

GASTON COUNTY REZONING APPLICATION (REZ-26-01-09-00241)

STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION SUMMARY	
Request:	
To rezone the property from the (C-3) General Commercial Zoning District to the (CD/C-3) General Commercial Conditional District.	
Applicant(s):	Property Owner(s):
Crown Towing – Chuck Armeen	James Isbill Jr.
Parcel Identification (PID):	Property Location:
185406	4904 Wilkinson Blvd, Gastonia
Total Property Acreage:	Acreage for Map Change:
0.89 acres	0.89 acres
Current Zoning:	Proposed Zoning:
(C-3) General Commercial	(CD/C-3) General Commercial Conditional District
Existing Land Use:	Proposed Land Use:
Automobile Sales	Automobile Towing and Wrecker Service

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
Area 4: The Garden Gaston / Southeast Gaston
Key issues for citizens in this area include road improvements and better connectivity to other areas of the county and throughout the region, another bridge crossing the Catawba River, increased walkability and connectivity between communities, continued coordination amongst local government agencies, and maintaining enhanced quality of life.
Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use
This property was released from the City of Lowell’s ETJ in 2021 and does not have an assigned future land use designation. Properties in the vicinity are designated as Suburban Development, and staff is comfortable applying this designation to the subject property.
Suburban Development consists of significant single-family residential areas that exist around commercial pockets representing a standard suburban center. Typically, this would resemble subdivisions built around services for those communities. Suburban centers can also include multifamily houses and support services as well. These centers are larger than the rural centers and tend to not serve a significant civic or commercial purpose, aside from immediate neighborhood needs.
Staff Recommendation:
Application, as presented, is consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

UTILITIES AND ROAD NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE
Water/Sewer Provider:
Private well / private septic
Road Maintenance:
North Carolina Department of Transportation (Wilkinson Blvd and Vale St)

Technical Review Committee (TRC) comments provided by Gaston Lincoln Cleveland Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The Gaston County TRC reviewed this request on January 20, 2026, and the following departments had no comment at this time:

- No comments from EMS

The Environmental Health Department confirmed the property is being served by a septic system and potentially a well.

The Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO reviewed this request and indicated there are no funded transportation improvement projects within the immediate vicinity. Other projects, including the proposed widening of Wilkinson Boulevard and the future high-speed rail line (Silver Line Project), are identified in the MPO's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP); however, they are not funded at this time. The full letter from the MPO is included as an attachment to this staff report.

STAFF SUMMARY

Prepared By: Peyton Wiggins, Land Development Manager

This property is located in the mid-eastern portion of the county along Wilkinson Boulevard, between the city limits of Gastonia, Lowell, Cramerton, and McAdenville. The subject parcel is approximately 0.89 acres in size and has frontage along both Wilkinson Boulevard and Vale Street.

The site currently operates as an auto sales business and contains three structures. The first structure, located at 4904 Wilkinson Boulevard, was constructed in 1985 and consists of a 200-square-foot office. The second structure, located at 309 Vale Street, was constructed in 1920 and is 656 square feet; it is not currently used as a single-family dwelling. The third structure is a metal carport constructed in 2005. If approved, the applicant is proposing to continue using the office for administrative purposes, with the remaining structures used for business-related storage.

According to the submitted site plan, the proposal includes use of the existing site for an automobile towing and wrecker service. The applicant proposes 78 vehicle storage spaces, 14 general parking spaces, and a landscape buffer, while utilizing the existing structures and site features.

General Applicable Ordinance Sections

UDO Section	
Section 2.7 – Definition	Automobile Towing and Wrecker Service: An establishment primarily engaged in the towing of motor vehicles and vehicular storage associated with vehicle accidents and violations. This shall not include vehicular salvaging operations or the sale of salvaged vehicular parts. This use is not to be construed as a junkyard and salvage yard. An "Automobile Towing and Wrecker Service" may be part of an "Automobile Body Shop" in zoning districts where an "Automobile Body Shop" is allowed.
Section 6.2.3 – Commercial Districts	(C-3) General Commercial - This district accommodates the broadest array of commercial uses of all the commercial zoning districts, some of which are not allowed in any other commercial zoning districts. Like the (C-2) district, the (C-3) district is intended to accommodate the community's larger and most intense commercial developments (outside of the central business district) and generally located within the Urban Standards overlay district.
Section 6.5 – Conditional District (CD)	The Conditional District (CD) zoning process allows for the establishment of specific uses that, because of their nature or scale, have particular impacts on both the immediate area and the community as a whole. Any area rezoned to a (CD) district shall be in general compliance with the goals, objectives, and implementation strategies of the adopted Comprehensive Land Use Plan and

	all other plans and regulations officially adopted by the Board of Commissioners. This review process provides for the accommodation of such uses by a reclassification of property into a (CD) district, subject to specific conditions (which may exceed those that would otherwise be required for the use in question), to ensure compatibility of the use with the enjoyment of neighboring properties and in accordance with the general plans of development of the County.
Section 7.5 – Table of Uses	The proposed use for this site includes “Automobile Towing and Wrecker Service,” which is allowed in the current district of (C-3) General Commercial by right or by special use permit, depending on the supplemental regulations.

Supplemental Regulations for Automobile Towing and Wrecker Service – Section 8.2.10

UDO Section	Required	Proposed
Section 8.2.10.B	If the lot containing the use is located within 300 feet of a residential zoning district, a Special Use Permit shall be required.	In lieu of the special use permit, the applicant is pursuing approval through the conditional rezoning process.
Section 8.2.10.C	All damaged and wrecked vehicles must be parked in delineated parking spaces.	The applicant is proposing 78 delineated parking spaces for wrecked vehicles.
Section 8.2.10.D	If the vehicle storage area is greater than 25 parking spaces then a Special Use Permit required.	In lieu of the special use permit, the applicant is pursuing approval through the conditional rezoning process.
Section 8.2.10.E	Vehicle storage facilities shall not be located at an elevation whereby the storage is visible from a public street after the required screening is in place.	The applicant plans to use the existing fence with black opaque screening and to plant landscaping on the exterior of the fence for additional screening.
Section 8.2.10.F	The automotive storage area shall be located in the rear yard only, and be materially screened with a six-foot high opaque fence in addition to other required screening provided elsewhere in this Ordinance.	Per the submitted site plan, wrecked vehicle parking will be limited to the rear yard of the subject property.
Section 8.2.10.H	No outdoor disassembly or salvaging of the vehicles or parts thereof shall be permitted on site.	The applicant understands this requirement.
Section 8.2.10.I	No portion of any pre-existing principal residential structure (other than the residential structure which is occupied by the owner of said use) shall be located within 100 feet of the automotive storage area.	While there is a single-family residence on site, it is not utilized as a dwelling today; therefore, the applicant is in compliance with this regulation.

Requested Area of Relief

UDO Section	Required	Proposed
Section 8.2.10.A	Any outdoor vehicle storage area shall be located a minimum of 100 linear feet from any street right-of-way and 200 linear feet from any residential zoning district.	Given the existing conditions, the site cannot meet these setback requirements. Instead, the applicant is requesting a 0-foot setback from the street right-of-way and a 45-foot setback from a residential zoning district.
Section 8.2.10.G	A minimum 240 square foot building for office and restroom shall be provided on site.	The applicant is requesting to utilize the existing 200 square foot office that is on-site to meet this requirement.

Public Engagement

This case is currently posted on Engage Gaston for public comment and questions as part of the public engagement process. To date, no public comments have been submitted. The case can be viewed at:

<https://engagegaston.com/rez-00241-wilkinson-blvd-conditional-rezoning>.

PLANNING & ZONING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Zoning Board heard this request at its February 9, 2026, special meeting and failed to recommend approval of the request.

The motion was this request is a reasonable request and in the public interest; and it is consistent with the goals of the comprehensive land use plan as it will keep the parcel commercial in nature within an existing commercial pocket along Wilkinson Blvd, as envisioned by the Suburban Development future land use designation. The motion failed by a 2 to 8 vote.