

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT  
STAFF REPORT****Date: August 3, 2020****CASE NUMBER**

6334/5431

**APPLICANT NAME**

Wrico Signs (Downtown Police Precinct)

**LOCATION**

55 North Water Street  
(West side of North Water Street, extending from St. Francis Street to St. Michael Street).

**VARIANCE REQUEST**

**SIGN:** Sign Variance to allow two (2) individual storefront signs exceeding the height limit, two (2) wall plaque signs exceeding the size allowance, and one (1) projecting sign in a T-6 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District.

**ZONING ORDINANCE  
REQUIREMENT**

**SIGN:** The Zoning Ordinance allows one (1) individual storefront sign per business not exceeding 2' in height, one (1) wall plaque sign per business not exceeding eight (8) square feet, and does not allow projecting signs in a T-6 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District.

**ZONING**

T-6 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District.

**AREA OF PROPERTY**

1.64± Acre

**CITY COUNCIL  
DISTRICT**

District 2

**ENGINEERING  
COMMENTS**

No comments.

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING  
COMMENTS**

No comments.

**ANALYSIS**

The applicant is requesting a Sign Variance to allow two (2) individual storefront signs exceeding the height limit, two (2) wall plaque signs exceeding the size allowance, and one (1) projecting sign in a T-6 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District; the Zoning Ordinance allows one (1) individual storefront sign per business not exceeding 2' in height, one (1) wall plaque sign per business not exceeding eight (8) square feet,

and does not allow projecting signs in a T-6 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District.

***Correction:*** *The variances requested are not regarding the size of storefront or wall plaque signs, but the quantity. The applicant is requesting two of each, and the Downtown Development District (DDD) only allows a business to have one of each type. The DDD does allow for a type of projecting sign called a “diagonal corner sign,” but this sign must be mounted at the corner of a building, at a 45 degree angle: the applicant wishes to mount this sign on the face of the building at a 90 degree angle.*

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 that substantial justice is 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 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 purpose of the Sign Regulations is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the City of Mobile and the general aesthetics of the city by providing for uniform standards for the locations, spacing, height, setback, lighting, and other regulation of off-premise and on-premise signs within the city.

The applicant states:

*Due to the growing activity in the DDD, it is of utmost importance that the Mobile Police Department, Central Precinct is as visible as possible. Signage is a necessary means of doing so. The purpose of this application is to allow signage that is prevalent, visible, and easily recognized by the citizens of Mobile searching for Public Safety aid and assistance. Present signage is not adequate to properly convey the location of the Police Department to the surrounding areas. The southeast corner of the building is unusual and different than other downtown buildings in that it has several elevations. These multiple elevations require strategic placement of the signage to convey proper visibility to the Public. We request the approval of this variance to allow proper signage consistent with the mission of the Mobile Police Department Central Precinct and delivering on the promise of making Mobile the safest City in America with respect for everyone.*

The applicant was approved by the Consolidated Review Committee (CRC) in January 2020 for one Individual Storefront sign and one Wall Plaque sign, and those signs have now been permitted. However, a second Individual Storefront sign and Wall Plaque sign were not approved, as well as a Projecting sign. The CRC determined that the second Individual Storefront sign and Wall Plaque sign are not allowed in a T-6 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District, nor is the Projecting sign as proposed in terms of location and mounting angle. The applicant was given the option of either selecting other allowed sign types, or applying for a Sign Variance; hence this application. It should be noted that the subject site is not within a historic district.

The subject site has public entrances on both Water Street and St. Francis Street. The total proposed signage package consists of one Individual Storefront sign and one Wall Plaque sign on the Water Street facade, and one Individual Storefront sign, one Wall Plaque sign, and the Projecting sign on the St. Francis Street facade.

Given that the site is a Police Precinct and not a regular commercial site, it is understandable that public recognition of the site be as simple as possible, especially in time of an emergency. Being able to recognize the site from street level via prominent signage could mean the difference between quick or delayed assistance. The allowance of extra signage would seem in the general interest of safety to both local citizens and visitors to the City.

The applicant has demonstrated that a literal interpretation of the signage allowances within a T-6 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District could be considered a hardship in the context of public safety, and the Board should consider this application for Approval.

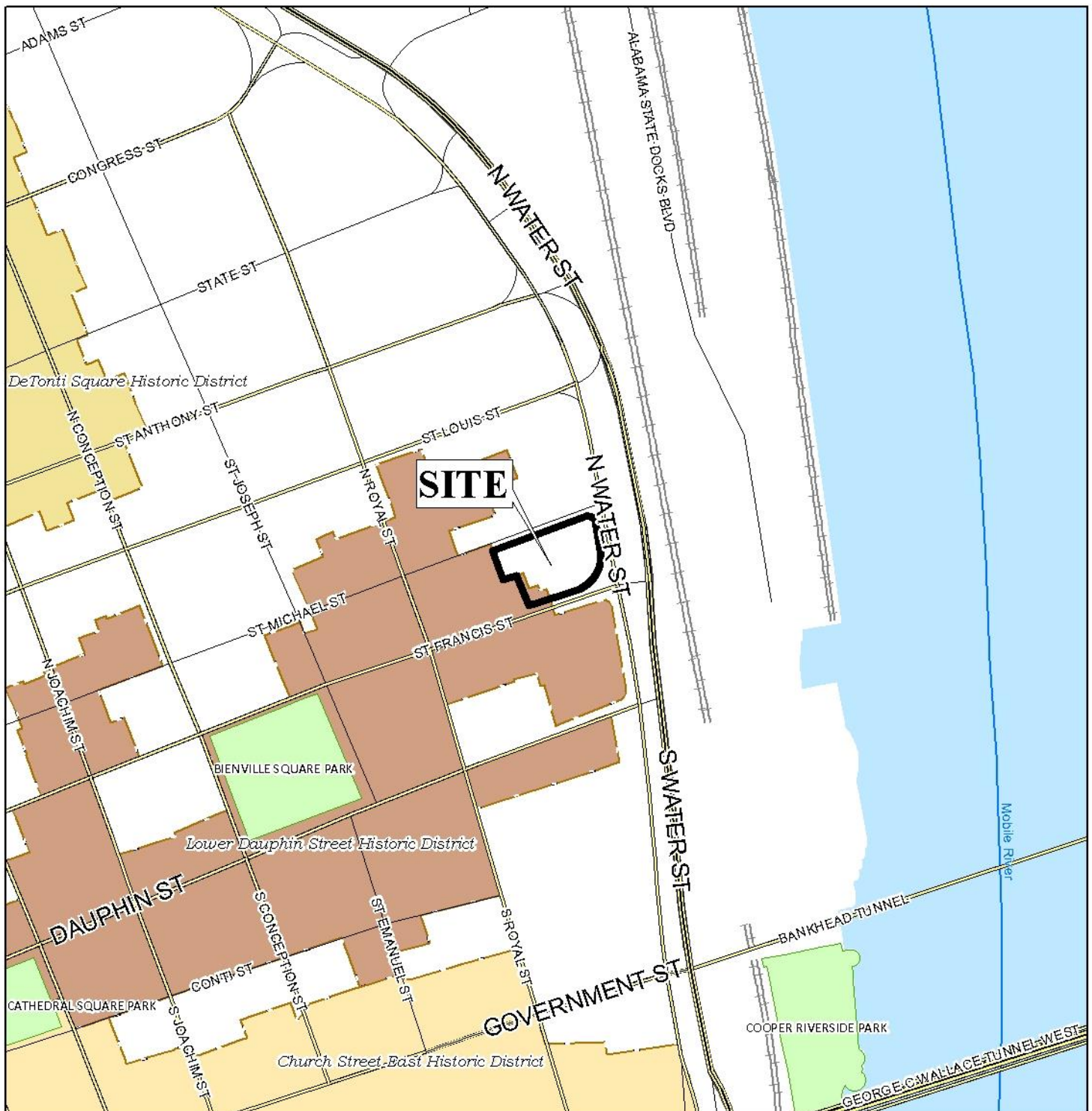
**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends to the Board the following findings of fact for Approval:

- 1) Approving the variance will not be contrary to the public interest in that it will allow greater recognition of a Police Precinct than would ordinarily be allowed;
- 2) Special conditions (the double street frontages and the building massing) exist such that a 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 applicant, the surrounding neighborhood, and the public in general by granting the variance because it will provide for easy recognition of a vital public safety entity in times of a possible emergency.

The Approval is subject to the following conditions:

- 1) signage to comply with the types and sizes as submitted with this application;
- 2) obtaining of the necessary sign permits for all signage; and
- 3) full compliance with all other municipal codes and ordinances.

# LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6334 DATE August 3, 2020

APPLICANT Wrico Signs (Downtown Police Precinct)

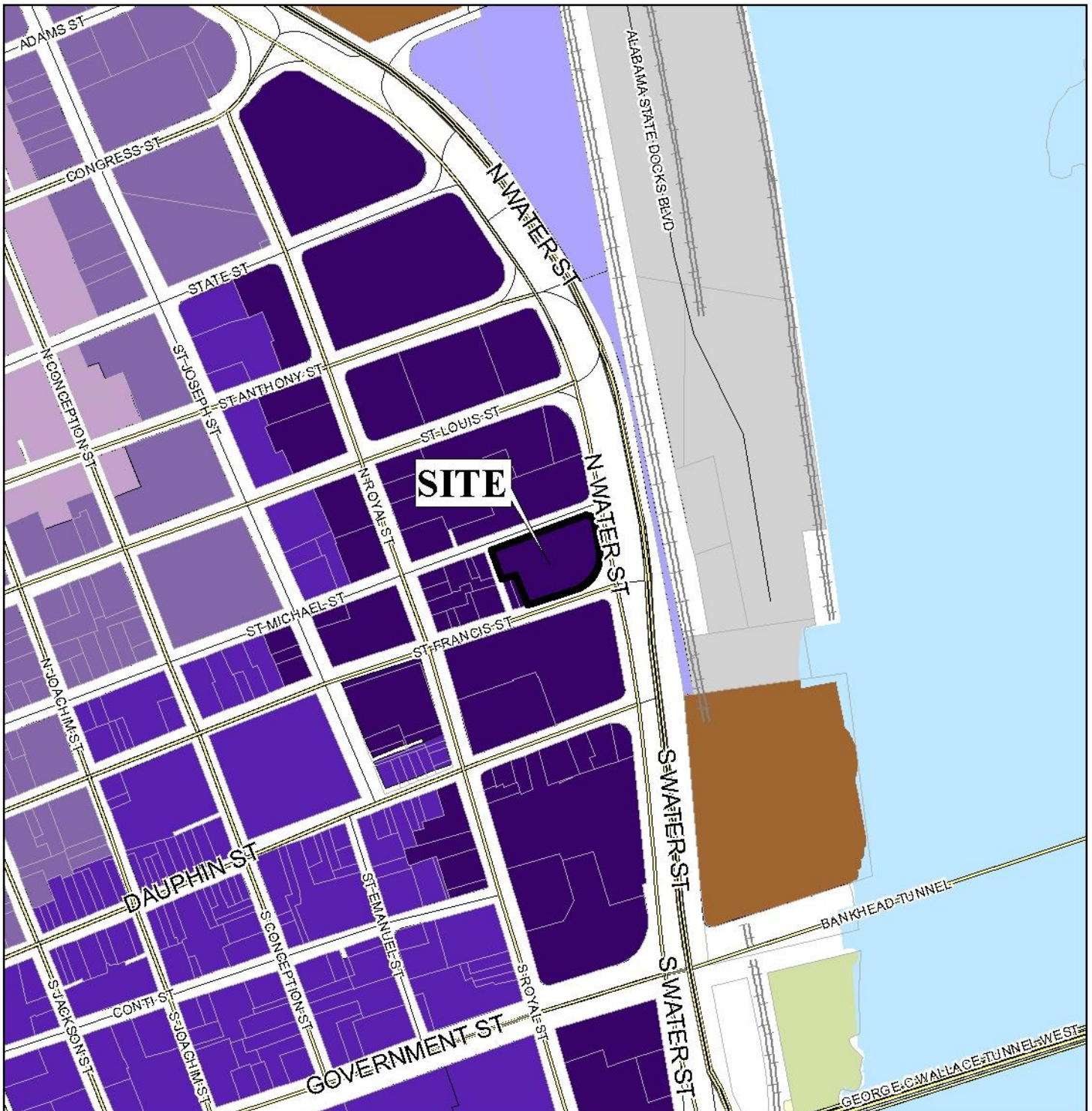
REQUEST Sign Variance



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# LOCATOR ZONING MAP

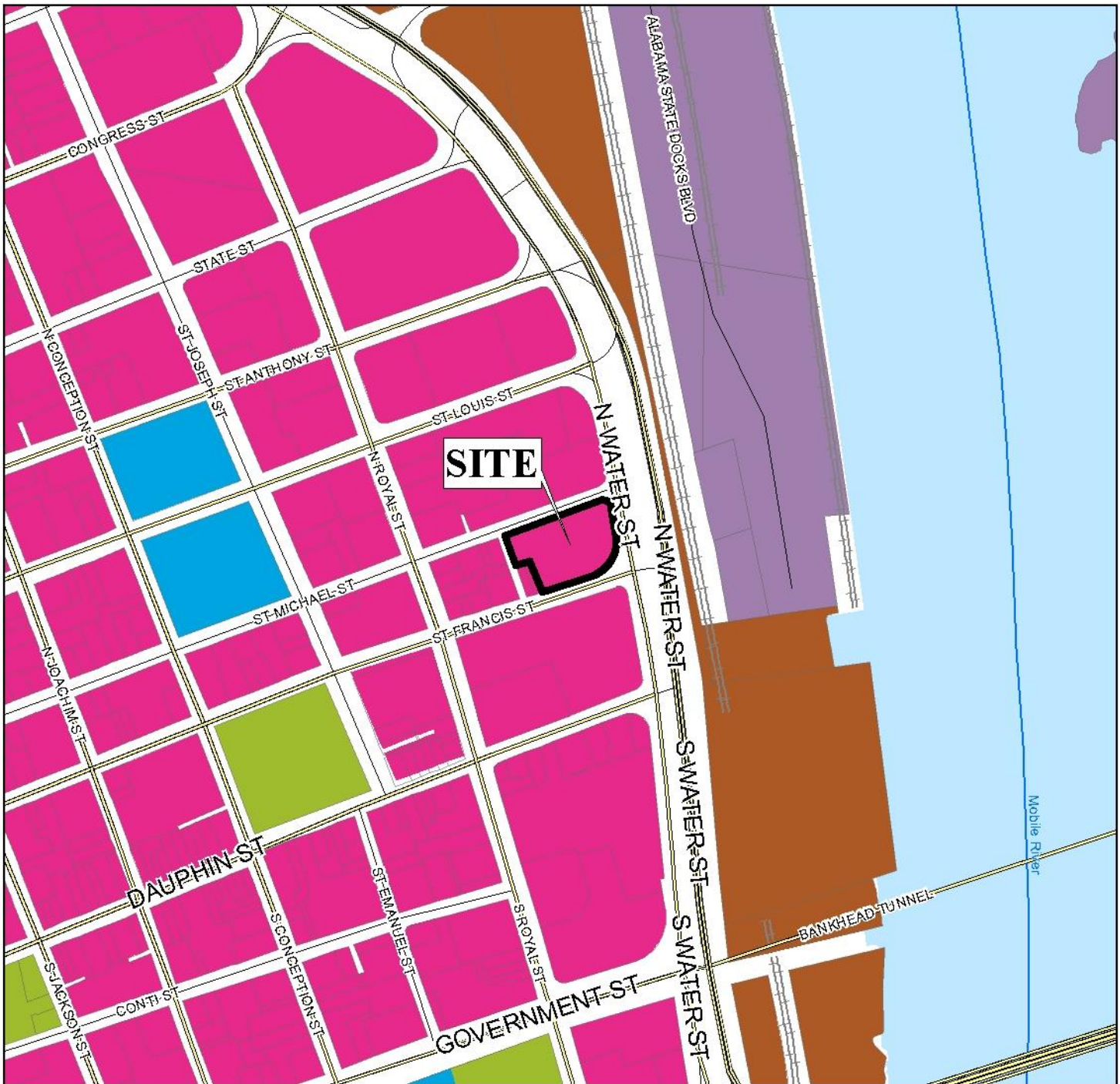


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REQUEST Sign Variance





# FLUM LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6334 DATE August 3, 2020

APPLICANT Wrico Signs (Downtown Police Precinct)

REQUEST Sign Variance

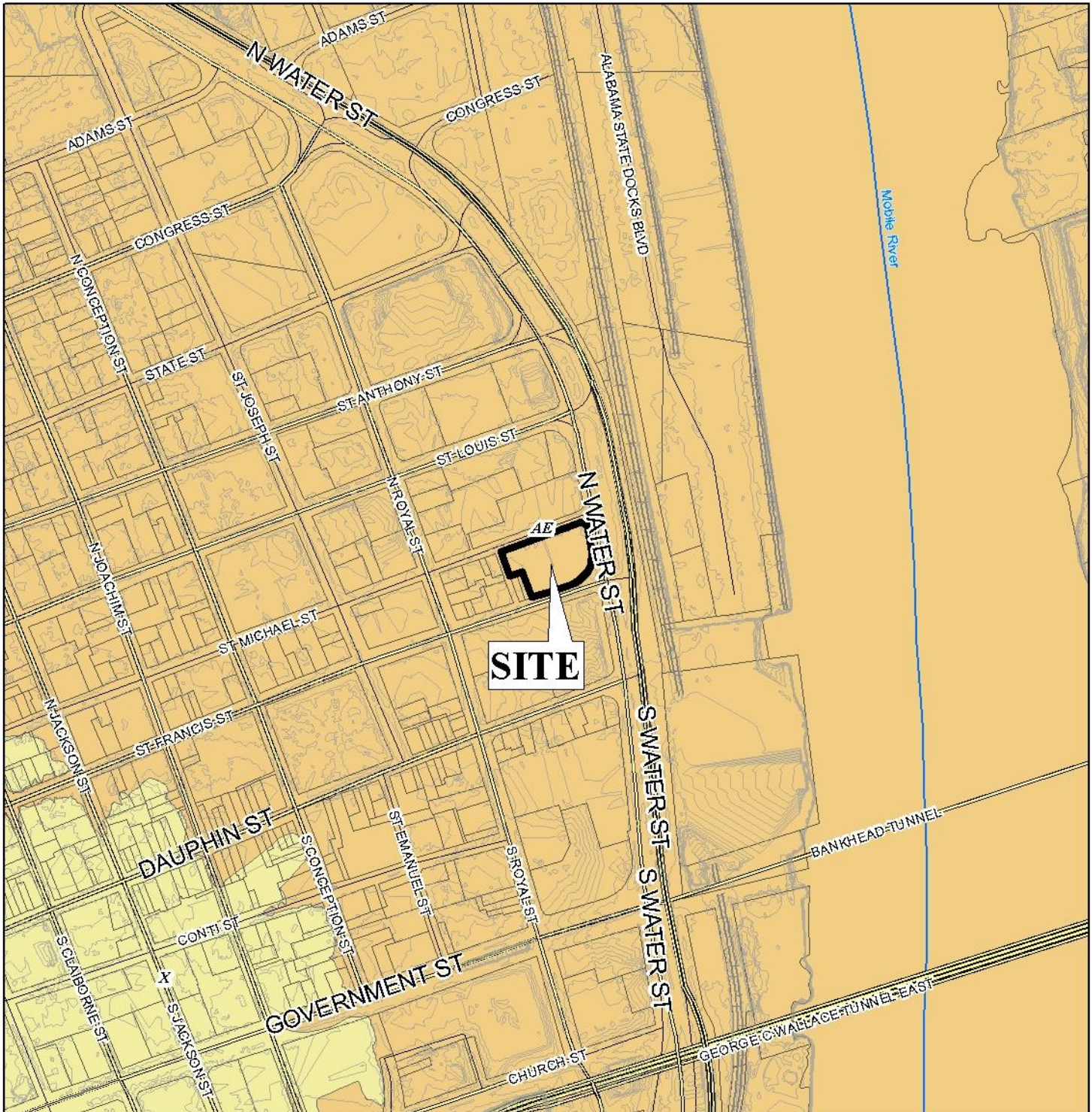
|                           |                                   |                     |                    |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Low Density Residential   | Neighborhood Center - Traditional | Downtown Waterfront | 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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# ENVIRONMENTAL LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6334 DATE August 3, 2020  
APPLICANT Wrico Signs (Downtown Police Precinct)  
REQUEST Sign Variance



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# BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

## VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by commercial units.

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APPLICANT Wrico Signs (Downtown Police Precinct)

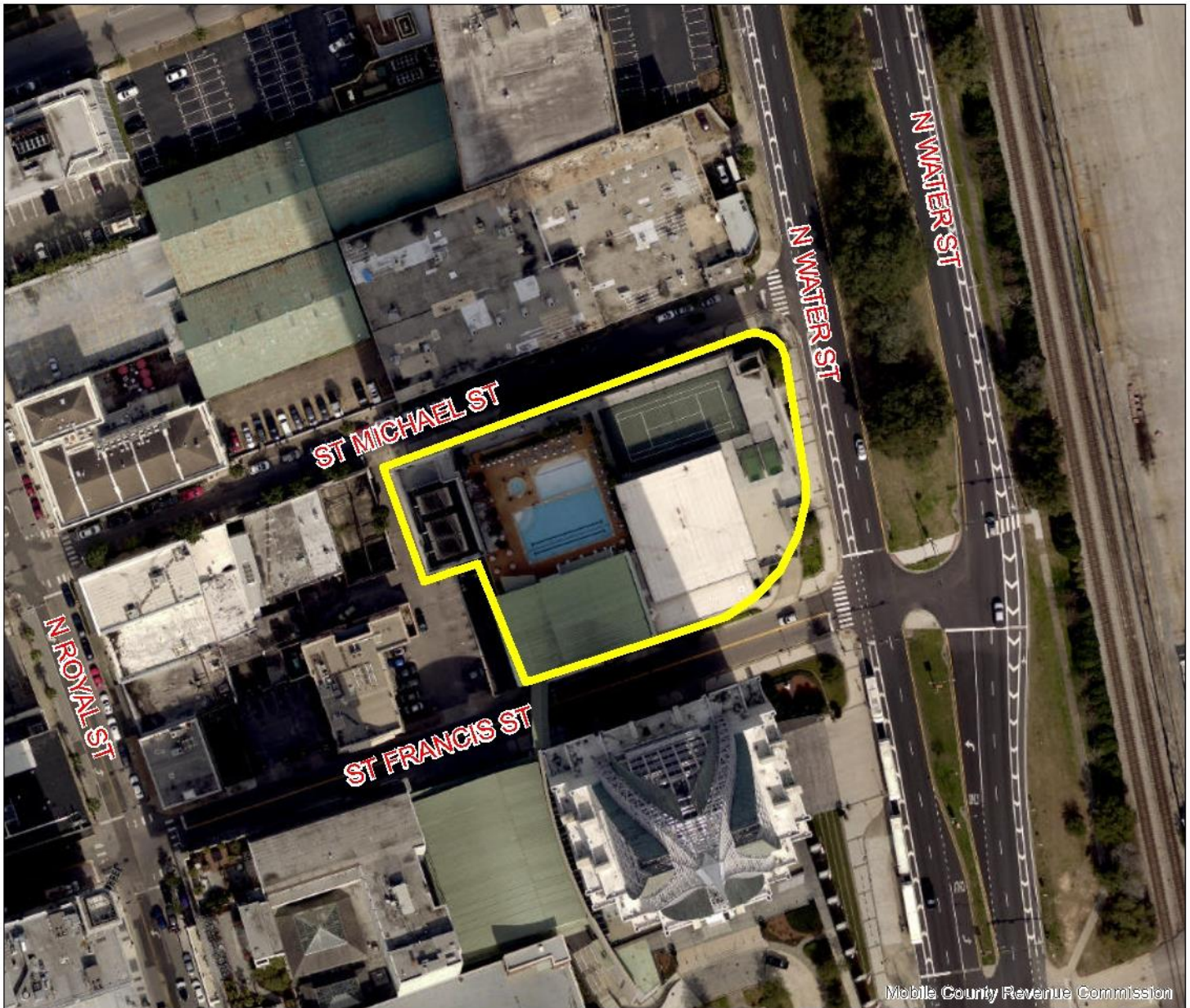
REQUEST Sign Variance

|  |   |  |  |   |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: cyan; border: 1px solid black;"></span> R-A   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black;"></span> R-3     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: tan; border: 1px solid black;"></span> T-B      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> B-2 | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></span> B-5      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> MUN      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> SD-WH   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black;"></span> T5.1     |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: white; border: 1px solid black;"></span> R-1  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: pink; border: 1px solid black;"></span> R-B      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: cyan; border: 1px solid black;"></span> B-1     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black;"></span> B-3    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black;"></span> I-1 | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black;"></span> OPEN | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: pink; border: 1px solid black;"></span> T3        | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: darkpurple; border: 1px solid black;"></span> T5.2 |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></span> R-2 | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: peachpuff; border: 1px solid black;"></span> H-B | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: magenta; border: 1px solid black;"></span> LB-2 | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: brown; border: 1px solid black;"></span> B-4  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: lightgrey; border: 1px solid black;"></span> I-2 | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: peachpuff; border: 1px solid black;"></span> SD    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: lightpurple; border: 1px solid black;"></span> T4 | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: darkpurple; border: 1px solid black;"></span> T6   |





# BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL



The site is surrounded by commercial units.

|                    |  |      |                |
|--------------------|--|------|----------------|
| APPLICATION NUMBER | 6334                                   | DATE | August 3, 2020 |
| APPLICANT          | Wrico Signs (Downtown Police Precinct) |      |                |
| REQUEST            | Sign Variance                          |      |                |



# SITE PLAN

Signs 1-3 are Non- Illuminated Reverse Channel Letters

Sign 4 Non- Illuminated Projecting Sign



1



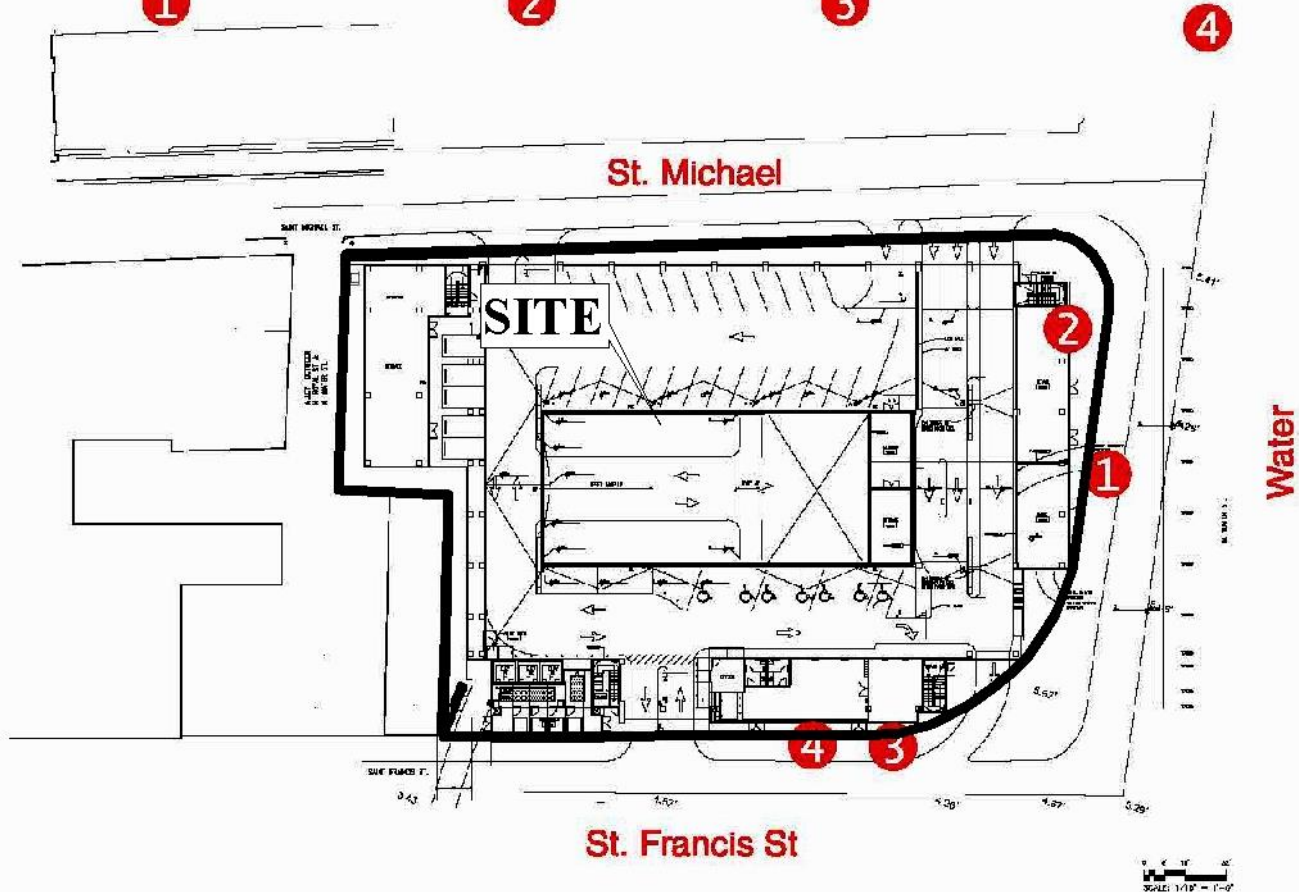
2



3



4



The site plan illustrates

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