



**STAFF REPORT
FUTURE LAND USE AMENDMENT
0 OLD ELBERTON ROAD
ZONE-2025-05-1052
JULY 3rd, 2025**

APPLICANT: William Diehl
OWNER: FAE Clarke, LLC
FUTURE LAND USE REQUEST: From *Rural to Employment Center*
ZONING REQUEST: From Agricultural Residential (A-R) to
Employment Industrial (E-I)
TYPE OF REQUEST: Type I
LOCATION: 0 Old Elberton Road
TAX MAP NUMBERS: 273 001
COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT: District 3
PROJECT SIZE: 233 Acres
PRESENT USE: Undeveloped
PROPOSED USE: Industrial
PUBLIC NOTICE POSTED: June 18th, 2025
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: FUTURE LAND USE: **COMMENTS ONLY**
..... ZONING: **COMMENTS ONLY**
PLANNING COMM. RECOMMENDATION: FUTURE LAND USE: **COMMENTS ONLY**
..... ZONING: **COMMENTS ONLY**
MAYOR & COMMISSION AGENDA SETTING: .. September 16, 2025 (tentative)
MAYOR & COMMISSION VOTING SESSION: October 7, 2025 (tentative)

I. Purpose of Applicant Request

A. Proposal

This request is to change a 233.09-acre parcel from Agricultural Residential (AR) to Employment Industrial (E-I). The corresponding Future Land Use change is from *Rural to Employment Center*. The request includes a conceptual plan with four structures ranging from 360,000 sf to 600,000 sf for over 2 million square feet of buildings. The concept is for speculative buildings that are proposed to house light industrial operations. There is also associated surface parking and driveways.

B. Existing Conditions

The property is currently vacant. It was previously used for agriculture, and includes a few driveways and a dilapidated structure. There are also some environmental areas on the property, including creeks and ponds. The parcel sits toward the northeastern edge of Athens-Clarke County, it is adjacent to other AR parcels, Coile Middle School, and across Old Elberton Road from the northeastern tip of the Athena Industrial Park (zoned E-I). Sewer is not immediately available in this area. The end of the closest line is at Coile Middle School, and line is sited at a higher elevation than the subject property with no other surrounding parcels having sanitary sewer access. The site has

limited vehicular access with Old Elberton Road being two lanes. The next closest roadway is Pittard Road, which is also limited in size and has residential properties before connecting to a main road. Voyles Road is the closest connection point for accessing Hwy 72 (Hull Rd) to handle industrial traffic, along with Spring Valley Road to head back towards town or GA Loop 10. The site has rolling topography toward the front, but drops over 100' toward the rear or northeastern portion of the property. The Future Land Use of the surrounding area mirrors the mix in zoning.

II. Policy Analysis

A. Compatibility with the Future Land Use Map

The 2023 Future Land Use Map designates the subject parcel as *Rural*, which is described as follows:

Rural

Rural lands are intended to have very low residential density. To maintain open space, clustering of dwellings is encouraged with common open spaces protected by conservation easements.

Agricultural functions are encouraged, as well as other compatible uses, such as limited low-impact commercial uses, equestrian facilities and other animal boarding uses.

The applicant is requesting a change to the Future Land Use Map from *Rural* to *Employment*, which is described as follows:

Employment Center

These are areas of industry, office, research parks, and flex-space mixed uses. Large-scale employment areas, which include large industrial areas, manufacturing, office parks, and research centers, is incompatible with housing. Smaller-scale employment areas are appropriate to be in close proximity to a neighborhood area. Design standards regulating building placement, landscaping, and buffering should apply. Small amounts of retail may be compatible in some areas.

The Future Land Use request is very different in nature, seeking to go from low-intensity agrarian uses to higher intensity industrial uses and associated effects. This tract does sit across the street from some *Employment* properties; however, they make up the edge of Athens' industrial area in this part of town. That boundary has stayed firm due to limited infrastructure availability and access issues. This request, with few details, is seeking to change that balance in a significant way due to the size of the parcel. Staff understands industrial projects can be of a larger scale, however, project details are minimal and do not provide enough information to make such a large switch. The surrounding properties are also mostly *Rural* and *Employment*, with the school property being *Government*.

End of Staff Report.