



**STAFF REPORT  
REZONE  
231 COLLINS INDUSTRIAL BOULEVARD  
ZONE-2025-05-1097  
JULY 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**

APPLICANT: ..... Carter Engineering Consultants Inc.  
OWNER: .....BRRG Development Company LLC  
ZONING REQUEST: ..... E-I to I  
TYPE OF REQUEST: ..... Type II  
LOCATION: .....231 Collins Industrial Boulevard  
TAX MAP NUMBERS: ..... 162 024D  
COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT: .....District 9  
PROJECT SIZE: ..... 15.1 Acres  
PRESENT USE: ..... Bottling Plant  
PROPOSED USE: .....Heavy Manufacturing  
PUBLIC NOTICE POSTED: ..... June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: .....***APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS***  
PLANNING COMM. RECOMMENDATION: .....***PENDING***  
MAYOR & COMMISSION AGENDA SETTING: .. July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (tentative)  
MAYOR & COMMISSION VOTING SESSION: .... August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (tentative)

## **I. Summary Recommendation**

This rezone request for 231 Collins Industrial Blvd. is to rezone from E-I to I. Quality Concrete Block is the intended occupant for 231 Collins Industrial Blvd, the former site of Southern Brewing Company, which is currently zoned E-I. The rezone request does not require a Future Land Use Map change. The applicant has submitted a non-binding site plan to illustrate the re-use of the existing building and infrastructure, and to show the location and scope of proposed additions.

The 15.1-acre parcel has road frontage on Collins Industrial Blvd. and Conrad Drive. The northwestern and northeastern boundaries of the property are bordered by eight residential lots. The closest residential structure to the proposed limits of development is over 700' away. All other parcels adjacent to the subject property are Zoned E-I. The I (Industrial) zone allows for 95% lot coverage and the submitted concept plan shows over 50% of the parcel to remain forested. To minimize any impacts to surrounding residential uses, Staff has evaluated limitations on use and access, and additional buffering.

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. The following Industrial uses are prohibited a) Feed lots or Slaughterhouses, b) Junk Yards and Auto Wrecking, c) Transfer Stations, d) Sanitary Landfills, Landfills, or Commercial Incinerators, e) Asphalt Plants, and f) Mines, Mining, Surface Mining, Quarries, Gravel Pits, or Sand Pits.
2. The applicant shall provide a vegetated 50 ft. buffer along the northwestern and northeastern property lines where adjacent parcels are zoned for residential uses to minimize impact on those neighboring parcels.
3. Vehicular access shall only come from Collins Industrial Boulevard.

## **II. Purpose of Applicant Request**

### **A. Proposal**

The requested zoning action is to rezone 231 Collins Industrial Blvd. from Employment-Industrial (E-I) to Industrial (I). The 15.1-acre parcel has road frontage on Collins Industrial Blvd. and Conrad Drive. The topography of the developed areas of the parcel is relatively flat. The applicant has submitted a concept site plan to illustrate the proposed scope of work. The plans submitted are non-binding and for reference only.

The proposal uses the existing drive, parking, stormwater pond, and utilities where possible. The existing building would be renovated to house a concrete block facility. The proposed additions include an 1,800 sq. ft. expansion attached to the existing 11,000 sq. ft. building, a 3,150 sq. ft. storage building and a large gravel pad for truck circulation and material storage. The plans show 8.52 acres of existing woodlands to remain. The submitted applicant report shows that all aspects of the proposed project will fall within the parameters of Level 1 performance standards for Industrial uses, per Section 9-11-5. The site plan shows a 20' landscape buffer strip between the subject parcel and the adjacent RS and RM zoned parcels.

### **B. Existing Conditions**

In 2014, Southern Brewing Company constructed the existing facilities and infrastructure, but the brewery has since ceased operation and the property has no current use. The adjacent properties along Collins Industrial Blvd are zoned E-I, RM-1 to the east, and RS-8 to the north. The surrounding areas follow a similar pattern where Collins Industrial Blvd sits at the eastern border of the Athena Industrial Park area and E-I and I zoning is prominent to the east and south of the subject parcel. To the northwest, residential zoning continues toward Danielsville Road. To the northeast Athens Technical College is located, as well as a growing commercial node along US Hwy 29. The rezone request would not require a Future Land Use change as it is currently designated as Employment.

The applicant, known as the Quality Block Company, is currently operating at 940 College Avenue. If the rezone is approved and the applicant moves its operations to 231 Collins Industrial Blvd, the 7.84 acres at 940 College Avenue. could be a prime redevelopment opportunity in the North Downtown area. Quality Block has been at its current location with Employment-Industrial zoning since 1995 with no Code Enforcement complaints on record associated with their operation or property management, other than a complaint regarding a homeless encampment along College Avenue.

## **III. Policy Analysis**

### **A. Compatibility with Comprehensive Plan**

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan calls for the following policy that is supported in this project:

- *Utilize best practices for the attraction and retention of business and industry.*

Quality Block Company has been in business for 30 years at its current location, and is currently in the process of purchasing equipment to modernize and streamline its production to ensure they are in business for at least another 30 years in Athens-Clarke County. Zoning land appropriately for employment uses that are compatible with the community's values lays the groundwork for successful development of the local economy.

Overall, the proposal is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan.

## **B. Compatibility with the Future Land Use Map**

### *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.*

No change to the Future Land Use Map is required since the proposed zoning action is already compatible with the Map. The proposal is compatible with the Future Land Use description for this area.

## **C. Compatibility with the Zoning Map**

The applicant has requested a rezone from Employment-Industrial (E-I) to Industrial (I). The following information has been provided to compare the difference in development intensity between the existing E-I zoning and the requested I zone. Broadly, a comparison of scale, use, and design is provided in this section to help decision makers evaluate the changes that would be allowed if the request is approved. In terms of building scale, the following chart illustrates the differences in size and scale of buildings that could be constructed:

	<b>CURRENT</b>	<b>REQUESTED</b>
<b>Standard</b>	<b>E-I Zoning</b>	<b>I Zoning</b>
<b>Minimum Lot Size</b>	2,500 sq. ft	5,000 sq. ft.
<b>Density</b>	-	-
<b>Max Lot Coverage</b>	85%	95%
<b>Max Building Height</b>	65 ft	100 ft
<b>Setbacks</b>	At least 10 ft. *	At least 10 ft.*
<b>Conserved Canopy</b>	5%	0%
<b>Total Canopy</b>	40%	5%
<b>Parking</b>	Varies based on use	Varies based on use

\*Plus one additional foot for building height above 30 ft.

The Athens-Clarke County Zoning Ordinance includes a list of defined uses and designates where they can or cannot be established. For this request, the most noticeable difference between the current E-I zoning and the proposed I zoning is that heavy manufacturing is only permissible in the I zone. Included below are the definitions illustrating the differences between light and heavy manufacturing. Light manufacturing includes the assembly, processing, treatment, etc. of materials that have been previously manufactured or processed. Heavy manufacturing includes the processing, manufacturing, and storage of products extracted or raw materials. Quality Block's use is classified as heavy manufacturing, as defined in Sec. 9-2, "Heavy manufacturing uses include...concrete or cement fabrication where raw materials and finished products are stored outside..."

As specified in Section 9-11-1, the purpose of the E and I districts is, "to provide for a variety of uses such as office or manufacturing in an aesthetic environment and having a minimal impact on

surrounding uses.” Heavy manufacturing is intended to be separated from residentially zoned parcels largely due to the associated impacts of noise, odor, vibration, and other manufacturing related by-products. The following are the definitions for “Heavy Manufacturing” and “Light Manufacturing” as found in Chapter 9-2 of the Athens-Clarke County Code of Ordinances.

***Heavy manufacturing:*** Uses engaged in the basic processing and manufacturing of materials or products predominately from extracted or raw materials, or a use engaged in storage of or manufacturing processes using flammable or explosive materials, or storage or manufacturing processes that potentially involve hazardous or commonly recognized offensive conditions that include, but are not limited to, smoke, steam, noise, soot, dirt, vibration, odor, or any other by-product of the manufacturing process that is known to be detrimental to the human or natural environment. These activities may involve outdoor operations as part of their manufacturing process. Heavy manufacturing uses include, but are not limited to, storage of petroleum products, concrete or cement fabrication where raw materials and finished products are stored outside, pulpwood processing, asphalt manufacturing, landfills, recycling processes, outdoor storage of solid waste, and other uses similar in nature.

***Light manufacturing:*** Enterprises primarily engaged in the processing, manufacturing, compounding, assembly, packaging, treatment, or fabrication of materials and products, from processed or previously manufactured materials, or materials fully encapsulated in a sealed container, including but not limited to, jars, cans, drums, or other container of a similar nature, to be stored inside. Light manufacturing is capable of operation in such manner as to control the external effects of the manufacturing process that is known to be detrimental to the human or natural environment. Light manufacturing uses include, but are not limited to, machine shops, manufacturing of apparel, electrical appliances, electronic equipment and computer components, camera and photographic equipment, ceramic products, cosmetic and toiletries, business machines, food, paper products (excluding the manufacture of paper from pulpwood), medical appliances, tools or hardware, plastic products (excluding the processing of raw materials), pharmaceutical or optical goods, and any other product of a similar nature.

#### **D. Consistency with Other Adopted ACCGov Plans, Studies, or Programs**

No applicable plans, studies, or programs were identified.

### **IV. Technical Assessment**

#### **A. Environment**

The property contains environmental areas. State waters follow the entire eastern boundary of the site. With E-I zoning, the current ACC stream buffer of 75’ is in effect and the current improvements on the site are outside of this buffer are. However, with a rezone to I, ACC’s stream buffer would increase to 150’. This stream was not identified on the non-binding site plan. State waters will be required to be shown on future submitted plans or a determination made that the area does not contain state waters.

Additionally, there are state waters that run through 225 Collins Industrial to the south of the subject property. With a 150’ ACC stream buffer, the buffer would extend into the subject property to the south. No development is proposed within this area.

The Arborist has reviewed the tree management plan, recommending approval and offered the following comment:

- *Project will be expected to meet all requirements of the community tree management ordinance at*

*time of development during plan review.*

## **B. Grading and Drainage**

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal, recommending approval and offered the following grading and drainage-related comment:

- *TPW Land development supports the re-zone of this property. It should be noted that some areas will need to be reserved in what is currently shown for stormwater management.*

## **C. Water and Sewer Availability**

The Public Utilities Department has reviewed the proposal, recommends approval with conditions and offered the following grading and drainage-related comment:

- *ACC water is available. ACC sanitary sewer is available. Capacity is available to serve the proposed development. Industrial zoning allows for large range of water/sewer demand, based on type of industrial development (e.g., warehouse vs filtration). The proposed development is not expected to have major impact on the existing water and sewer infrastructure. No tree planting is allowed in PUD easements. Conflicts exist around the fire hydrant near the existing concrete pad and with the sewer at property line between 231 Collins Industrial Blvd and 210 Hull Rd. The proposed storage building appears to fall within ACC easement. No structures allowed in the easement.*

## **D. Transportation**

The Transportation & Public Works Department has reviewed the proposal, recommends approval.

## **E. Fire Protection**

The Fire Marshal has reviewed the proposal and recommends approval with the following comment:

- *The proposed development meets the 2018 IFC requirements for fire department access, including road width, turnaround capability, and unobstructed site access. The location and layout do not negatively impact emergency response times or the department's ability to serve the area. While the existing building is equipped with a fire sprinkler system and a riser room, the new addition, being physically connected, will also require a fire sprinkler and fire alarm system. The Fire Department Connection (FDC) is already in place and accessible. However, hydrant placement and spacing could not be verified on the submitted plans, and additional hydrants may be required due to the added structures. The proposed use does not appear to introduce unusual fire hazards or high-risk operations.*

## **F. Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and Development Standards**

Since a binding plan is not required or proposed with this request, Staff reviewed the plan for general compliance with the Code. If approved the proposal will be reviewed for code compliance at the time of permitting review. The applicant has not made any waiver requests, so they will be expected to comply with all of the applicable standards. Signage and lighting are not reviewed at this stage, but the applicant is expected to adhere to those standards as well.

End of Staff Report.

**Reviewed**

**Zoning Criteria Considered by Staff**

The following factors have been considered as set forth in *Guhl v. Holcomb Bridge Road Corp.*, 238 Ga. 322, 232 S.E.2d 830 (1977).

- ☒ The proposed zoning action conforms to 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.
- ☒ The proposed use meets all objective criteria set forth for that use provided in the zoning ordinance and conforms to the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and all its elements.
- ☒ The proposal will not adversely affect the balance of land uses in Athens-Clarke County.
- ☒ 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.
- ☒ The existing land use pattern surrounding the property in issue.
- ☒ The possible creation of an isolated district unrelated to adjacent and nearby districts.
- ☒ The aesthetic effect of existing and future use of the property as it relates to the surrounding area.
- ☒ Whether the proposed zoning action will be a deterrent to the value or improvement of development of adjacent property in accordance with existing regulations.
- ☒ 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 zoned as requested will not alone constitute a significant detriment.
- ☒ Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use and development of the property that give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal.
- ☒ Public services, which include physical facilities and staff capacity, exist sufficient to service the proposal.
- ☒ 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 possible impact on the environment, including but not limited to, drainage, soil erosion and sedimentation, flooding, air quality and water quantity.