



Agenda Item # 15
BOA-003635-2026

View additional details on this proposal and all application materials using the following link:
[Applicant Materials for Consideration](#)

DETAILS

Location:
720 Museum Drive

Applicant / Agent:
Museum Partners, LLC

Property Owner:
Museum Partners, LLC

Current Zoning:
B-2, Neighborhood Business Suburban District, within the Neighborhood General sub-district of the Spring Hill Overlay

Future Land Use:
Neighborhood Center - Traditional

Case Number:
6741/6662/6549

Unified Development Code (UDC) Requirement:

- The UDC limits structures to a maximum size of 20,000 square feet, requires full landscape area compliance, does not allow more than 20% above the minimum parking requirement be provided, full compliance with street tree plantings, and the provision of public access no greater than 50-feet apart on a site currently zoned B-2, Neighborhood Business Suburban District, within the Neighborhood General sub-district of the Spring Hill Overlay.

Board Consideration:


- Large Building Footprint, Reduced Landscape Area, Increased Parking, Reduced Street Trees, and Public Access Variances to allow a structure larger than 20,000 square feet, reduced front landscaped area, provision of more parking spaces than allowed, a reduced number of street tree plantings, and reduced public access doors on a site currently zoned B-2, Neighborhood Business Suburban District, within the Neighborhood General sub-district of the Spring Hill Overlay.

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BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL



The site is surrounded by commercial and residential units.

APPLICATION NUMBER <u> 6741 </u> DATE <u> March 2, 2026 </u>	 NTS
APPLICANT <u> Museum Partners, LLC </u>	
REQUEST <u> Building Footprint, Reduced Landscape Area & Street Trees, Increased Parking & Public Access Variances </u>	

SITE HISTORY

The site was formerly used by the Alabama National Guard as an armory with the existing large building constructed in the mid to late 1960's. The Armory Commission of Alabama deeded the property to the City in the 2000's and in 2023, the City published a Request For Proposal (RFP) to sell the property.

The site was before the Board of Zoning Adjustment at its December 4, 2023 meeting with an application to allow a Planned Development on the subject site. The applicant withdrew the application.

On April 7, 2025, the Board of Adjustment approved a Use Variance to allow the subject site to be used as a hotel. A one (1) year extension was granted by the Board at its September 8, 2025 meeting.

On May 15, 2025, the Planning Commission approved a two (2)-lot subdivision for the site, Fort Hardeman Subdivision, Resubdivision of Lots 1 and 2, and a Rezoning from R-1, Single-Family Residential Suburban District, to B-2, Neighborhood Business Suburban District. The City Council subsequently adopted the Rezoning on July 22, 2025. It should be noted that the Subdivision has been recorded in Probate Court, but the required copies of the recorded plat have not been submitted to Planning & Zoning. As such, copies of the recorded plat should be submitted to staff prior to the issuance of permits.

STAFF COMMENTS

Engineering Comments:

No comments to the proposed variance; however; according to the submitted plans, the proposed project will require a Land Disturbance Permit to be submitted through Central Permitting.

Traffic Engineering Comments:

A traffic impact study will be required for the proposed site shown. Driveway number, size, location, and design to be approved by Traffic Engineering and conform to AASHTO standards. Any required on-site parking, including ADA handicap spaces, shall meet the minimum standards as defined in Article 3, Section 64-3-12 of the City's Unified Development Code.

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 Large Building Footprint, Reduced Landscape Area, Increased Parking, Reduced Street Trees, and Public Access Variances to allow a structure larger than 20,000 square feet, reduced front landscaped area, provision of more parking spaces than allowed, a reduced number of street tree plantings, and reduced public access doors on a site currently zoned B-2, Neighborhood Business Suburban District, within the Neighborhood General sub-district of the Spring Hill Overlay (SHO); the Unified Development Code (UDC) limits structures to a maximum size of 20,000 square feet, requires full landscape area compliance, does not allow more than 20% above the minimum parking requirement be provided, full compliance with street tree plantings, and the provision of public access no greater than 50-feet apart on a site currently zoned B-2, Neighborhood Business Suburban District, within the Neighborhood General sub-district of the Spring Hill Overlay (SHO).

A detailed description of the proposed Variance request is available via the link on Page 1 of this report.

It should be noted that the applicant has submitted a three (3) lot Subdivision application, which is scheduled to be considered by the Planning Commission at its March 19th meeting. As such, the site plan submitted only depicts proposed development on the proposed Lot 1. If approved, a copy of that recorded Subdivision should be submitted to staff prior to the issuance of permits.

The applicant is proposing to construct a new building on the proposed Lot 1, which would house a hotel with 121 rooms. Because the previous Use Variance application stated the development would only have 87 rooms, and the site plan layout has changed significantly, it should be noted that the applicant will need to submit a new Use Variance to amend to previously approved Use Variance prior to the issuance of permits.

Chapter 64, Article 13-5.B.4.(a). of the UDC only allows buildings with footprints exceeding 20,000 square feet in Village Center and Neighborhood Center Sub-Districts of the SHO, and not within the Neighborhood General Sub-District of the SHO. The applicant states the first floor will have a footprint of 22,408 square feet, while the overall hotel will have 69,605 square feet.

Chapter 64, Article 2-13.E.10. of the UDC requires a minimum of 15% of the overall site to landscaped, while Chapter 64, Article 3-7.A.2.(a)(2). of the UDC requires at least 60% of the total amount of landscaped area for a site be located between the proposed building and the street. The applicant states that because buildings within the Neighborhood General Sub-District of the SHO are required to be setback from front property lines between

six-feet (6') and eighteen-feet (18'), there is limited room available for front landscaped areas. The applicant does propose 20.5% of the overall site to be landscaped, exceeding the minimum amount required.

Chapter 64, Article 13-6.C. of the UDC states that no more than 20% of the required minimum amount of off-street parking shall be provided. Hotels are required to provide one (1) parking space per two (2) rooms, thus requiring 61 parking spaces for a hotel with 121 rooms. The applicant is proposing to provide parking that will accommodate the other two (2) lots of the Subdivision and depicts a total of 166 parking spaces. It should be noted that no development is depicted on the other lots, but the narrative submitted mentions a possible retail use that would require 19 parking spaces, a coffee shop that would require 5 parking spaces, and an events center which would require 29 parking spaces, for a total of 114 required parking spaces. If the site is developed in a manner similar to that proposed, 166 will still exceed 20% of the total minimum required parking spaces for all lots. The applicant states the need for the additional parking on-site is due to the lack of overflow or other nearby commercial parking lots for use when the hotel is at full capacity, has a full staff, and the other businesses on the site are operational.

Chapter 64, Article 13-5.D.6. of the UDC requires street trees to be planted approximately 30-feet apart. The applicant states that in coordination with the City of Mobile for planned streetscape improvements, they are requesting that they be allowed to space street trees further apart, resulting in six (6) trees being planted, instead of nine (9) trees.

Finally, Chapter 64, Article 13-5.B.2.(c)(2) of the UDC requires public access to street be provided no further than 50-feet apart to provide pedestrians frequent opportunities to enter buildings and to minimize any expanses of inactive wall. The applicant requests having a single door for public access from North McGregor Avenue due to the use of the structure as a hotel.

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 Codes 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:

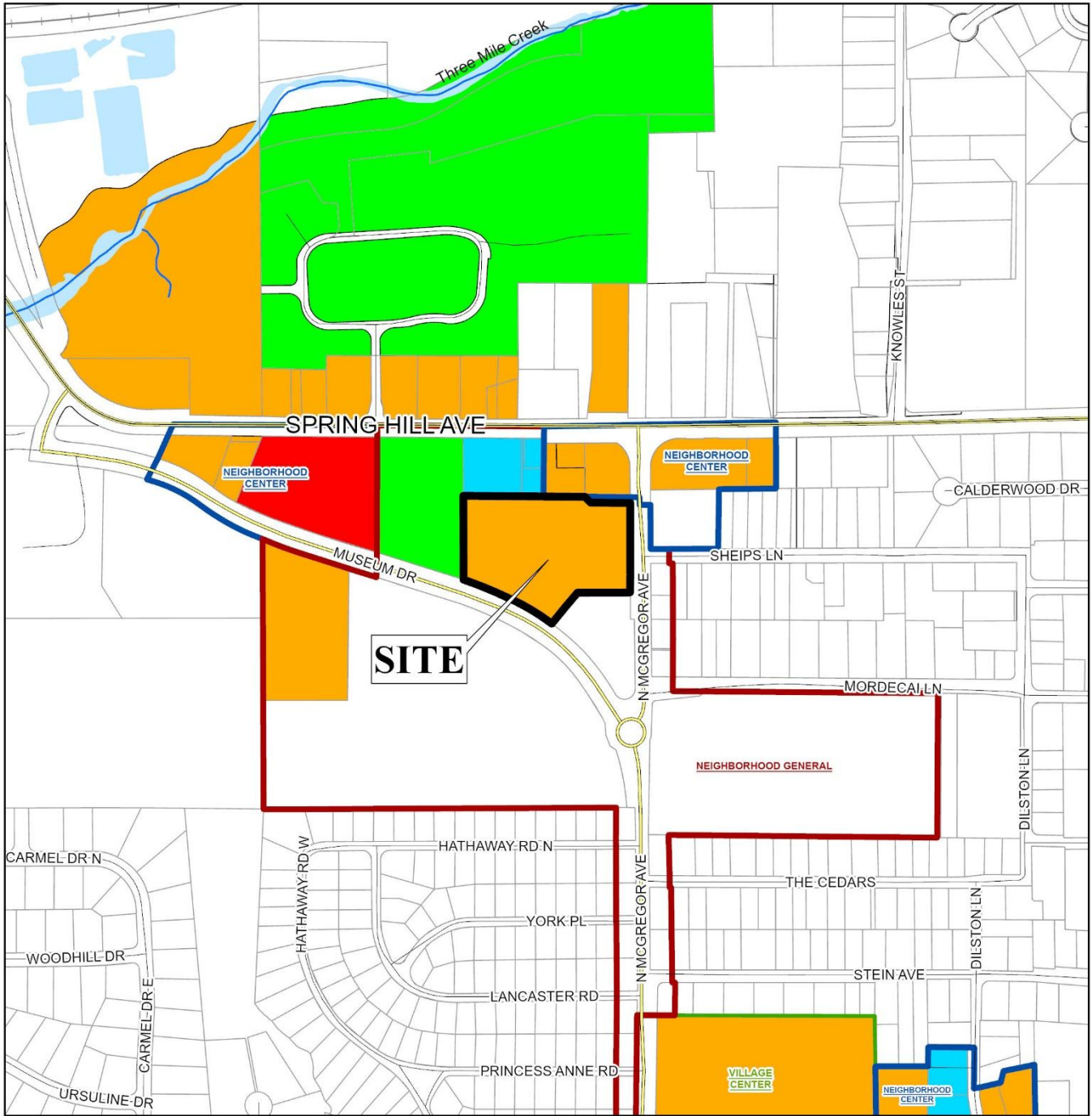
If the Board considers approval of the request, the following findings of fact must be present:

- 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 approved, the Variance should be subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Submittal of the required copies of the recorded Fort Hardman Subdivision, Resubdivision of Lots 1 & 2 to staff;
- 2) Either submittal of the required copies of the recorded three-lot Subdivision to be considered by the Planning Commission on March 19, 2026 (if approved) or revision of the site plan to depict the entire lot as it exists (if Subdivision is denied);
- 3) Submit a new Use Variance to amend to previously approved Use Variance prior to the issuance of permits; and
- 4) Full compliance with all municipal codes and ordinances.

LOCATOR ZONING MAP



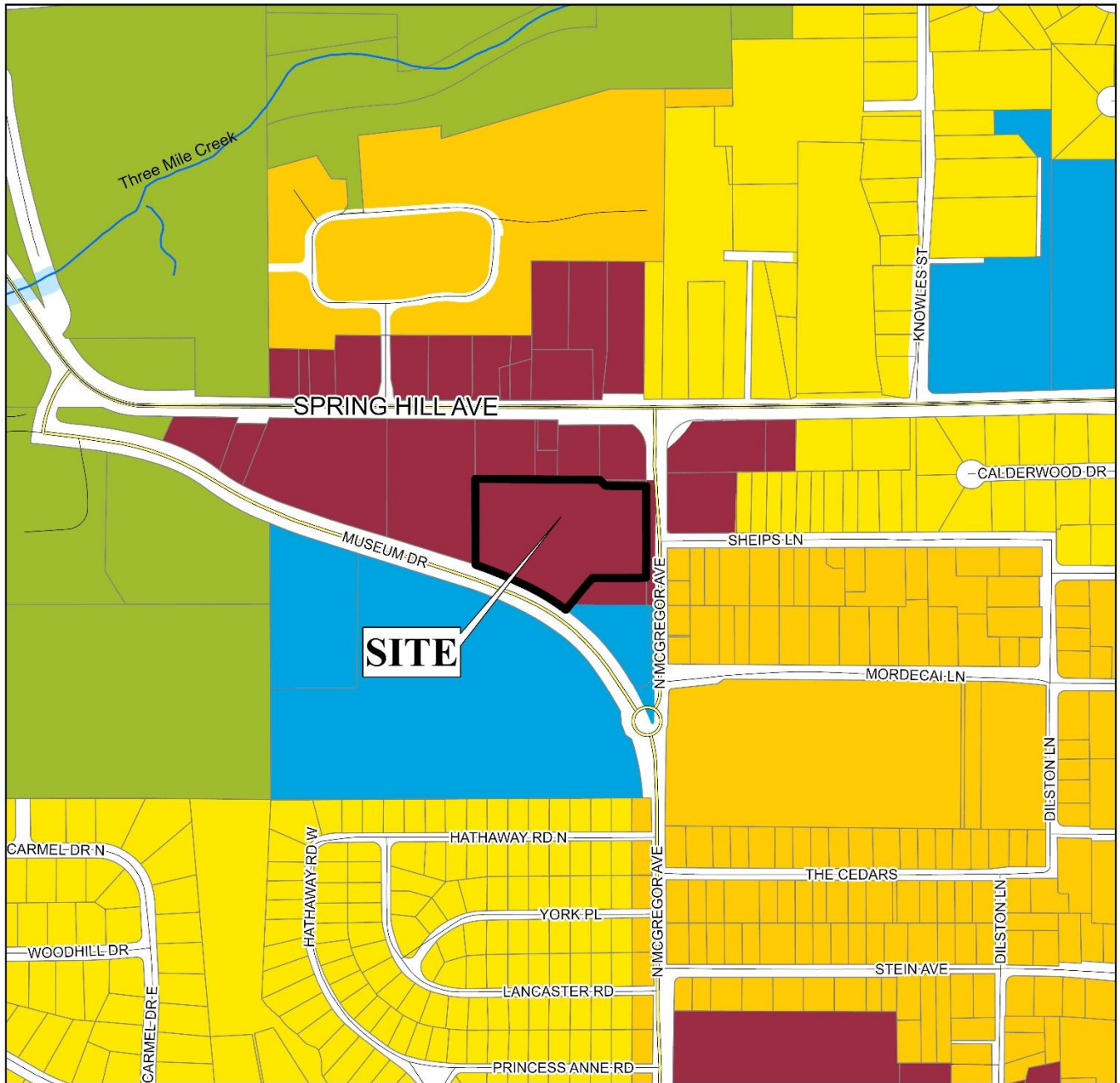
APPLICATION NUMBER 6741 DATE March 2, 2026

APPLICANT Museum Partners, LLC

REQUEST Building Footprint, Reduced Landscape Area & Street Trees,
Increased Parking & Public Access Variances



FLUM LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6741 DATE March 2, 2026

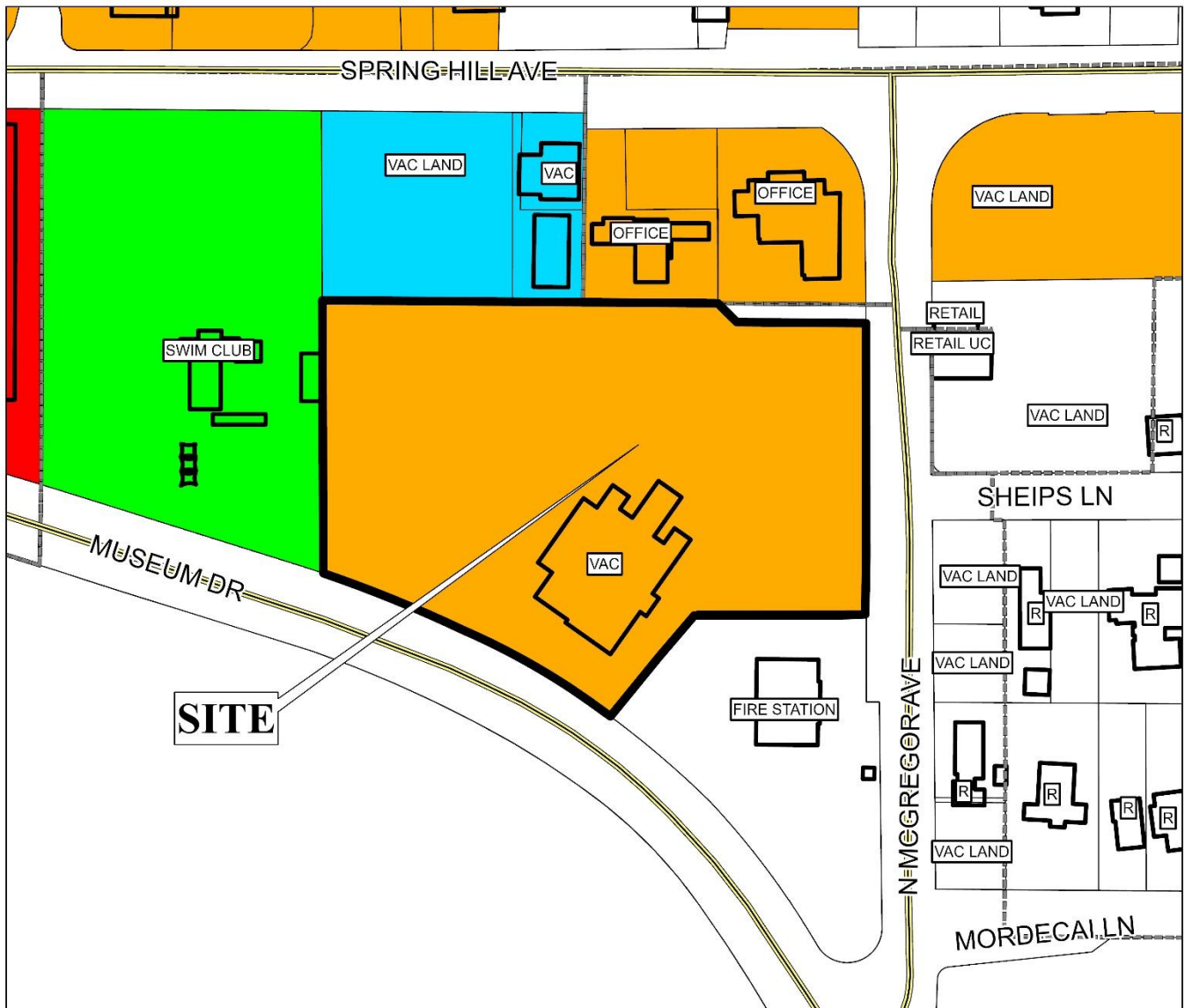
APPLICANT Museum Partners, LLC

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



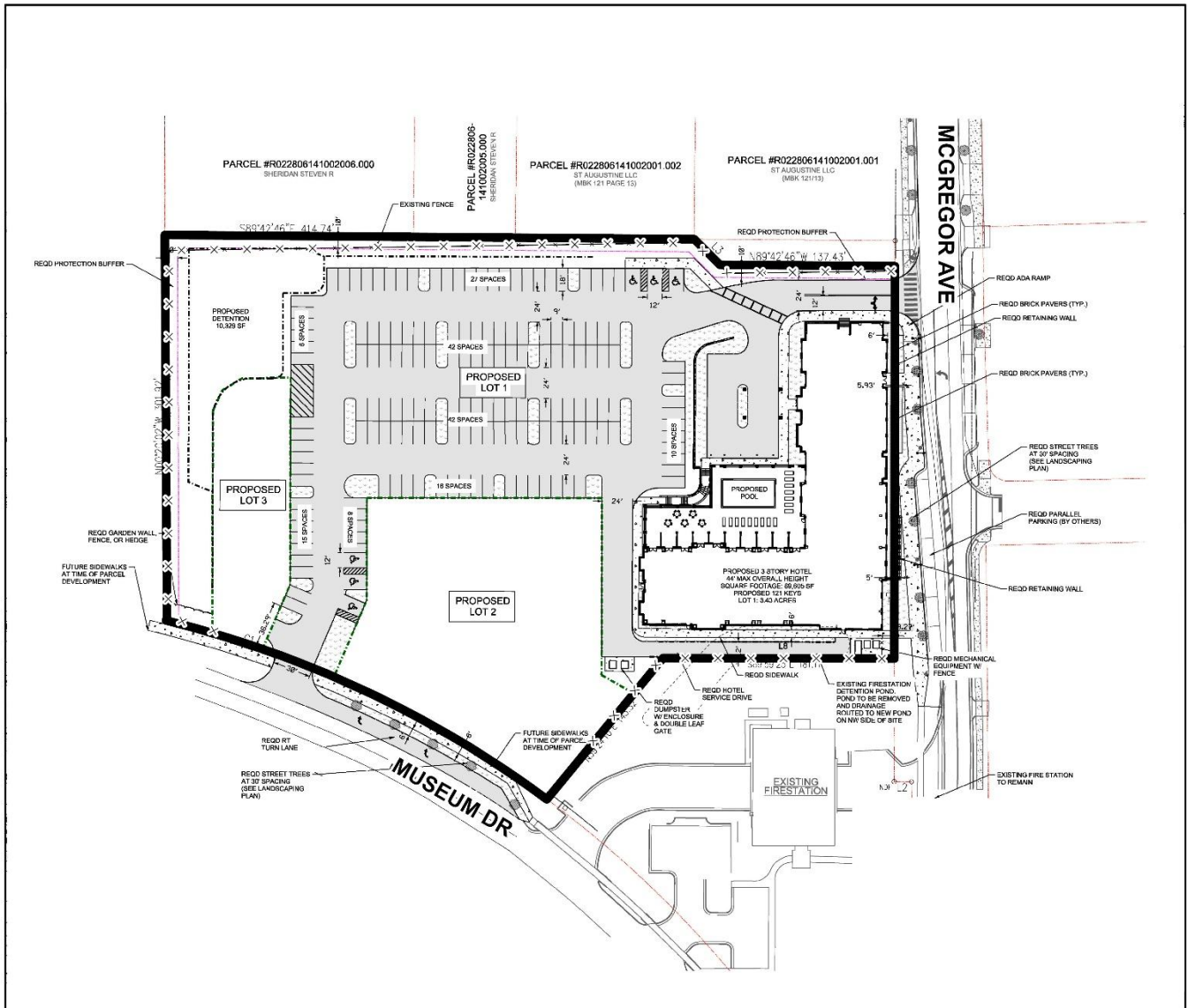
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



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<table style="width: 100%; font-size: small;"> <tr> <td> R-A</td> <td> R-3</td> <td> B-1</td> <td> B-2</td> <td> B-5</td> <td> ML</td> <td> I-2</td> <td> OPEN</td> <td> T-3</td> <td> T-5.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td> R-1</td> <td> R-B</td> <td> T-B</td> <td> B-3</td> <td> CW</td> <td> MH</td> <td> PD</td> <td> SD</td> <td> T-4</td> <td> T-6</td> </tr> <tr> <td> R-2</td> <td> H-B</td> <td> LB-2</td> <td> B-4</td> <td> MM</td> <td> I-1</td> <td> MUN</td> <td> SD-WH</td> <td> T-5.1</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			 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	
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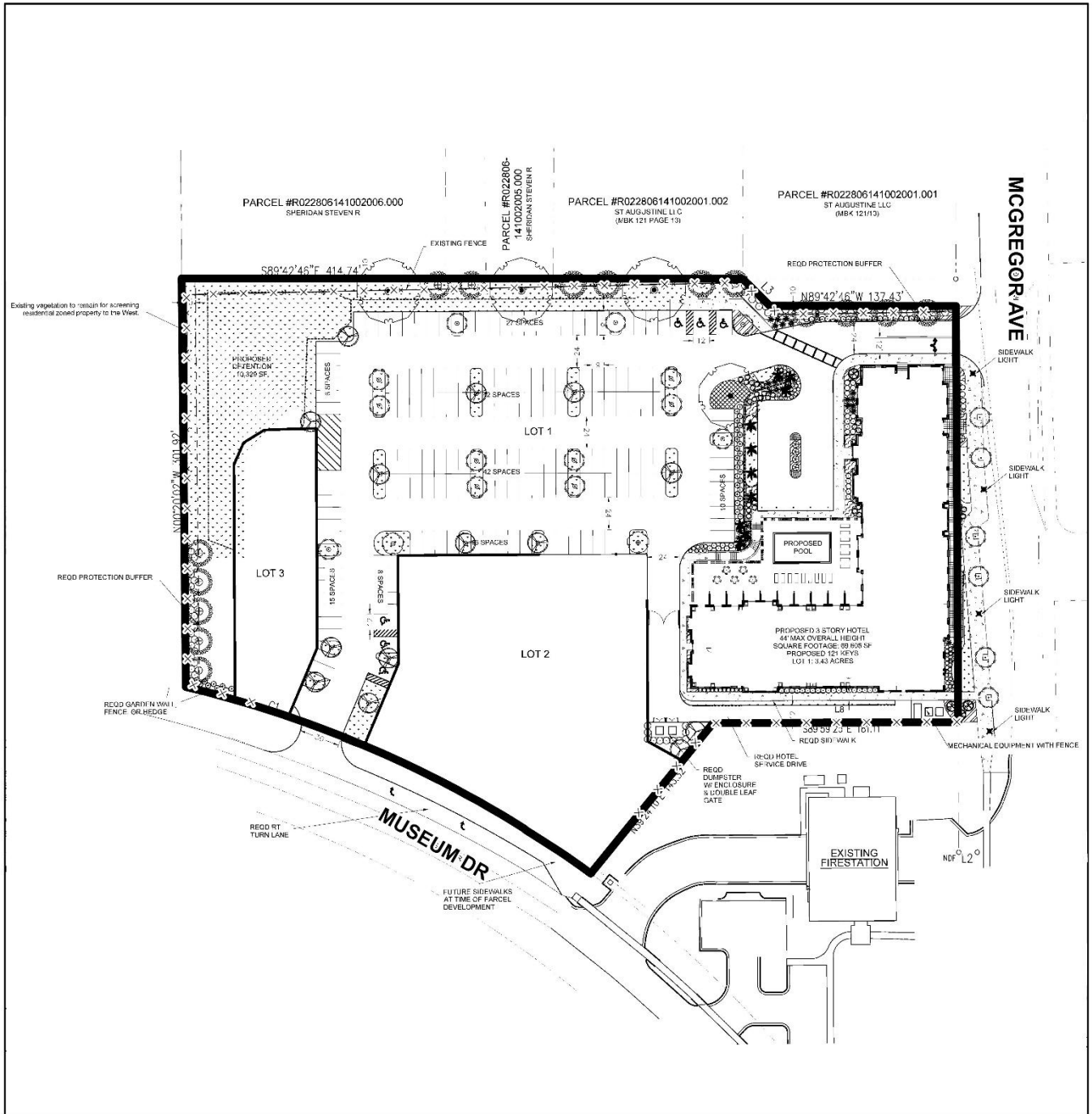
SITE PLAN



The site plan illustrates the proposed lots, building placement, and parking.

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LANDSCAPE SITE PLAN



APPLICATION NUMBER 6741 DATE March 2, 2026
 APPLICANT Museum Partners, LLC
 REQUEST Building Footprint, Reduced Landscape Area & Street Trees,
 Increased Parking & Public Access Variances



FUTURE LAND USE MAP CORRESPONDENCE TO ZONING

A primary purpose of the Future Land Use Map is to guide zoning decisions. In many cases the designation on the FLUM may match the existing use of land, but in others the designated land use may differ from what is on the ground today. For example, a parcel that is in commercial use today but designated as any of the “mixed use” types on the map could redevelop with a mix of residential and commercial uses (such as retail, office, entertainment, etc., depending on the location).

Each future land use designation on the FLUM will have at least one corresponding zoning district, allowing a more precise application of the FLUM based on specific local conditions. In most cases, there are multiple combinations or types of zoning techniques that can accomplish the future land use designation's objectives.

The correspondence between the FLUM and the zoning district structure is described in the matrix below. This tool gives the City the flexibility over the long-term to determine appropriate changes to the zoning map based on various factors.

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

	RESIDENTIAL - AG (R-A)	ONE-FAMILY RESIDENCE (R-1)	TWO-FAMILY RESIDENCE (R-2)	MULTIPLE-FAMILY (R-3)	RESIDENTIAL BUSINESS (R-B)	HISTORIC BUSINESS (H-B)	BUFFER BUSINESS (B-1)	TRANSITIONAL BUSINESS (T-B)	LIMITED BUSINESS (LB-2)	NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS (B-2)	COMMUNITY BUSINESS (B-3)	GENERAL BUSINESS (B-4)	OFFICE-DISTRIBUTION (B-5)	COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSE (CW)	MARITIME MIXED (MM)	MARITIME LIGHT (ML)	MARITIME HEAVY (MH)	LIGHT INDUSTRY (I-1)	HEAVY INDUSTRY (I-2)	VILLAGE CENTER (TCD)	NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER (TCD)	NEIGHBORHOOD GENERAL (TCD)	DOWNTOWN DEV. DDD (T-6)	DOWNTOWN DEV. DDD (T-5.1)	DOWNTOWN DEV. DDD (T-5.2)	DOWNTOWN DEV. DDD (T-4)	DOWNTOWN DEV. DDD (T-3)	DOWNTOWN DEV. DD (SD-WH)	DOWNTOWN DEV. DD (SD)	
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)	■	S	S	S			○								○															○
MIXED DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR)		U	U	■	■			■	■						■															○
DOWNTOWN (DT)						■						■											■	■	■	■	■	○	○	
DISTRICT CENTER (DC)								■			U	○	○																	
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER - TRADITIONAL (NC-T)	■	■	U	■	■	○		■	○	○	○										■	■	■							
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER - SUBURBAN (NC-S)			S			S		■	S	S	○										■	■								○
TRADITIONAL CORRIDOR (TC)		■	■	■	■	U		■	U	U	○																			○
MIXED COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR (MCC)						■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■															
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (LI)													■	■	■	■				■									○	○
HEAVY INDUSTRY (HI)																■	■	■	■										○	○
INSTITUTIONAL LAND USE (INS)											■	■		○	○					○										
PARKS & OPEN SPACE (POS)	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
WATER DEPENDENT USES (WDWRU)	■					○									■	■	■		○											

- Zoning district is appropriate to implement the future land use category.
- US Zoning district with Urban or Suburban subdistrict is appropriate to implement the future land use category.
- Elements of the zoning district are related to the future land use category and may be appropriate with qualifications or conditions.
- Zoning district is appropriate, but the district does not directly implement the category (e.g., open space in an industrial district)

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS (NC)

Neighborhood Center applies to smaller hubs of mixed commercial, community, and recreational activity that cater to adjacent residential areas. Many of these centers exist today in some form. The following principles apply not just to the future development of new centers, but also to the redevelopment of existing centers. These principles are common to all neighborhood centers, but the appropriate design varies depending on whether a center is in a more “traditional” or more “suburban” context.

- › Support a limited amount of commercial employment
- › Incorporate some residential use, compatible in character with that of surrounding residential development, providing appropriate transitions in height, massing and other buffering from one land use district to the next.
- › The retail and housing uses should merge around vibrant, compact, accessible nodes, located at key neighborhood intersections or along short road segments. Form vibrant, compact, accessible nodes, located at key neighborhood intersections or along short road segments.
- › Be connected to the surrounding neighborhood and nearby public uses (e.g., schools, parks, etc.) via well-designed sidewalks and complete streets.

Land use mix

Primary Uses

- › Commercial
- › Office
- › Residential, Multifamily

Secondary Uses

- › Residential, Attached
- › Civic
- › Parks

Housing mix

- › Various types ranging in density from 10 to 30 du/ac;
- › Residential units above ground-floor retail
- › Multifamily buildings (small scale)
- › Attached residential such as duplexes, multiplexes, and townhomes
- › Accessory and live-work units



NC TRADITIONAL (NCT)

These tend to be in areas connected to MxDR neighborhoods. They primarily occur east of I-65.

Development Intent

- › Buildings should orient to the street, with on-site parking typically pushed to the back of the site.
- › Design qualities of the public realm are emphasized, including the provision of continuous sidewalks, tree canopy, pedestrian amenities, on-street parking and bicycle facilities where appropriate.



NC SUBURBAN (NCS)

These generally are located among the LDR neighborhoods west of the I-65. Where they exist, these centers currently have a more pronounced vehicular orientation.

Development Intent

- › Support increase in mix and density of uses (e.g., infill of outparcels, addition of housing, etc.).
- › Retrofit to improve internal walkability (e.g., through the addition of sidewalks, tree canopy, protection from the elements) and external connectivity to the surrounding areas (via sidewalks, paths and trails, street crossings, transit stops, etc.)

