



Agenda Item # 3

BOA-003847-2026

View additional details on this proposal and all application materials using the following link:

[Applicant Materials for Consideration](#)

DETAILS

Location:

407 Hillcrest Road

Applicant / Agent:

Geographic Consulting, LLC

Property Owner:

John Pilger, JP3 Holdings, LLC

Current Zoning:

R-1, Single-Family Residential Suburban District

Future Land Use:

Low Density Residential

Case Number(s):

6785

Unified Development Code (UDC) Requirement:

- The Unified Development Code (UDC) does not allow a professional office in an R-1, Single-Family Residential Suburban District, requires full compliance with access and maneuvering areas, compliant residential buffers, pedestrian connections to public sidewalks, and full compliance with tree planting and landscape area requirements.

Board Consideration:

- Use, Access and Maneuvering, Residential Buffer, Pedestrian Connection, and Reduced Landscape Area Variances to allow a professional office with reduced access and maneuvering area, reduced residential buffers, no pedestrian connection, and reduced landscape area in an R-1, Single-Family Residential Suburban District.

Report Contents:**Page**

Context Map	2
Site History	3
Staff Comments	3
Variance Considerations	5
Exhibits	7

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL



The site is surrounded by commercial and residential units.

APPLICATION NUMBER	6785	DATE	October 1, 2026
APPLICANT	Geographic Consulting, LLC		
REQUEST	Use, Access and Maneuvering, Residential Buffer, Pedestrian Connection, and Reduced Landscape Area		



SITE HISTORY

The subject site was annexed into the City of Mobile in 1956.

With the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance in 1967, the site was assigned an R-A, Residential-Agriculture zoning classification. At some point in time afterward, the classification was changed to R-1, Single-Family Residential District.

There are no prior Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Adjustment cases associated with the site.

STAFF COMMENTS

Engineering Comments:

No comments on the proposed variance; however, according to the submitted plans, the proposed project will require a Land Disturbance Permit. The applicant will need to have the following conditions met:

1. The proposed site improvements will require that a Land Disturbance Permit be submitted through the CSS Portal.
2. The existing drainage patterns and surface flow characteristics should not be altered so as to have a negative impact on any adjoining properties or any public rights-of-way.
3. Any and all proposed land disturbing activity within the property will need to be in conformance with Mobile City Code, Chapter 17, Storm Water Management and Flood Control); the City of Mobile, Alabama Flood Plain Management Plan (1984); and, the Rules for Erosion and Sedimentation Control and Storm Water Runoff Control.
4. Applicant agrees to install adequate BMPs during construction to protect from sediment/pollutants leaving the site.

Traffic Engineering Comments:

The requested variance to allow a 16-foot width drive aisle represents the minimum width typically permitted for an alleyway. Additionally, no parking is proposed along this portion of the drive aisle.

Urban Forestry Comments:

Property to be developed in compliance with state and local laws that pertain to tree preservation and protection on both city and private properties [Act 929 of the 1961 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature (Acts 1961, p. 1487), as amended, and City Code Chapters 57 and 65]. Private removal of trees in the right-of-way will require approval of the Mobile Tree Commission. Removal of heritage trees from undeveloped residential sites, developed residential sites in historic districts, and all commercial sites will require a tree removal permit.

Fire Department Comments:

All projects located within the City Limits of Mobile shall comply with the provisions of the City of Mobile Fire Code Ordinance, which adopts the 2021 edition of the *International Fire Code (IFC)*.

Fire apparatus access roads shall be provided to within 150 feet of all non-sprinklered commercial buildings and within 300 feet of all sprinklered commercial buildings, as measured along an approved route around the exterior of the facility.

An approved fire water supply capable of meeting the requirements set forth in *Appendices B and C* of the 2021 IFC shall be provided for all commercial buildings.

Fire hydrant placement shall comply with the following minimum standards:

- Within 400 feet of non-sprinklered commercial buildings
- Within 600 feet of sprinklered commercial buildings
- Within 100 feet of fire department connections (FDCs) serving standpipe or sprinkler systems

Although the *International Residential Code (IRC)* functions as a stand-alone document for the construction of one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses, it does not govern the design or layout of emergency access or community-level fire protection infrastructure. Therefore, residential developments must also comply with the applicable requirements of the *International Fire Code*, including, but not limited to, those listed above concerning the design, construction, regulation, and maintenance of fire apparatus access roads and fire protection water supplies.

Planning Comments:

The applicant is requesting Use, Access and Maneuvering, Residential Buffer, Pedestrian Connection, and Reduced Landscape Area Variances to allow a professional office with reduced access and maneuvering area, reduced residential buffers, no pedestrian connection, and reduced landscape area in an R-1, Single-Family Residential Suburban District. The Unified Development Code (UDC) does not allow a professional office in an R-1, Single-Family Residential Suburban District, requires full compliance with access and maneuvering areas, compliant residential buffers, pedestrian connections to public sidewalks, and full compliance with tree planting and landscape area requirements.

The application and supporting documentation are available via the link on Page 1 of this report.

The site currently contains approximately 14,982 square feet and is developed with an existing 2,227± square-foot single-family dwelling, with a double-entry dirt and deteriorated asphalt driveway, and a small one-vehicle parking space. The applicant proposes to improve the site for use as a professional insurance office and seeks relief from the use, access and maneuvering, residential buffer, pedestrian connection, and landscaping standards of the UDC in order to do so.

As justification for the Use Variance request, the applicant cites the fact that the site is on Hillcrest Road, a major arterial corridor, and is in close proximity to other office, institutional, multifamily and commercial uses which make it well suited for the proposed adaptive reuse as a low-intensity professional office.

It should be noted that the adjacent property to the South was granted a Use and Substandard Access Variance by the Board in September 2002 to allow a professional office with a 12-foot wide driveway. That site is still in use as an income tax service. There have not been any other similar requests within the vicinity.

The site plan submitted indicates that the existing substandard drive will be widened to twelve (12) feet and paved. The double-entry will be retained. As such, the driveway should be restricted to one-way traffic entering from the South side and exiting to the North side, if approved. Two (2) compliant parking stalls are proposed in the front yard. Proposed access to a rear yard parking area would be via a substandard 16-foot wide two-way drive along the South side of the site adjacent to the existing dwelling. This drive would expand to a standard 24-foot width behind six (6) proposed compliant parking stalls. The site is required six (6) parking spaces, and a total of eight (8) are proposed.

The site plan indicates a bicycle parking area but does not specify the parking count. As the building would require two (2) bicycle parking spaces, the site plan should be revised to indicate such, if approved.

The site plan indicates a wood fence along the North and South sides of the site, but none along the East (rear). As all three are adjacent to residentially zoned properties, the site plan should be revised to also indicate a wood privacy fence along the East of the site, with all indicated to be six (6) feet high. The site plan indicates that the fences along the North and South sides of the site would stop even with the front of the dwelling. The six-foot (6') height should continue to the 25-foot front setback line, at which point it should reduce to a three-foot (3') height to the front property line.

The privacy fences are only part of the required residential buffer. Section 64-3-8 of the UDC requires the buffer to be ten (10) feet wide and consist of a wall or fence, or screen planting, or a combination of both. As proposed, there is no ten (10) foot wide buffer along the North, East or South property lines. However, site constraints could possibly be considered as factors restricting the inclusion of the residential buffers.

The applicant requests relief from the requirement of Section 64-3-3.B. of the UDC to provide a pedestrian connection from the public sidewalk within the right-of-way to the main building entrance. However, no justification for such is provided, and the site plan does not indicate any topographical feature restricting the inclusion of such.

Pertaining to the Landscaping Variance request, calculations provided on the site plan indicate that both the total and frontage landscaping percentage requirements will be met. Tree planting requirements will also be met due to the existing Live Oaks on site which will be retained and credited toward the requirement. As such, Tree Planting and Landscape Area Variances are unnecessary.

Article 5, Section 10-E.1. of the UDC states that the Board of Adjustment may grant a variance where the applicant demonstrates that the variance will not be contrary to the public interest, that special conditions exist such that literal enforcement of the chapter would result in unnecessary hardship, and that the spirit of the chapter will be observed and substantial justice done.

A revised site plan should be submitted to and approved by Planning and Zoning prior to the issuance of permits for development.

It should be noted that the proposed use may constitute a change of occupancy, which could trigger compliance with applicable Fire Code, Building Code, and other regulatory requirements. As such, if the variance request is approved, the applicant should coordinate with the Inspection Services Department to determine whether additional permits or modifications are necessary to ensure compliance with all applicable safety requirements for the proposed use.

VARIANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Standards of Review:

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.

Article 5 Section 10-E. 1. of the Unified Development Code states that the Board of Adjustment may grant a variance if:

- The Applicant demonstrates that the variance shall not be contrary to the public interest;

- Where, owing to special conditions a literal enforcement of the provision of this Chapter will result in unnecessary hardship; and
- The spirit of this Chapter will be observed and substantial justice done.

Article 5 Section 10-E.2. states no variance shall be granted:

- (a) In order to relieve an owner of restrictive covenants that are recorded in Mobile County Probate Court and applicable to the property;
- (b) Where economic loss is the sole basis for the required variance; or
- (c) Where the variance is otherwise unlawful.

Considerations:

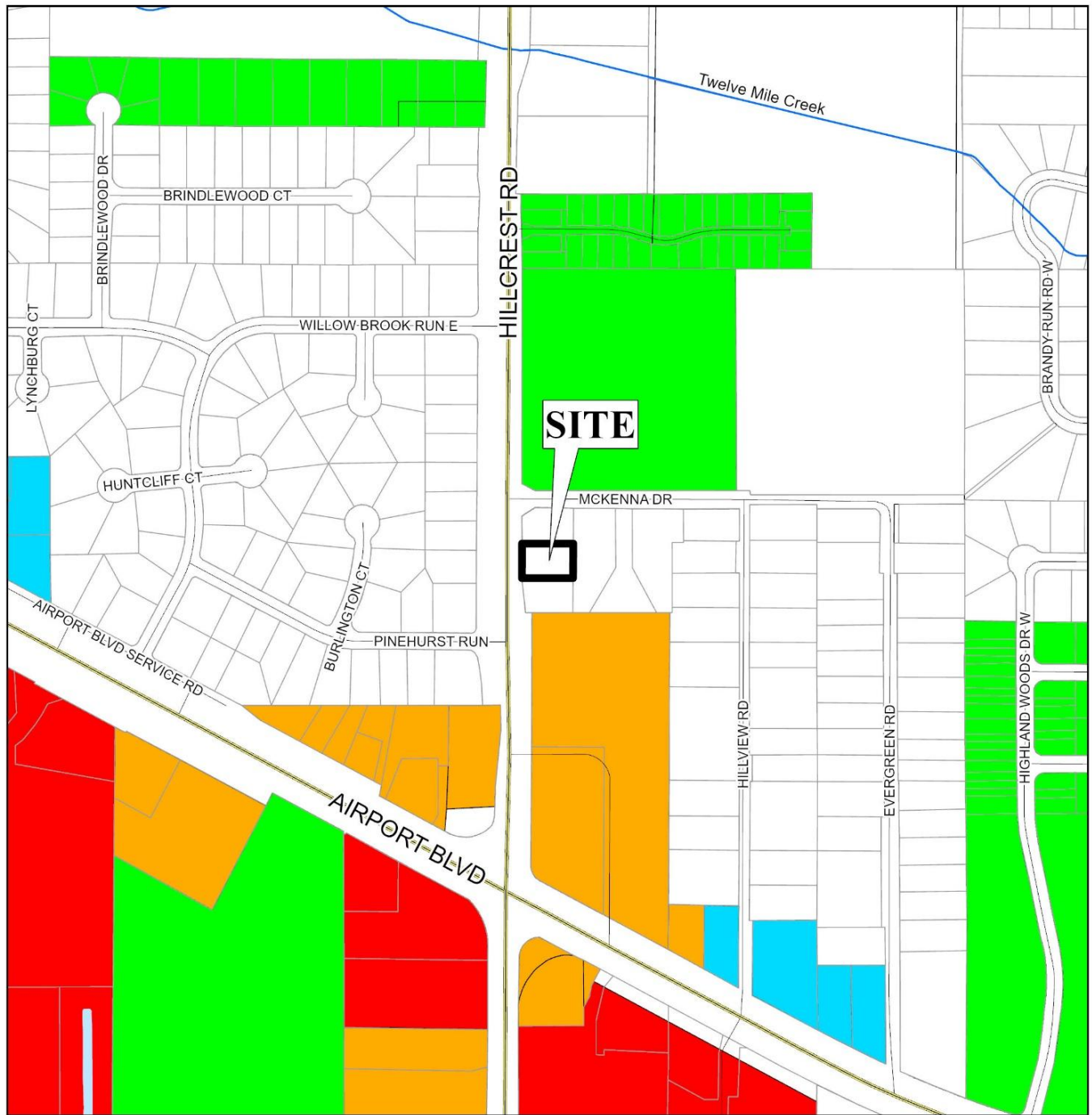
Based on the requested Variance application and documentation submitted, if the Board considers approval of the request, the following findings of fact must be presented:

- A) The variance **will not** be contrary to the public interest;
- B) Special conditions exist such that a literal enforcement of the provisions of the chapter **will** result in unnecessary hardship; and
- C) The spirit of the chapter **shall** be observed and substantial justice done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood by granting the variance.

If approved, the following conditions should apply:

- 1) Revision of the site plan to mark the driveway as one-way in from the South and one-way out at the North;
- 2) Revision of the site plan to indicate two (2) bicycle parking spaces on the designated parking rack;
- 3) Revision of the site plan to provide a six-foot (6') high wood privacy fence along the East (rear) of the site;
- 4) Revision of the site plan to indicate the wood privacy fences along the North and South sides of the site are six (6) feet high to the 25-foot front yard setback line, then dropping to three (3) feet high continuing to the front property line;
- 5) Revision of the site plan to provide a compliant Pedestrian Connection as required by Section Section 64-3-3.B. of the UDC;
- 6) Submission to and approval by Planning and Zoning of a revised site plan prior to the issuance of permits for development;
- 7) Obtaining any/all required permits and inspections necessary to authorize use of the building as an office, in coordination with the Inspection Services and Permitting Departments; and
- 8) Full compliance with all other municipal codes and ordinances.

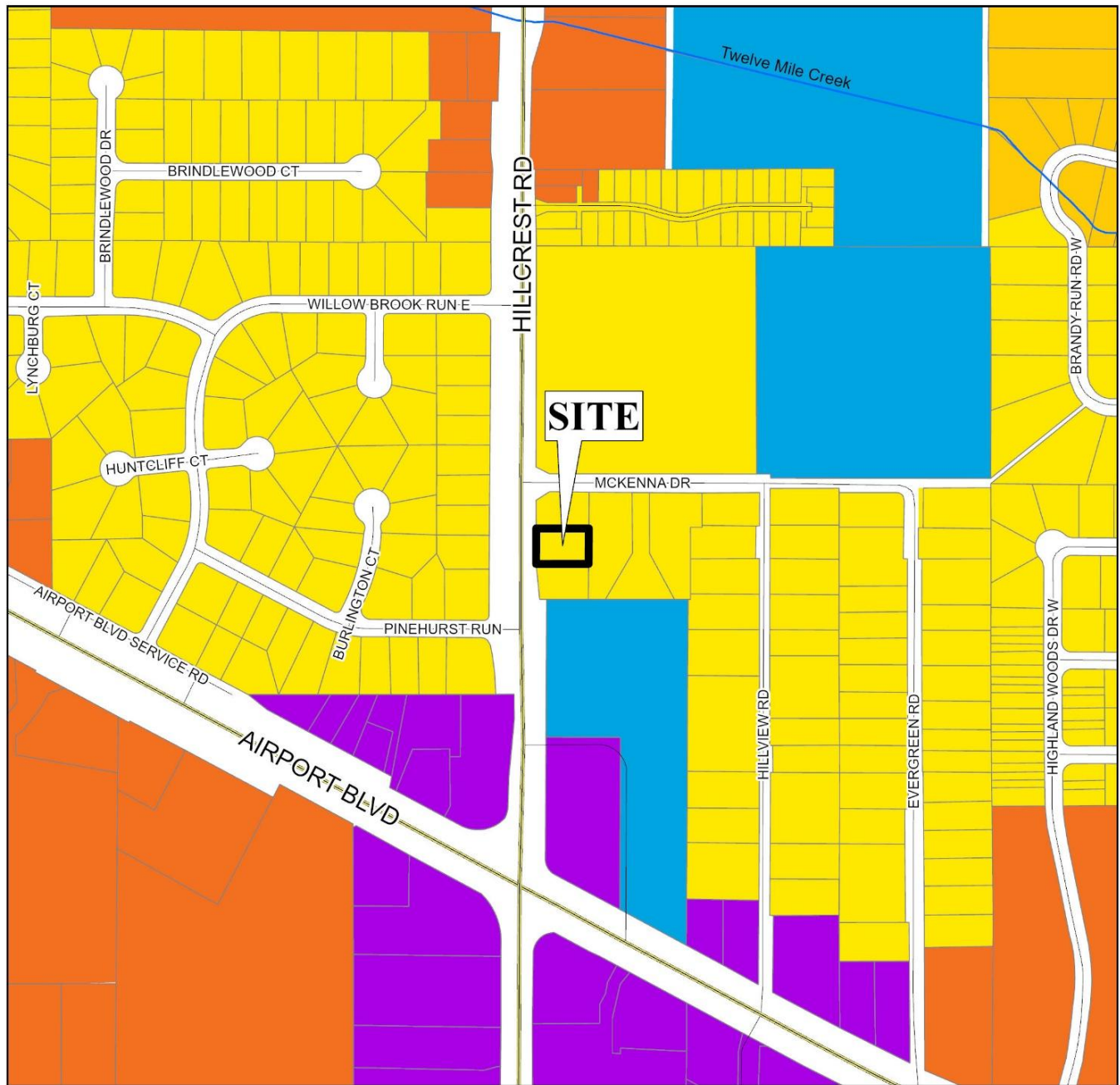
LOCATOR ZONING MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6785 DATE October 1, 2026
 APPLICANT Geographic Consulting, LLC
 REQUEST Use, Access and Maneuvering, Residential Buffer, Pedestrian Connection, and Reduced Landscape Area



FLUM LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6785 DATE October 1, 2026

APPLICANT Geographic Consulting, LLC

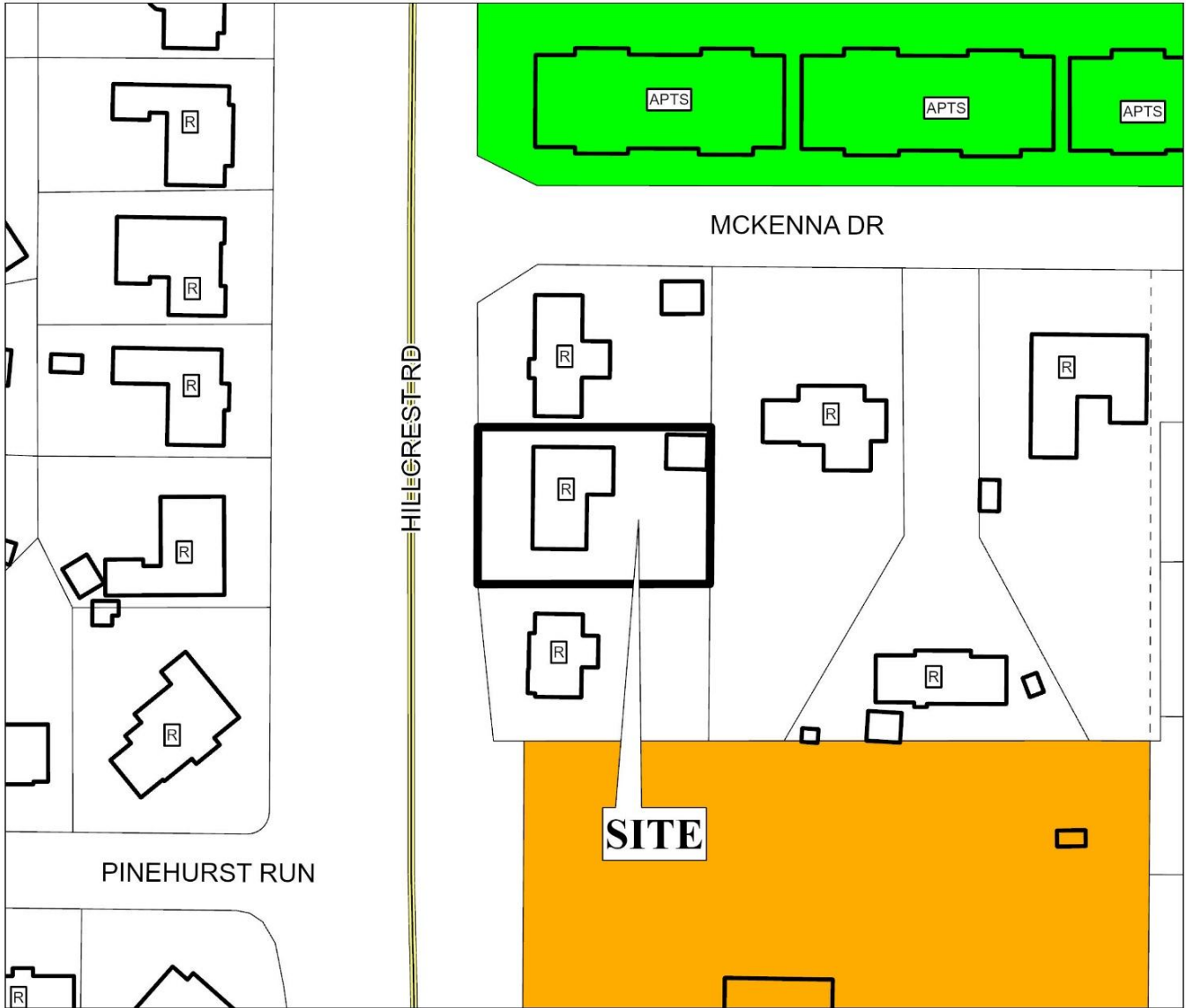
REQUEST Use, Access and Maneuvering, Residential Buffer, Pedestrian Connection, and Reduced Landscape Area

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



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by commercial units.

APPLICATION NUMBER 6785 DATE October 1, 2026

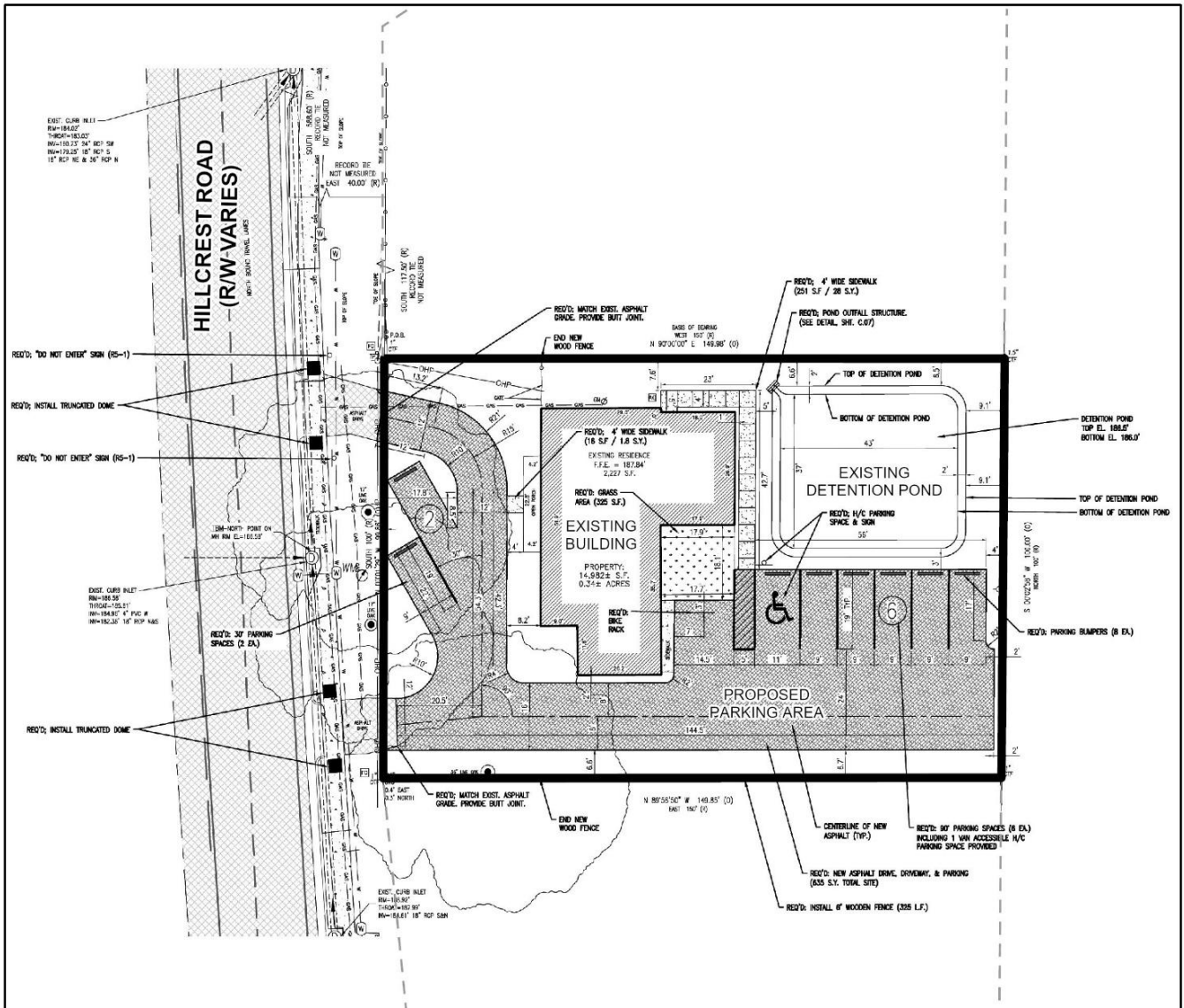
APPLICANT Geographic Consulting, LLC

REQUEST Use, Access and Maneuvering, Residential Buffer, Pedestrian Connection, and Reduced Landscape Area

R-A	R-3	B-1	B-2	B-5	ML	I-2	OPEN	T-3	T-5.2
R-1	R-B	T-B	B-3	CW	MH	PD	SD	T-4	T-6
R-2	H-B	LB-2	B-4	MM	I-1	MUN	SD-WH	T-5.1	



SITE PLAN



The site plan illustrates the proposed parking area, current buildings, and landscape features.

APPLICATION NUMBER 6785 DATE October 1, 2026
 APPLICANT Geographic Consulting, LLC
 REQUEST Use, Access and Maneuvering, Residential Buffer, Pedestrian Connection, and Reduced Landscape Area



A primary purpose of the Future Land Use Map is to guide zoning decisions. In many cases the designation on the FLUM may match the existing use of land, but in others the designated land use may differ from what is on the ground today. For example, a parcel that is in commercial use today but designated as any of the “mixed use” types on the map could redevelop with a mix of residential and commercial uses (such as retail, office, entertainment, etc., depending on the location).

The correspondence between the FLUM and the zoning district structure is described in the matrix below. This tool gives the City the flexibility over the long-term to determine appropriate changes to the zoning map based on various factors.

Zoning correspondence matrix

[illegible]

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)

This designation applies to residential neighborhoods found mostly west of I-65 or immediately adjacent to the east side of I-65. These areas are primarily single family residential, but may contain small-scale complimentary uses and other residential types at appropriate locations. An LDR area may include a wide range of lot sizes, housing size and styles, including some small-scale multi-unit buildings, but housing styles are highly consistent within a subdivision and tend to have limited connectivity between residential types and non-residential uses. Neighborhoods tend to have longer blocks and may be designed in a network of meandering streets. Residential density ranges between 0 and 6 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).

Development Intent

- › Complementary uses are designed and sited in a manner compatible with and connected to the surrounding context.
- › The presence of individual ancillary uses should contribute to the fabric of a complete neighborhood, developed at a walkable, bikeable human scale.
- › When establishing new residential areas or expanding existing developments, provide pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between adjacent developments.

Land use mix

Primary Uses

- › Residential, Single family
- › Residential, Attached

Secondary Uses

- › Residential, Multifamily
- › Civic
- › Parks

Housing mix

- › Predominantly single family subdivisions with lots smaller than one acre
- › Attached residential such as duplexes, multiplexes, and townhomes that have the scale of a single family home

Character Example

