

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
STAFF REPORT****Date: November 1, 2021****CASE NUMBER**

6424/5430/4765/4557/4493/4402

APPLICANT NAME

Renaissance Hotel (Wrico Signs, Inc., Agent)

LOCATION64 South Water Street
(North side of Government Street, extending from South
Water Street to South Royal Street).**VARIANCE REQUEST****SIGN:** Sign Variance to allow one (1) monument sign, one (1) internally illuminated upper building sign over three (3) feet tall, and two (2) unspecified sign types in a T-6 Sub-District of Mixed-Use High Intensity of the Downtown Development District.**ZONING ORDINANCE
REQUIREMENT****SIGN:** The Zoning Ordinance does not allow monument signs, internally illuminated upper building signs over three (3) feet tall, or unspecified sign types in a T-6 Sub-District of Mixed-Use High Intensity of the Downtown Development District.**ZONING**T-6 Sub-District of Mixed-Use High Intensity of the
Downtown Development District**AREA OF PROPERTY**

1.4± Acres

**ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

No comments.

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

No comments.

**CITY COUNCIL
DISTRICT**

District 2

ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a Sign Variance to allow one (1) monument sign, one (1) internally illuminated upper building sign over three (3) feet tall, and two (2) unspecified sign types in a T-6 Sub-District of Mixed-Use High Intensity of the Downtown Development District; the Zoning Ordinance does not allow monument signs, internally illuminated upper building signs over three (3) feet tall, or unspecified sign types in a T-6 Sub-District of Mixed-Use High Intensity of the Downtown Development District.

The site has been given a Downtown (DT) land use designation, per the Future Land Use Plan and Map, adopted on May 18, 2017 by the Planning Commission. The Future Land Use Plan and Map complements and provides additional detail to the Development Framework Maps in the Map for Mobile, adopted by the Planning Commission at its November 5, 2015 meeting.

Downtown is called out as a separate land use designation due to its distinct role, layout and fabric.

As a land use district, Downtown (DT) is the ultimate mixed-use environment. Land development and redevelopment will emphasize variety, mixed uses, and unity of form within buildings or complexes.

As the city's and region's center for commercial and service employment, Downtown supports intense development and a dynamic combination of uses: specialty and regional retail shopping and offices; business support services; urban housing at higher densities (starting at 10 dwelling units per acre); civic, educational and cultural destinations; entertainment options; and other public amenities including active and passive park space. The successful integration of a mix of housing types and densities will be critical to achieve a vibrant, 24/7-active Downtown Mobile.

Development in the DT district will focus on new, redeveloped and adaptively reused buildings that frame attractive, human-scaled streetscapes, memorable public spaces, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly streets and convenient transit access to jobs, housing and entertainment. Accordingly, certain areas of Downtown will be more intensively developed to facilitate that pedestrian orientation.

It should be noted that the Future Land Use Plan and Map components of the Map for Mobile Plan are meant to serve as a general guide, not a detailed lot and district plan. In many cases the designation on the new Future Land Use Map may match the existing use of land, but in others the designated land use may differ from what is on the ground today. As such, the Future Land Use Plan and Map allows the Planning Commission and City Council to consider individual cases based on additional information such as the classification request, the surrounding development, the timing of the request, and the appropriateness and compatibility of the proposed use and, where applicable, the zoning classification.

The Zoning Ordinance states that no variance shall be granted where economics are the basis for the application; and, unless the Board is presented with sufficient evidence to find that the variance will not be contrary to the public interest, and that special conditions exist such that a literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in an unnecessary hardship. The Ordinance also states that a variance should not be approved unless the spirit and intent of the Ordinance is observed and substantial justice done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood.

Variances are not intended to be granted frequently. The applicant must clearly show the Board that the request is due to very unusual characteristics of the property and that it satisfies the variance standards. What constitutes unnecessary hardship and substantial justice is a matter to be determined from the facts and circumstances of each application.

The purpose of the Sign Regulation Provisions is to promote the economic well-being of the entire Mobile community by creating a favorable physical image, to afford the business community an equal and fair opportunity to advertise and promote products and services, and to protect the right of the citizens to enjoy Mobile's natural scenic beauty.

The hotel was most recently granted a sign variance by the Board at its June 1, 1998 meeting, where a total of four wall signs were approved. Since that approval, the Downtown Development District regulations were adopted in 2014, which does not permit the size and types of signage the applicant wishes to place on the subject site. The applicant submitted three of the proposed signs for review by the Consolidated Review Committee (CRC) in August 2021, at which point they were advised of the need for the variance request at hand. If approved, the fourth sign should be submitted for CRC review as well.

The applicant states:

1. *The purpose of this application is to allow for The Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel to change the signage to the new corporate branding logo. All the signs that exist are to help our guests to not only find the hotel but the proper entrances.*
2. *Monument Sign on Water Street and Government is still necessary due to various events throughout the year, such as Mardi Gras, where valet must relocate to the east drive rather than on Royal Street.*

Royal Street Wall sign is necessary as identification for guests coming into downtown from the west on Government Street.

For the Valet Sign, no onsite parking lot is available, and this is the only location for valet signage.

Highrise Signage is iconic for this building and the existing location of this signage is the only option in order to update the new corporate Marriott branding logo.

3. *The hotel was designed and built before the present Downtown Development District sign ordinance was put in place.*
4. *The Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel is part of the iconic skyline of our city and updated branding signage in existing locations would further beautify this property for the thousands of guests and locals who navigate to this property in our Port City.*

The site has an existing monument sign that is approximately 25± square feet, and wishes to replace it with a 32± square foot monument. The proposed sign dimensions comply with DDD regulation allowances; however, monument signs are not allowed in T-6 Sub-districts. Due to unique circumstances regarding the property and the impact Mardi Gras has on the site, it appears that it may be reasonable to allow the site to maintain a monument sign.

The applicant has an existing internally illuminated upper building sign that is 187± square feet that they wish to replace with a sign having the same dimensions (15' 7" wide x 12' tall). Upper building signs are limited to three feet tall by the Ordinance, and internally illuminated signs are prohibited. Due to the height of the structure, a larger, internally lit sign may be appropriate to increase visibility to the site by day and night.

The applicant has an existing 32.3± square foot sign with the name of the hotel at its valet area, and wishes to replace it with a 38.4± square foot sign. As the configuration of the hotel prevents any other signage from being visible at this location, it is important for visitors to the site to know they are at the correct location, therefore it may be appropriate to allow the requested sign, despite that it is not allowed sign type.

Finally, the applicant is proposing to change out an existing 262.2± square foot channel letter sign facing Government Street, with a new 382± square foot sign. The increase in size is largely due to the inclusion of a hotel logo on top of the hotel name. Again, due to the size and configuration of the hotel, it is important that visitors know that they are at the correct location, and as the other proposed signs are not visible from the street level along Government Street, it may be appropriate to allow the applicant to change the existing sign.

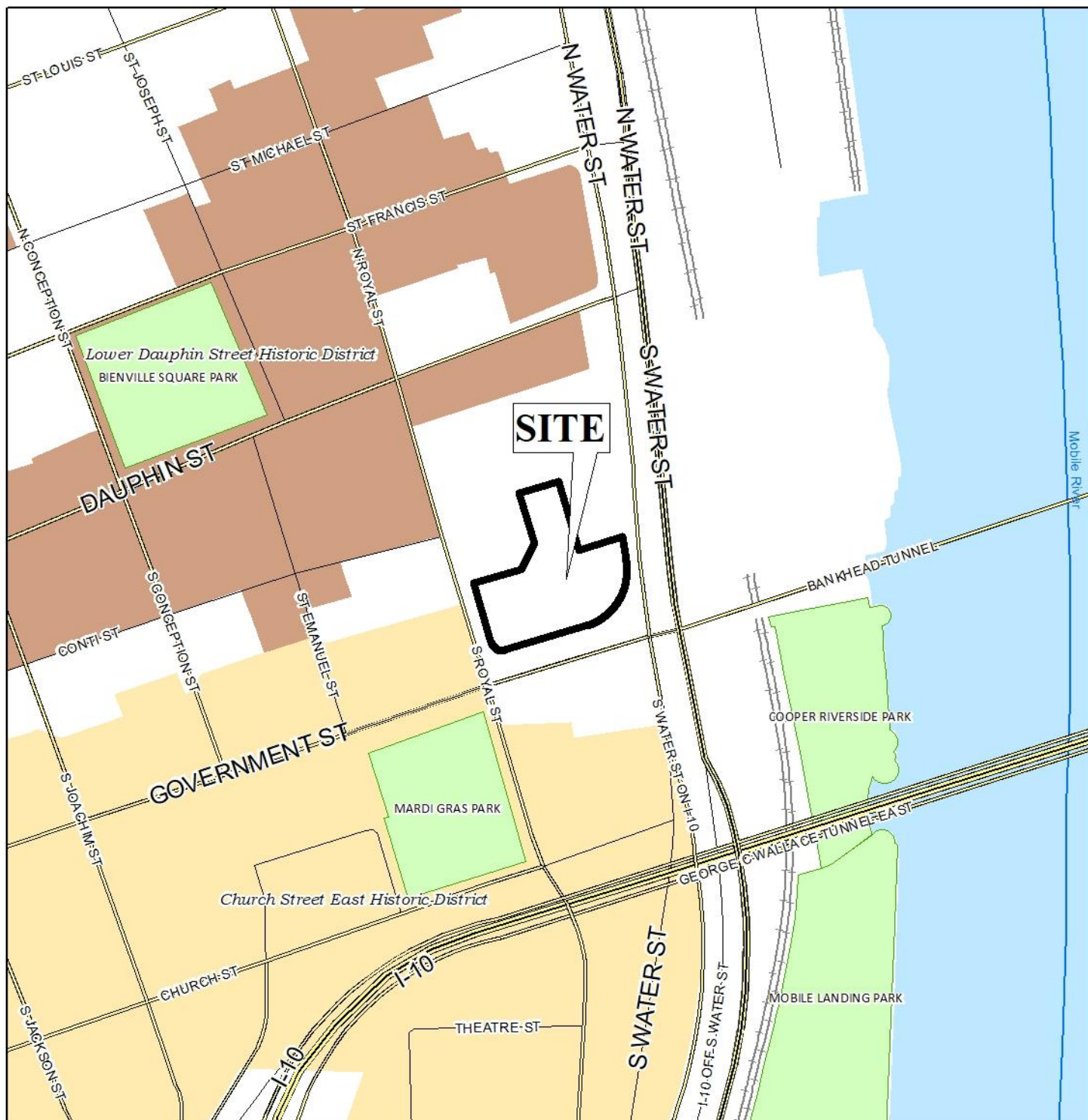
RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends to the Board the following findings of fact for Approval:

- 1) Approving the variance request will not be contrary to the public interest due to the fact that in that the proposed signage package is similar to the existing signage;
- 2) Special conditions do appear to exist such that a literal enforcement of the provisions of the chapter will result in unnecessary hardship due to the size and configuration of the hotel resulting in drivers being unable to see signage from various access points to the subject site; and
- 3) That the spirit of the chapter shall be observed and substantial justice shall be done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood by granting the variance in that no additional signage is proposed beyond the number of signs already existing at the site.

The approval should be subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Submittal of a CRC review application for the upper building sign;
- 2) Obtain sign permits; and
- 3) Full compliance with all municipal codes and ordinances.

LOCATOR MAP



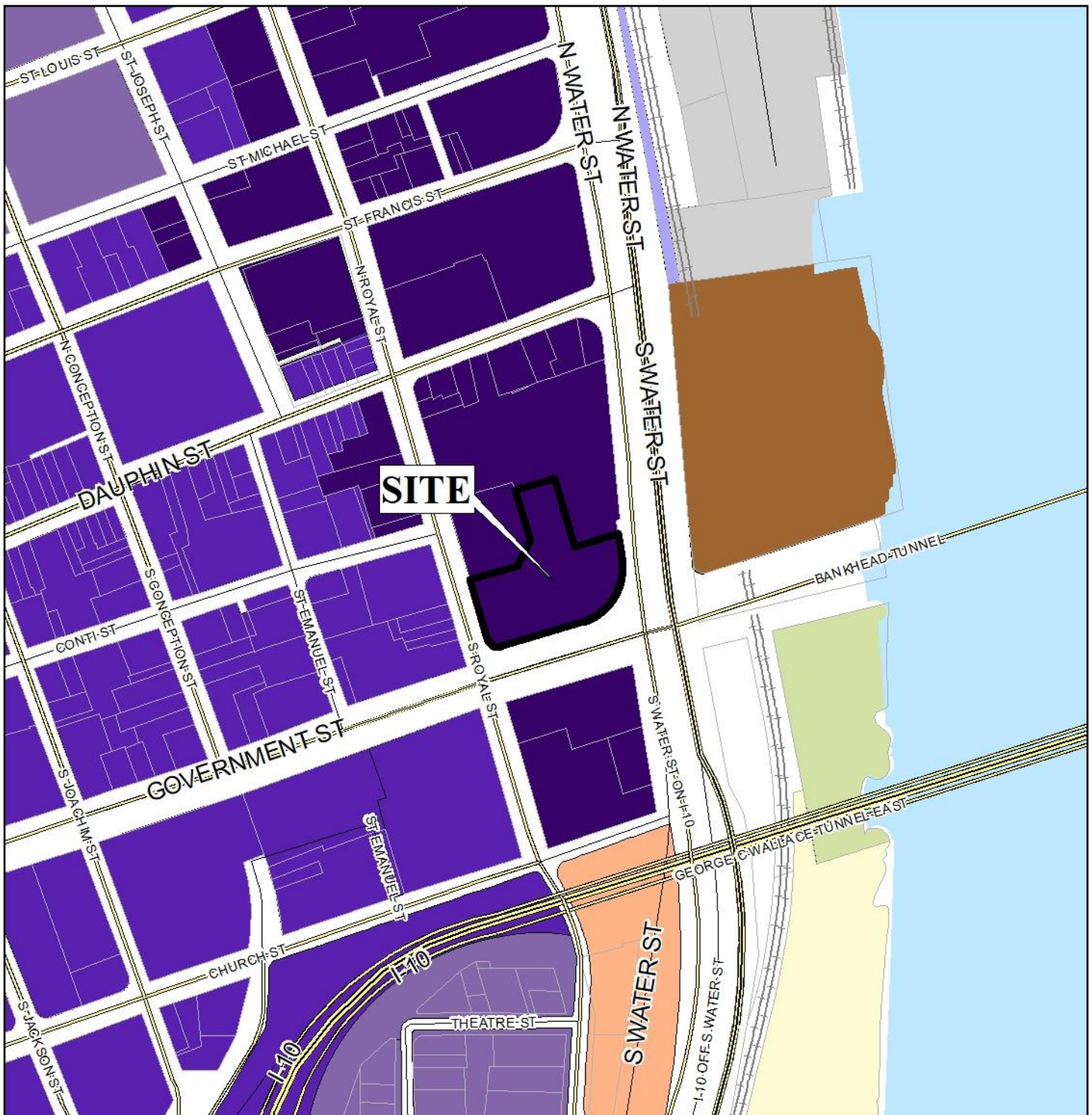
APPLICATION NUMBER 6424 DATE November 1, 2021

APPLICANT Renaissance Hotel (Wrico Signs, Inc., Agent)

REQUEST Sign Variance



LOCATOR ZONING MAP



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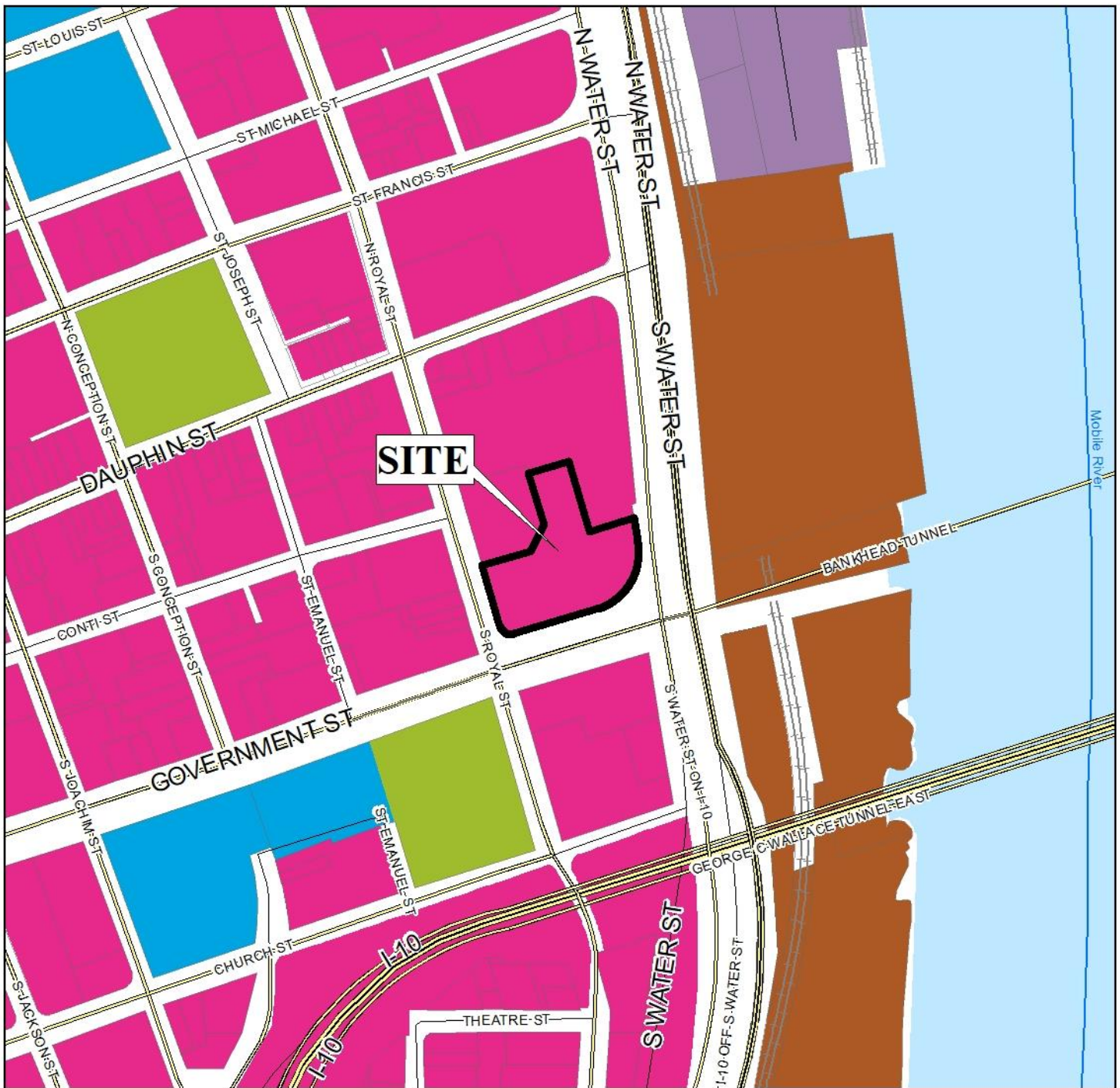
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FLUM LOCATOR MAP



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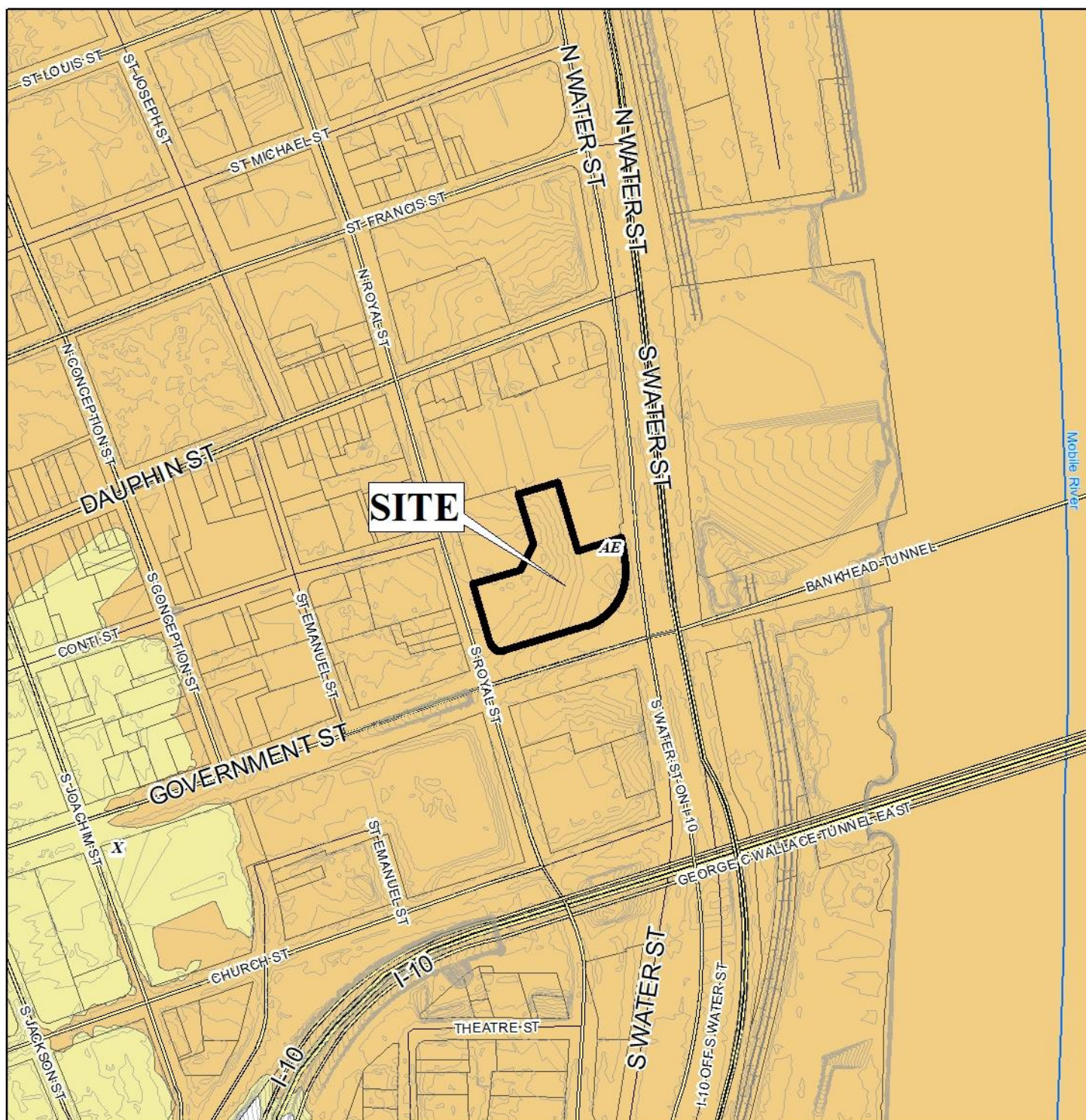
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REQUEST Sign Variance

Low Density Residential	Neighborhood Center - Traditional	Downtown Waterfront	Parks & Open Space
Mixed Density Residential	Neighborhood Center - Suburban	Light Industry	Water Dependent
Downtown	Traditional Corridor	Heavy Industry	
District Center	Mixed Commercial Corridor	Institutional	



ENVIRONMENTAL LOCATOR MAP



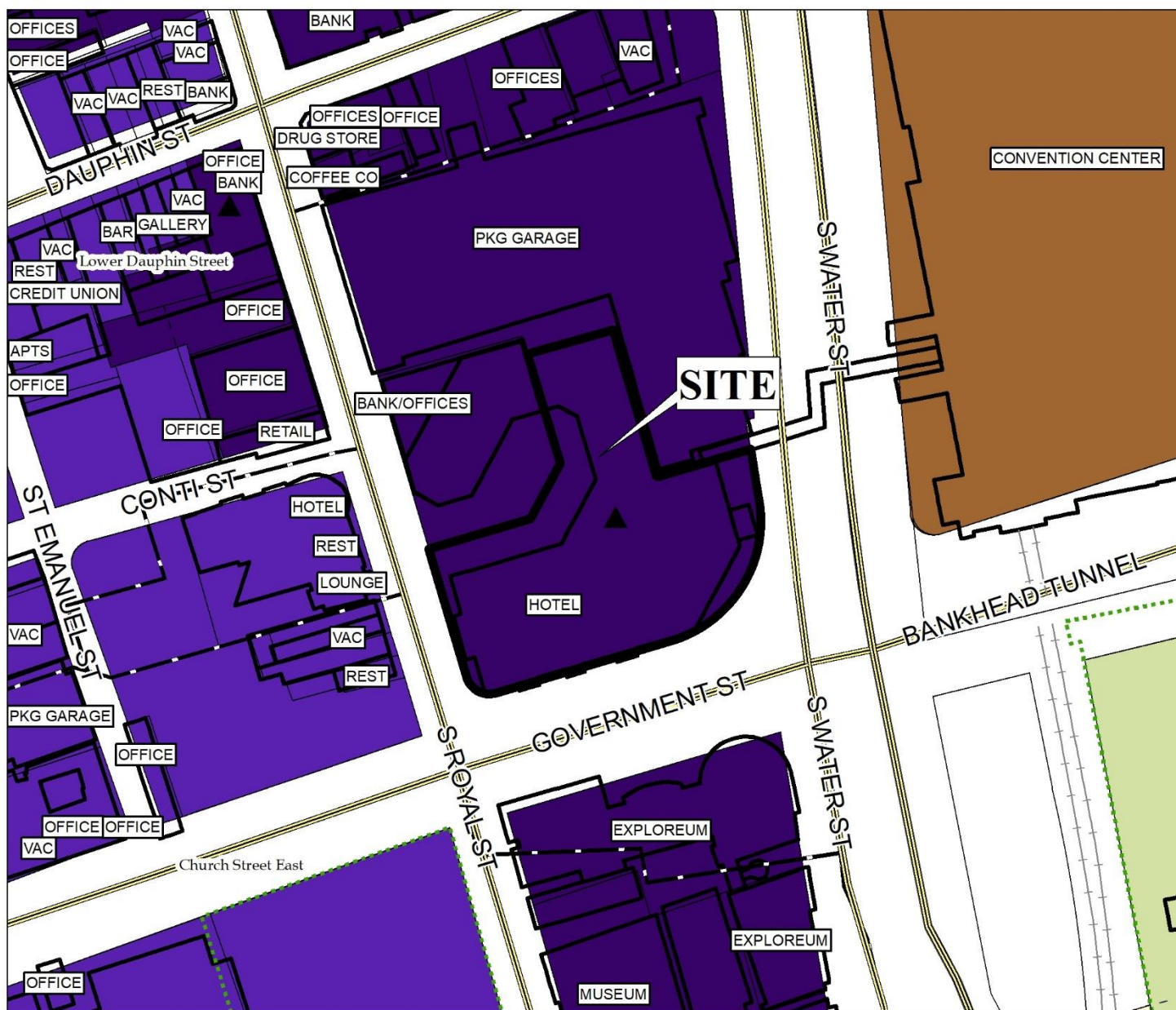
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REQUEST_____Sign Variance



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



















The site is surrounded by commerical sites, vacant units, museums and a convention center.









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REQUEST_____Sign Variance

 R-A
  R-3
  T-B
  B-2
  B-5
  MUN
  SD-WH
  T5.1

 R-1
  R-B
  B-1
  B-3
  I-1
  OPEN
  T3
  T5.2

 R-2
  H-B
  LB-2
  B-4
  I-2
  SD
  T4
  T6



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL



Mobile County Revenue Commission

The site is surrounded by commercial sites, vacant units, museums and a convention center.

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DETAIL SITE PLAN

WATER STREET & GOVERNMENT STREET MONUMENT SIGN LOCATION



EXISTING SIGN



ILLUMINATED NIGHT VIEW



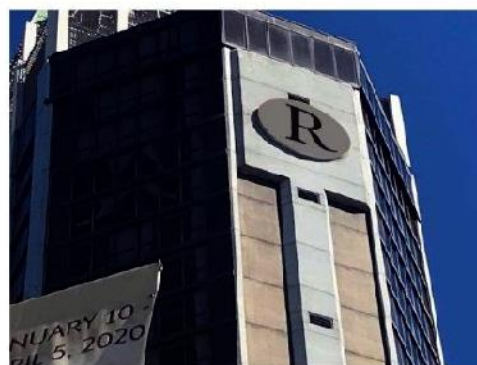
PROPOSED NEW SIGN



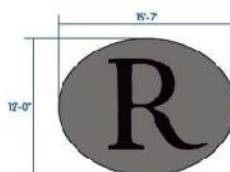
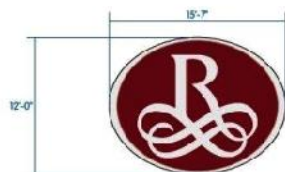
HIGHRISE SIGNAGE LOCATION



EXISTING SIGN WITH 3M PANAFLEX FACES



PROPOSED NEW 3M PANAFLEX FACES TO FIT EXISTING SIGN



DAYTIME APPEARANCE

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DETAIL SITE PLAN

ROYAL STREET WALL SIGN



EXISTING SIGN



PROPOSED NEW SIGN



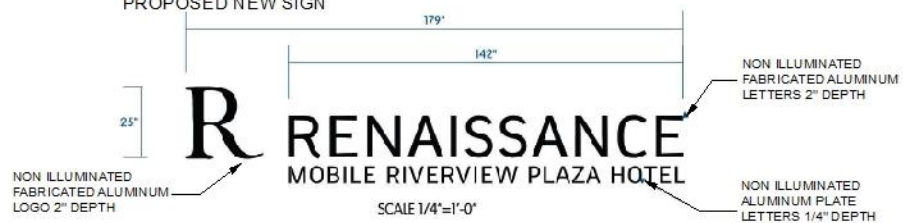
VALET SIGN LOCATION



EXISTING SIGN



PROPOSED NEW SIGN



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REQUEST Sign Variance



NTS