

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT  
STAFF REPORT****Date: July 9, 2018****CASE NUMBER**

6188

**APPLICANT NAME**

Florida Certified Sign Erectors

**LOCATION**

25 West I-65 Service Road North  
(West side of West I-65 Service Road North, 340'± South  
of College Lane South, extending to the East side of Du  
Rhu Drive)

**VARIANCE REQUEST**

**SIGN:** Sign Variance to allow a second wall sign for a  
tenant on a single street frontage wall on a multi-tenant site  
in a B-1, Buffer Business District.

**ZONING ORDINANCE  
REQUIREMENT**

**SIGN:** The Zoning Ordinance allows one wall sign per  
tenant per street frontage wall on a multi-tenant site in a  
B-1, Buffer Business District.

**ZONING**

B-1, Buffer Business

**AREA OF PROPERTY**

6.7± Acres

**ENGINEERING  
COMMENTS**

No comments.

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING  
COMMENTS**

This request was not reviewed by Traffic Engineering.

**CITY COUNCIL  
DISTRICT**

District 7

**ANALYSIS**

The applicant is requesting a Sign Variance to allow a  
second wall sign for a tenant on a single street frontage wall on a multi-tenant site in a B-1,  
Buffer Business District; the Zoning Ordinance allows one wall sign per tenant per street  
frontage wall on a multi-tenant site in a B-1, Buffer Business District.

The site contains one multi-tenant bank building (Hancock Whitney Bank) currently in the  
process of rebranding following a merger. Since the site is multi-tenant and has over 601 linear  
feet of public street frontage, two freestanding signs are allowed and have been permitted. Each  
tenant is allowed one wall sign per public street façade, and the applicant has obtained a sign  
permit for one illuminated 115-square-foot wall sign on the front facade of the building. A

second illuminated wall sign of 35 square feet on the front facade is proposed by the applicant which would exceed the signage allowance for the site; hence this application.

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 subject site is abutted by B-2, Neighborhood Business, to the North with a bank, and to the South by B-1, with a financial services office and another vacant B-1 site. To the rear across Du Rhu Drive is B-1, used as a multi-family residential complex.

The site has been given a Mixed Commercial Corridor land use designation per the recently adopted Future Land Use Plan and Map. 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. This designation acknowledges existing commercial development that is spread along Mobile's transportation corridors in a conventional strip pattern or concentrated into shorter segments of a corridor.

Over time, new development and redevelopment in Mixed Commercial Corridors is encouraged to: raise design quality; improve connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods; improve streetscapes; and, improve mobility and accessibility for all users of the corridor.

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 applicant states:

*Hancock Bank and Florida Certified Sign Erectors are applying for a variance for 25 W I-65 Service Rd North, Hancock Whitney Bank, in order to request that the two allowable wall signs (one badge in the gable and one set of channel letter set above the entry) both be placed on the front elevation of the building rather than on separate elevations. The badge and channel letter set have already been approved by the City of Mobile on separate elevations. This is standard branding for Hancock.*

*This does not meet the conditions of the Zoning Ordinance. Though we are allowed two signs, ordinance requires that they must be on different exterior walls. Hancock wishes to place both signs on the same exterior wall at the front of the building. The building faces I-65 which is a major highway. By placing both signs on the front of the building, the bank can maximize visibility from the interstate. The back exterior wall of the building has many trees which obstruct the view of potential signage; the back street also is not a major highway with high traffic flow. The badge in the gable of the building also gives the front exterior wall of the building a more balanced appearance.*

*This property is both different and not different than existing neighboring businesses in this location. Hancock Bank is a very large building; it is located on seven lots. All property is owned by the bank. Many of the neighboring businesses are much smaller in size. Iberiabank is a much smaller business, and they have been granted two signs on the front exterior wall. The BB&T Bank located adjacent to Hancock has three wall signs located on three different exterior walls. We would like for the Board to consider granting a variance allowing two signs on the front exterior of the building.*

The applicant cites the fact that the near-by Iberiabank was granted two signs on the front wall as justification to allow the request at hand. However, that site (15 West I-65 Service Road North) is a single-tenant site and is allowed two wall signs in any facade combination. Also cited is the adjacent BB&T Bank located at 41 West I-65 Service Road North and adjacent to the subject site. It is noted that three wall signs were allowed on three different facades for that bank. In fact, that bank was allowed such by a Sign Variance approved by the Board in June, 2010, and submitted by the current applicant. Signs were approved on the front (East) and two ends (North and South) of that multi-tenant site.

Given the scale of the front facade of the building, the fact that the rear facade is greatly obscured by required tree plantings, and the fact that the additional proposed sign is small in relation to the already-approved front wall sign, it would seem that the allowance of a second front wall sign would be justified, especially with the building's proximity to Interstate 65. The Board has been sympathetic in similar cases by granting Sign Variances where increased signage for larger-scale buildings along busy thoroughfares was requested, and this case should be considered for approval.

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

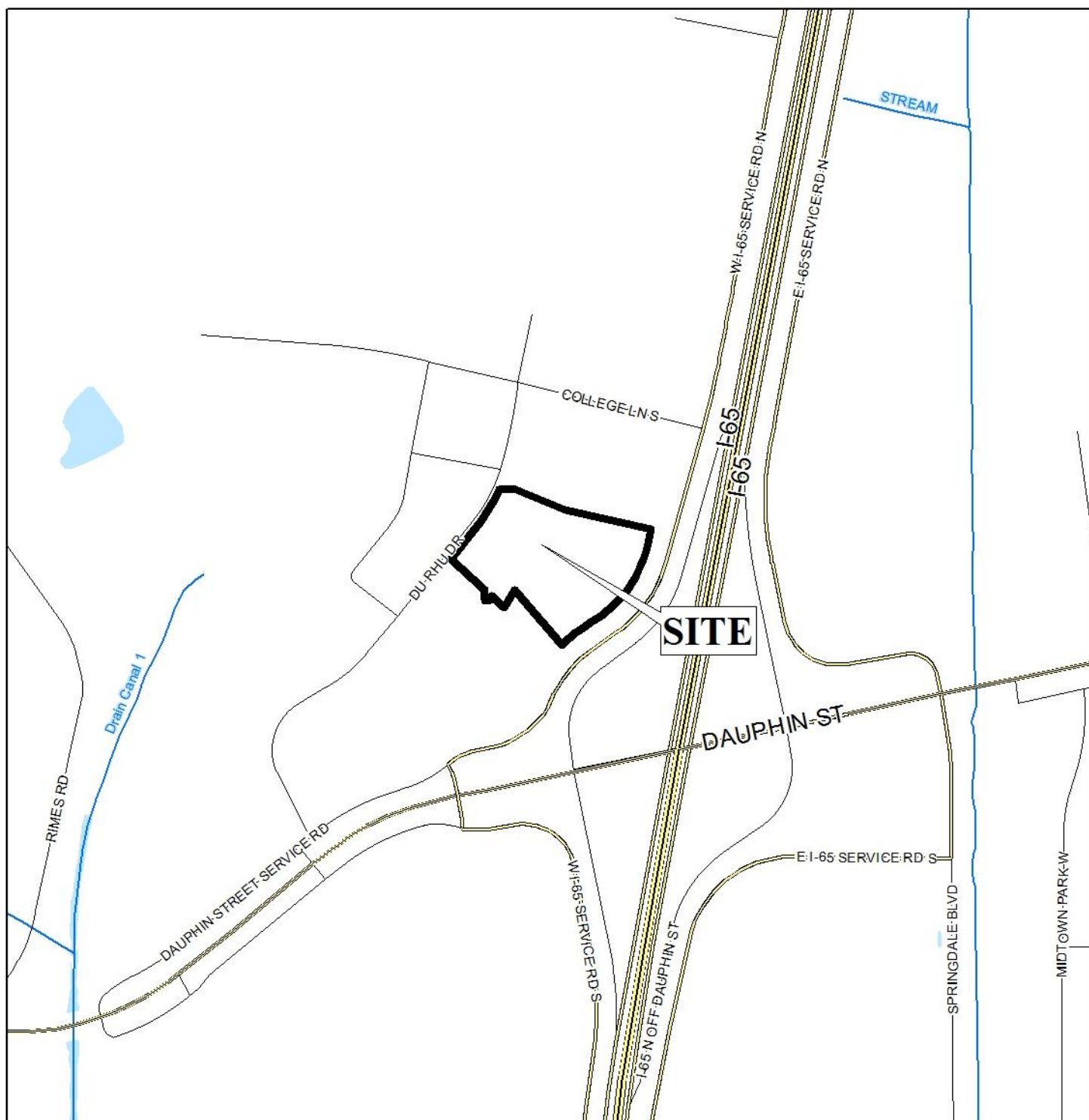
- 1) Approving the variance request will not be contrary to the public interest in that it would be similar to other approvals for increased signage on larger-scale buildings;

- 2) Special conditions (the front facade is of a large-scale nature; the rear facade of the building is greatly obscured by tree plantings; and the building faces Interstate 65) exist such that the literal enforcement of the provisions of the chapter will result in an unnecessary hardship; and
- 3) The spirit of the chapter shall be observed and substantial justice shall be done to the surrounding neighborhood by granting the variance since the additional sign is small in relation to the already-approved wall sign and will be harmonious with the building's facade.

The approval is subject to the following conditions:

- 1) obtaining of a sign permit for the proposed sign; and
- 2) full compliance with all municipal codes and ordinances.

# LOCATOR MAP



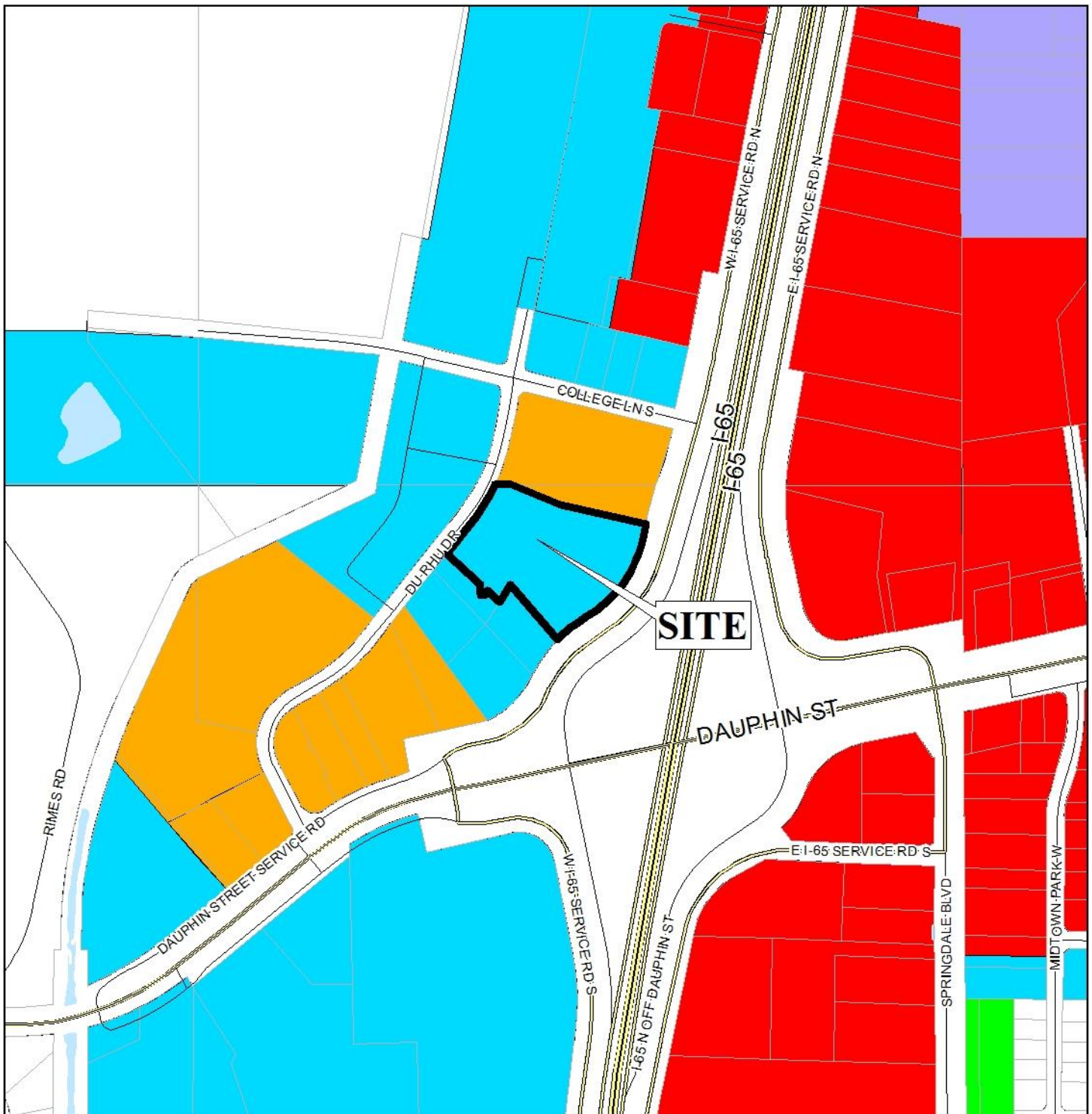
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# LOCATOR ZONING MAP



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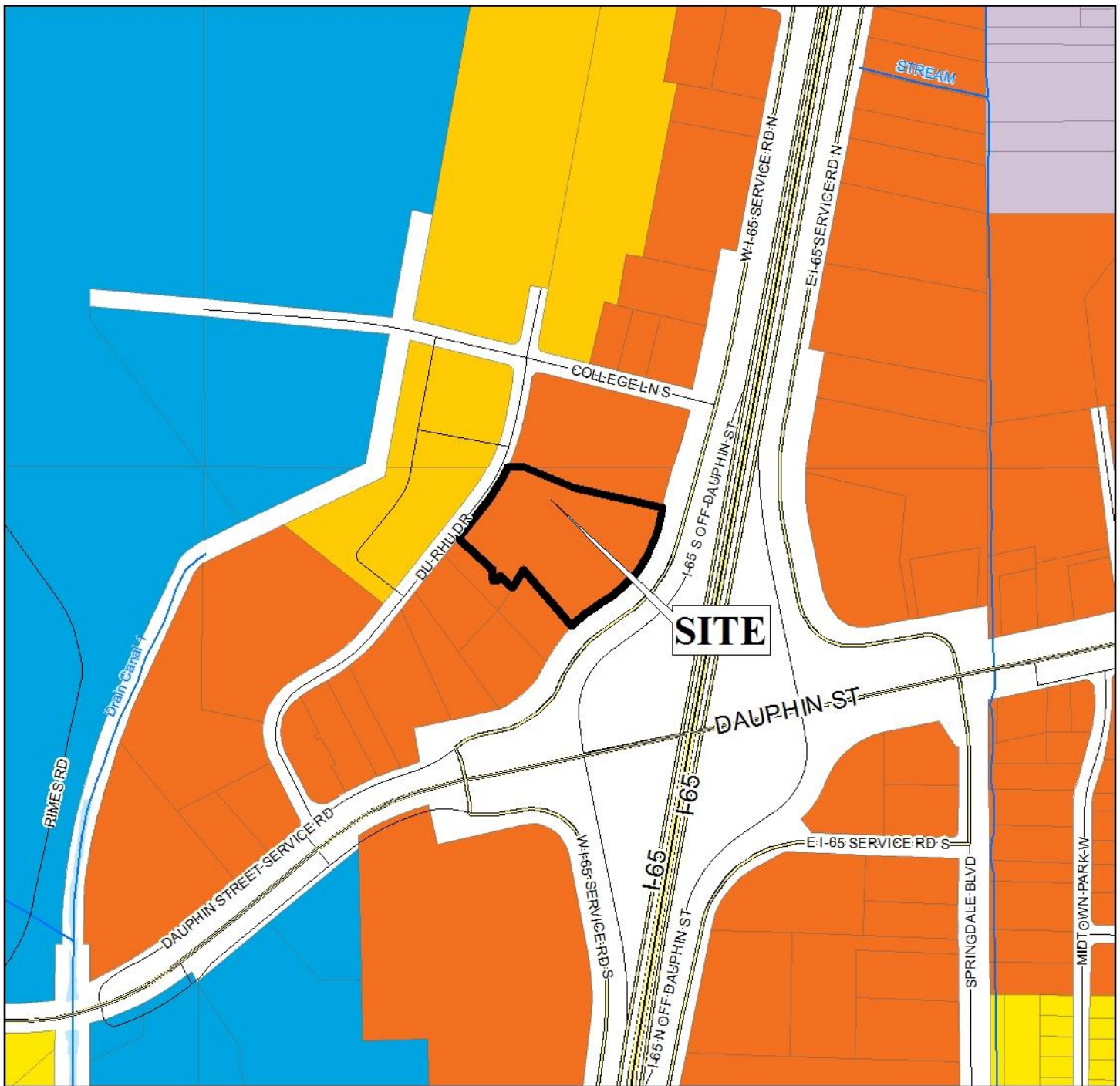
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# FLUM LOCATOR MAP



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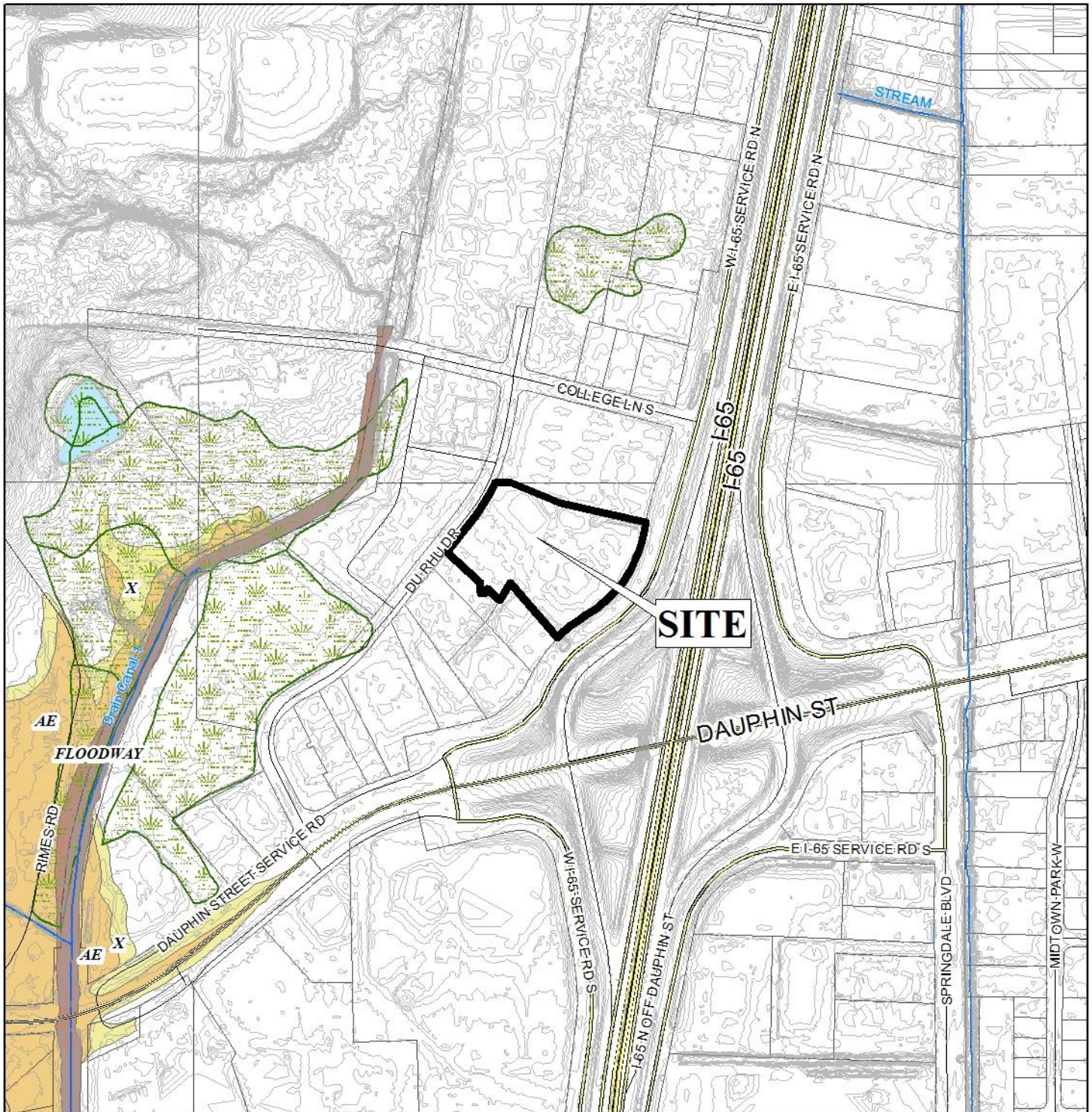
REQUEST Sign Variance

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

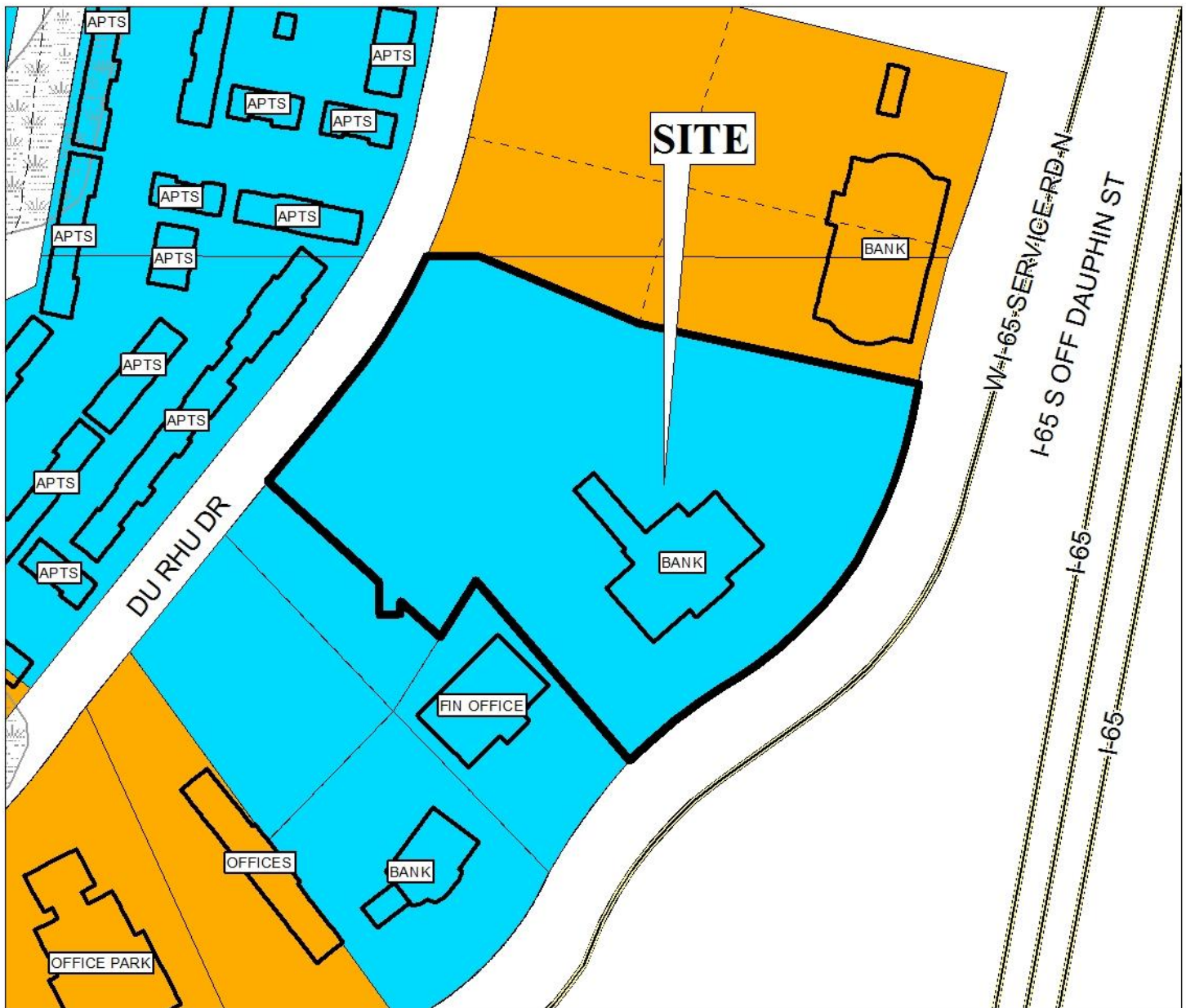


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# BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by commercial units. An apartment complex lies west of the site.

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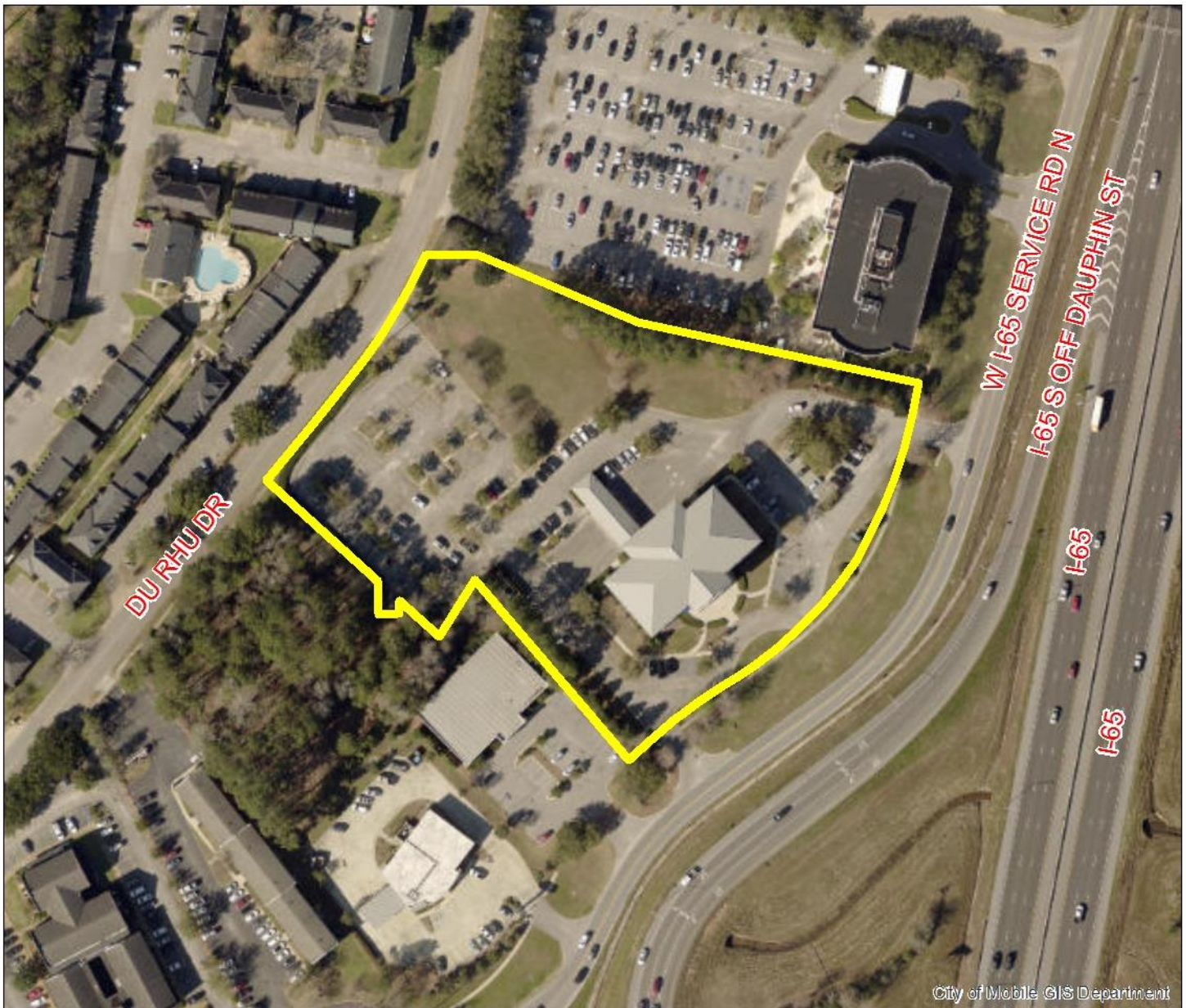
REQUEST Sign Variance

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# BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL



The site is surrounded by commercial units. An apartment complex lies west of the site.

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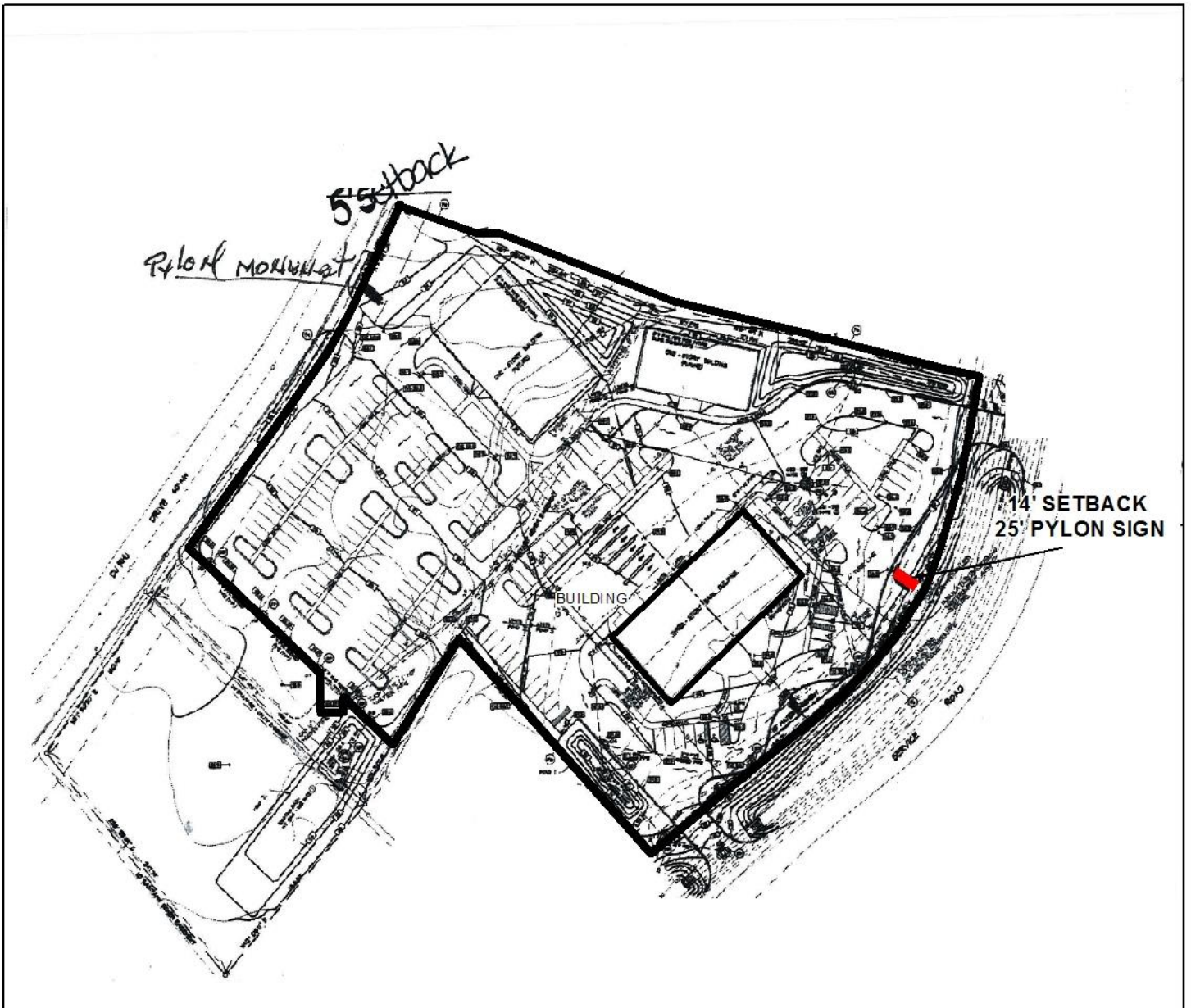
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# SITE PLAN



The site plan illustrates the existing building, and pylon sign location.

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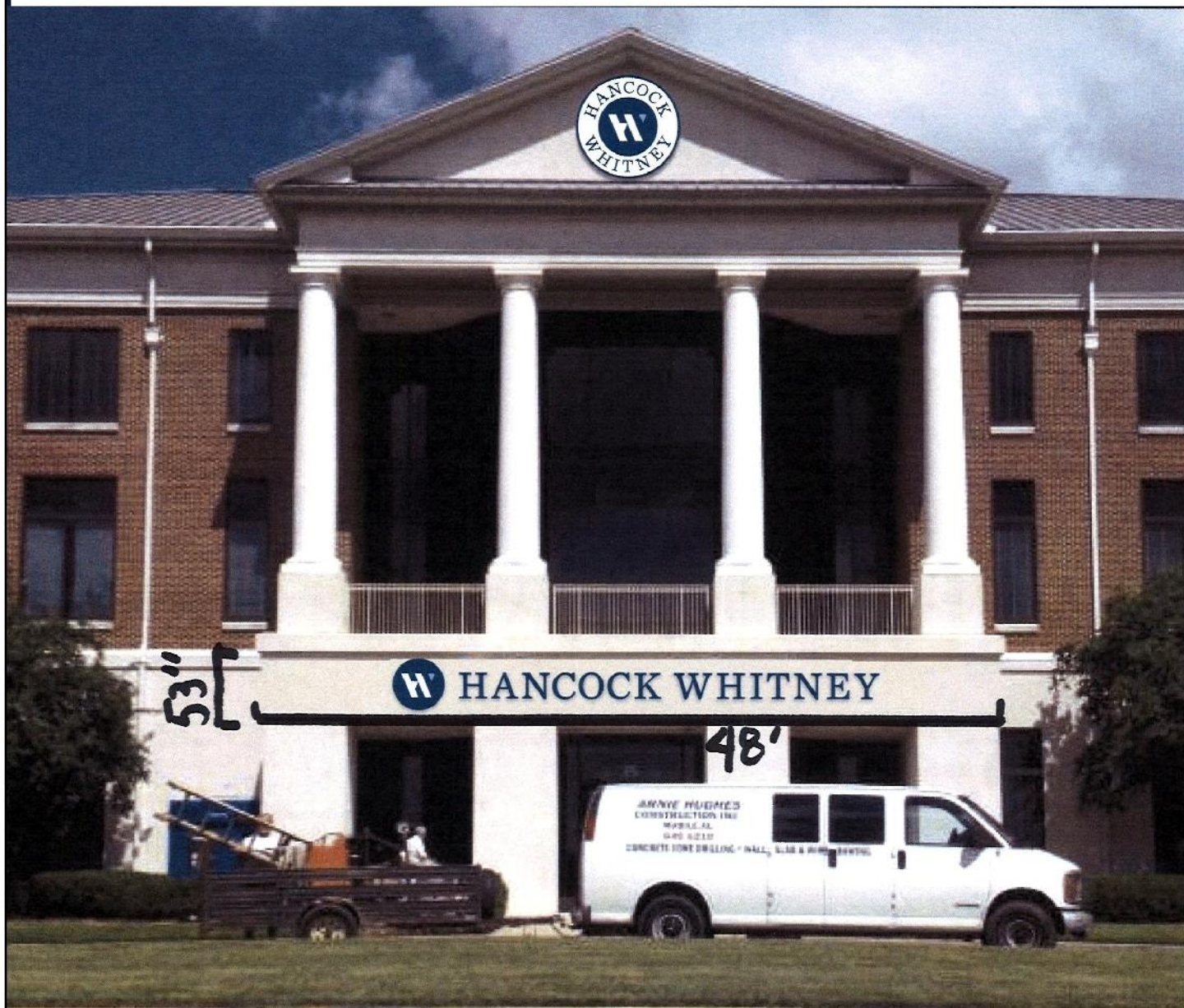
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NTS



# DETAIL SITE PLAN



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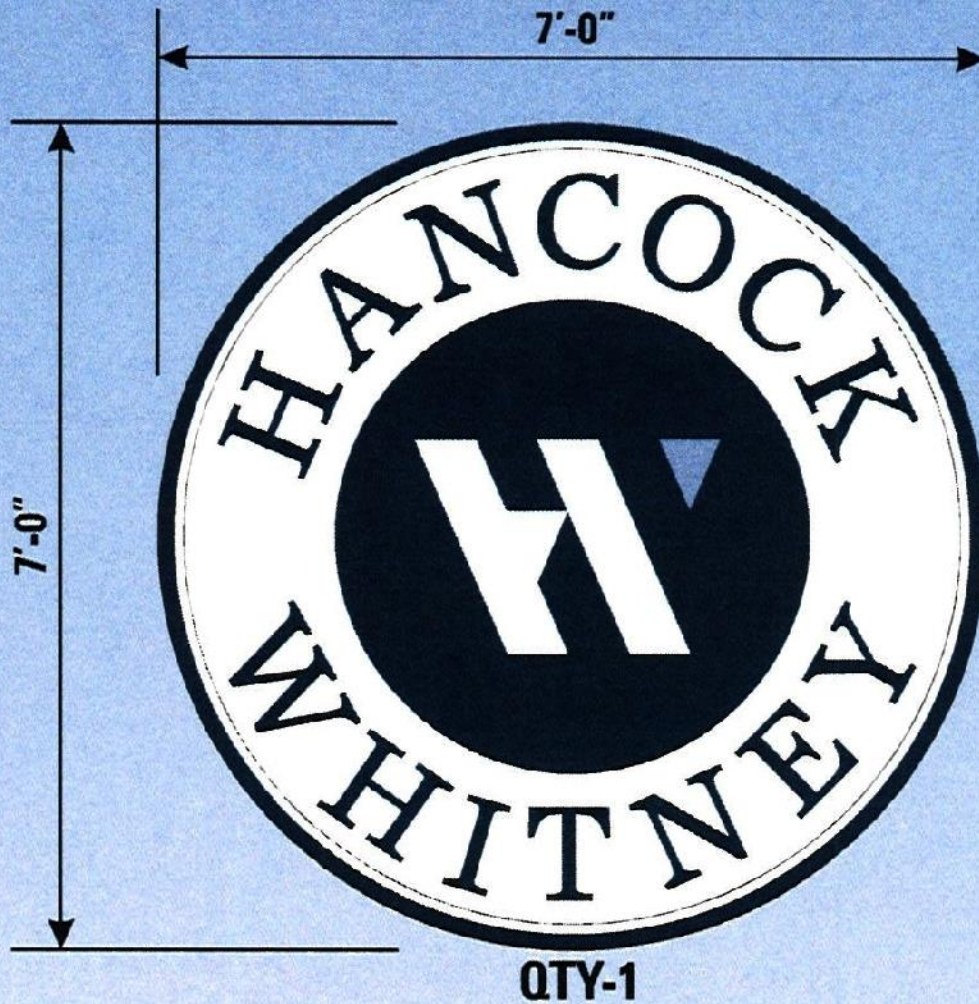
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## DETAIL SITE PLAN



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