



Baldwin County Planning & Zoning Department

Baldwin County Commission Staff Report

Case No. Z26-06

Buckley Property

Rezone from RSF-1, Residential Single Family District to RA, Rural Agricultural District

April 21, 2026

Subject Property Information

Planning District: 37
General Location: South of Gayfer Road Ext and west of Liberty Lane in Fairhope
Physical Address: 20901 Liberty Lane, Fairhope, AL 36532
Parcel Number: 05-46-06-14-0-000-001.997
PIN#: 638293
Existing Zoning: RSF-1, Residential Single Family District
Proposed Zoning: RA, Rural Agricultural District
Existing Land Use: Residential
Proposed Land Use: Agricultural
Acreage: 6.5 ± acres
Applicant/Owner: Leigh Buckley and Michael Gottstine
20901 Liberty Lane
Fairhope, AL 36532
Lead Staff: Cory Rhodes, Planner
Attachments: *Within Report*

Adjacent Land Use		Adjacent Zoning
North	Residential	RSF-1, Residential Single Family
South	Residential	City of Fairhope (R-1, Low Density Single-Family Residential)
East	Residential	RTF-4, Residential Two Family
West	Residential	RSF-1, Residential Single Family

Summary

The subject property encompasses approximately 6.5 acres and is currently zoned as RSF-1, Residential Single Family District. A request has been made to change the designation to RA, Rural Agricultural District, for agricultural use.

Section 4.2 RSF-1, Single Family District

4.2.1 Generally. This zoning district is provided to afford the opportunity for the choice of a low density residential environment consisting of single family homes on large lots.

4.2.2 Permitted uses. Except as provided by *Section 2.3: Establishment of Zoning in Planning Districts*, the following uses and structures designed for such uses shall be permitted:

- (a) The following general industrial uses: extraction or removal of natural resources on or under land.
- (b) The following transportation, communication, and utility uses: water well (public or private).
- (c) The following agricultural uses: Silviculture.
- (d) Single family dwellings including manufactured housing and mobile homes.
- (e) Accessory structures and uses.
- (f) The following institutional use: church or similar religious facility.
- (g) Agricultural uses, on RSF-1 zoned parcels that otherwise meet the minimum area and dimension requirements for Rural Agricultural District under Section 3.2.6 herein, agricultural uses shall be permitted uses, except that the minimum front yard for barns and other agricultural structures shall be 100 feet when constructed on an RSF-1 zoned parcel where no primary dwelling currently exists.

4.2.3 Conditional Use Commission Site Plan Approval. Except as provided by *Section 2.3: Establishment of Zoning in Planning Districts*, the following uses and structures designed for such uses may be allowed by the site plan approval process:

- (a) Outdoor recreation uses.
- (b) The following institutional uses: day care home; fire station; school (public or private).
- (c) The following general commercial uses: country club.
- (d) The following local commercial use: bed and breakfast or tourist home (see Section 13.10: *Bed and Breakfast Establishments*).

4.2.4 Special exception. Except as provided by *Section 2.3: Establishment of Zoning in Planning Districts*, the following use and structures designed for such use may be allowed as a special exception: Not Applicable

4.2.5 Area and dimensional ordinances. Except as provided by *Section 2.3: Establishment of Zoning in Planning Districts*, *Section 12.4: Height Modifications*, *Section 12.5: Yard Requirements*, *Section 12.6: Coastal Areas*, *Section 12.8: Highway Construction Setbacks*, *Section 18.5: Variances*, and *Article 20: Nonconformities*, the area and dimensional ordinances set forth below shall be observed.

Maximum Height of Structure	35-Feet
Maximum Height in Habitable Stories	2 ½
Minimum Front Yard	30-Feet
Minimum Rear Yard	30-Feet
Minimum Side Yards	10-Feet
Minimum Lot Area	30,000 Square Feet
Minimum Lot Width at Building Line	100-Feet
Maximum Ground Coverage Ratio	.35

Proposed Zoning Requirements

Section 3.2 RA, Rural Agricultural District

3.2.1 Generally. This zoning district provides for large, open, unsubdivided land that is vacant or is being used for agricultural, forest or other rural purposes. Low-density residential development that maintains the rural character of the district is permitted in accordance with the permitted uses and area and dimensional requirements of this section.

3.2.2 Permitted uses. Except as provided by *Section 2.3: Establishment of Zoning in Planning Districts*, the following uses and structures designed for such uses shall be permitted:

- (a) The following general industrial uses: extraction or removal of natural resources on or under land.
- (b) The following transportation, communication, and utility uses: water well (public or private).

- (c) Outdoor recreation uses.
- (d) The following general commercial uses: animal clinic and/or kennel; farm implement sales; farmers market/truck crops; nursery; landscape sales; country club.
- (e) The following local commercial uses: fruit and produce store.
- (f) The following institutional uses: church or similar religious facility; school (public or private).
- (g) Agricultural uses.
- (h) Single family dwellings including manufactured housing and mobile homes.
- (i) Accessory structures and uses.

3.2.3 Permit Exemptions for Agricultural Uses and Agriculture Buildings. Agricultural uses and Agriculture Buildings, as defined in this ordinance, within the RA zoning district, shall be exempt from the Zoning Site Plan and Zoning Land Disturbance permitting requirements of this ordinance.

3.2.4 Special exceptions. Except as provided by *Section 2.3: Establishment of Zoning in Planning Districts*, the following uses and structures designed for such uses may be allowed as special exceptions: Not Applicable

3.2.5 Conditional Use Commission Site Plan Approval. Except as provided by *Section 2.3: Establishment of Zoning in Planning Districts*, the following uses and structures designed for such uses may be allowed by the site plan approval process:

- (a) Transportation, communication, and utility uses not permitted by right.
- (b) Institutional uses not permitted by right.
- (c) The following general commercial uses: low density recreational vehicle park (see *Section 13.8: Recreational Vehicle Parks*).
- (d) The following local commercial uses: bed and breakfast or tourist home (see *Section 13.10: Bed and Breakfast Establishments*).

3.2.6 *Area and dimensional ordinances.* Except as provided by Section 2.3: *Establishment of Zoning in Planning Districts*, Section 12.4: *Height Modifications*, Section 12.5: *Yard Requirements*, Section 12.6: *Coastal Areas*, Section 12.8: *Highway Construction Setbacks*, Section 18.5: *Variances*, and Article 20: *Nonconformities*, the area and dimensional ordinances set forth below shall be observed.

Minimum Front Yard	40-Feet
Minimum Rear Yard	40-Feet
Minimum Side Yards	15-Feet
Minimum Lot Area	3 Acres
Minimum Lot Width at Building Line	210-Feet

3.2.7 *Area and dimensional modifications.* Within the RA district, area and dimensional requirements may be reduced, as set forth below, where property is divided among the following legally related family members: spouse, children, siblings, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, or step-related individuals of the same status.

Minimum Front Yard	30-Feet
Minimum Rear Yard	30-Feet
Minimum Side Yards	10-Feet
Minimum Lot Area	40,000 Square Feet
Minimum Lot Width at Building Line	120-Feet

Agency Comments

USACE, James Buckelew: Staff reached out 3/6/2026 but received no comments.

ADEM, Scott Brown: Staff reached out 3/6/2026 but received no comments.

City of Fairhope, Hunter Simmons: Staff reached out 3/6/2026 but received no comments.

Subdivisions, Fabia Waters: It does not appear the proposed rezoning request will require subdivision review; at this time, I do not have additional comments.

Engineering, Kaylan Driskell: No action needed from P&Z Engineering.

Staff Analysis and Findings

The criteria for reviewing zoning amendments are outlined in Section 19.6 of the Baldwin County Zoning Ordinance. Staff carefully considered all of these factors during the evaluation of the application.

a) Degree of compatibility of the proposed rezoning with existing and allowable land uses in the vicinity.

The subject property consists of approximately 6.5 acres. An application has been submitted to rezone the property to RA in order to allow agricultural uses, including livestock and a satsuma orchard. Nearby properties are zoned for residential purposes, with zoning classifications ranging from R-1 within the Fairhope city limits to RTF-4 and RA.

b) Degree of conformity of the proposed rezoning to the Master Plan.

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) represents a combination of development and environmental suitability factors, which direct growth and development patterns for the unincorporated areas of the County. The FLUM identifies the subject property and the surrounding area mainly for Rural / Conservation / Low-Impact Development. Areas designated for Rural Development Potential are characterized by large lot sizes, open-space views, and significant separation between buildings. Residential uses may consist of homes situated on large tracts of land, including estate-style residences and active farmland.

c) Proximity of the proposed rezoning to existing transportation network and utility infrastructure.

The subject property is situated south of a Major Collector, a roadway designed to collect traffic from local roads and direct it to the arterial network. The property benefits from deeded access to the classified roadway via a 60-foot right-of-way.

d) Timing of the request and development trends in the area.

The subject property currently contains a single-family residence. It was recently rezoned to RSF-1 after the previous owner considered subdividing the land and selling portions to adjacent property owners who wanted to maintain the area's rural character. That plan was never carried out. The current owner now requests that the property remain rural and intends to develop it for agricultural use, which is also supported by neighboring property owners.

e) Impacts on environmental conditions of the vicinity or the historic resources of the County.

No impacts on environmental conditions nor any historic resources of the County are proposed.

f) Impacts to the health, safety and welfare of the County and the vicinity.

The proposed request should have no impact to the health, safety and welfare of the property or surrounding properties.

Staff Comments and Recommendation

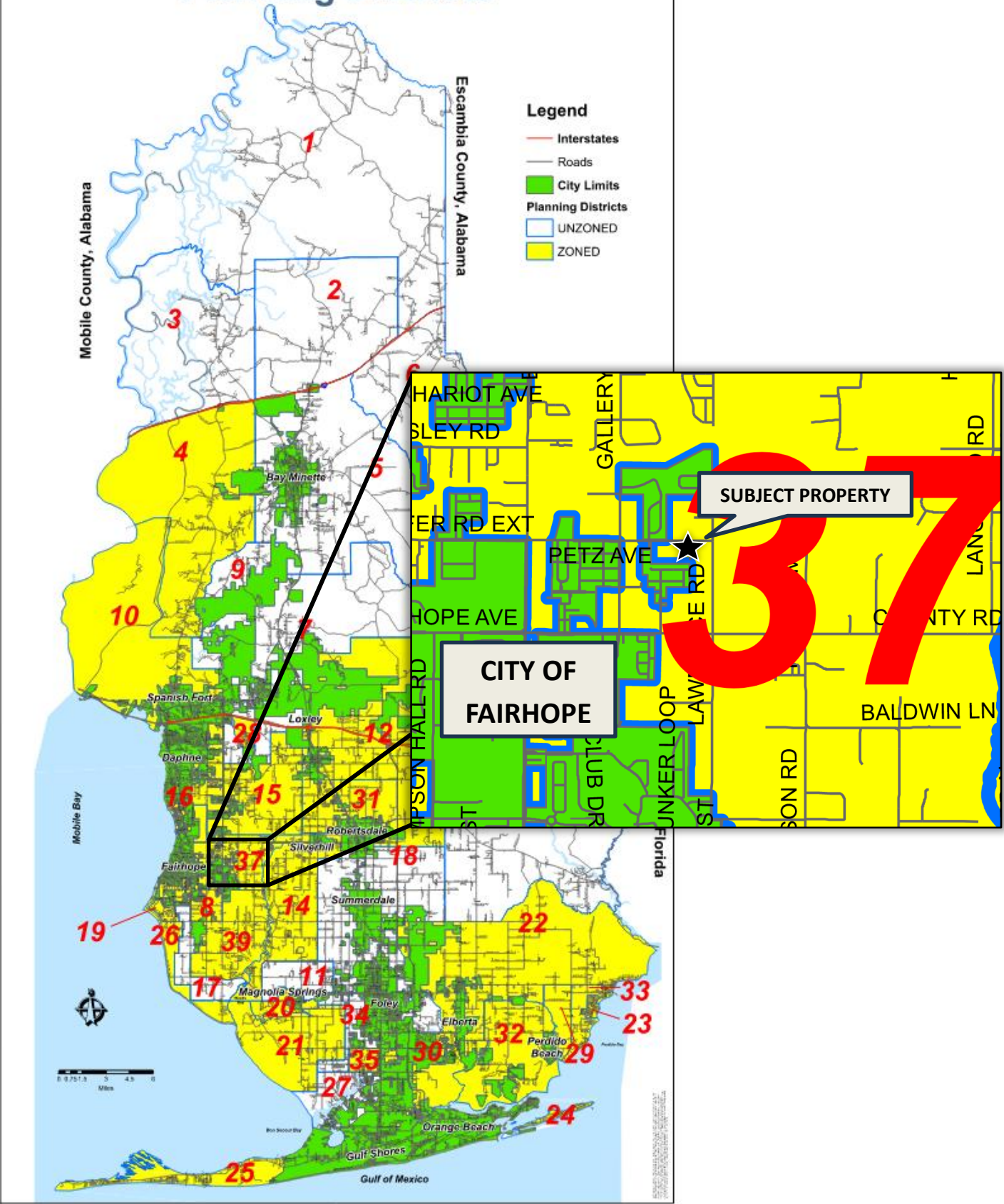
Upon review of the *Factors for Reviewing Proposed Zoning Map Amendments* specified within Section 19.6 of the Baldwin County Zoning Ordinance and themes of the Baldwin County Master Plan, staff has determined that the requested Zoning Map Amendment is **consistent** with the factors specified within the Baldwin County Zoning Ordinance as well as the Baldwin County Master Plan Future Land Use Map.

The requested Zoning Map Amendment was also evaluated using the Smart Growth Scorecard (attached) which **strongly supports** the request.

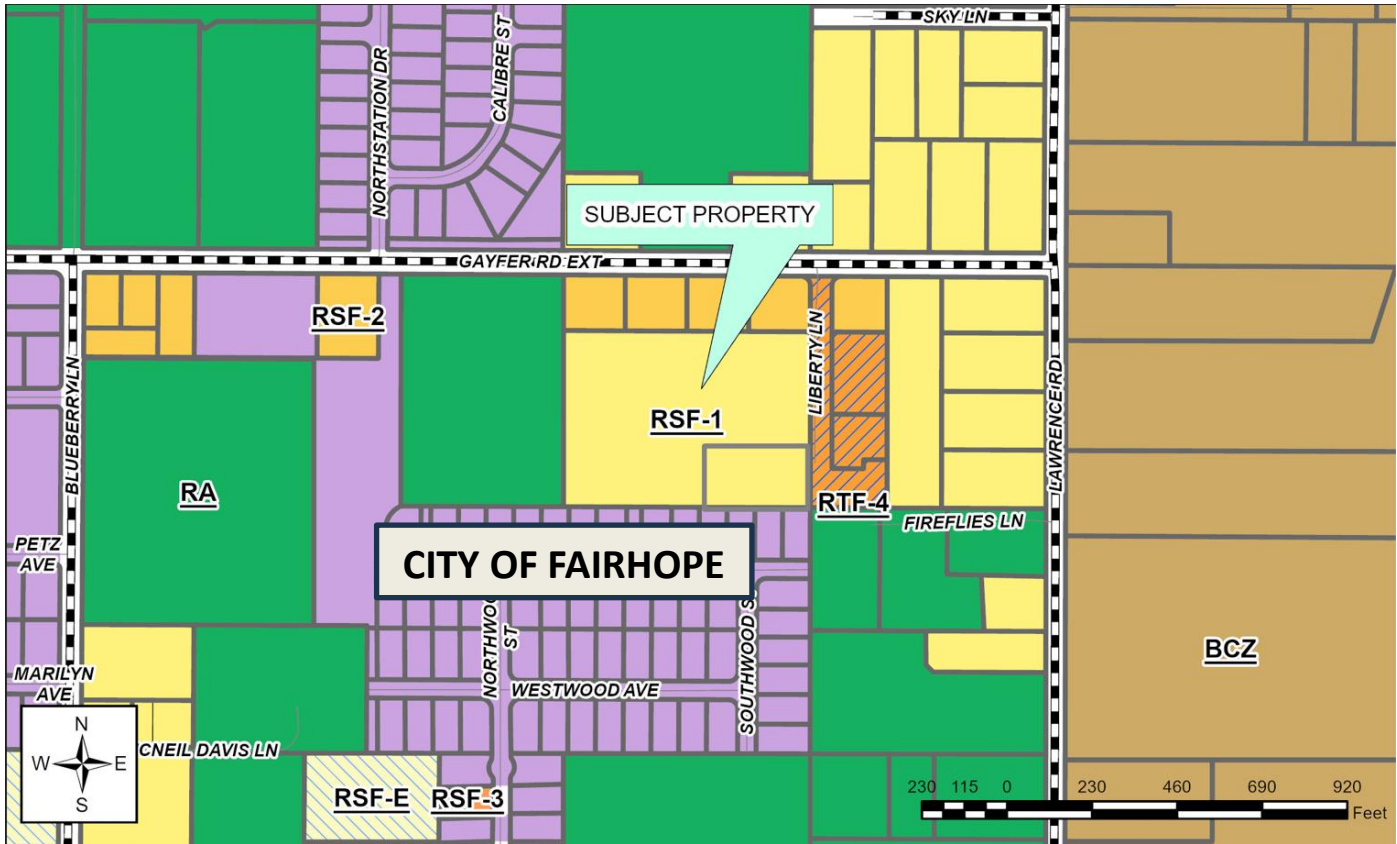
Baldwin County, Alabama Planning Districts

Legend

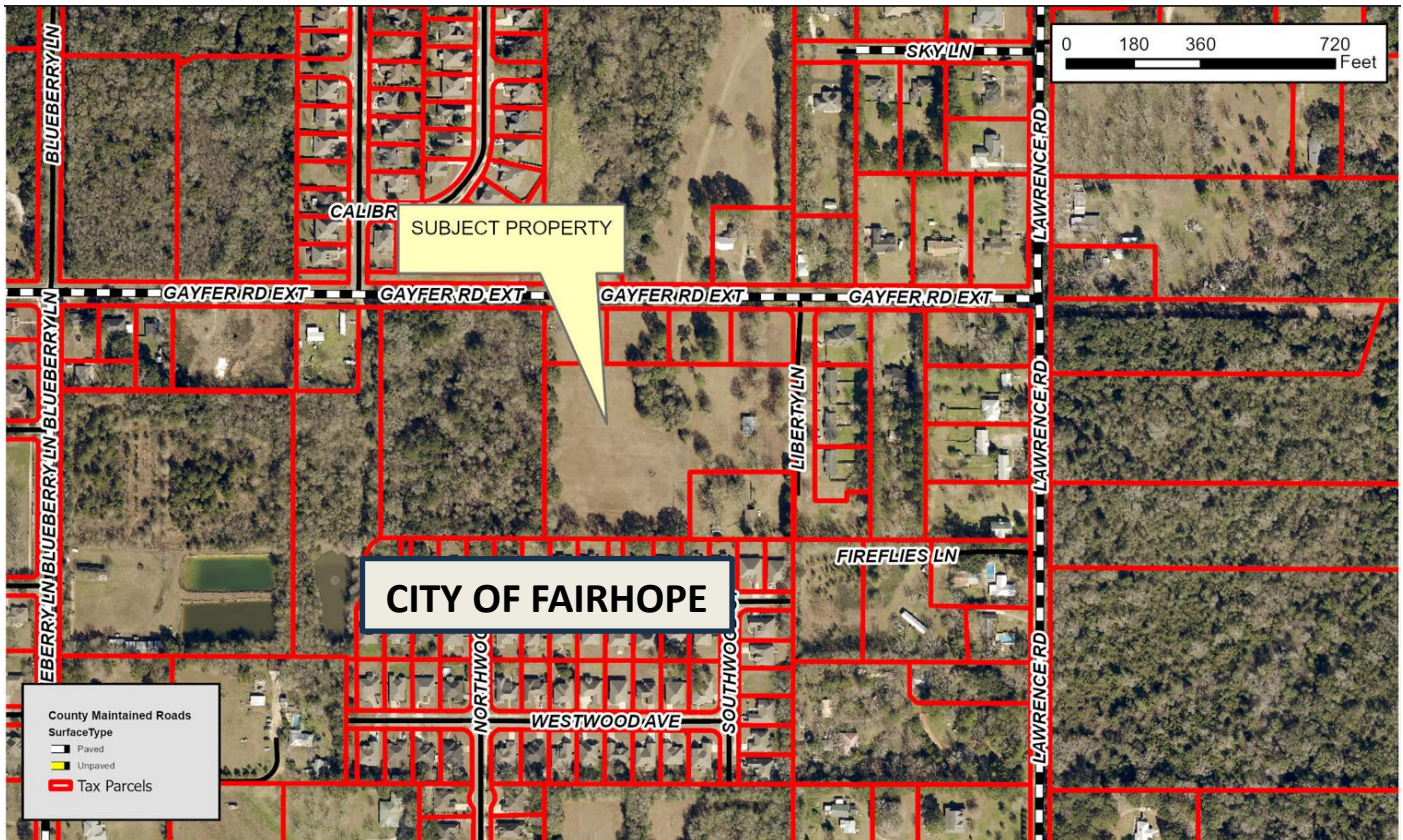
- Interstates
- Roads
- City Limits
- Planning Districts
- UNZONED
- ZONED



Locator Map



Site Map



Property Images





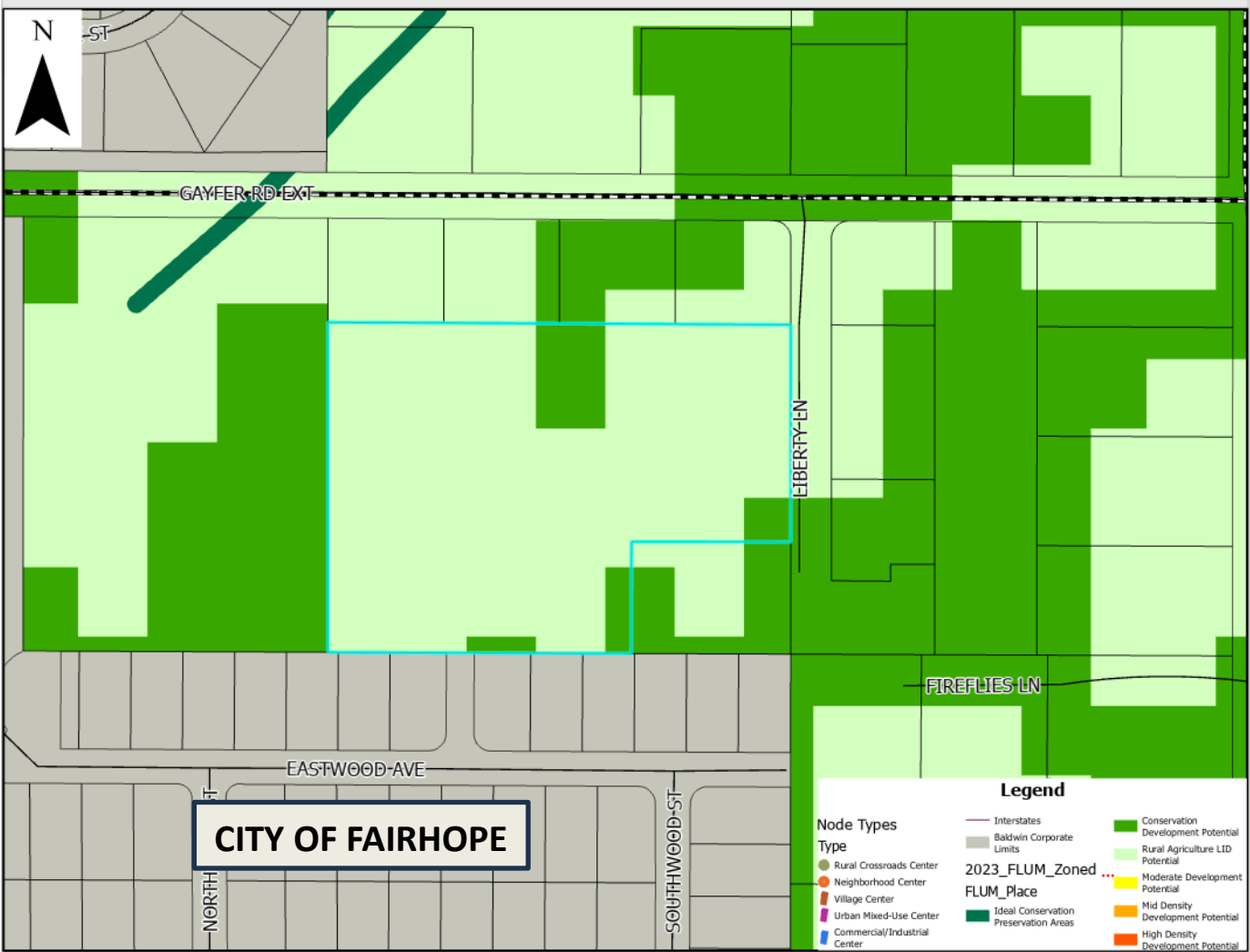


Adjoining Property
to the East
PIN: 365480



Mar 20, 2026 12:07:34 PM
93° E

FLUM



LEGEND

- PLACE TYPES**
- IDEAL CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION
 - CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
 - RURAL/AGRICULTURE/LID POTENTIAL
 - MODERATE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
 - MID-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
 - HIGH-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MUNICIPAL JURISDICTIONS**

- NODE TYPES**
- RURAL CROSSROADS CENTER
 - NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

RURAL/AGRICULTURE/LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AREAS

Rural Development Potential Areas include large lots, open space views, and a large buffer distance between buildings. Residential homes may be on large tracts and could include estate homes and working farmland. The development pattern may also include conservation-based subdivisions to allow for the clustering of residential dwellings to protect open space that is valued for natural resource protection—such as stream buffers, mature forest habitat, or wetlands—working farmland, or recreational amenities. Lands within these areas should be developed with additional Low Impact Development (LID) standards and buffers to limit the impact to adjacent critical environments. At key rural crossroads, rural centers or nodes could allow for a combination of retail and service uses to meet the needs of the community.

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Single-family detached homes
- Hobby farms
- Agri-hoods
- Cultivated farmland, timber/managed forest, pastureland
- Clustered manufactured housing communities
- Rural crossroads center/node

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- RR Rural District
- RA Rural Agricultural District
- RSF-E Residential Single Family Estate

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Rural streets with sidewalks, paved shoulders, bike lanes, and/or side paths based on local character and context
- Rural greenways and trails along environmental buffers

CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Conservation Development Potential Areas are suitable for all of the land uses described in the Ideal Conservation/Preservation Areas place type but would allow for limited development based on low-impact design principles. Allowing conservation-based subdivisions in these areas could help to balance the pressure of residential development with environmental preservation and rural character. Conservation-based subdivisions allow for the clustering of residential dwellings to protect open space that is valued for natural resource protection—such as stream buffers, mature forest habitat, or wetlands—working farmland, or recreational amenities.

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Conservation-based or cluster development with high levels of Low Impact Design (LID) and sustainable development practices
- Natural areas that are publicly and privately owned and managed
- Permanently protected lands such as conservation easements, parks, cemeteries
- Parks and open spaces devoted primarily to passive recreation and trails
- Lands with important cultural landmarks or assets
- Scenic view protection

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- Environmental Conservation
- CR Conservation Resource District
- OR Outdoor Recreation District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Rural streets with paved shoulders, bike lanes, or side paths
- Greenways and trails along environmental buffers

SMART GROWTH SCORECARD TOOL

Score each element based on the following: +2 (Strongly Supports), +1 (Somewhat Supports), -1 (Somewhat Does Not Support), and -2 (Strongly Does Not Support). Each category will be totaled and then combined for a final score to evaluate whether the development aligns with the vision and themes of the Master Plan. The following final score ranges will be used in this evaluation.

STRONGLY SUPPORTS	SOMEWHAT SUPPORTS	SOMEWHAT DOES NOT SUPPORT	STRONGLY DISAPPROVE
Score of 20 to 40	Score of 0 to 19	Score of 0 to -19	Score of -20 to -40

SMART GROWTH SCORECARD		SCORE			
Conformity with Surrounding Land Use		2	1	-1	-2
Is the property contiguous to a complementary use or zoning district to what is being proposed?		2			
Does the density/intensity of the proposed use conform to the surrounding area or provide a use that would support the surrounding existing or permitted land uses?		2			
Does the proposed land use provide a mix of uses or diversity of housing types in the area?	For single use projects evaluate the diversity of uses within 1/2 mile		1		
Does the proposed land use require building separation and buffers that fit the character of the surrounding area?		2			
Does the proposed land use promote development that fits the character of the surrounding area?			1		
Total Land Use Score (out of 10 points)		8			
Conformity with Master Plan		2	1	-1	-2
Does the location and proposed land use support the need identified in the Master Plan for the surrounding community?		2			

Is the request located in an area identified for development in the Master Plan?	Evaluate the uses identified for the area in the Master Plan not the "equivalent zoning"	2			
Does the size & scale of the proposal fit the recommendations in the Master Plan and the character of the surrounding community?	Evaluate the uses identified for the area in the Master Plan not the "equivalent zoning"	2			
Is the property located within 1/2 mile of a municipal boundary or node identified in the Master Plan?	Rate +2 if property is within 1/2 mile, +1 for 1/2 to 1 mile, -1 for 1 to 1.5 mile, & -2 for outside of 1.5 mile. For "downzoning" requests outside of 1 mile from municipal boundary or node, score +1.	2			
Does the proposed use provide housing or commercial uses that are consistent with the growth and demand projections for the surrounding area?		2			
Total Master Plan Score (out of 10 points)			10		
Proximity to Transportation & Utility Infrastructure		2	1	-1	-2
Is the property located within 1/2 mile of an existing roadway that is classified appropriately to support the proposed use?	Major projects should be located near collector road or greater. Minor projects should be located near local street or greater.	2			
Does the property allow access from at least two existing or planned streets?	Existing or planned streets located outside of the applicant property.			-1	
Are frequently visited uses within 1 mile of the proposed use?	For residential uses, schools/daycares, employment centers, grocery/convenience shopping. For commercial, housing & similar intensity commercial uses. Rate +2 for within 1/2 mile, +1 for 1/2 to 1 mile, -1 for 1 to 1.5 mile, & -2 for greater than 1.5 mile.		1		

Is the proposed use within the service boundary of existing water service?	Rate +2 if within service boundary and adjacent to water main sufficient to serve development, +1 if within service boundary but requires water main upgrade or extension to serve development, -1 for outside of service area but within 1/2 mile of service area, -2 for outside of service area and greater than 1/2 mile.	2			
Is the proposed use within the service boundary of existing sewer service?	Rate +2 if within service boundary and adjacent to sewer main sufficient to serve development, +1 if within service boundary but requires sewer main upgrade or extension to serve development, -1 for outside of service area but within 1/2 mile of service area, -2 for outside of service area and greater than 1/2 mile.	2			
Total Transportation & Utility Score (out of 10 points)		6			
Environmental Conditions & Historic Resources		2	1	-1	-2
Can the property be reasonably developed without impacting jurisdictional wetlands/streams or buffers?		2			
Can the property be reasonably developed without filling within the floodplain or contributing to a net loss of flood capacity?		2			

Does the proposed use limit growth in environmentally sensitive or flood prone areas?	The more environmentally sensitive the area, the lower the overall density should be. Rate +2 for non-sensitive area, +1 for somewhat sensitive area but density can be clustered to avoid impacts, -1 for moderate sensitive area that would be challenging to avoid impacts, -2 for significantly sensitive area that would be unable to avoid impacts.	2			
Can the proposed use implement a stormwater facility that would aide regional stormwater management?		2			
Would the proposed use have any impacts to historic or cultural resources in the area?		2			
Total Environmental Score (out of 10 points)				10	
TOTAL SMART GROWTH SCORE				34	
RECOMMENDATION				STRONGLY SUPPORTS	
				0	
				0	