

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
STAFF REPORT****Date: November 2, 2015****CASE NUMBER**

6011

APPLICANT NAMEThe Medical Clinic Board of the City of Mobile, AL
Springhill, Inc.**LOCATION**3719 Dauphin Street
(South side of Dauphin Street at West I-65 Service Road
South)**VARIANCE REQUEST****SIGN:** Sign Variance to allow a sign to extend above the roof-line of a building and an informational sign larger than 40 s.f. for a hospital in a B-1, Buffer Business District.**ZONING ORDINANCE
REQUIREMENT****SIGN:** The Zoning Ordinance prohibits any portion of a sign from extending above a roof-line of a building and does not allow informational signs larger than 40 s. f. for a hospital in a B-1, Buffer Business District.**ZONING**

B-1, Buffer Business District

AREA OF PROPERTY

3.7± Acres

**ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

No comments

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

This request was not reviewed by Traffic Engineering.

**CITY COUNCIL
DISTRICT**

District 5

ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a Sign Variance to allow a sign to extend above the roof-line of a building and an informational sign larger than 40 s.f. for a hospital in a B-1, Buffer Business District; the Zoning Ordinance prohibits any portion of a sign from extending above the roof-line of a building and does not allow informational signs larger than 40 s.f. for a hospital in a B-1, Buffer Business District.

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 applicant states:

"The attached Application is being filed to allow approval of a Springhill Emergency sign mounted to the roof of a canopy, which is not currently allowed by the City of Mobile Zoning Ordinances. The variance being sought will allow the new Emergency Room signage to present a more modern appearance in keeping with other more current and updated visual aspects of the entire hospital complex. Many of the neighboring properties in the area with more recent construction have more modern features and current day conveniences. Springhill Medical Center wants to afford the community a complex that is forward-looking on the outside and state of the art medical care inside. The signs for this building are designed also to better assist the public in readily identifying emergency and trauma health services that can be critically time sensitive."

"The subject parcel of this Application is one of six adjoining parcels that are owned by The Medical Clinic Board of the City of Mobile, AL – Springhill, Inc., and are known as Springhill Medical Center."

The hospital is currently making site and building modifications in the emergency room ambulance and pedestrian entrance areas. In connection with these modifications, new signage is proposed for both areas. A "SPRINGHILL EMERGENCY" sign facing South is proposed above the ambulance unloading area canopy, and an "EMERGENCY" sign facing East is proposed on a wall in the pedestrian entry area. Although not specifically given by the applicant, construction drawings for the modifications indicate the roof-top sign to be approximately 30 square feet, and the wall sign to be approximately 230 square feet.

Both proposed signs are strictly directional in nature with no advertising. Due to the fact that both are intended to direct traffic to the hospital's emergency room, the fact that the emergency area is internal to the complex and would not be visible from properties outside the complex, and the fact that the circuitous traffic flow pattern of this particular hospital site impairs directional signage visibility to some degree, the allowance of the signs could seem justified, especially in instances where the timing of access to emergency medical services could be the determining factor in a person surviving and having reduced negative impacts due to an emergency.

Although the applicant has not specifically illustrated a hardship associated with needing the signage, its importance in emergency situations is obvious and the Board should consider the request for approval.

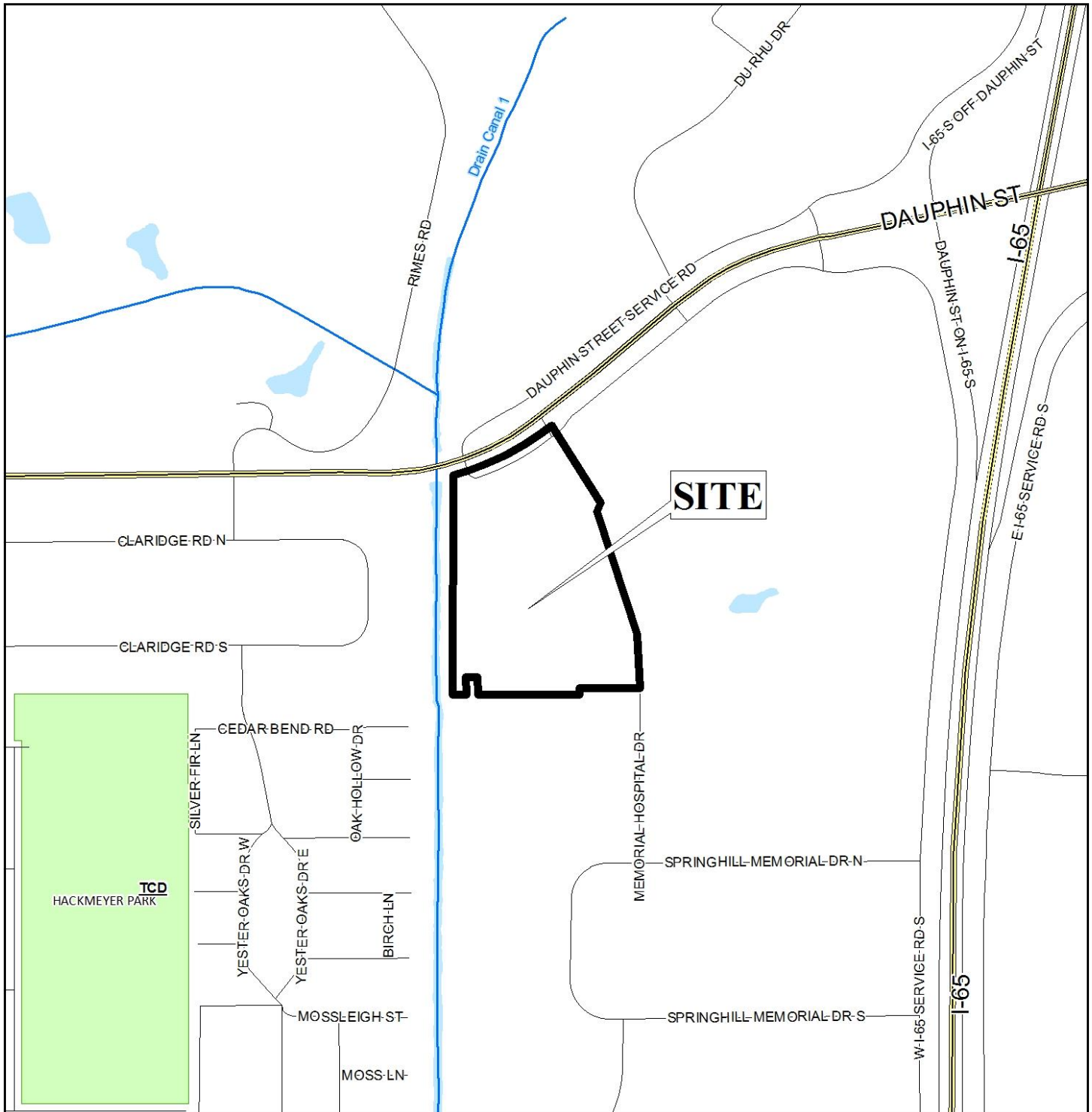
RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends to the Board the following findings of facts for approval:

- 1) Based on the fact that the signs are strictly for giving direction to emergency medical services, the variance will not be contrary to the public interest;
- 2) These special conditions (the hospital site traffic flow pattern is circuitous and impairs directional signage visibility) 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 proposed signs could be a determining factor in a person's survivability and having reduced negative impacts during a medical emergency.

Therefore, this application is recommended for approval, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) obtaining of sign permits for both signs; and
- 2) full compliance with all other municipal codes and ordinances.

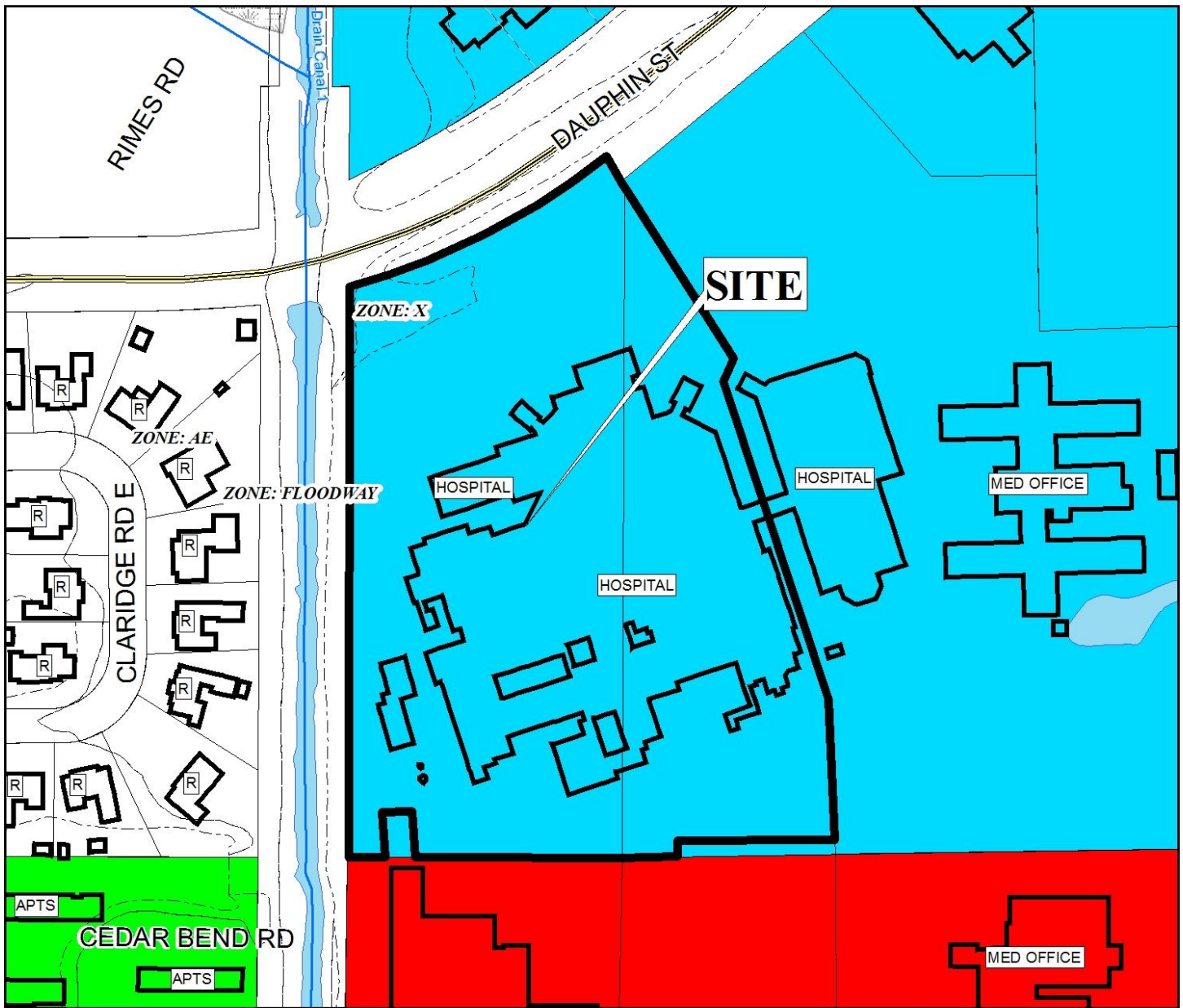
LOCATOR MAP



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BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by residential units to the west, and medical facilities to the east.

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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 ZONING

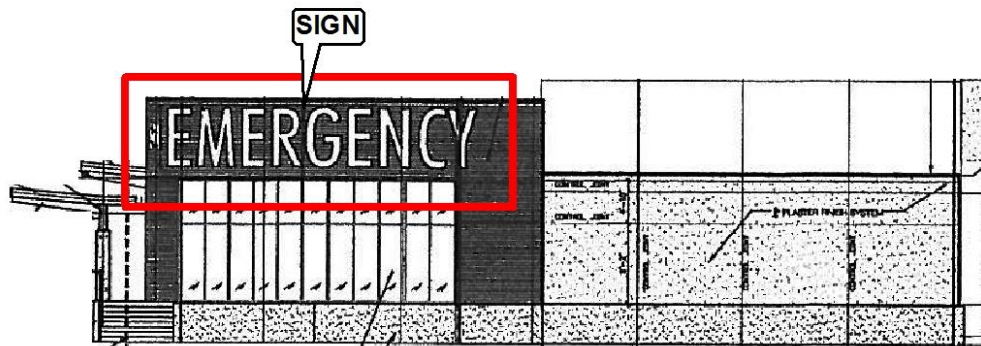


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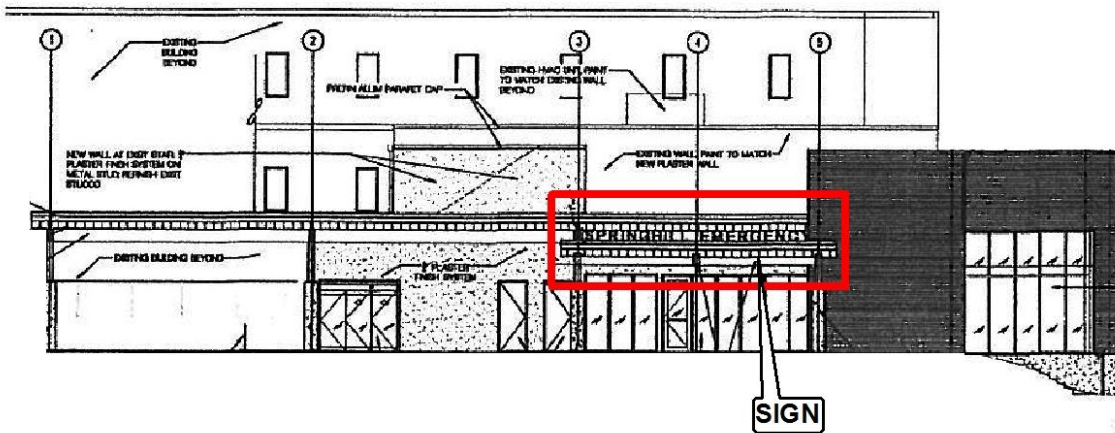
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DETAIL SITE PLAN



EAST
ELEVATION



SOUTH (ENTRY)
ELEVATION

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