

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
STAFF REPORT****Date: February 5, 2018****CASE NUMBER**

6157

APPLICANT NAME

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation (Frank Lott, Agent)

LOCATION

Area bounded by St. Louis Street, North Franklin Street, St. Anthony Street, Gliddon Place and North Claiborne Street.)

VARIANCE REQUEST**FRONTAGE:** To allow a 1,097 square foot pedestrian forecourt in a T5.1 Sub-District within the Downtown Development District.**SIGN:** To allow an individual storefront sign 10' in height in a T5.1 Sub-District within the Downtown Development District.**BUILDING MATERIALS:** To allow metal siding and roofing as well as vertical polycarbonate skylights in a T5.1 Sub-District within the Downtown Development District.**PARKING:** To allow parking spaces without wheel stops in a T5.1 Sub-District within the Downtown Development District.**ZONING ORDINANCE
REQUIREMENT****FRONTAGE:** The Zoning Ordinance prohibits pedestrian forecourts exceeding 600 square feet in a T5.1 Sub-District within the Downtown Development District.**SIGN:** The Zoning Ordinance limits individual storefront signs to 2' in height in a T5.1 Sub-District within the Downtown Development District.**BUILDING MATERIALS:** The Zoning Ordinance does not allow metal siding, roofing, or vertical polycarbonate skylights in a T5.1 Sub-District within the Downtown Development District.

PARKING: The Zoning Ordinance requires all parking spaces to have wheel stops in a T5.1 Sub-District within the Downtown Development District.

ZONING

T5.1 Sub-District

AREA OF PROPERTY

56,628 ± square feet/1.3 ± Acres

**ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

No comments.

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

Any on-site parking, including ADA handicap spaces, shall meet the minimum standards as defined in Section 64-6 of the City's Zoning Ordinance. The shorted length of parking spaces to assume "overhang" is not advisable as not all drivers pull over the curb. Site plan appears to have adequate space for standard parking space dimensions. In addition, handicap spaces are required (not shown) and the space dimensions for accessible parking can not be given a variance by this board.

**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 (State Act 2015-116 and City Code Chapters 57 and 64).

**FIRE DEPARTMENT
COMMENTS**

All projects within the City Limits of Mobile shall comply with the requirements of the City of Mobile Fire Code Ordinance. (2012 International Fire Code).

**CITY COUNCIL
DISTRICT**

District 2

ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a Frontage. Sign, Building Materials, and Parking Variances to allow a 1,097 square foot pedestrian forecourt, an individual store front sign 10' in height, metal siding and roofing as well as vertical polycarbonate skylights, and parking spaces without wheel stops in a T5.1 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District.; the Zoning Ordinance prohibits pedestrian forecourts exceeding 600 square feet, limits individual storefront signs to 2' in height, does not allow metal siding, roofing or vertical polycarbonate skylights, and requires all parking spaces to have wheel stops in a T5.1 Sub-District of the Downtown Development District.

A portion of the site is currently developed with existing building while the remainder of the site is used as a parking lot. The applicant wishes to redevelop the site to have the existing building renovated and add an additional building that will be utilized as an entrepreneur-support

program. Interior renovations to the existing building will include new public toilets, mechanical systems to serve office space, classrooms, and a large assembly area. The existing building will also receive new insulated metal roofing, new metal-clad wood window frames, and new clear insulated glazing. The applicant states that the new building will be approximately 15,000 square feet to provide primary entry, conference space, and future tenant space. The new structure will be steel framed and clad with corrugated metal panels, new metal roofing, and new aluminum store front with clear, insulated glazing. The site plan also depicts a new private court screened by an evergreen hedge, a new public pedestrian forecourt, and asphalt parking for approximately 40 cars screened with a fence and an evergreen hedge.

The applicant states the following reasons for the variance requests:

1) The proposed design for Innovation PortAL designates a Pedestrian Forecourt type frontage. This design meets all frontage requirements with the exception of maximum allowed square footage. The code specifies a forecourt no larger than 600 square feet. The forecourt as proposed measures 1,097 square feet. The size of the proposed forecourt exceeds the allowable area due to the portion of the building that connects new construction with the existing. This connector is placed to allow good flow between buildings and to create active user space along the St. Louis frontage in front of the entry. The increased depth of the forecourt allows the addition to be read as a sensitive intervention to the historic fabric of the St. Louis Street Corridor. It also aligns very strongly with the new building, bringing its pattern of vertical skylights into relationship with the hipped roof of the existing building. As this project is subject to historic requirements on account of its EPA grant, consideration for the existing character will be of utmost importance. (Note: The proposed frontage meets the 80% build-out requirement without using the pedestrian forecourt)

2) Proposed signage along the St. Louis Street facade of the new building exceeds the 2'0" maximum height for Individual Storefront Signage. The proposed signage will have an over height of 10'0". This includes the name "Innovation PortAL" in two stacked lines each 5'0" in height. The size of the signage in this location is due to the height of the architectural element behind and the style of the signage will take on the appearance of the building. The DDD code often references traditional building typologies and their associated features. The existing historic buildings on site do not fit these descriptions. The site is located at the heart of the St. Louis Street Automotive Corridor and the proposed design is a response to the surrounding property and traditional automotive and manufacturing signage, which was often large and prominently displayed.

3) Proposed new construction will include the use of vertical metal panels, metal roofing and vertical polycarbonate skylights. The St. Louis Automobile Corridor is a collection of buildings, many are masonry, but some employ metal materials and semi opaque skylights. The proposed design is informed by its context and the unique historic area. Metal building materials, and especially metal roofing, are historically applicable to the street's automotive and manufacturing heritage. The vertical skylights included as part of the proposed new construction are specified as

extruded polycarbonate view panels (basis of design: Extech Lightwall 3440) rather than clear glazing. These will light the interior, reducing energy consumption, while insulating the building envelope and will not engage the principle public view. The skylights will only be visible to a determined passerby or when viewed from above.

4) Parking proposed on site will comply with AASHTO standards for aisle width, stall width and overall depth, but will deviate in one respect. Parking stalls will exclude wheel stops - the curb itself will serve as the wheel stop. This arrangement will ease movement in the parking lot and reduce the visual clutter on site, as well as reduce the module depth required for parking.

Upon reviewing the site plan staff noticed that although on-site parking is not required in the Downtown Development District, the parking spaces do not have any designated handicap accessible spaces. The applicant may wish to review the need for accessible parking and make adjustments to the site plan as needed.

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.

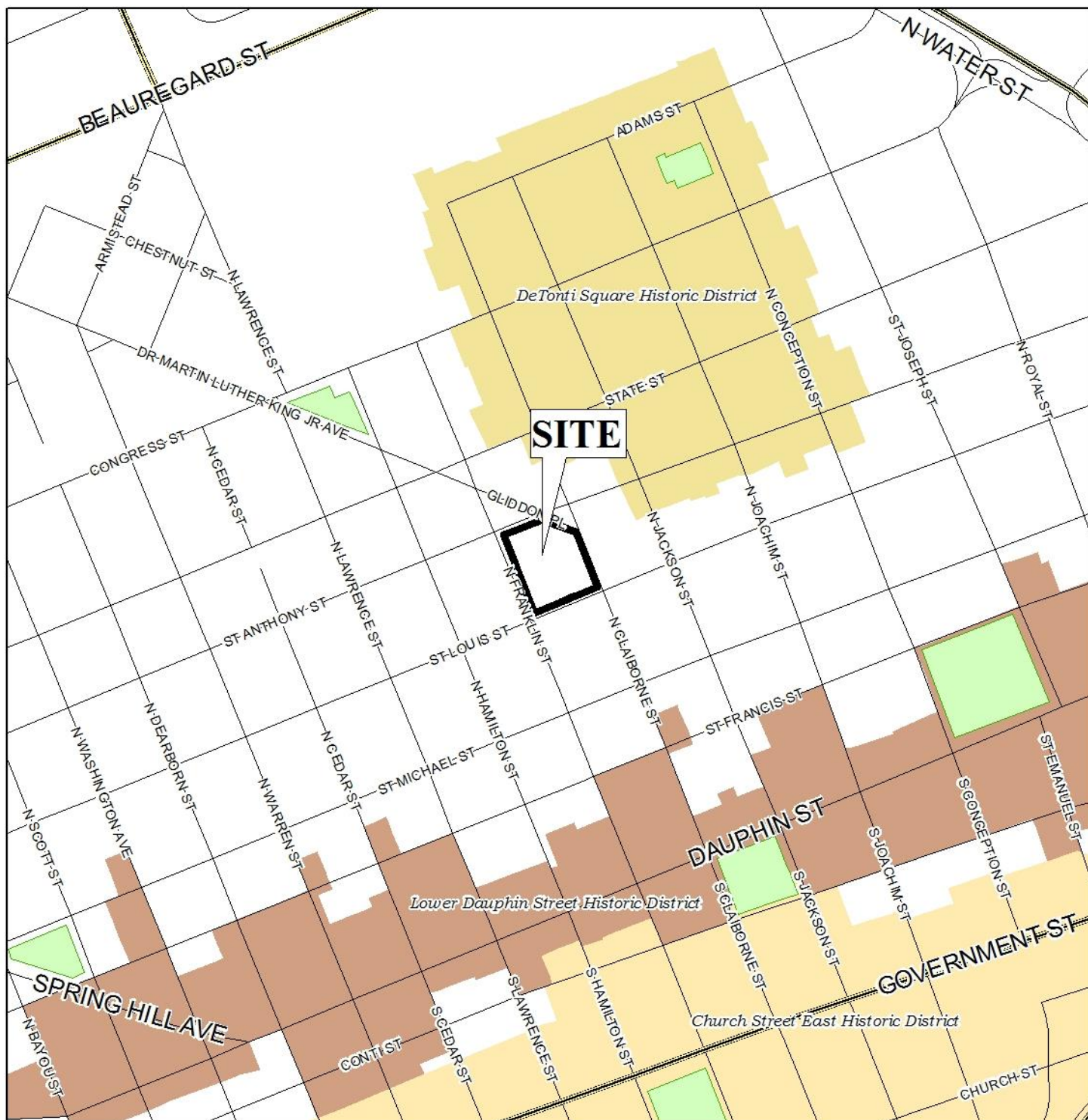
According to the Map for Mobile, the site is located within the Downtown area. The intent for the Downtown area is:

- Infill development that complements the existing character and enhances the pedestrian-friendly urban environment
- Fewer surface parking lots - more structured parking
- Increased streetscaping, including improved sidewalks, street furniture and lighting along corridors
- Greater mix of uses - retail, restaurant, office, residential

While the applicant has provided a very detailed narrative to justify the desire for the variance requests, unfortunately there has been no evidence provided identifying hardships and what, if any, hardships exists with the site that would not allow the site to comply with the city's requirements. However; there may be certain functional aspects of the proposed project that may allow the Board to determine that the development desirable.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Board consider all relevant facts and review the request based upon its own merits, as well as any information presented at the meeting.

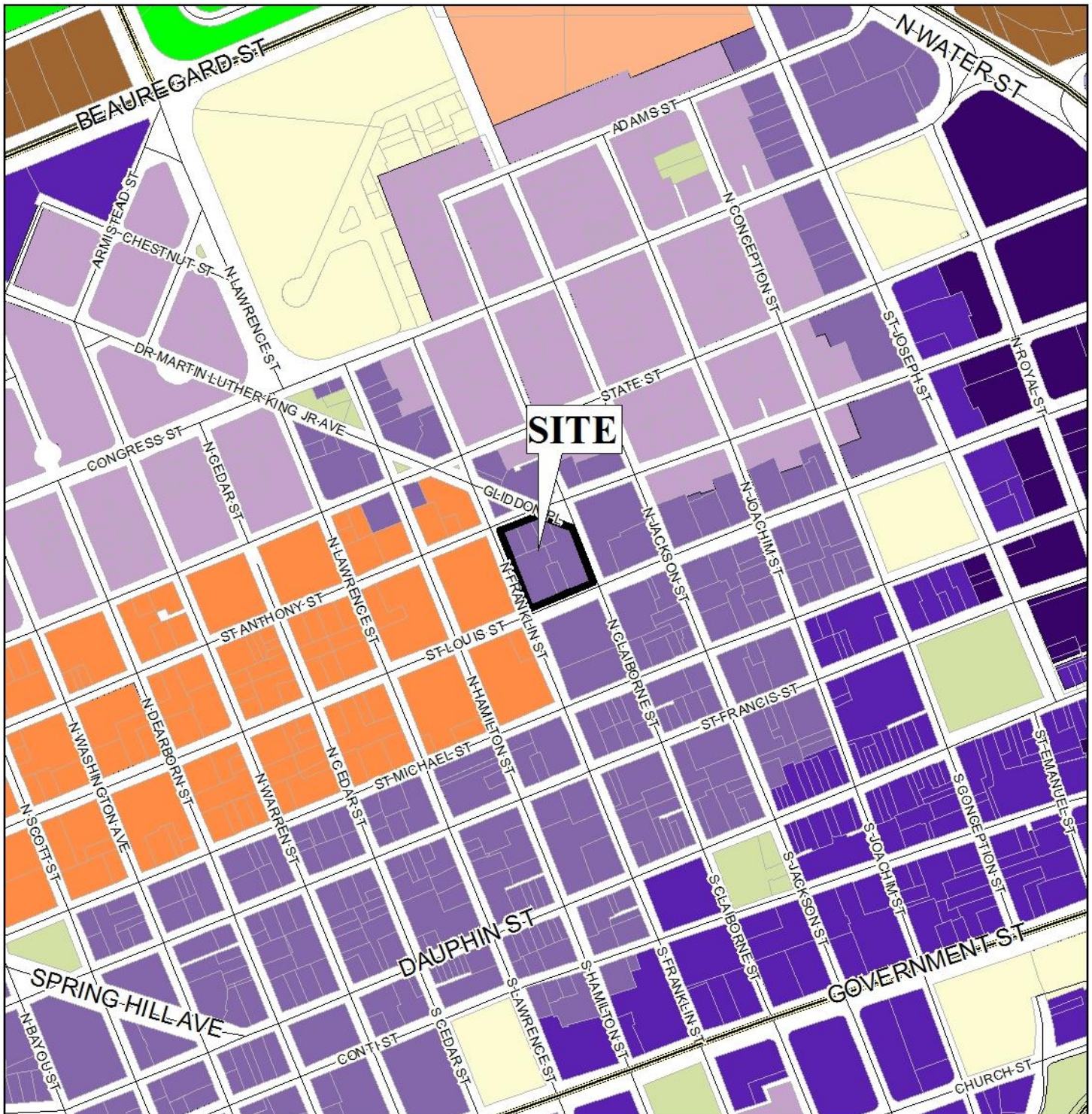
LOCATOR MAP



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REQUEST Frontage, Sign, Building Materials, and Parking Variances



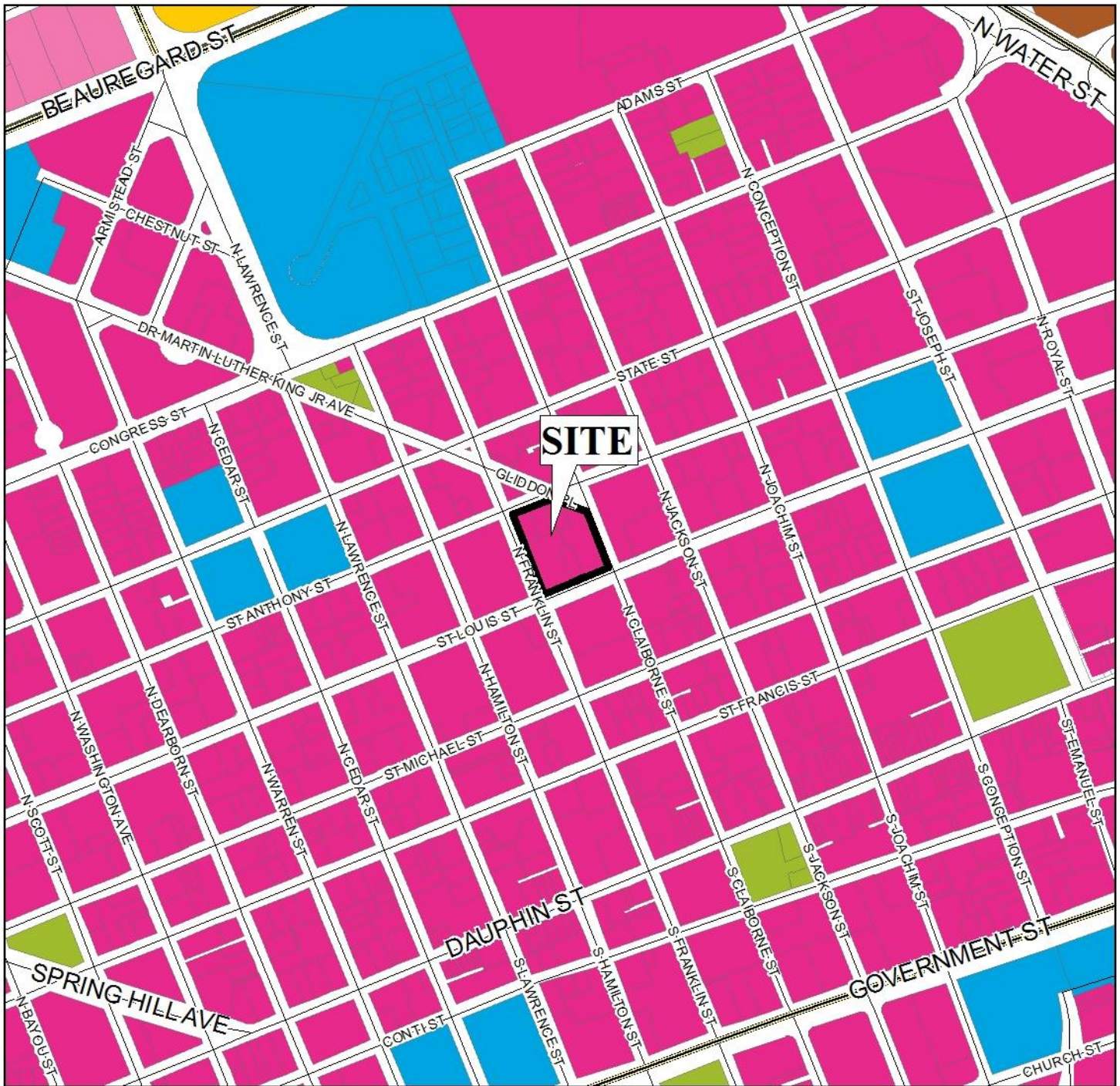
LOCATOR ZONING MAP



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FLUM LOCATOR MAP



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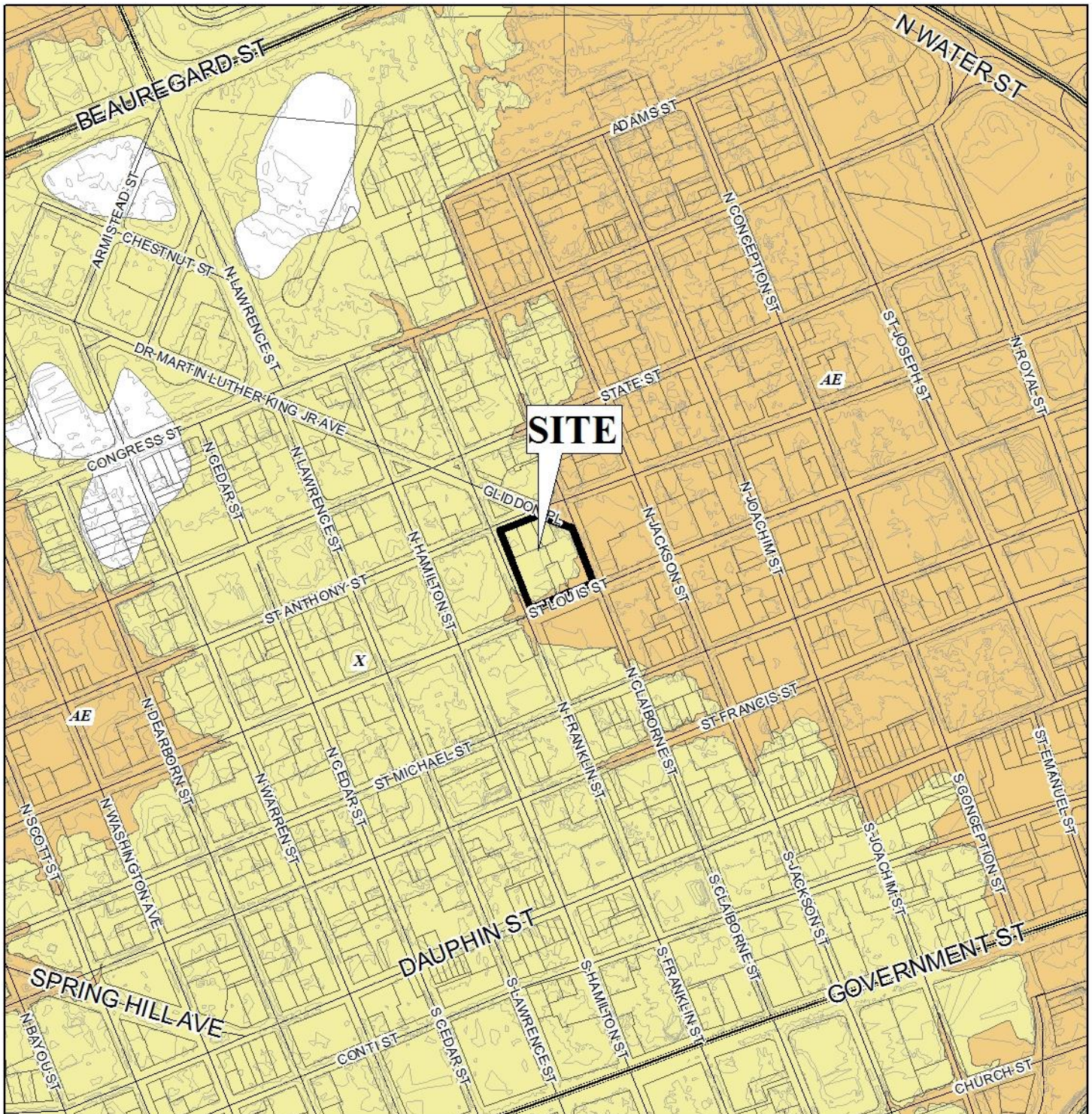
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Low Density Residential	Neighborhood Center - Traditional	Downtown Waterfront	Parks & Open Space
Mixed Density Residential	Neighborhood Center - Suburban	Light Industry	Water Dependent
Downtown	Traditional Corridor	Heavy Industry	
District Center	Mixed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



ENVIRONMENTAL LOCATOR MAP



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BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by commercial units. Residential units are located to the north.

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 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

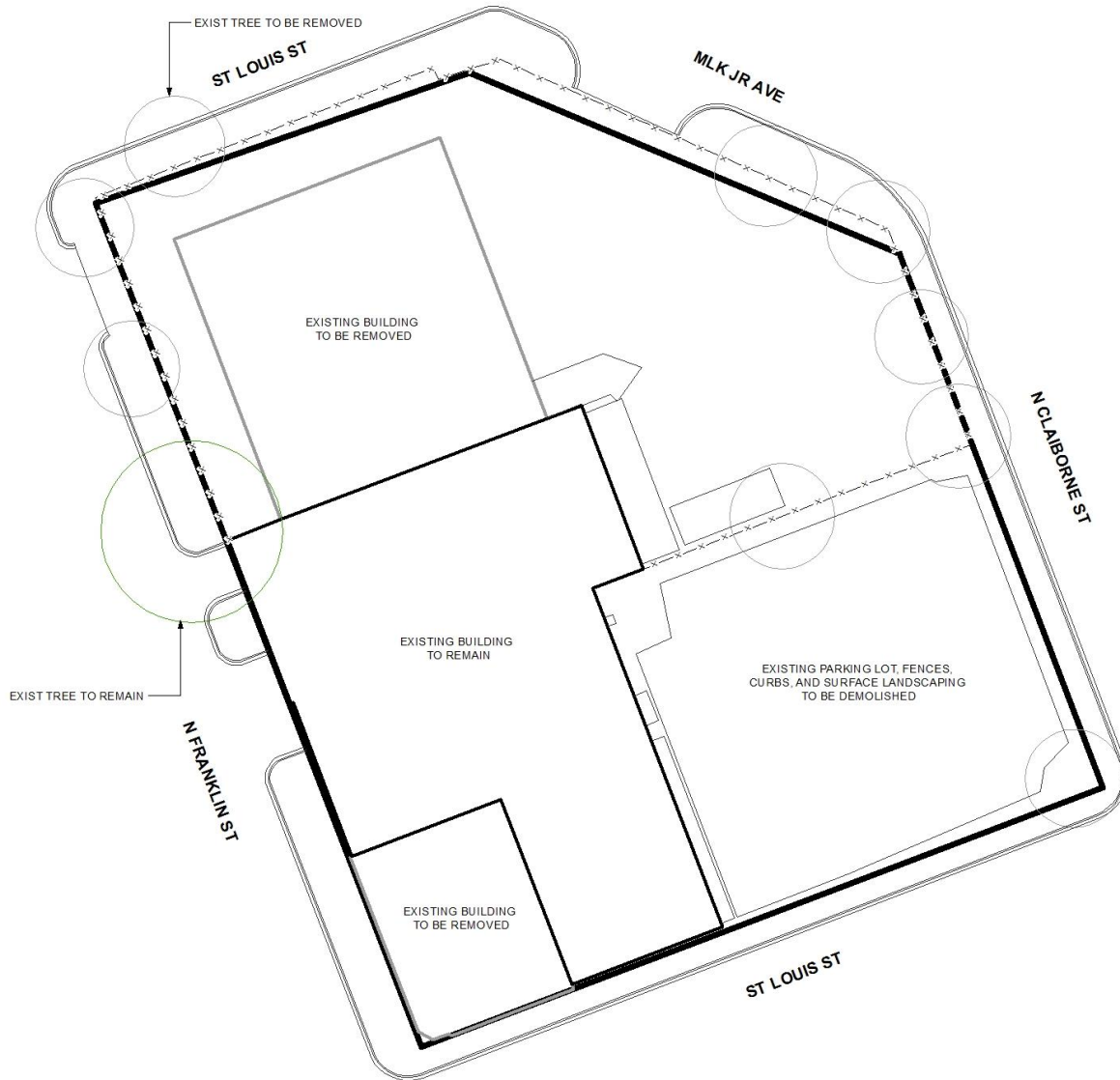


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EXISTING SITE PLAN



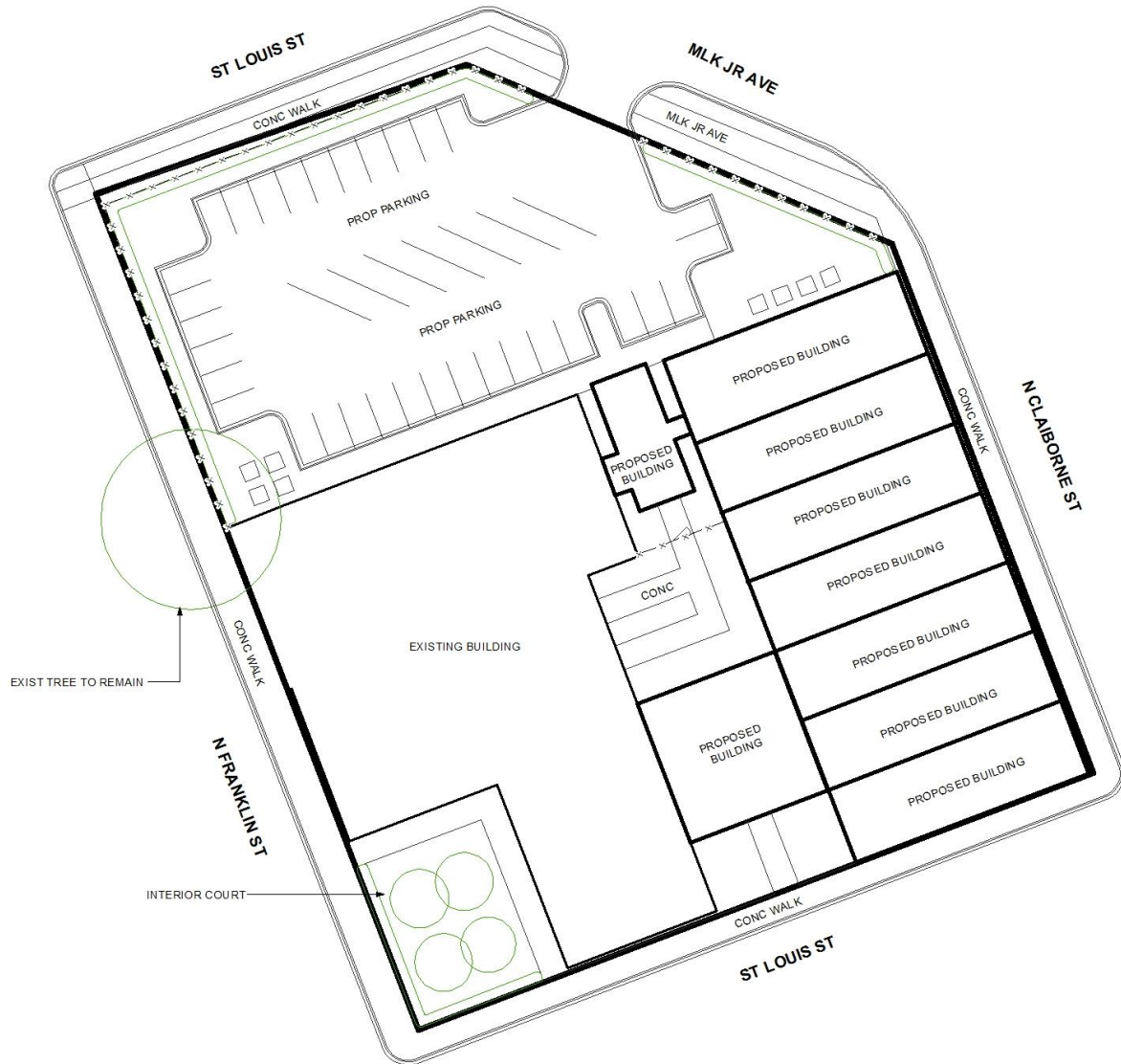
The site plan illustrates the existing buildings, buildings to be demolished, and parking area to be removed.

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NTS

PROPOSED SITE PLAN



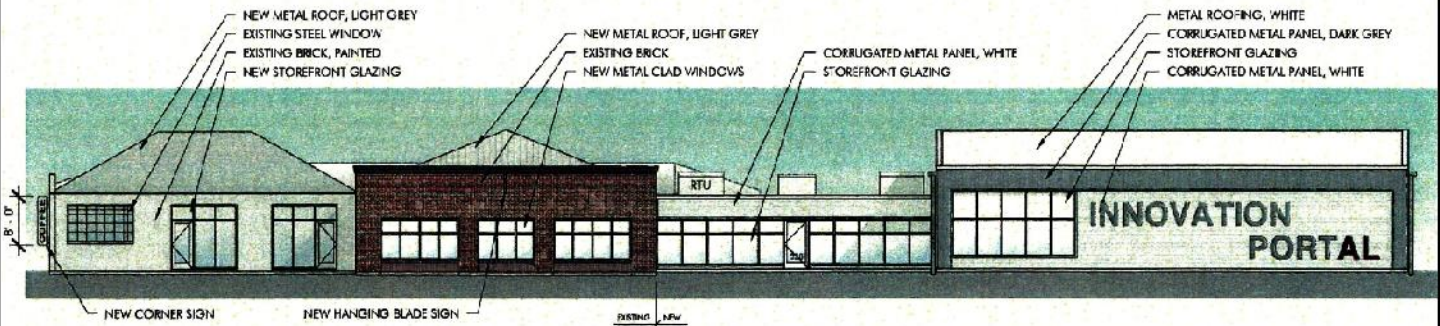
The site plan illustrates the existing buildings, proposed buildings, and proposed parking.

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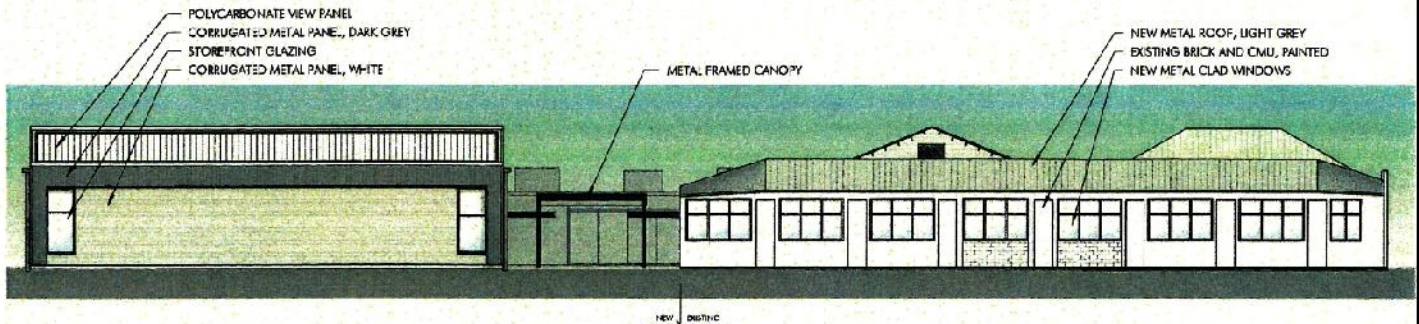
NTS

DETAIL SITE PLAN



1 NEW BUILDING AND EXISTING - SOUTH ELEVATION
1/16" = 1'-0"

ST. LOUIS STREET



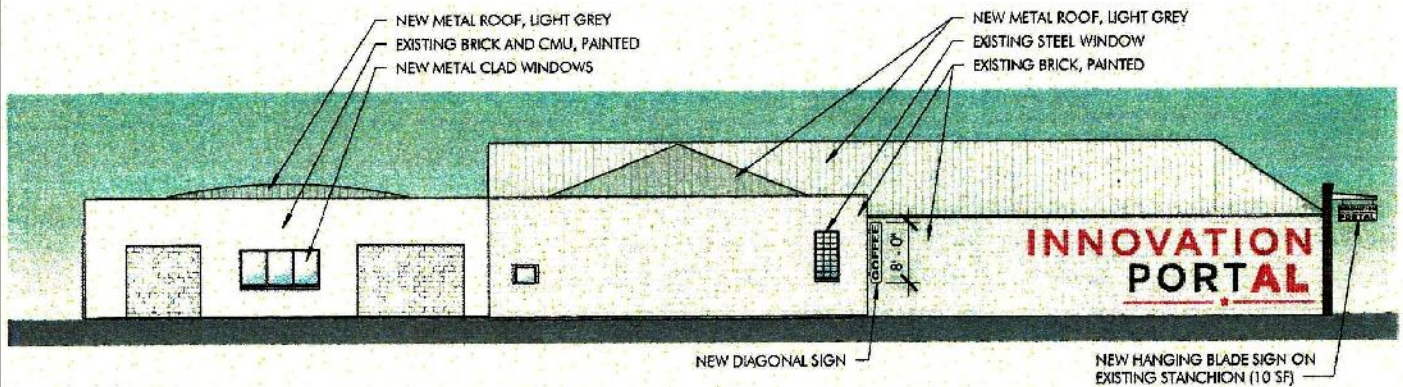
2 NEW BUILDING AND EXISTING - NORTH ELEVATION
1/16" = 1'-0"

ST. ANTHONY STREET

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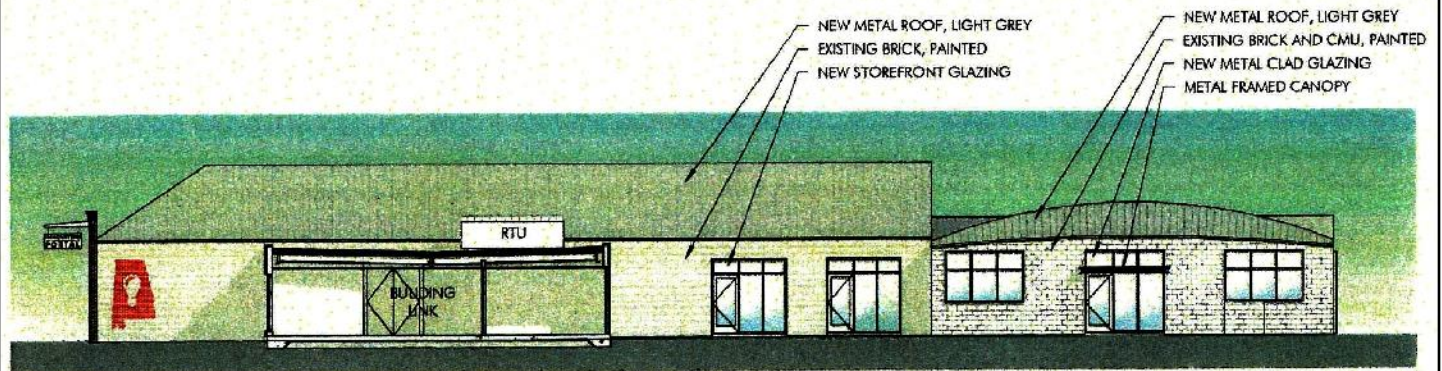


DETAIL SITE PLAN



1 EXISTING BUILDINGS - WEST ELEVATION
1/16" = 1'-0"

N. FRANKLIN STREET



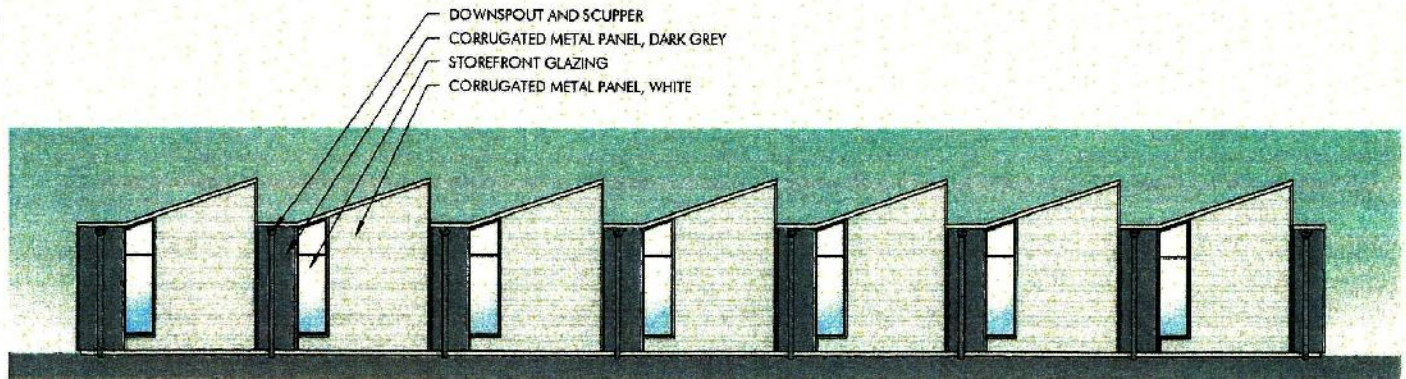
2 EXISTING BUILDINGS - EAST ELEVATION
1/16" = 1'-0"

COURTYARD

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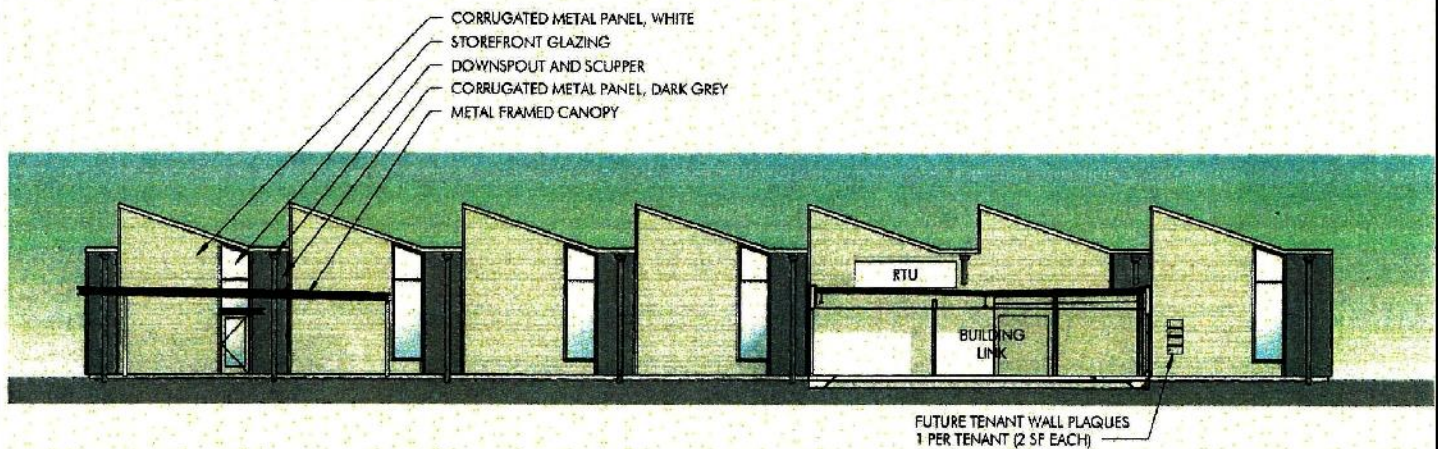


DETAIL SITE PLAN



1 NEW BUILDING - EAST ELEVATION
1/16" = 1'-0"

N. CLAIBORNE STREET



2 NEW BUILDING - WEST ELEVATION
1/16" = 1'-0"

COURTYARD

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