



Agenda Item # 10

BOA-003897-2026

View additional details on this proposal and all application materials using the following link:

[Applicant Materials for Consideration](#)

DETAILS

Location:

1028 Newman Lane

Applicant / Agent:

Africatown Redevelopment Corporation/Helmsing
Leach, PC (Keri Coumanis, Agent)

Property Owner:

Africatown Redevelopment Corporation

Current Zoning:

R-1, Single-Family Residential Urban District

Future Land Use:

Mixed Density Residential

Case Number:

6792/6752

Unified Development Code (UDC) Requirement:

- The Unified Development Code (UDC) requires 24-foot wide access for two-way traffic at a cottage court development in an R-1, Single-Family Residential Urban District Development District.

Board Consideration:

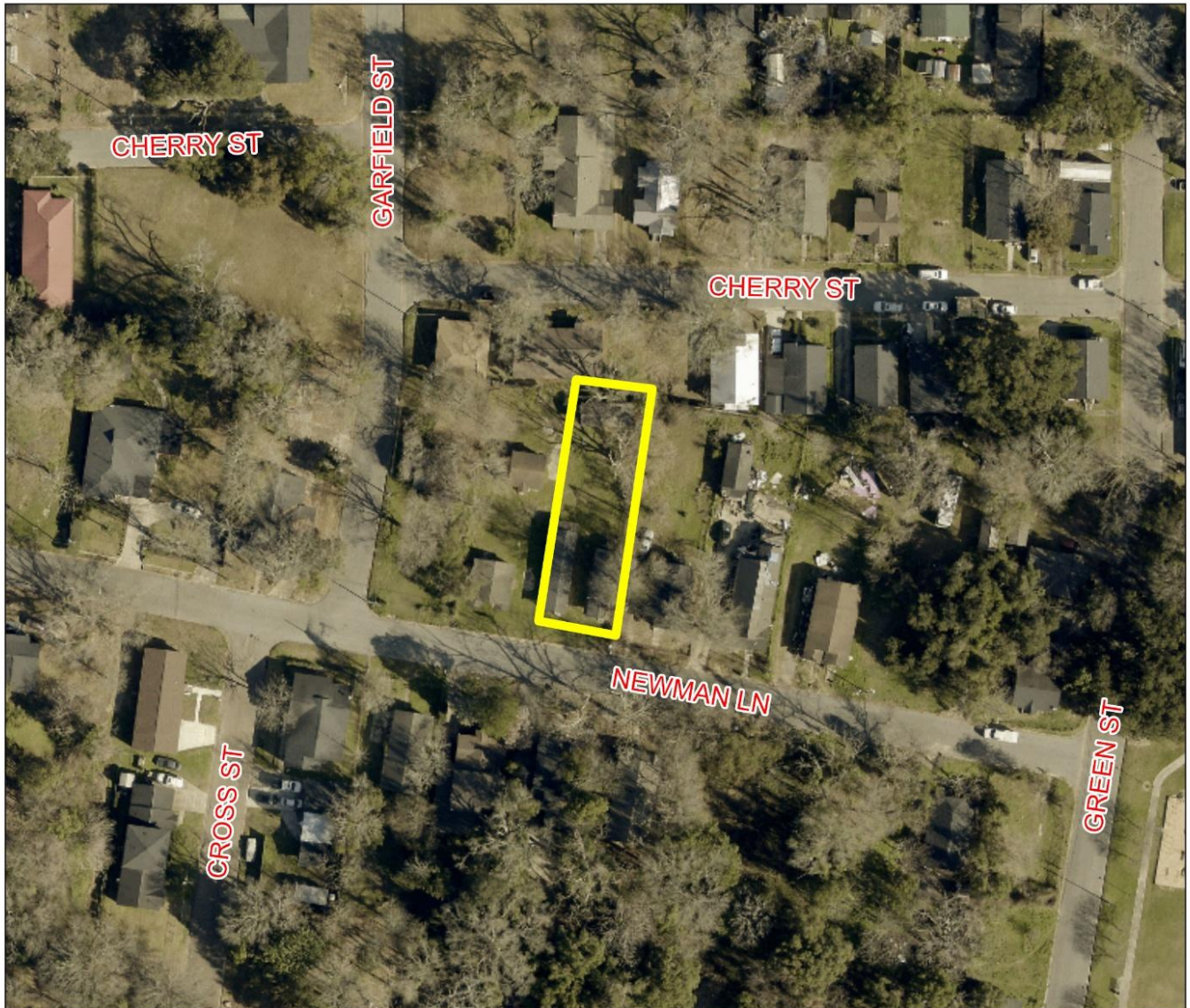
- Access Variance to allow sub-standard access for two-way traffic at a cottage court development in an R-1, Single-Family Residential Urban District.

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BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL



The site is surrounded by residential units.

APPLICATION NUMBER	6792	DATE	October 1, 2026
APPLICANT	Helmsing Leach, PC (Keri Coumanis, Agent)		
REQUEST	Access Variance		



SITE HISTORY

This site was annexed into the City of Mobile in 1960.

The site was part of an Access Variance request at the May 2026 Board of Adjustment meeting. That application was approved by the Board of Adjustment, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Revision of the site plan to either depict a compliant dumpster on the site plan, or placement of a note stating that curbside pickup will be utilized;
- 2) Obtain all necessary land disturbance and building permits; and
- 3) Full compliance with all municipal codes and ordinances.

There have been no other Planning Commission or Board of Zoning Adjustment applications associated with the site.

STAFF COMMENTS

Engineering Comments:

No comments.

Traffic Engineering Comments:

No comments on the proposed variance. The driveway services three parking spaces for three R-1 Single-Family Residential homes.

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 [Act 929 of the 1961 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature (Acts 1961, p. 1487), as amended, and City Code Chapters 57 and 65]. Private removal of trees in the right-of-way will require approval of the Mobile Tree Commission. Removal of heritage trees from undeveloped residential sites, developed residential sites in historic districts, and all commercial sites will require a tree removal permit.

Fire Department Comments:

All projects located within the City Limits of Mobile shall comply with the provisions of the City of Mobile Fire Code Ordinance, which adopts the 2021 edition of the *International Fire Code (IFC)*.

Fire apparatus access roads shall be provided to within 150 feet of all non-sprinklered commercial buildings and within 300 feet of all sprinklered commercial buildings, as measured along an approved route around the exterior of the facility.

An approved fire water supply capable of meeting the requirements set forth in *Appendices B and C* of the 2021 IFC shall be provided for all commercial buildings.

Fire hydrant placement shall comply with the following minimum standards:

- Within 400 feet of non-sprinklered commercial buildings
- Within 600 feet of sprinklered commercial buildings

- Within 100 feet of fire department connections (FDCs) serving standpipe or sprinkler systems

Although the *International Residential Code (IRC)* functions as a stand-alone document for the construction of one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses, it does not govern the design or layout of emergency access or community-level fire protection infrastructure. Therefore, residential developments must also comply with the applicable requirements of the *International Fire Code*, including, but not limited to, those listed above concerning the design, construction, regulation, and maintenance of fire apparatus access roads and fire protection water supplies.

Planning Comments:

The applicant is requesting an Access Variance to allow a sub-standard access for two-way traffic at a cottage court development in an R-1, Single-Family Residential Urban District; the Unified Development Code (UDC) requires 24-foot wide access for two-way traffic at a cottage court development in an R-1, Single-Family Residential Urban Development District.

All documentation submitted for this application is available via the hyperlink, on page 1.

The subject site is a Nonconforming cottage court consisting of three (3) parking spaces with three (3) dwellings on one (1) legal lot of record. As such, the site meets the minimum parking requirements.

Furthermore, the vehicular access aisle to the parking area proposed at the rear of the site is approximately 12-feet wide. The Unified Development Code (UDC) requires vehicular access aisles for two-way traffic to be a minimum of 24-feet in width. As the subject site is already developed with existing structures, the site does not have adequate space to accommodate the required amount of parking in front of the structures, and it is impossible to provide a wider access aisle to parking in the rear of the site without completely re-developing the site. It should be noted that the site plan does not depict handicap parking spaces, as is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Building Code.

The site plan does not depict a dumpster. If approved, a compliant dumpster should be depicted on the site plan, including screening and sufficient on-site access, or a note should be added stating that curbside pickup will be utilized.

VARIANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Standards of Review:

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.

Article 5 Section 10-E. 1. of the Unified Development Code states that the Board of Adjustment may grant a variance if:

- The Applicant demonstrates that the variance shall not be contrary to the public interest;
- Where, owing to special conditions a literal enforcement of the provision of this Chapter will result in unnecessary hardship; and
- The spirit of this Chapter will be observed and substantial justice done.

Article 5 Section 10-E.2. states no variance shall be granted:

- (a) In order to relieve an owner of restrictive covenants that are recorded in Mobile County Probate Court and applicable to the property;
- (b) Where economic loss is the sole basis for the required variance; or
- (c) Where the variance is otherwise unlawful.

Considerations:

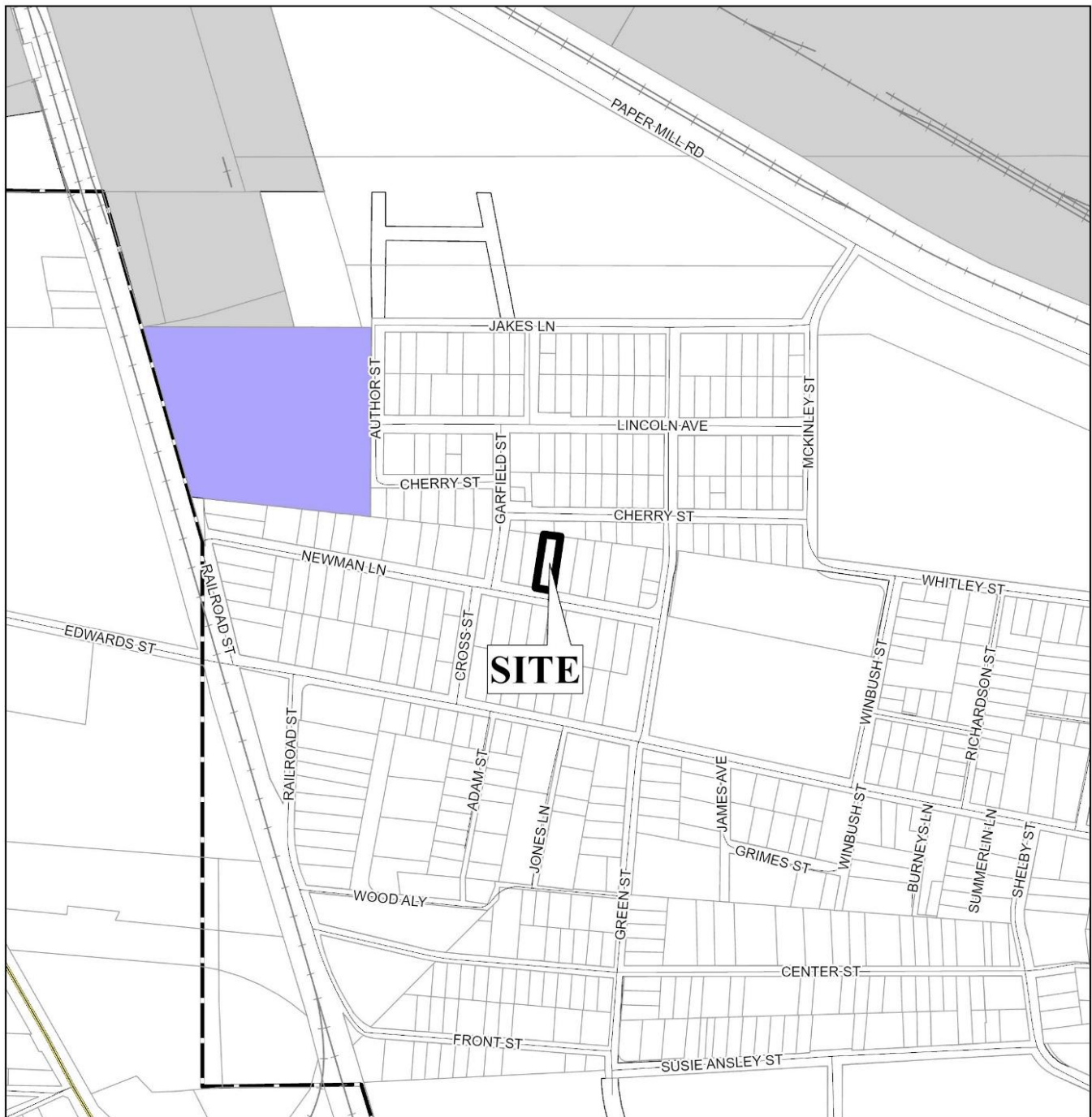
Based on the requested Variance application and documentation submitted, if the Board considers approval of the request, the following findings of fact must be presented:

- A) The variance **will not** be contrary to the public interest;
- B) Special conditions exist such that a literal enforcement of the provisions of the chapter **will** result in unnecessary hardship; and
- C) The spirit of the chapter **shall** be observed and substantial justice done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood by granting the variance.

If the Board considers approving the variance request, it could be subject to the following condition:

- 1) Revision of the site plan to either depict a compliant dumpster on the site plan, or placement of a note stating that curbside pickup will be utilized;
- 2) Obtain all necessary land disturbance and building permits; and
- 3) Full compliance with all municipal codes and ordinances.

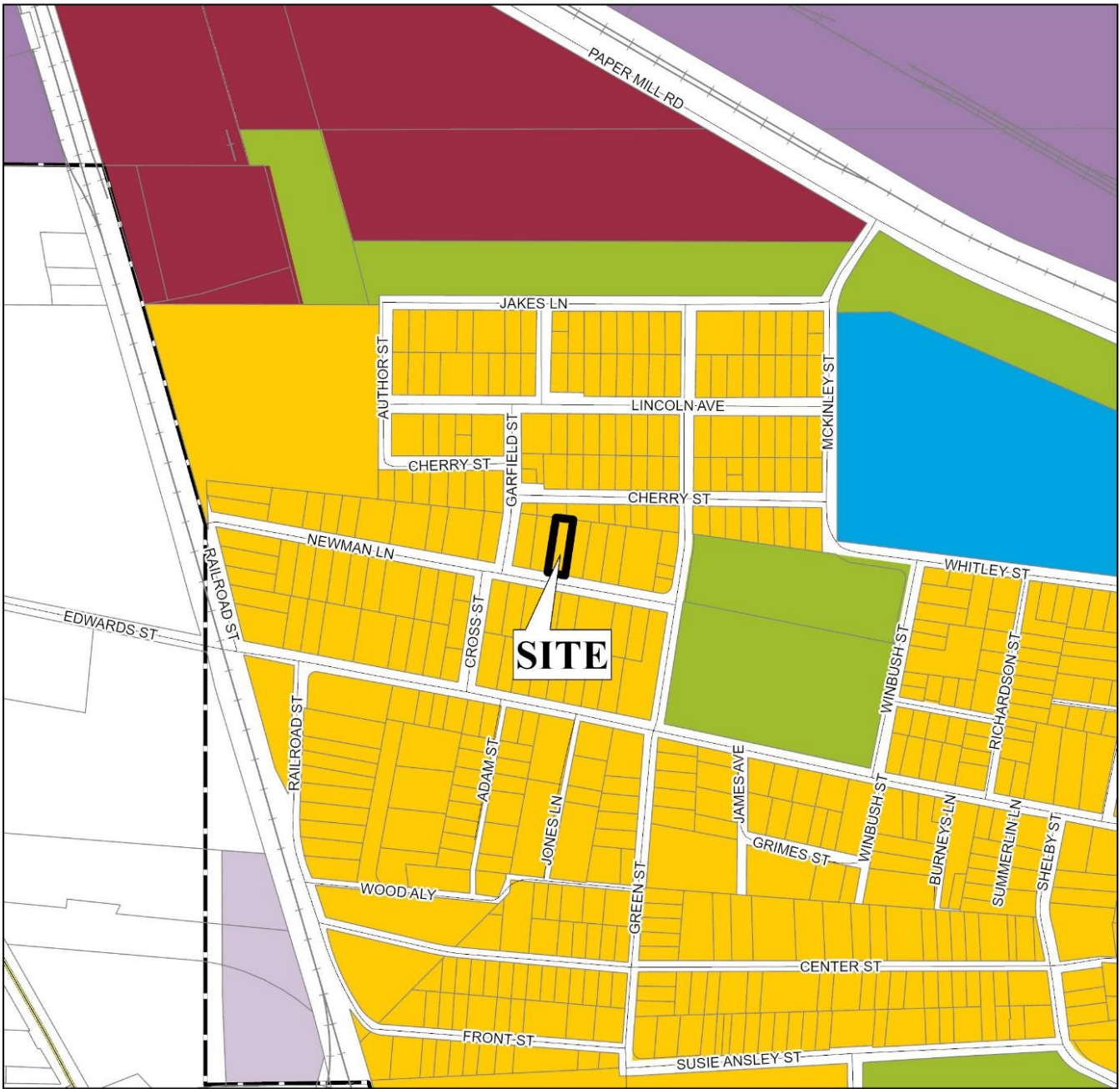
LOCATOR ZONING MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6792 DATE October 1, 2026
APPLICANT Helmsing Leach, PC (Keri Coumanis, Agent)
REQUEST Access Variance



FLUM LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6792 DATE October 1, 2026
 APPLICANT Helmsing Leach, PC (Keri Coumanis, Agent)
 REQUEST Access Variance

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



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by residential units.

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APPLICANT Helmsing Leach, PC (Keri Coumanis, Agent)

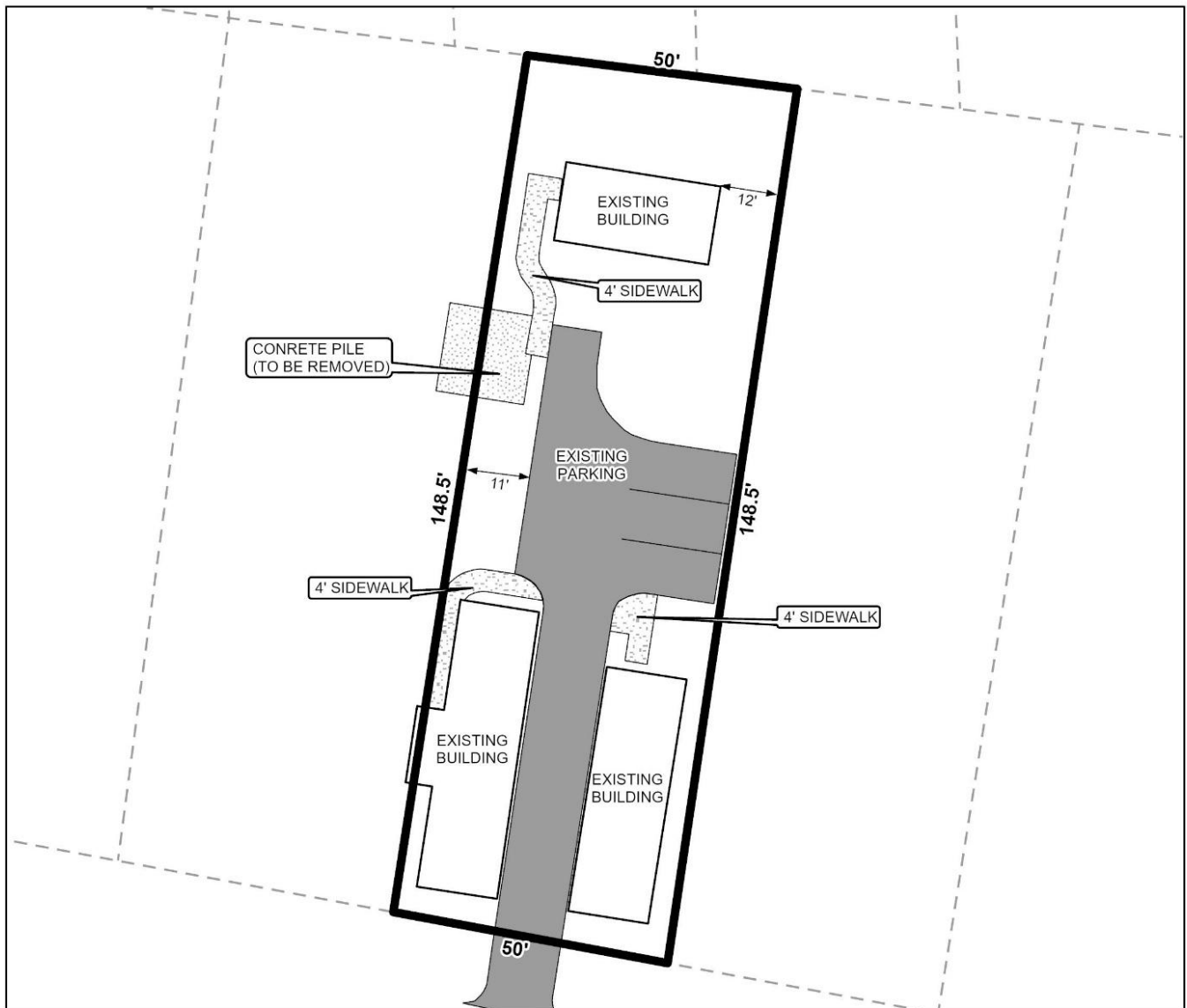
REQUEST Access Variance

R-A	R-3	B-1	B-2	B-5	ML	I-2	OPEN	T-3	T-5.2
R-1	R-B	T-B	B-3	CW	MH	PD	SD	T-4	T-6
R-2	H-B	LB-2	B-4	MM	I-1	MUN	SD-WH	T-5.1	



NTS

SITE PLAN



The site plan illustrates current buildings, parking areas, and other landscape features.

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REQUEST Access Variance



The designation of an area with a FLUM land use category does not mean that the most intense zoning district consistent with that category is “automatically” assigned to a property. Instead, an area retains its existing zoning category until it is changed through a landowner-initiated rezoning application, or a rezoning that follows an area plan. This is because the FLUM is a long-term designation, while a change in zoning considers current conditions – such as market demands, availability of infrastructure, or impacts on the immediate neighborhood.

Zoning correspondence matrix

[illegible]

MIXED DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR)

This designation applies mostly to residential areas located between Downtown and I-65, where the predominant character is that of a traditional neighborhood laid out on an urban street grid. These areas should offer a variety of residential types in a compact pattern at the scale of a single family neighborhood. They typically have a walkable block pattern with integrated neighborhood amenities such as parks and schools. Small office, commercial, and civic uses may also exist in these areas near major thoroughfares. Residential density ranges between 6 and 30 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) depending on the mix, types, and locations of the housing as specified by zoning.

Development Intent

- › Continue historic preservation efforts to maintain the existing neighborhood character within city-designated historic districts.
- › Support residential infill that fits-in with neighboring homes (building scale, placement, etc.). Support more intense residential infill and redevelopment adjacent to commercial or mixed use centers.

Land use mix

Primary Uses

- › Residential, Single family
- › Residential, Attached

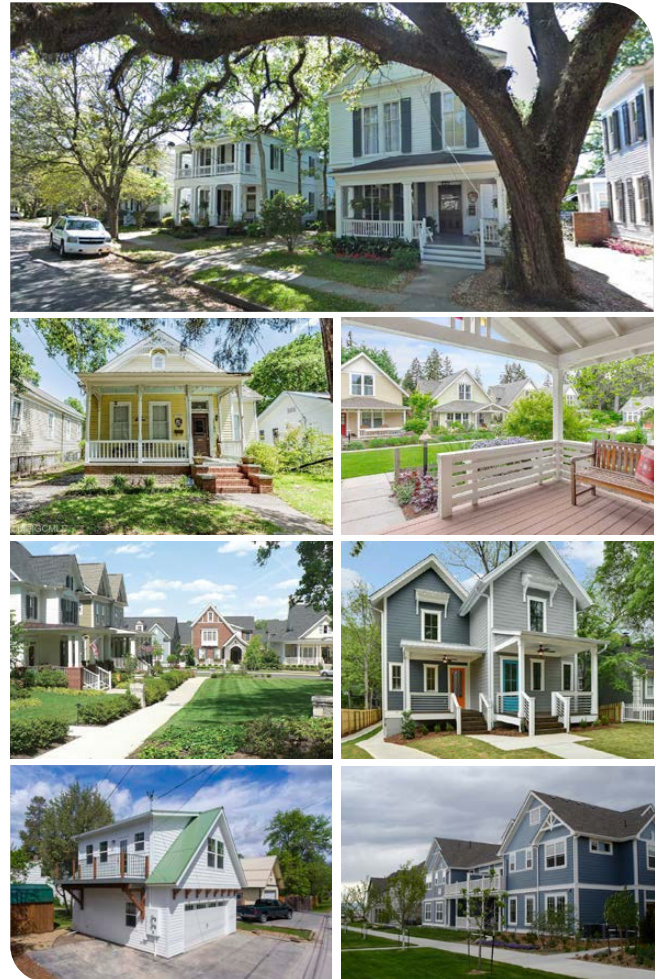
Secondary Uses

- › Residential, Multifamily
- › Commercial
- › Civic
- › Parks

Housing mix

- › Single family on small to medium sized lots
- › Attached residential such as duplexes, multiplexes, and townhomes
- › Small scale multifamily buildings

Character Example



A mixed density neighborhood may include a range of housing types and densities at a similar scale.

Rendering: Dover Kohl