

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT  
STAFF REPORT****Date: December 3, 2018**

<b><u>CASE NUMBER</u></b>	6221
<b><u>APPLICANT NAME</u></b>	McCrory & Williams, Inc. (Frank C. Crawford, Agent)
<b><u>LOCATION</u></b>	7261 & 7311 Airport Boulevard (Southeast corner of Airport Boulevard and Portside Drive, extending to the Southwest corner of Airport Boulevard and Lakeview Drive).
<b><u>VARIANCE REQUEST</u></b>	<b>SIGN:</b> Sign Variance to allow four (4) freestanding signs and seven (7) wall signs for a single tenant site in a B-3, Community Business District.
<b><u>ZONING ORDINANCE REQUIREMENT</u></b>	<b>SIGN:</b> The Zoning Ordinance only allows a total of three (3) signs with only one (1) being a freestanding sign for a single tenant in a B-3, Community Business District.
<b><u>ZONING</u></b>	B-3, Community +-Business
<b><u>AREA OF PROPERTY</u></b>	10.97± Acres
<b><u>ENGINEERING COMMENTS</u></b>	No comments.
<b><u>TRAFFIC ENGINEERING COMMENTS</u></b>	This request was not reviewed by Traffic Engineering.
<b><u>CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT</u></b>	District 6
<b><u>ANALYSIS</u></b>	The applicant is requesting a Sign Variance to allow four (4) freestanding signs and seven (7) wall signs for a single tenant site in a B-3, Community Business District; The Zoning Ordinance only allows a total of three (3) signs with only one (1) being a freestanding sign for a single tenant in a B-3, Community Business District.

The site was developed under County jurisdiction prior to the 2006 City annexation of the area. All nonconforming existing signage at the time of the annexation was “grandfathered” and the Sign Regulation provisions of the Zoning Ordinance allow such nonconforming signage to remain until such time as any nonconforming signage for a particular business is removed and replaced. The refacing at the same size/same place of nonconforming signage is allowed. The

applicant proposes to reconfigure buildings on the subject site which will require the removal of some existing wall signs, and also proposes to remove and replace an existing pylon sign. Since existing nonconforming signage will be altered, compliance with the current sign regulation provisions of the Zoning Ordinance would be required. Due to contractual commitments with the Ford Motor Company, certain signage standards must be adhered to which differ from the Sign Regulation provisions; hence this Variance request is presented.

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 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.

Surrounding zonings are B-3 to the North across Airport Boulevard, to the East across Lakeview Drive, and to the West across Portside Drive, all in commercial use. The rear (South) of the site

abuts the City limits line. Adjacent to the South in the County is a single-family residential subdivision.

The applicant states:

1. *The purpose of this variance is to allow;*

*Four (4) existing freestanding signs to remain, to include the reimaging of one (1) sign, and to erect one (1) new freestanding Ford sign at the entrance of the new sales building. Also, to allow existing wall signs to remain and/or to be removed and replaced due to existing building demolition and new building construction.*

2. *What are the conditions, items, facts or reasons which prevent you from complying with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance?*

*Ford's design requirements for the Ford Lincoln dual facilities include fascia signs and separate Ford Oval and Lincoln brand ground signs.*

*Please see attached letter from Ford Motor Company.*

3. *How did the conditions, items facts, or reasons which prevent you from complying with the Zoning ordinance occur?*

*This facility previously was outside of the Mobile City Limits and was annexed into the City of Mobile.*

*The construction of the new sales building and buildings additions required approval from the City of Mobile due to this property now being within the City of Mobile Planning Jurisdiction.*

*Ford's design requirements for the Ford Lincoln dual facilities include fascia signs and separate Ford Oval and Lincoln brand ground signs.*

*Please see aforementioned attached letter from Ford Motor Company.*

4. *How is this property different from the neighboring properties?*

*This property is much larger than the surrounding properties and has a longer roadway frontage.*

The Ford Motor Company narrative states:

*As you are aware, Mullinax Ford Lincoln is in process of completing a new Ford Lincoln Signature facility renovation. Ford's design requirements for the ford Lincoln dual facilities include fascia signs and separate Ford Oval and Lincoln brand ground signs. These signs are standard requirements for all Ford Lincoln Signature facilities across the*

*nation. Ford's goal with this new facility renovation is to increase the dealership's visual appearance in the area, providing a landmark in the business community that will ultimately assist the dealer in reaching his maximum potential customer base. As part of this effort, we would need approval to install signage which exceeds city ordinance in sizes and quantity of signs.*

*Ford's Signature design for this Ford Lincoln dealership requires a Ford entry tower with a 21 sf Ford Oval wall logo, a Lincoln wall logo on the brand wall with LINCOLN lettering underneath, a set of SERVICE letters on the Service elevation. All of these signs are internally illuminated with LED's. Also required, is a Ford Oval brand ground sign and a separate Lincoln brand ground sign to be installed in a prominent location of the dealer's property. In this case, the dealership already has an approved Ford Oval brand ground sign, which should remain "as is". We would be looking to add the Lincoln brand sign in addition to the required fascia signs listed above.*

*The installation of these standard Ford Lincoln Signature signs will provide a substantial increase in visibility for the dealership, and will go a long way towards helping this dealer increase their customer base and gross revenues. I am sure that we would all agree that in today's economy, anything we can do to help bring in customers and keep our auto dealerships successfully operating is of utmost importance to the owners, their employees (your citizens), and the community overall by the potential increase in revenue generated for the city. And, providing ultimate visibility with signs which correspond to those of other Ford Lincoln dealerships is a huge component for promoting that success.*

The site currently has four freestanding signs, three logo pylons along Airport Boulevard, and one small freestanding directional sign along Lakeview Drive. One of the front pylons with the Ford Trucks logo is proposed to be removed and replaced with a Lincoln brand pylon. The other two pylons along Airport Boulevard, one for the Ford logo, and one for the Ford Body shop are proposed to remain. Along Lakeview Drive, an existing Parts and Body Shop directional sign with 28 square feet per face is proposed to remain. As it is over the allowable 20 square feet per face for directional signs, it is included in the request to allow four freestanding signs.

The proposed demolition, expansion and rebuilding of various buildings on the site will result in some existing wall signs to remain and some new wall signs proposed, with some being directional/informational, and some being branding signs. The applicant requests one Body Shop directional/informational sign of approximately 96 square feet, and one Collision Center directional/informational sign of approximately 200 square feet to remain. One new Service directional/informational sign of approximately 83 square feet is proposed. Four new branding wall signs are proposed. All would be within the allowable 30% of the usable wall area. Two Ford Oval signs are proposed, one Lincoln sign is proposed, and one Mullinax sign is proposed.

The applicant bases a hardship being imposed by the branding requirements of the Ford Motor Company for separate Ford and Lincoln signage. As automobile brands typically require separate branding signage for their dealerships, in the past the Board has been sympathetic to dealership requests for excess signage. Given the fact that the subject site has over 1,925 linear feet of public street frontage, the allowance of additional freestanding signage would seem

justified. And given the expansiveness of the site with the multiple buildings proposed, the allowance of additional over-sized informational/directional signage would also seem justified. Therefore, the Board should consider the request to allow four freestanding signs and seven wall signs for approval, subject to conditions.

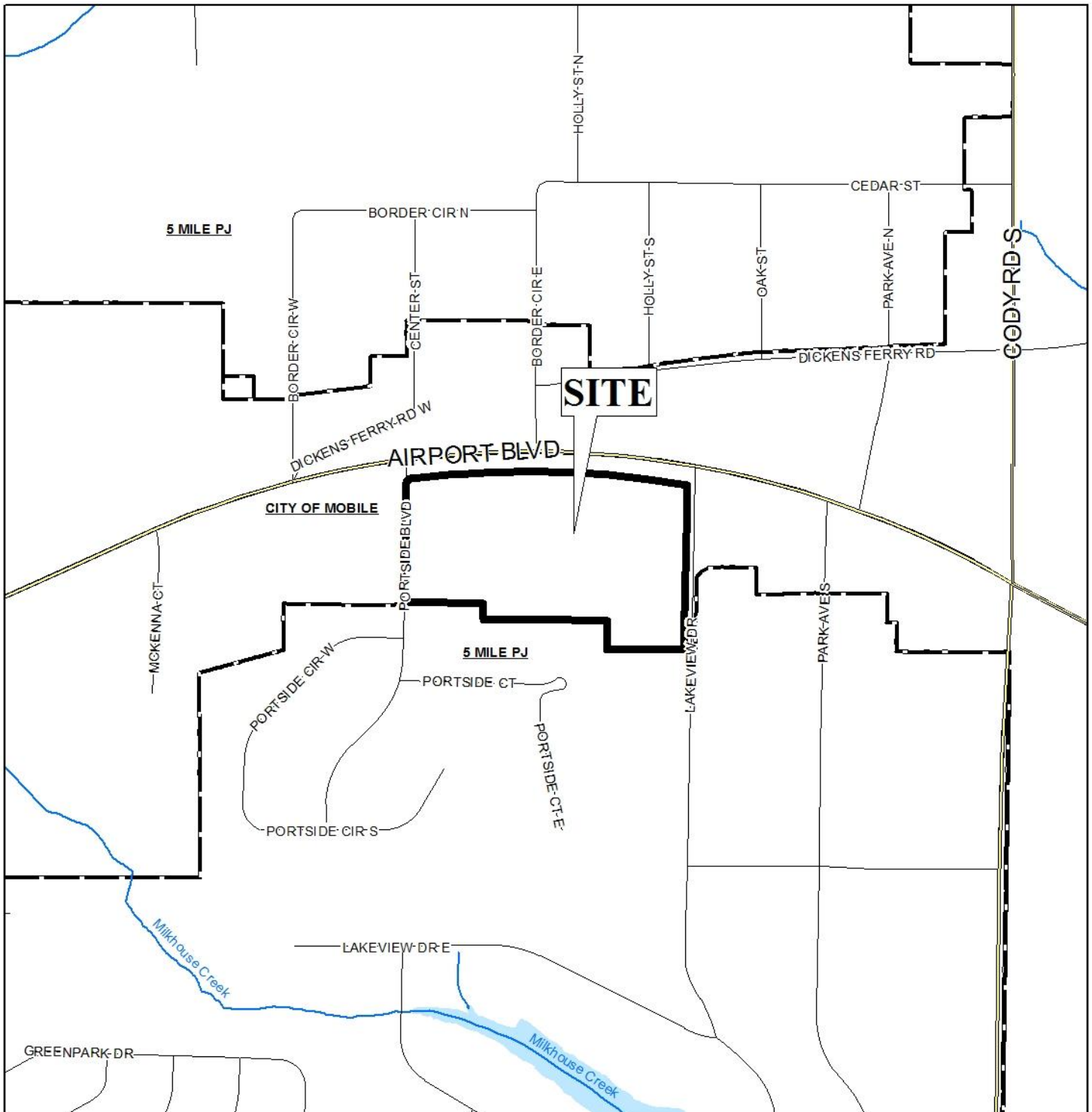
**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends to the Board the following findings of facts for approval:

- 1) Based on the fact that other automobile dealerships have been granted similar requests in the past, the variance will not be contrary to the public interest;
- 2) These special conditions (the site has extensive public street frontage and expansive internal area with multiple buildings and uses) exist such that a literal enforcement of the provisions of the chapter will result in unnecessary hardship; and
- 3) That the spirit of the chapter shall be observed and substantial justice done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood by granting the variance in that the signs will allow the applicant to continue site branding and informational/directional signage similar to what has been in place since prior to annexation.

The approval should be subject to the following conditions:

- 1) obtaining of a sign permit for each new sign proposed;
- 2) obtaining of an electrical permit for all internally illuminated signs; and
- 3) full compliance with all other municipal codes and ordinances.

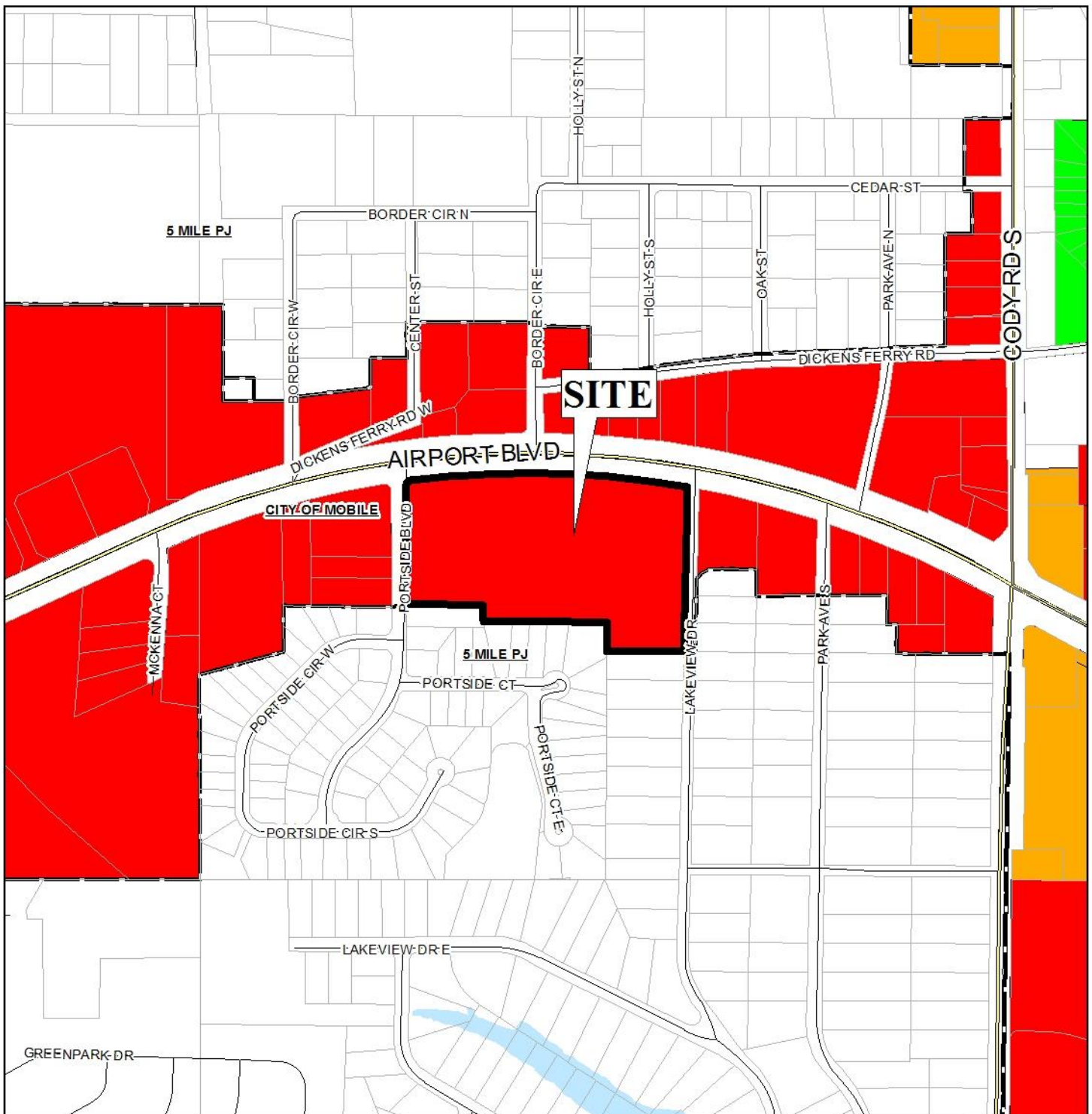
# LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6221 DATE December 3, 2018  
APPLICANT McCrory & Williams, Inc. (Frank C. Crawford, Agent)  
REQUEST Sign Variance



# LOCATOR ZONING MAP

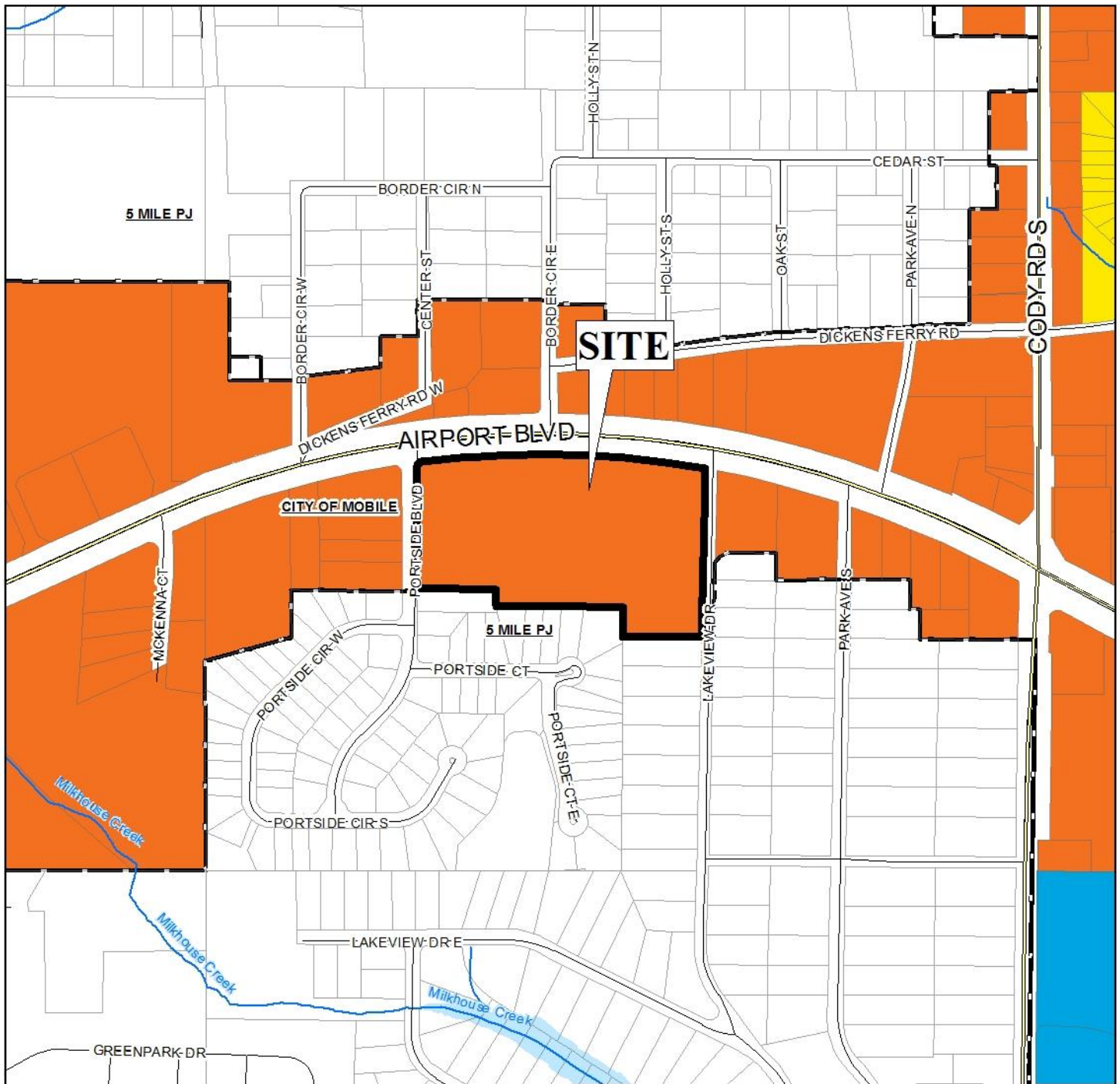


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# FLUM LOCATOR MAP



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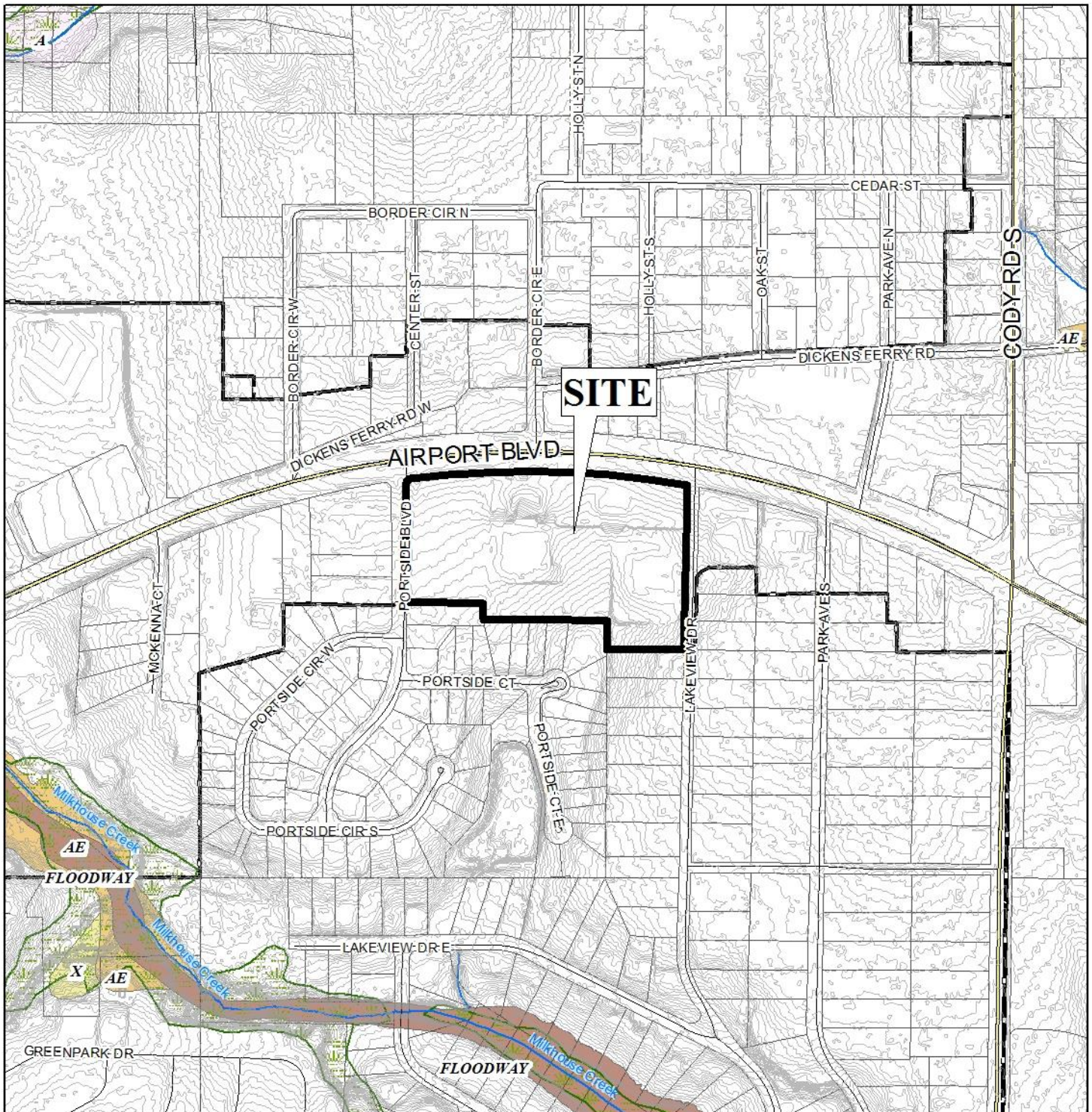
REQUEST Sign Variance

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	

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NTS



# ENVIRONMENTAL LOCATOR MAP

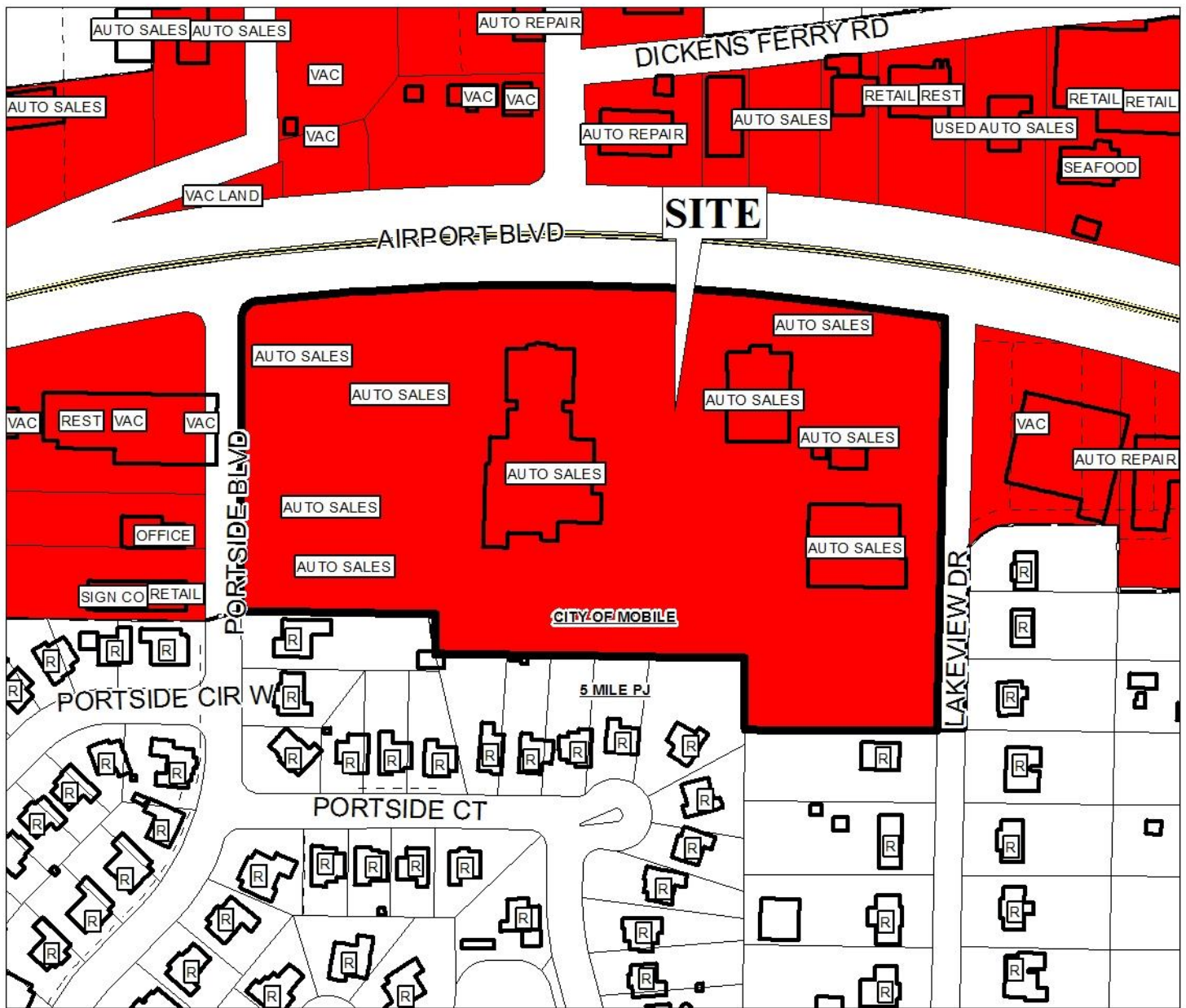


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# BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by commercial units to the north and residential units to the south.

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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

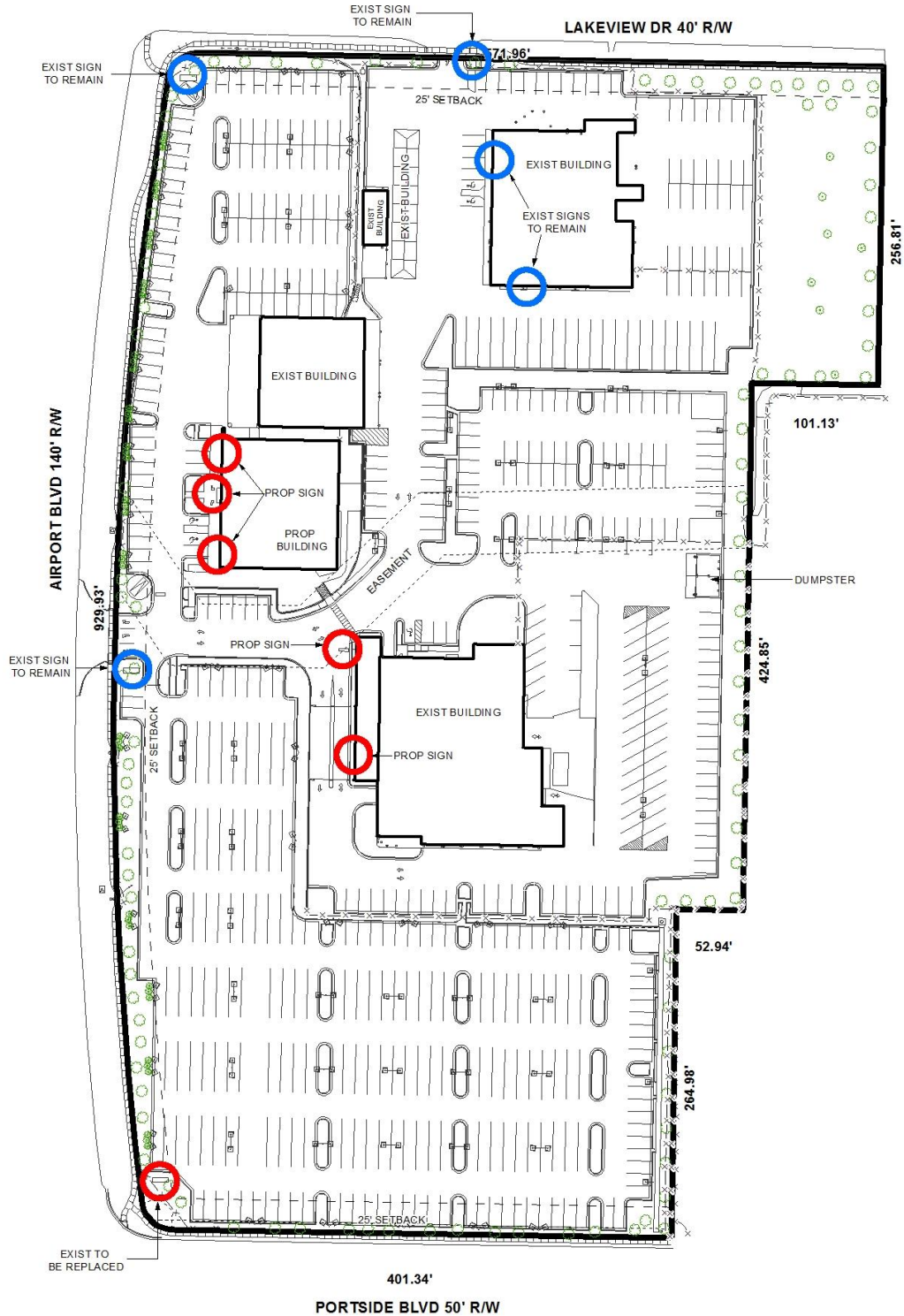


The site is surrounded by commercial units to the north and residential units to the south.

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REQUEST <u>Sign Variance</u>



# SITE PLAN



The site plan illustrates the existing buildings, setbacks, parking, proposed buildings, and proposed signs.

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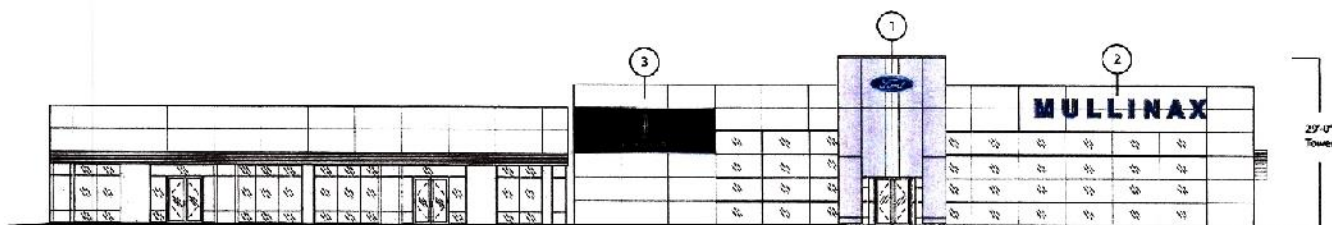
REQUEST Sign Variance



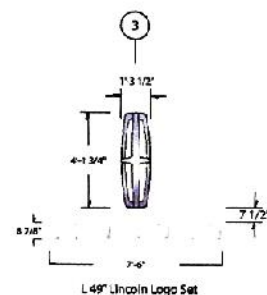
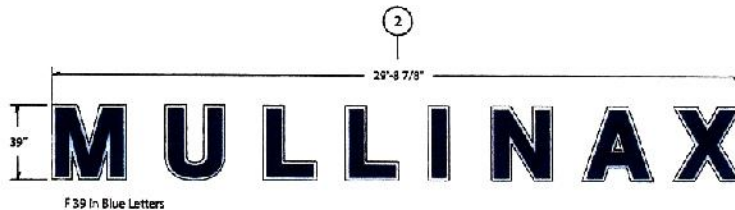
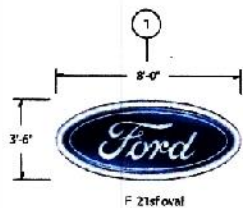
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# DETAIL SITE PLAN



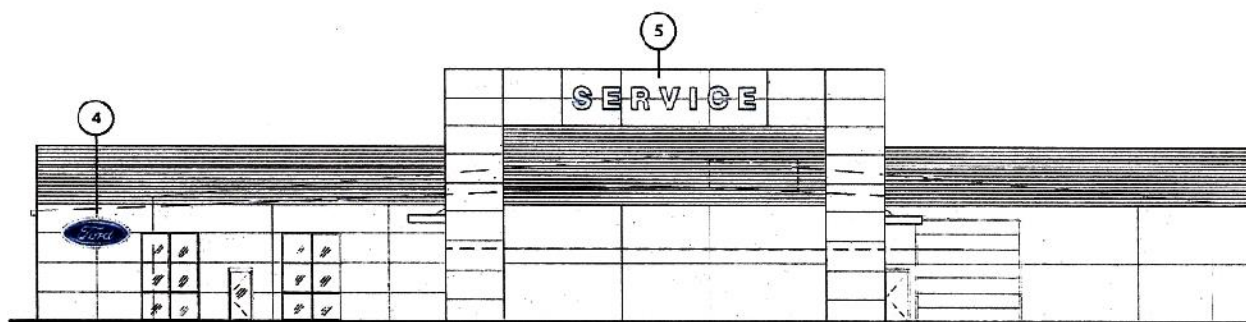
NORTH ELEVATION



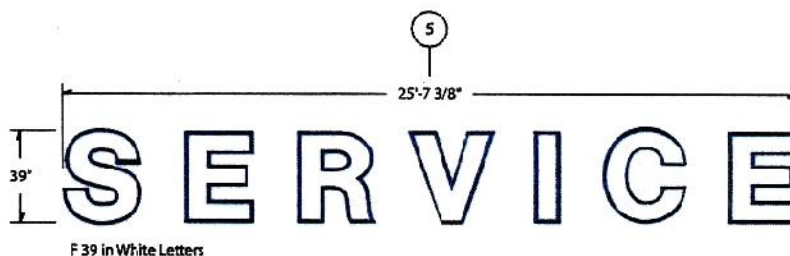
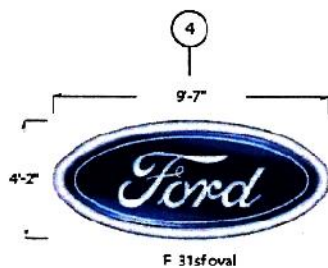
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# DETAIL SITE PLAN



NORTH ELEVATION

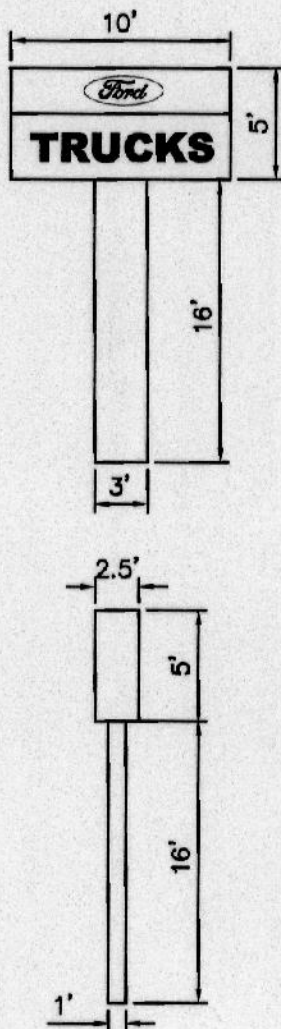


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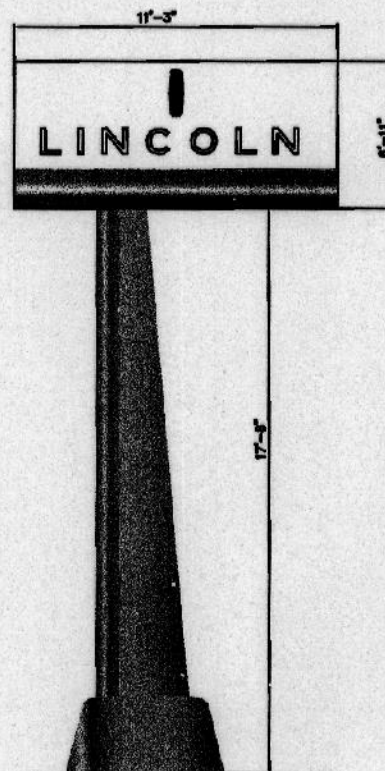




# DETAIL SITE PLAN



EXISTING FORD TRUCK SIGN +/- 50 SQ.FT.  
 PROPOSED REIMAGING  
 TO A LINCOLN BRAND SIGN  
 NOT OT SCALE



PROPOSED LINCOLN SIGN +/- 78 SQ.FT.  
 NOT OT SCALE

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