



A Better Environment

LAND PLANNING
LAND SURVEYING
CIVIL ENGINEERING
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
COMPREHENSIVE ENGINEERING
SOIL MAPPING & SEPTIC SYSTEMS
WETLAND & ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

January 2, 2025

Mr. Bruce Lonnee, Director
Athens-Clarke County Planning Dept.
120 W. Dougherty Street
Athens, GA 30601

**RE: Neighborhood Grocery Store & Restaurant Development – AR to CR Rezone Report
6535 Jefferson Road, Athens, GA 30607**

Owners: Luis Contreras Martinez & Carolina Medrano

**Owner's Contact & Authorized Agent: Mr. Abe Abouhamdan, PE, FASCE
ABE Consulting, Inc.**

TP#: 054C 087

Current Zonings: A-R (Agricultural Residential)

Proposed Zonings: C-R (Commercial-Rural)

Total Parcel Area: 4.354 Acres

Dear Mr. Lonnee:

ABE Consulting, Inc. (ABE) is the Authorized Agent for the Owner for this CR proposed rezone request. ABE is pleased to submit this report in support of this CR rezone request since it involves a neighborhood size grocery store, small restaurant and a couple of small retail or business suites. The subject property is currently zoned AR (Agricultural - Residential). The proposed zoning is C-R (Commercial-Rural). This request is considered a Type II Planned Development since the proposed zoning classification conforms to the current Future Land Use Map. Rural is currently designated on the current Future Land Map which is compatible with the proposed C-R zoning.

The following provides responses for this request for consideration:

- 1. Explain how the proposed zoning action is compatible with the Future Land Use Map, the general plans for the physical development of Athens-Clarke County, and any master plan or portion thereof adopted by the Mayor and Commission.*

As designated, the proposed request conforms well with the Future Land Use Map and the overall development plans of Athens-Clarke County (ACC). The subject area is located within a commercial developing corridor with various commercial uses. Furthermore, the

ABE Consulting, Inc.

2410 Hog Mountain Road, Suite 103, Watkinsville, GA 30677

PH: 706-613-8900 Fax : 706-425-9631 E-mail: abe@ABEconsultinginc.com

subject development fronts on a major State Highway which makes more suitable for this type of use rather than residential.

2. *The proposed use meets all objective criteria set forth for the use provided in the zoning ordinance and conforms to the purpose and intent of the comprehensive plan and all its elements.*

The proposed development meets and exceeds all objective criteria set forth for the commercial-rural use as outlined in the zoning ordinances. This proposal conforms to the scale, size and character of a commercial rural neighborhood development. This proposal also conforms to the intent of the comprehensive plan and all of its elements.

3. *The proposal will not adversely affect the balance of land uses in Athens-Clarke County.*

The planned development request provides a good balance within the Jefferson Road developing corridor zoning and uses. The proposed development provides a balanced approach to a successful commercial-rural project. The Owners currently lease and operate a similar neighborhood scale commercial business (La Jalisco Supermercado) which is located on 3750 old Jefferson Road. The current landlord is requesting that they vacate the premises with no possible negotiation or lease extension. This is a great way of keeping existing rural commercial business in the County. The proposal will allow the Owners to relocate from an existing location to another on Jefferson Road. The proposed development has been a success especially to the Hispanic Community. This is a much-needed development for the Hispanic and other citizens of the County. The request is not anticipated to have any adverse effects on the balance of land uses in the County.

4. *Public services, which include physical facilities and staff capacity, exist sufficient to service the proposal.*

The proposed request will have minimum impacts to physical facilities and staff capacity since this involves the relocation of an existing rural commercial development. Existing services are anticipated to be more than sufficient to serve this neighborhood scale request. In addition, the proposed development will substantially increase the tax digest and provide additional tax dollars to offset some of the County operational costs. Due to its rural size and location, minimum public services demands are anticipated for the proposed rezone request.

5. *The Existing land use pattern surrounding the property in issue.*

The existing land use patterns in the vicinity have a mixture of commercial and residential uses with varying sizes and scales. Single-family residential, multi-family, rural commercial, office and service establishment and large retail centers (Public Shopping Center) are found in the vicinity area. The proposed rezone conforms and compliments land use patterns in the

Jefferson Road corridor. The request allows for a relocation of an existing rural commercial use to another location in the vicinity area. This is a unique development that caters to the Hispanic Community and others in the area.

6. The Possible creation of an isolated district unrelated to adjacent and nearby districts.

It is clear that the proposed use will not create an isolated district unrelated to adjacent and nearby districts. This rezone request for a rural scale commercial development is being proposed within a predominately developed commercial corridor along Jefferson Road.

7. The Population density pattern and possible increase or over-taxing of the load on public facilities, including, but not limited to, schools, utilities, and streets.

The proposed rezone provides a great opportunity to increase the tax digest and increase the sales tax collected as a result of this development. No residential units are being added to the overall request which eliminates any burden to schools and other public facilities.

Public water will be utilized for the project. Sewerage service is anticipated to be provided through private on-site septic system, unless an agreement is reached with an adjacent neighbor to extend the public sewer line to the subject site. Public water and sewer are available on site and within the rights-of-way (ROW) of adjacent roads. It is anticipated that existing water and sanitary sewer capacities will be adequate based on the low demands calculated for the proposed uses.

The subject property fronts on a Major State Hwy (Jefferson Road / US Hwy 129). The proposed right-in / right-out entrance with proper deceleration lane and acceleration tapers will provide safe and adequate access to the site. The Jefferson Road will provide more than sufficient capacity to service this project at its location. Furthermore, there is an existing driveway apron on site which will be improved to meet GDOT standards and used as the main entrance to the development. The overall number of daily trips generated for the site based on ITE 11th Edition Trip Generation Manual Code 822 Retail Plaza is 567 TPD. These trip generations are considered nominal to the available capacity of Jefferson Road. It is anticipated that the proposed development minimum to no impact to existing roadway infrastructure.

8. The cost of the Unified Government and other governmental entities in providing, improving, increasing or maintaining public utilities, schools, streets and other public safety measures.

Minimum increase in demand is anticipated for this rezone request since no roadways or ROWs are being created with this rezone request. The existing roadway infrastructure and current driveway, as improved, will be utilized. It is anticipated that existing roadways will be sufficient to accommodate the proposed average daily trips. It is not anticipated that the County will incur additional costs in maintaining the existing roadway as a result of this

proposed PD since the existing roadway is a GDOT Hwy and has already been developed for heavy traffic uses.

The Owner intends to connect to the existing 8" water line and possibly extend the existing sewer line to the site as required. Should public sewer not be an option for sewerage service, the Owners will install a private on-site septic system. All necessary Level III Soil testing has been completed on-site which provides adequate soils capacity for the calculated flows for the proposal. Additional costs to the County for installing water and sewer lines are not anticipated since the Owner / Developer will be responsible for such modifications and extensions on-site. The existing water and sewer lines are currently being maintained by the County and minimal additional cost for maintaining any sewer extension line is anticipated. All new lines will be designed and constructed to meet the current County standards. Newly installed lines will have great life spans and low maintenance needs based on the strict adherence to County requirements.

Public school student population will not increase as a result of this project since no residential units or components are a part of this request.

Public safety will likely see a minimal cost increase based on the proposed commercial-rural size and uses of this rezone. No additional measurable costs are anticipated for Public Safety as a result of this rezone request since all of the structures will include all current safety measures as required by local and State regulations.

Overall, increase in the County Tax Digest, increase of sales tax revenue and job creation as a result of implementing the proposed will help more than offset the cost increases to the County.

9. The possible impact on the environment, including, but not limited to, drainage, soil erosion and sedimentation, flooding, air quality and water quantity.

Minimal impacts to the environment are expected with the implementation of this project. The project will be designed and constructed to meet current County standards for detaining stormwater runoff and flood control. In addition, water quality features and measures will be implemented to ensure that all County standards and codes are met or exceeded as required. Soil erosion control plans will be prepared to meet the latest published standards by the County and GA SWCC (Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission). Approximately, 30% of the entire parcel will remain natural and undisturbed. Furthermore, disturbed areas, outside the impervious areas, will be landscaped and re-established with vegetation per County Tree Management Plans.

The proposed rezone is anticipated to include approximately 30 % impervious coverage which is well below the maximum lot coverage as allowed under the C-R Zoning District.

Air quality impacts are expected to be minimal since the proposed rural scale commercial area generated minimum air quality concerns. The proposed development air quality is considered clean with low emissions.

10. Whether the proposed zoning action will be a deterrent to the value or improvement of development of adjacent property in accordance with existing regulations.

The proposed rezone will not adversely impact or be a deterrent to the value or improvements of adjacent properties. The subject property is located on a Major State Hwy with proposed improvements concentrated mainly at the front of the lot. Various other commercial, offices, RM (multi-family residential) and large retail centers in the vicinity area. The proposed development has been placed at the front of the lot as close to the Hwy as possible with proposed expanded buffers along adjacent properties. No adverse impacts are expected to adjacent properties values since the majority of the structures and parking are bordered by GDOT R/W. The remainder of the site will be maintained either natural or landscaped.

11. Whether there are substantial reasons why the property cannot be used in accordance with existing zoning; provided, however, evidence that the economic value of the property as currently zoned is less than its economic value if rezoned as requested will not alone constitute a significant detriment.

The existing lot is currently vacant, most likely due to its frontage and proximity to the Hwy which deters most residential single family uses. The current lot is not found conducive for single family residential development. The proposed rezone seems to be more fitting and appropriate scale / size since the subject fronts on a major Hwy. The overall Jefferson Road Corridor has been developing and re-developing with various commercial and business establishments. The proposal provides a great opportunity for the Owners to relocate their new business within proximity to their existing business. The intent here is to develop a rural scale commercial project that is much needed for the County and especially the Hispanic community.

12. The aesthetic effect of existing and future use of the property as it relates to the surrounding area.

The vacant lot invites problems dealing with illegal dumping and site upkeep. The proposed scale of the development, proposed expanded buffers and maintenance of natural wooded areas create a better approach to existing and future use of the property. Building styles and architecture are anticipated to be aesthetically more fitting with its surrounding area. Main emphases on small scale architectural structures and elements instead of large box style will be implemented for this project. Smaller individualized shops and store approach would be utilized in developing the overall architecture of the building. This approach is anticipated to



be more aesthetically fitting to existing and future use of the property as it relates to surrounding areas.

13. 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.

It is evident that Jefferson Road corridor has been transforming through re-developments and new commercial centers throughout the past several years. It was extremely difficult to find a lot along Jefferson Road that would be possible for the Owner's business relocation.

Existing and changing conditions create a substantial lack of available lots or buildings in the market and especially within the Jefferson Road Corridor. The proposed request addresses a true need for the community and allows a local small business to stay in the County and within proximity to their current location.

Thank you for your assistance and consideration of our request. Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me at 706-613-8900.

Respectfully submitted,
ABE Consulting, Inc.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Abe Abouhamdan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Abe Abouhamdan, P.E, F.ASCE
President & CEO

Attachment: