

June 12, 2025

ITEM NO.: 7

FILE NO.: A-350 and Z-10172

NAME: Project Boar Land Annexation and 1-3, Heavy Industrial Zoning

LOCATION: East of the Fourche Bayou, south of 6101 Zeuber Road, west of 7001 Zeuber Road, and north of Earl Lane

OWNER/AUTHORIZED AGENT:

Little Rock Port Authority (Agent/Owner)
10600 Industrial Harbor Rd
Little Rock, AR
72206-3800

Amazon.com Services, LLC (Owner)
PO BOX 80416
Seattle, WA
98108-0416

Stephan William Keohler/Maertens J August Jr/William Adams Ratcliffe II (Owner)
PO BOX 146
Sweet Home, AR
72164-0146

SURVEYOR/ENGINEER:

Joe White & Associates, Inc.
25 Rahling Circle, Suite A-2
Little Rock, AR 72223

AREA: 783 acres more or less

WARD: N/A - ETJ

PLANNING DISTRICT: 26

CENSUS TRACT: 40.07

CURRENT ZONING: Not currently zoned

BACKGROUND:

- Petition for Annexation was filed with the County Court of Pulaski County pursuant to A.C.A § 14-40-409 on May 14, 2025.
- The petition qualifies as an annexation by 100%, in accordance with Arkansas Code § 14-40-609. There are multiple separate property owners, and all owners have signed the petition to request that the are be incorporated into the municipal boundaries.
- The County Judge's Order verifying findings was filed on May 14,2025.
- In a letter dated May 12, 2025, the Arkansas GIS Office confirmed that the annexation request meets all requirements outlined in Arkansas Code § 14-40-101.
- The subject area lies within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction and is contiguous to the City of Little Rock's municipal boundary along the area's northeastern boundary.

A. PROPOSAL/REQUEST/APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

The request is to grant the 100% petition, accept the property petitioned to be annexed, and to obtain municipal services. The annexation request involves approximately 783 acres proposed for incorporation into the City of Little Rock. The applicant (petitioners) seeks access to municipal services in order to facilitate development of the property for uses under the I-3 Heavy Industrial zoning district.

The request is also to establish the I-3 Heavy Industrial zoning district designation for the petitioned land upon annexation. Annexation and zoning designation are being requested concurrently.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Land use authority

The property is located east of Fourche Bayou, within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), where zoning authority is granted but has not yet been exercised. However, with the enactment of Act 314 by the Arkansas State Legislature, the City's authority over zoning, land use, and infrastructure planning in unincorporated areas outside the city limits will expire in August. Act 314 repeals the provision allowing municipalities to exercise planning authority within their ETJ.

Development & environmental context

The site consists of approximately 783 acres of primarily wooded, open farmland, and wetlands. Development plans have been submitted for review for a ± 933,565 square foot distribution center at the north portion of the land. Public right-of-way has been dedicated for a portion of an arterial standard road to access the development from Zeuber Road with the intention of extending to the intersection of Harper Road to the south upon future development of the area. The area consists of approximately 45 acres of wetland habitat identified in the National Wetlands Inventory by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

C. NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS:

Neighborhood Association contacts are notified of all items on the Planning Commission agenda via a single notice prior the Commission's hearing.

D. ENGINEERING COMMENTS:

Engineering Division, Planning & Development Department: Indicated no issues with the annexation of the subject property. Any future development shall be reviewed accordingly.

Public Works Department: Indicated no issues with the annexation of the subject property.

F. BUILDING CODES/LANDSCAPE

Building Code: No comment received.

Landscape: No comment received.

E. UTILITIES/FIRE DEPARTMENT/PARKS/COUNTY PLANNING:

Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority: No comment received.

Entergy: No comments received.

Summit Utilities: No comments received.

AT & T: No comments received.

Central Arkansas Water: All Central Arkansas Water requirements in effect at the time of request for water service must be met.

A water main extension will be needed to provide water service to this property.

Please submit plans for water facilities and/or fire protection system to Central Arkansas Water for review. Plan revisions may be required after additional review. Contact Central Arkansas Water regarding procedures for installation of water facilities and/or fire service. Approval of plans by the Arkansas Department of Health Engineering Division and Little Rock Fire Department is required.

If there are facilities that need to be adjusted and/or relocated, contact Central Arkansas Water. That work would be done at the expense of the developer.

The facilities on-site will be private. When meters are planned off private lines, private facilities shall be installed to Central Arkansas Water's material and construction specifications and installation will be inspected by an engineer, licensed to practice in the State of Arkansas. Execution of Customer Owned Line Agreement is required.

Due to the nature of this facility, installation of an approved reduced pressure zone backflow preventer assembly (RPZ) is required on the domestic water service. This assembly must be installed prior to the first point of use. Central Arkansas Water (CAW) requires that upon installation of the RPZA, successful tests of the assembly must be completed by a Certified Assembly Tester licensed by the State of Arkansas and approved by CAW. The test results must be sent to CAW's Cross Connection Section within ten days of installation and annually thereafter. Contact the Cross Connection Section at 377-1226 if you would like to discuss backflow prevention requirements for this project.

Fire sprinkler systems which do not contain additives such as antifreeze shall be isolated with a double detector check valve assembly. If additives are used, a reduced pressure zone backflow preventer shall be required.

Fire Department: No comments received.

Police Department: : Indicated no issues with the annexation of the subject property.

Parks and Recreation: No comments received.

County Planning: No comments received.

G. TRANSPORTATION/PLANNING:

Rock Region Metro: No comments received.

Planning Division:

Land Use Plan:

The request is in the Port South Planning District, District 26. The development principles of the district include two goals: to allow for future expansion of industrial uses lying to the north and the protection of existing agricultural land.

The Land Use Plan shows Industrial (I) for the requested area. The Industrial (I) category encompasses a wide variety of manufacturing, warehousing research and development, processing, and industry related office and service activities. Industrial development typically occurs on an individual tract basis rather than according to an overall development plan.

The areas east and southeast of the subject area are designated for Industrial (I) use and are characterized by three large scale industrial developments to the east and wetlands and wetland bank parcels to the east and southeast. The area to the west of the subject area is designated Park/Open Space (PK/OS), Agriculture (A), and Residential Low (RL) and is characterized by woodlands, the Fourche Bayou, a Union Pacific rail line, and rural residential tracts.

The Park/Open Space (PK/OS) land use category includes all public parks, recreational facilities, greenbelts, flood plains, and other designated open space and recreational land. The Agriculture (A) land use category encourages the continuation of agricultural uses of land and provides for transition zones between rural areas and the urban fringe where it is considered appropriate to preserve existing rural land use prior to annexation. The Residential Low (RL) land use category provides for single family homes at densities not to exceed 6 dwelling units per acre.

There have been two (2) Land Use Plan amendments in the vicinity which thematically changed the land use of the areas from Agriculture to Industrial.

Master Street Plan:

The northeastern section of the subject area that is contiguous to the city boundary will access and extend roadway infrastructure through Zeuber Road. The Master Street Plan Map shows Zeuber Road as a Minor Arterial. The primary function of a Minor Arterial to provide short distance travel within the urbanized area. Zeuber Road has been constructed to 'Industrial Street' design standards with shoulders and open ditches. Standard Right-of-Way (ROW) is 90 feet.

The Master Street Plan shows a proposed Minor Arterial route intended to provide a general path from Zeuber Road to Harper Road. Public right-of-way has been dedicated in the subject area for a portion of a new roadway—named Riverport Road—to intersect with Zeuber Road at the east and extend west towards to the Fourche Bayou. The road is intended to intersect Harper Road to the south upon future development of the land.

Bicycle Plan:

Zeuber Rd and Harper Road are a designated bike routes on the Master Bike Plan as Proposed Class III Bike Routes. Class III Bike Routes utilize sharrow pavements markings and directional signage to indicate facility use. Class III Bike Routes do not require additional right-of-way.

Historic Preservation Plan:

The subject area is in proximity to the Hanger Cotton Gin (PU3275), located at 4300 Harper Road, in the Sweet Home community. The Hanger Cotton Gin is a steam-powered gin built c. 1876 that was utilized commercially in the 19th century and affiliated with Peter Hanger and his son, Federick Hanger (Hanger House, 1010 S. Scott Street). Peter Hanger's daughter, Margaret M. Hanger Ratcliffe, and her husband became managers of the land on which the Hanger Gin located and the Ratcliffe's have retained ownership since.

The application, as shown, should have no effect on identified historic resources.

H. ANALYSIS:

The area requesting annexation is contiguous with the City limits along portions of its northeastern section. The land to the east was annexed by the City in 2021 with Ord. 22,034 (A-340 Amazon Zeuber Annexation). The land to the north was annexed by the City in 2024 with Ord. 22,555 (A-349 Elopak Annexation). The subject area has been farmland and rural farmland estates since the land was considered to be within the Arkansas Territory. According to General Land Office records, in 1837, the lands were managed by families such as the Fletchers, Keatts, and Thorns. The site consists of approximately 783 acres of primarily wooded, open farmland, and wetlands.

The entire Port South Planning District, in which the subject area is located, is protected by levee systems—Little Rock Pulaski Drainage District No. 2 Levee and Fourche Island Drainage District No. 2 Levee. Two sections of land within the subject area are within the 100-year floodplain. One area is a small area of the northern section of the annexation area, adjacent to the current municipal boundary. The other area is larger and makes up a majority of the western half of the annexation area.

Land Use & Zoning

The subject area requesting annexation is designated as Industrial (I) by the Land Use Plan. The area is not currently zoned. The applicant requests concurrently with annexation that the lands be zoned for uses within the I-3, Heavy Industrial District (Z-10172). This zoning district is designed to accommodate industrial uses which involve potentially objectionable uses and hazards, and which, therefore, cannot be reasonably expected to conform to a high level of performance standards, but which are essential to the economic viability of the city. The incorporated land to the north and northeast is zoned I-3, Heavy Industrial District, is designated for Industrial (I) use, and is characterized by three large scale industrial developments that have completed construction within the past four years. The lands to the east, south, and west are unincorporated and not currently zoned. The requested zoning designation for the annexation area is consistent with the Land Use Plan and the Port of Little Rock internal land use plans.

Infrastructure & Services

Upon annexation, the City will be responsible for the continued maintenance of approximately 9,044 linear feet of roadway—Riverport Road and Harper Road—and related drainage facilities. Riverport Road is being constructed to the City's 'Industrial Street' standard approved for roads within the Port area.

No municipal solid waste services will be provided to the area as there are no residential structures on the land and the proposed use intends for non-residential uses.

The nearest Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority (LRWRA) facility is a 24" to 42" sewer line approximately 168 feet from the subject area. No comments have been received by Little Rock Water Reclamation on the proposed annexation. The nearest Central Arkansas Water (CAW) facility is a 16" water line approximately 1,940 feet from the subject area in the southern right-of-way of Zeuber Road. As part of the development of any land within the annexation area, the developer will have to extend these services from the existing service lines to any new development in coordination with CAW and LRWRA.

The nearest fire station is Station 4 at 7500 Lindsey Road, approximately 2.29 miles from the closest annexation area utilizing the existing street system. Station 13, at 1105 E Roosevelt, is 3.69 miles from the closest annexation area utilizing the existing

street system. No comments have been received the Little Rock Fire Department on the proposed annexation.

The current patrol district for the Little Rock Police Department for this area is approximately 6,080 acres. The annexation would increase the patrol district by 12.9 percent. The Police Department indicate there are no issues with the annexation request.

The applicant has provided the City with a letter, dated May 12, 2025, from the Arkansas Geographic Information Systems Office (AGIO) that the annexation request meets all requirements outlined in Arkansas Code § 14-40-101. The area is contiguous to the City of Little Rock's municipal boundary along the area's northeastern boundary and meets all requirements for a petition of annexation by 100 percent, in accordance with Arkansas Code § 14-40-609, verified by the Pulaski County Judge's Order that was signed and filed on May 14, 2025. The Order sets the exact boundaries of the annexation, which, by custom, includes all adjacent rights-of-way.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Staff recommends approval of annexation and incorporation of the land into the City of Little Rock and the concurrent designation of the zoning classification of the area to I-3, Heavy Industrial District.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

(June 12, 2025)

The applicant was present. There were three (3) people in opposition. James Wilson, Deborah Wilson, and Tara Lancaster voiced concerns regarding: the zoning designation of I-3, Heavy Industrial directly abutting the Sweet Home community; financial impacts to nearby residences and the City regarding tax revenues and public infrastructure; mitigation strategies for environmental and quality of life impacts of a potential data center or other uses allowable in an I-3 zoning district among; impacts to water supply and quality; and impacts to nearby residents in the Sweet Home community and other adjacent unincorporated areas. After considerable discussion, there was a motion and second to approve the application as recommended by staff. The vote was 6 ayes, 4 nays, and 1 absent. The motion passed.