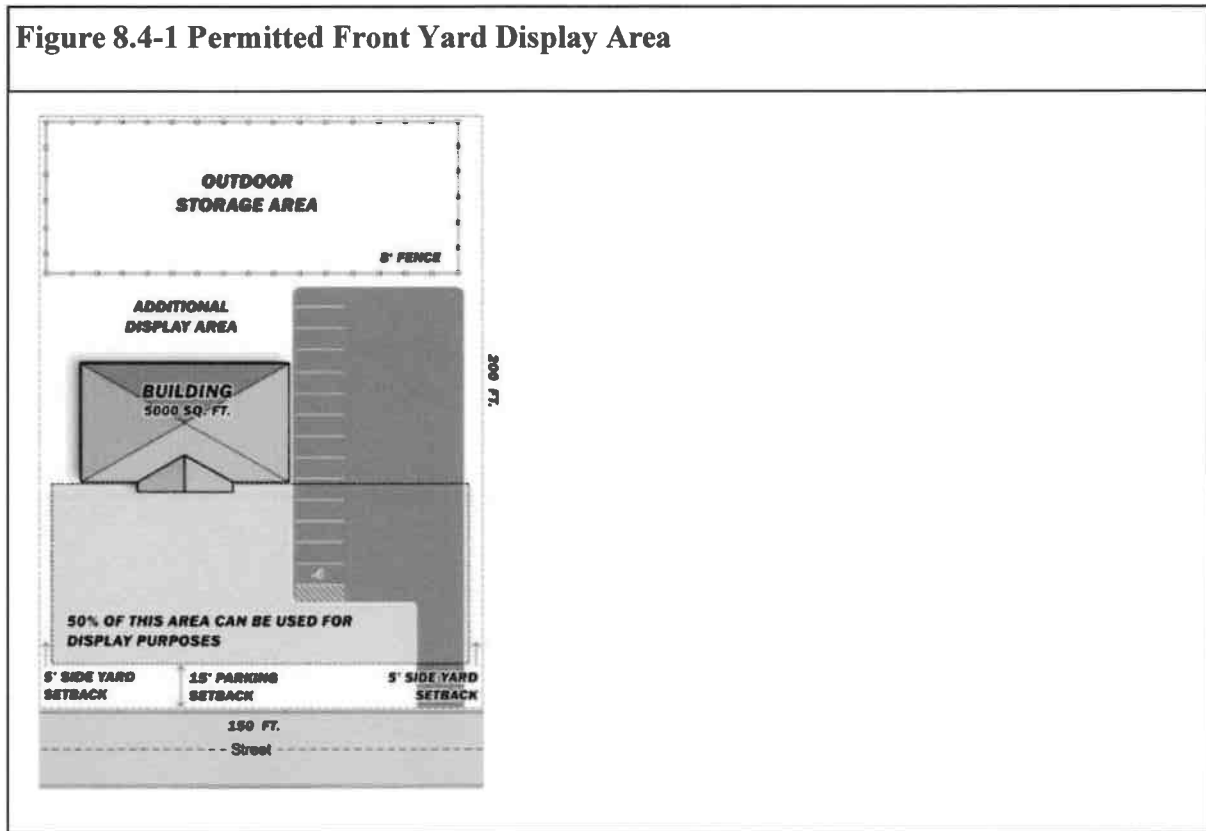
The Petitioner requests amendment of the IL-R (Light Industrial-Restricted) zoning district to require issuance of a Special Use Permit from Savannah’s City Council in establishing a ‘Vehicle and Freight Terminal Use’ or ‘Vehicle Towing and Impound Facility’ use within the District.

The Petitioner also requests modification of standards related to:

- ‘Outdoor Storage’ in the IL-R (Sec. 5.17.9.b. ii)
- Configuration of ‘Outdoor Sales’ display areas and associated structures (Sec. 8.4.18)
- Standards regulating the operation and configuration of Vehicle and Freight Terminals (Sec. 8.6)
- Clarification regarding Outdoor Display Areas (Sec. 8.7.12.b.)
- Clarification regarding Principal Use Outdoor Storage Areas (Sec. 9.7)
- Establishment of a new minimum fence and buffer standard for Principal Use Outdoor Storage Areas (Sec. 9.7.4)



**Figure 8.4-1 Permitted Front Yard Display Area**



#### **8.4.44 Vehicle Towing and Impound Facility**

- a. As of the Effective Date of this Ordinance any new such use or the area of expansion of an existing such use, as applicable, shall comply with the following:
  - i. Such use shall be located at least 200 feet from any Residential district or existing residence.
  - ii. Facility only shall mean indoor storage of vehicles only. No outdoor storage. Indoor storage only in the B-N, B-C and I-L-R districts.
  - iii. Yard shall mean facility with outdoor storage of vehicles. Only permitted in the I-L-T, I-L and I-H districts.
    1. Such use shall comply with Sec. 9.7, Principal Use Outdoor Display Areas. In addition, outdoor storage areas shall be screened by an opaque wall or fence at least six (6) feet in height in accordance with Sec. 9.6, Fences and Walls.

#### **Sec. 8.6.4 Vehicle and Freight Terminal**

**As of the Effective Date of this Ordinance any new such use or the area of expansion of an existing such use, as applicable, shall comply with the following:**

- a. **Hours of operation shall be limited to 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.**
- b. **Unless a larger buffer applies, a Type B buffer yard shall be installed along the perimeter of the site, including street rights-of-way.**
- c. **Pole-mounted lighting shall be limited to 25 feet in height.**
- d. **For vehicle shipping uses, vehicle stacking space shall be provided within the site at a ratio of 150 linear feet of stacking per acre of outdoor storage area. Fractions of an acre that are greater than 0.5 shall be rounded to 1 acre.**
- e. **A traffic impact analysis shall be required for sites larger than 2.5 acres.**
- f. **The paving requirements defined in Sec. 9.3.5.c shall not be varied.**
- g. **Outdoor storage areas shall be subject to Sec. 9.7 Principal Use Outdoor Storage Areas.**

#### **8.7.12 Outdoor Display Areas**

The following standards apply to outdoor display areas that are not a principal use (see Sec. 9.7, Principal Use Outdoor Storage Areas), or temporary use (Sec. 8.8, Temporary Uses). A permanent and enclosed component of a retail use that shares a common wall with the principal building is not considered an outdoor display area.

##### **a. General**

- i. The outdoor display area shall be located on an improved surface such as the sidewalk or pavement.
- ii. Outdoor display areas shall not include hazardous and/or flammable materials, such as gasoline, oil, antifreeze and kerosene. Such areas may include propane tanks. Fertilizers must be contained to prevent run-off and shall be stored no less than 25 feet from a stormwater detention pond or a stormwater inlet (drain).

##### **b. Outdoor Display Areas Adjacent to Building**

Outdoor display areas shall be permitted adjacent to the building façade provided that such display area:

- i. At least four (4) feet along the parking lot side of the display area shall be maintained free of obstruction to allow for pedestrian and handicap movement, such that pedestrians do not have to enter the parking lot or drive aisle to walk around the display.
- ii. Shall be located at least three (3) feet from any public entrance.
- iii. Shall only occur along building façades with a public entrance.

**c. Outdoor Display Areas away from Building**

Outdoor display areas not adjacent to the façade shall be permitted according to the following standards:

- i. The display area shall not exceed more than 10% of the yard in which it is located or 20,000 square feet, whichever is less; and
- ii. A designated display area shall be shown on the site plan. At least two (2) sides of the display area shall have a fence, planters or similar physical barrier.

**Sec. 9.7 Principal Use Outdoor Storage Areas**

**9.7.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this Section is to provide standards for permanent and semi-permanent outdoor storage areas. including storage areas that are associated with a principal use other than Outdoor Storage Yard and occupy greater than 30% of the disturbed or improved site area. The following standards have been established in order to ensure that such storage ~~and display~~ does not create an unsafe condition, impede pedestrian or vehicular movement or otherwise create a nuisance. The areas designated for the display of vehicle for sale, rental or lease will be exempt.

**9.7.2 Applicability**

- a. This Section shall apply to permanent and semi-permanent outdoor storage ~~and display~~ areas that are not ~~an accessory use or~~ a temporary use. For outdoor ~~storage and~~ display as an accessory use to a permitted principal use, see Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses. For temporary outdoor storage and display, see Sec. 8.8, Temporary Uses.
- b. Principal use outdoor storage ~~and display~~ areas shall comply with all the standards of the zoning district, except as expressly set forth in this Section.
- c. Outdoor storage which occupies more than 30% of the disturbed or improved area of a site containing another principal use shall be considered Principal Use Outdoor Storage except when it meets the requirements of Sec. 8.7.12 Outdoor Display Areas.

### 9.7.3 Site Development Plan Required

A site development plan (see Sec. 3.8, Development Plan Review) depicting the location and extent of the proposed area for outdoor storage ~~and/or display~~ area is required.

### 9.7.4 General Provisions

- a) Outdoor storage ~~and display~~ areas may not be located within any setbacks (including parking area setbacks), buffers, floodplains, marshes or wetlands, unless permitted elsewhere in this Ordinance.
- b) Storage ~~and/or display~~ areas are prohibited within rights-of-way and easements, unless an encroachment permit or written permission is provided by the City of Savannah or easement holder, as applicable.
- c) Storage ~~and/or display~~ of bulk, toxic or hazardous materials within a floodplain is prohibited. Other materials may be stored or displayed in the floodplain as approved by the City Manager or his or her designee. See City of Savannah Code Part 4, Chapter 11, Stormwater Management for additional regulations.
- d) No materials shall be stored ~~or displayed~~ in areas intended for vehicular or pedestrian movement including parking areas, fire lanes and sidewalks.
- e) ~~In addition to the standards in this Section, fences and walls shall comply with Sec. 9.6, Fences and Walls. Unless a greater buffer requirement applies, Principal Use Outdoor Storage shall be enclosed by a fully opaque fence with height not less than eight (8) feet. Where Principal Use Outdoor Storage is located along a public street and a more stringent street yard buffer is not required, a Type A buffer shall be provided along the outdoor storage area and include an opaque fence as described above.~~

### FACTS AND FINDINGS:

1. The Industrial (“I-”) districts are established to allow industrial and industrial-like uses with limited non-industrial uses. The intensity of uses allowed is indicated by the suffix following the district name, with the Light Industrial-Restricted district being the most limited and the Heavy Industrial district the most intense.
2. The IL-R district is established to accommodate industrial properties that developed prior to 1960 and which are typically located adjacent to or within residential areas. This district may also allow limited commercial, light manufacturing and assembly, research and development and small-scale [warehousing](#) and processing uses in order to promote economic viability and encourage employment growth. Development must be operated in a clean and quiet manner, with all activities occurring primarily indoors, and should not be a nuisance to nearby non-industrial uses.





*impound lot or freight terminal for the purpose of protecting public health, safety, and welfare. This is particularly appropriate for these specific predominately outdoor activities in the IL-R district, which is described as accommodating "clean and quiet" operations "primarily indoors" and aiming to avoid nuisances to nearby non-industrial uses, especially as it's often located adjacent to or within residential areas.*

- b. **New or Changing Circumstances** – The extent to which the proposed text amendment represents a new idea not considered in the existing Zoning Ordinance, or represents a revision necessitated by changing circumstances over time.

**MPC Staff Comment:** *The proposed text amendment is likely best contextualized as a response to a deeper understanding of the detrimental impacts of industrial encroachment into predominately minority communities. The proposed modifications respect the vested rights of these industrial property owners but are intended to ensure structures and uses associated with these properties are configured in a manner that is safer and more aesthetically compatible for all community stakeholders.*

- c. **Error or Inappropriate Standard** – Whether or not the proposed text amendment corrects an error in the Zoning Ordinance, or otherwise improves upon existing requirements or standards.

**MPC Staff Comment:** *The text amendment includes clarifying language to improve understanding and administration of standards pertaining to 'outdoor display areas,' 'outdoor sales areas,' and 'outdoor storage areas.' The proposed amendment also establishes a minimum fence and buffer standard for 'Principal Use Outdoor Storage' areas, which was likely an unintentional omission.*

- d. **Compliance with Higher Law** – Whether or not the proposed text amendment revises the Zoning Ordinance to comply with state or federal statutes.

**MPC Staff Comment:** *The proposed amendment is not intended to bring the Ordinance into alignment with state or federal statutes.*

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Recommend approval of the request or an alternate amendment.
2. Recommend denial of the request.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning Commission recommends **approval** of the requested text amendment to require issuance of a Special Use Permit for the establishment of a Vehicle and Freight Terminal or Vehicle Towing and Impound Facility in the IL-R zoning district, and to permit modifications of the following sections:

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