

**SIDEWALK WAIVER REQUEST  
STAFF REPORT****Date: March 19, 2020****NAME**

A &amp; B Electric

**LOCATION**1643 Varner Drive  
(East side of Varner Drive, 255'± North of Halss Mill Road).**PRESENT ZONING**

I-1, Light Industrial District

**ENGINEERING  
COMMENTS**

It appears that there is not adequate room to construct a sidewalk south of the existing driveway due to a steep slope between the existing parking lot curb and the roadway curb, location of existing utility poles, and an open drainage ditch to the south. To the north side of the existing driveway it appears that there is sufficient room within the ROW for the construction of a sidewalk that could be approved through the ROW Permit process.

**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). Private removal of trees in the right-of-way will require approval of the Mobile Tree Commission. Removal of heritage trees from a commercial site will require a tree removal permit.

**REMARKS**

The applicant is requesting a waiver for the construction of a sidewalk along Varner Drive in anticipation of applying for their final Certificate of Occupancy.

The site has been given a Light Industry (LI) 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.

This land use designation applies to an array of modern, low-impact industrial uses that include assembly and processing, warehousing, distribution and wholesaling facilities. The bulk of the light industrial use must be contained within a building or facility. If a light industrial use requires outside storage, the storage must be limited in area and appropriately screened from view in accordance to specific zoning requirements. This designation may also include uses such as complementary offices and retail.

LI also includes areas that may be regarded as “industrial business”, where the land uses include business administration and logistics operations for industrial concerns, building trade contractors facilities and advanced research facilities, as well as stand-alone educational, scientific and industrial research facilities, or any combination of those facilities located in light

industrial and technology parks. Many parcels used for industrial business are smaller and scattered throughout Mobile. For this reason, these parcels are not singled out in the FLUM, but rather are addressed through zoning.

Light industrial uses are characterized by attractive, accessible and connected development, compatible with the character of surrounding neighborhoods. Development may take the form of planned campuses in parklike settings or unified design corridors, with consideration to factors such as site and building orientation, building design, landscaping and buffering, lighting, continuity of pedestrian networks, access and connectivity to transit and to freight transportation.

Heavy commercial and, in some cases, high-density residential land uses may serve as transitions between LI and other, lower-intensity land use designations. Protection buffers may also be required by zoning.

The applicant states the following to justify the sidewalk waiver request:

*One of the main issues is an 18" grade difference near the southeast property corner where the existing parking lot is located. The distance from the property line and the face of the existing curb and gutter is 7' which would place the sidewalk 2' from the face of the curb and gutter (constructed to City standards) along Varner Dr. The existing parking lot is right at the property line on the Eastern side and the existing 6' high chain link fence is at the property line on the Western side. The site is in an I-1 Light Industrial District and there are no other sidewalks on this fully developed street. The street also dead ends at the applicant's property corner.*

It should be pointed out that the Mobile City Council adopted a "complete streets" policy on May 31, 2011. The purpose of the complete streets policy is to support the design and construction of streets to enable safe access to all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial and emergency vehicles, and for people of all ages and abilities.

At its September 6, 2018 meeting, the Planning Commission denied a similar request at the corner of Varner Drive and Halls Mill Road, located at 3726 Halls Mill Road.

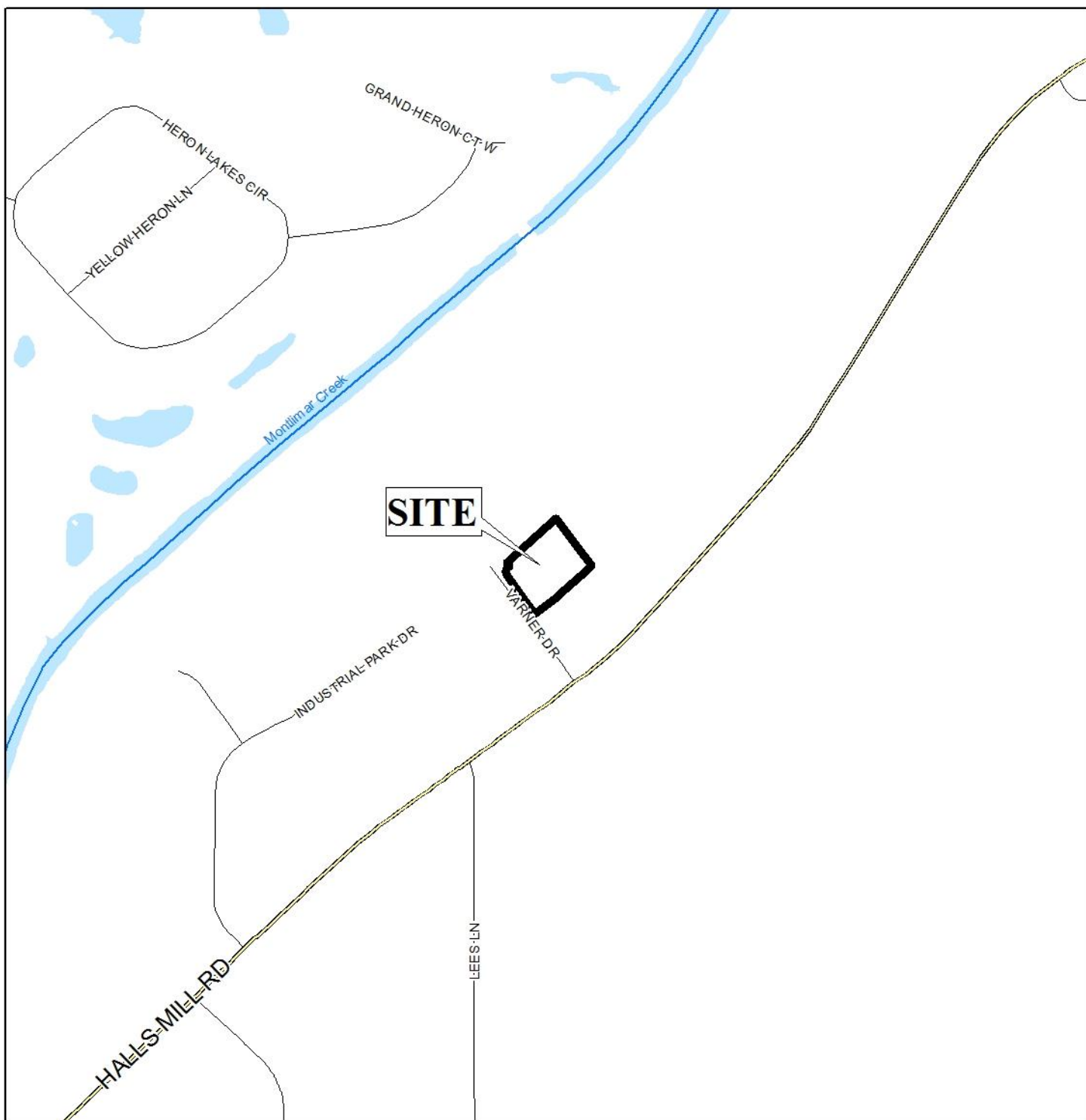
While there is sufficient room North of the existing driveway for a sidewalk approved through the right-of-way permit process; as indicated in the City Engineering comments, there does not appear to be adequate room to construct a sidewalk south of the existing driveway.

Furthermore, while there may be room to construct a sidewalk North of the existing driveway, there is a chain-link fence with barbed wire directed towards the right-of-way that would be parallel to any sidewalk, making a sidewalk undesirable at this time. If the property is substantially redeveloped in the future, sidewalks should be required at that time.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Based upon the preceding, the request to waive construction of a sidewalk along Varner Road is recommended for Approval.

# LOCATOR MAP



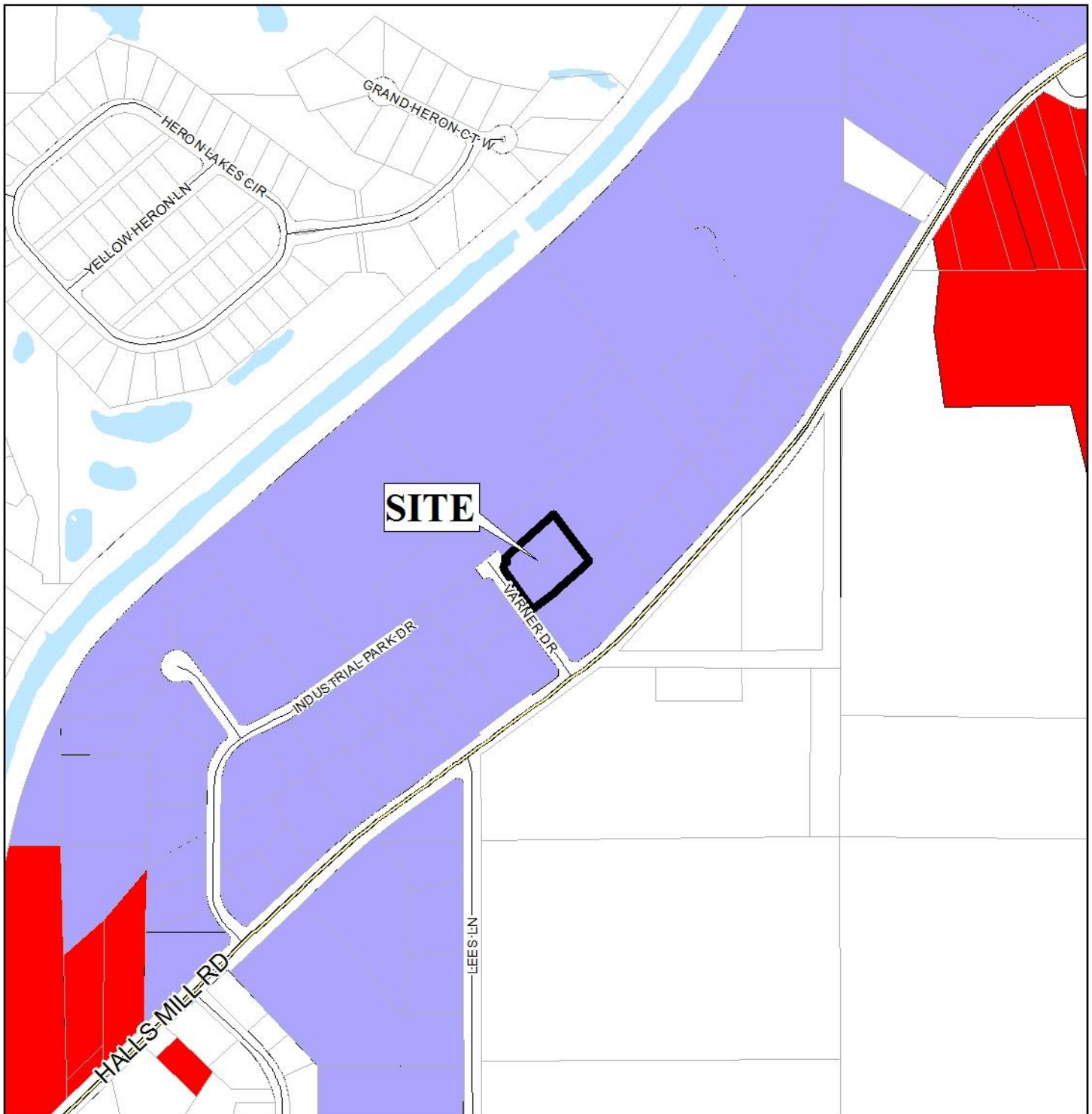
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# LOCATOR ZONING MAP



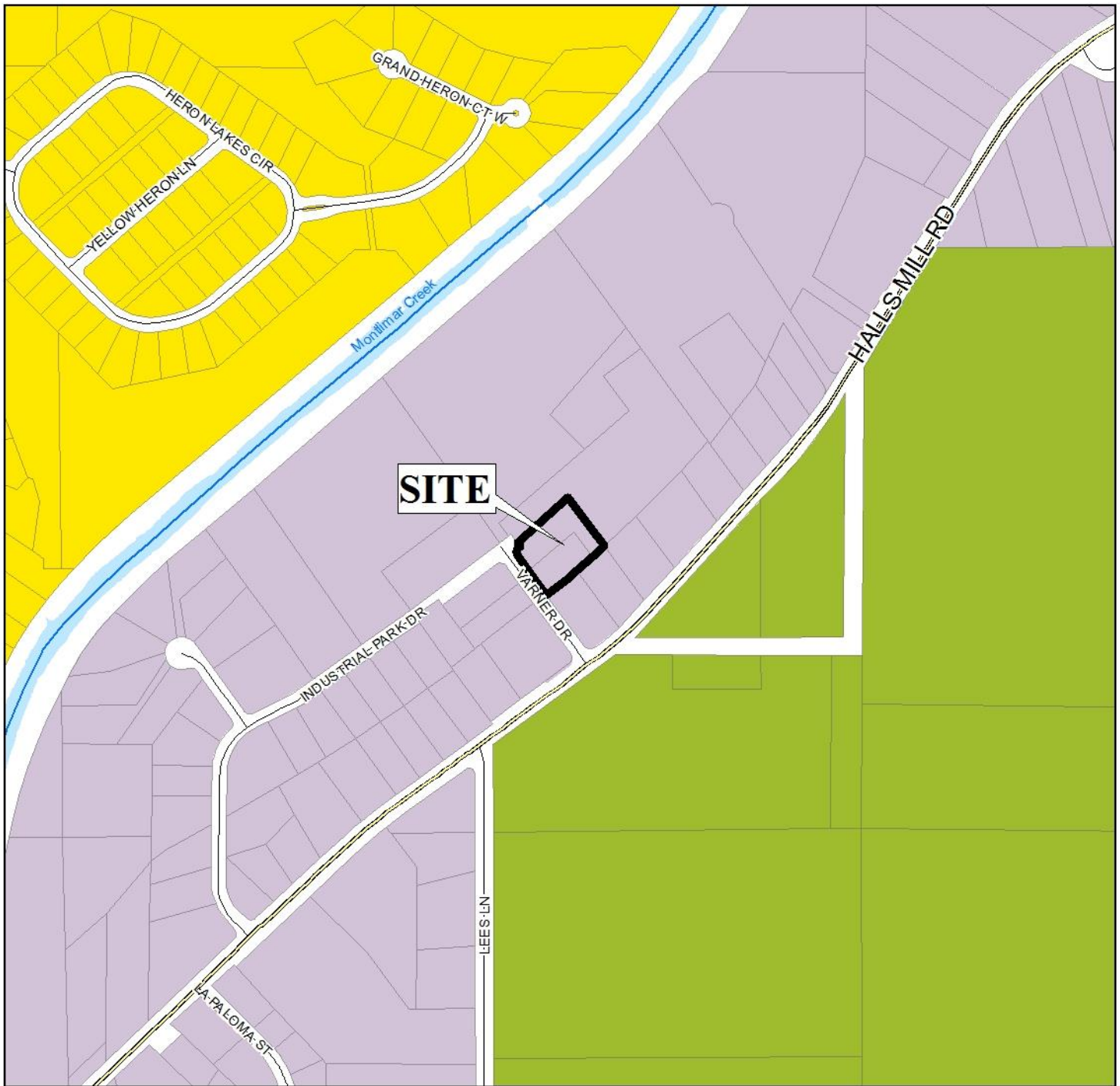
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# FLUM LOCATOR MAP



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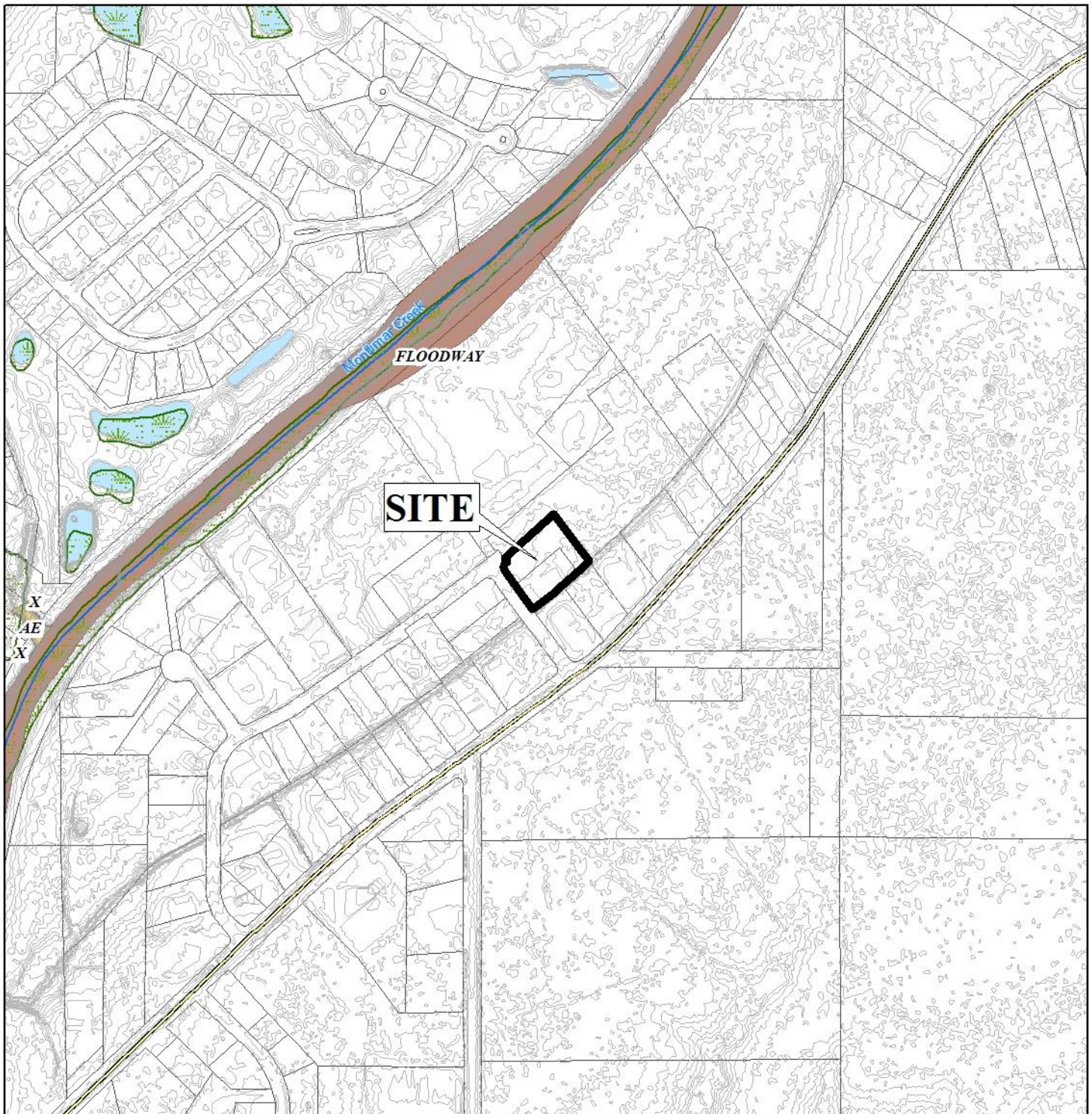
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Low Density Residential	Neighborhood Center - Traditional	Downtown Waterfront	Parks & Open Space
Mixed Density Residential	Neighborhood Center - Suburban	Light Industry	Water Dependent
Downtown	Traditional Corridor	Heavy Industry	
District Center	Mixed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





# ENVIRONMENTAL LOCATOR MAP



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# PLANNING COMMISSION VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by commercial units.

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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



# PLANNING COMMISSION VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL



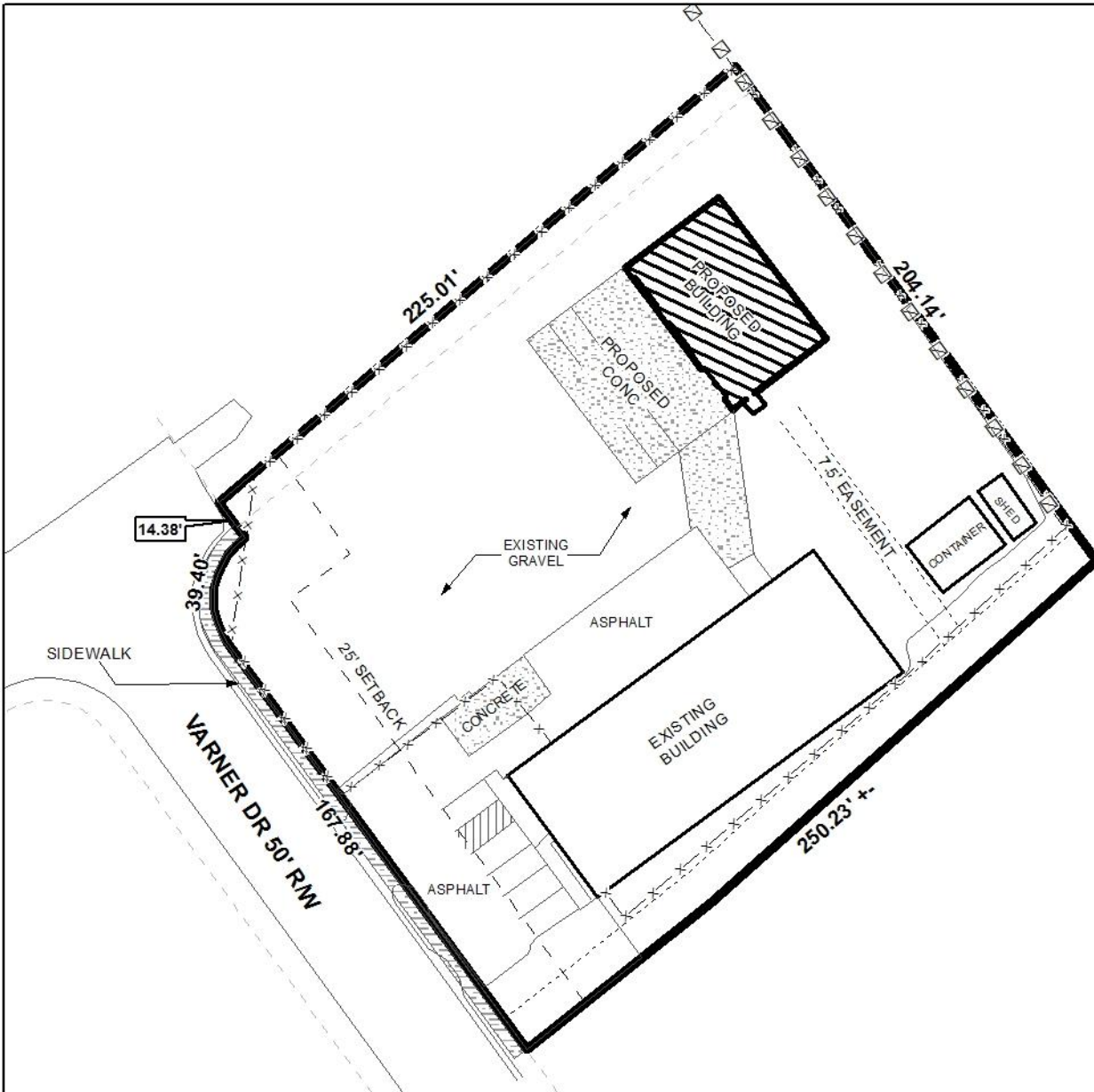
The site is surrounded by commercial units.

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# SITE PLAN



The site plan illustrates the proposed building, existing buildings, setbacks and easements.

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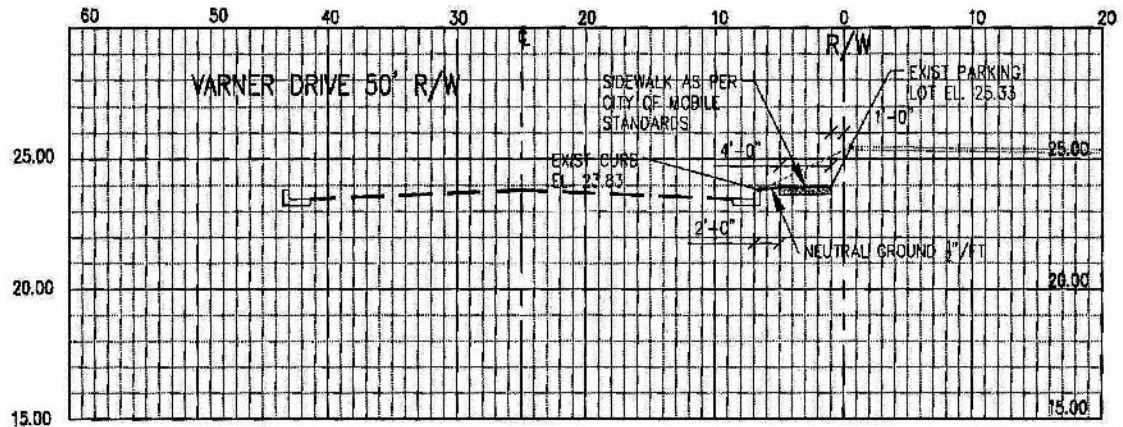
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NTS

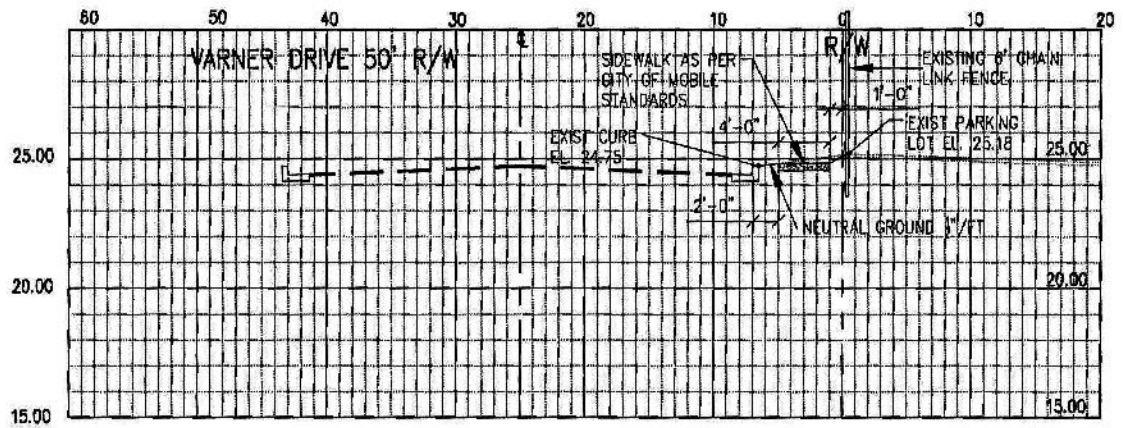
# DETAIL SITE PLAN



STA 0+25  
VARNER DRIVE

CROSS SECTION @ STA 0.25

HORIZ. 1" = 10'  
VERT. 1" = 5'



STA 1+05  
VARNER DRIVE

CROSS SECTION @ STA 1.05

HORIZ. 1" = 10'  
VERT. 1" = 5'

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