

GLPC AGENDA ITEM # 8

OCTOBER 27, 2025

Variance request by Rick Williams

File #: HA-2025-07

On behalf of Williams Investment Company, Rick Williams is requesting certain variances from the Hahira Zoning Ordinance in order to replace a prior existing billboard sign that was severely damaged during Hurricane Helene 13 months ago. The subject property is a cleared and undeveloped tract of land (about 1.80 acres) located at 1024 GA Highway 122 West, which is in the immediate NE quadrant of the Exit 29 interchange of I-75. The property is currently zoned Highway Commercial (C-H) and is also located within the Hahira Gateway Corridor Overlay District. Specific sections of the Zoning Ordinance from which Variances are being requested, include Sections 4-5.11, 8-4, 8-5, 10-3 and 10-6. (specific language from these Sections is depicted on pages 2-3)

The subject sign, in some form, has existed on this property for many years and has been classified as legal nonconforming sign since at least 2009, when the Hahira Gateway Corridor regulations were adopted by the City. This sign is a large freestanding monopole structure measuring about 60' tall, with a sign face area of 1,200-sf (20'x60'). Under current Overlay regulations, a freestanding sign must be located on a site with a building, and is limited to being monument that is no more than 10' tall and 50-sf in sign area for a single-tenant development. Outside the Overlay District, freestanding signs are limited to no more than 400-sf in area. Therefore, the subject sign is very nonconforming in several regards.

Section 8-5 of the Hahira Zoning Ordinance states that "When a nonconforming structure or a structure containing a nonconforming use or nonconforming sign is razed or damaged by fire, flood, wind, or act of God, such structure or sign may be reconstructed as a nonconforming use only if the damage totals less than 50% of the value of the structure." Based on the total destruction of the sign above ground level, and the stated cost to reinstall a sign meeting the same specifications, it certainly appears to be beyond the 50% threshold. Based on the Ordinance language pertaining to the replacement of nonconforming signs and structures, variances to all the above-stated Sections will be required as well, for this particular situation.

In general, nonconformances are intended to be phased-out over time by attrition as the individual situations warrant, rather than be held in a grandfathered condition forever. There are currently several grandfathered billboards, as nonconforming signs by virtue of their size and location, in proximity to I-75 and Exit 29. In this particular case, the most egregious of the nonconformities stem from the Overlay District requirements. However, this particular sign is located in close proximity to the new I-75 northbound onramp and more than 300' from GA Hwy 122m, and not very visible from other areas outside the immediate interchange. The subject property is also currently vacant (with no building structure) and will be hard to develop on its owns – due to GDOT control of its very limited frontage along GA Hwy 122. Therefore in this particular case, since the cause of the sign's destruction was involuntary on the part of the applicant (caused by the Hurricane), staff is OK with the complete reestablishment of the prior billboard sign – as it existed prior to the Hurricane.

Staff Recommendation:

Find consistent with Variance review criteria, and recommend **approval** to the City Council, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Variance approval shall be granted for the reestablishment of the same kind of 2-sided static-display monopole billboard sign, in the same location as previous, with the height being limited to no more than 65' and a sign area of no more than 1,250-sf as a 20'x60' sign face for each facing direction.
- (2) All appropriate State and local sign permits shall be obtained, and the new sign shall be installed within 12 months from the date of Variance approval.
- (3) All remnants and debris from the previous sign shall be removed from the property, as required by the Building Official.

Variance Review Criteria

The following criteria shall be applied in evaluating and deciding any application for a Variance. The Planning Commission may recommend to Hahira City Council in specific cases such Variance from the dimensional standards and development requirements of the Hahira Zoning Ordinance, as will not be contrary to the public interest where, owing to special conditions, a literal enforcement of provisions of the Ordinance will, in an individual case, result in unnecessary hardship, so that the spirit of the Ordinance shall be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done. Variances may be granted by the Hahira City Council in an individual case upon overall finding by the Planning Commission that the following hardships exist:

Recommended findings by staff:

(1) There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular piece of property in question because of its size, shape or topography.	
Staff:	Yes. This particular property has potential difficulties in being developed conventionally and its only current/logical development purpose is to continue facilitating the location of the billboard sign.
(2) The application of all dimensional standards and development requirements to this particular piece of property would render the particular property unusable.	
Staff:	N/A
(3) Such conditions are peculiar to the particular piece of property involved, or, in the alternative, that such conditions are due to the location of existing utilities, etc...	
Staff:	Yes. Yes. The cause of this particular Variance is due to storm damage from Hurricane Helene in September 2024, which effectively destroyed this existing sign..
(4) Relief, if granted, would not cause substantial detriment to the public good or impair the purposes and intent of this ordinance; requests for rezoning, the authority for such rezoning of property being solely reserved for the Hahira City Council.	
Staff:	No. The requested relief would simply continue the previous nonconforming situation

Relevant excerpts from the Hahira Zoning Ordinance

Section 8-4 Nonconforming Signs. Nonconforming signs shall be allowed to continue except as provided in paragraphs 10-3, and 10-6 as follows:

- a. A nonconforming sign shall not be replaced by another nonconforming sign except that the substitution or interchange of poster panels, painted boards, or demountable material on nonconforming signs shall be permitted.
- b. Minor repairs and maintenance of nonconforming signs such as repainting, electrical repairs, and neon tubing repairs shall be permitted. However, no structural repairs or changes in the size or shape of a nonconforming sign shall be permitted except to make the sign comply with the requirements of this ordinance.
- c. New point of business sign related to legally established nonconforming uses may be erected provided they comply with the sign regulations applicable to the use in the most restrictive district in which the use is permitted.

Section 8-5 Reconstruction of Nonconforming Structures. When a nonconforming structure or a structure containing a nonconforming use or nonconforming sign is razed or damaged by fire, flood, wind, or act of God, such structure or sign may be reconstructed as a nonconforming use only if the damage totals less than 50% of the value of the structure. Structures which do not conform to the yard requirements of this ordinance shall also be governed by this provision.

Section 10-3 Locations Prohibited. No sign shall be attached to or painted on any telephone pole, light pole, telegraph pole, or any tree, rock, or other natural object. Except in the C-B-D districts, no signs other than those signs erected by public governmental agencies or signs required by law, shall be placed so as to overhang any portion of public rights-of-way or other public properties.

Section 10-6 **Maximum Area of Signs.** No sign shall be larger in area than 400 square feet.

**** Gateway Corridor Overlay District (Section 4-5)**

Section 4-5.11 **Signs.** The provisions of Section 10 do not apply to properties located within the Gateway Corridor. Instead, the following provisions shall apply:

(d) Permitted Signs.

1. Signs on individual lots (except for convenience stores with fuel pumps).
 - i. Freestanding Signs. Each lot containing a building is allowed freestanding signs that are monument-style only, as follows:
 - a. Number of Signs. Only one freestanding sign shall be permitted per street frontage per lot.
 - b. Height and Size Standards: The following standards shall apply to all signs governed by this paragraph.
 - (1) Maximum sign height: 10 feet.
 - (2) Maximum sign area for single tenant development: 50 square feet.
 - (3) Maximum sign area for multi-tenant development: 75 square feet.

Development Review Comments

Building Plan Review: No comments

Hahira Fire: < No comments received >.

Hahira Utilities: < No comments received >

Hahira Engineering: < No comments received >

Attachments:

Zoning Location Map
 Aerial Location Map
 Local sign permit schematics (4 pages)
 GDOT sign permit info

HA-2025-07 Zoning Location Map

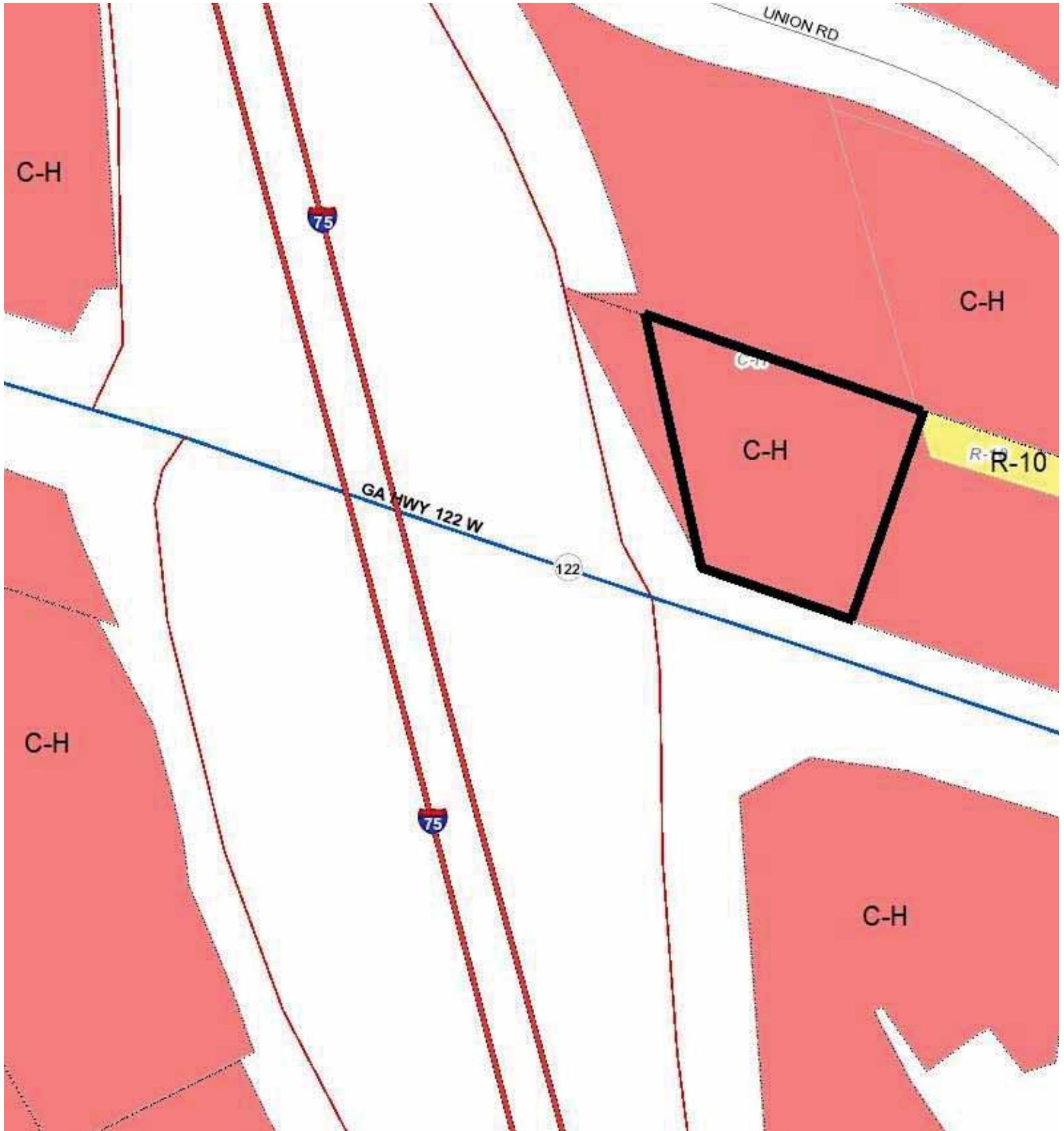


Rick Williams
Variance Request

I-75 and Hwy 122 Road Frontage
Tax Parcel # 0026 038

Current Zoning = C-H

** Map NOT to scale Map Data Source: VALOR GIS September 2025



HA-2025-07 Aerial Location Map

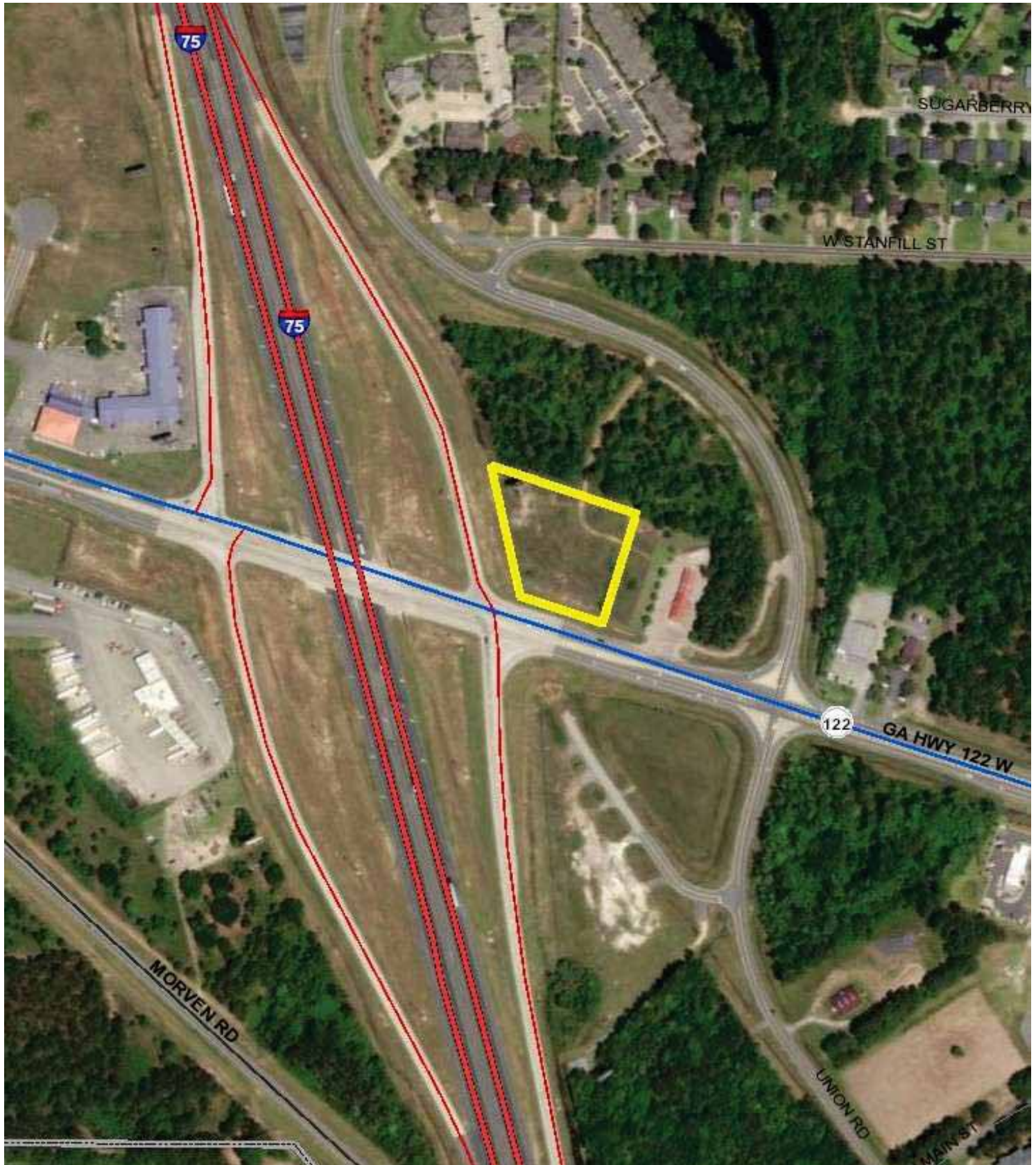


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~ 2023 Aerial Imagery

** Map NOT to scale Map Data Source: VALOR GIS September 2025



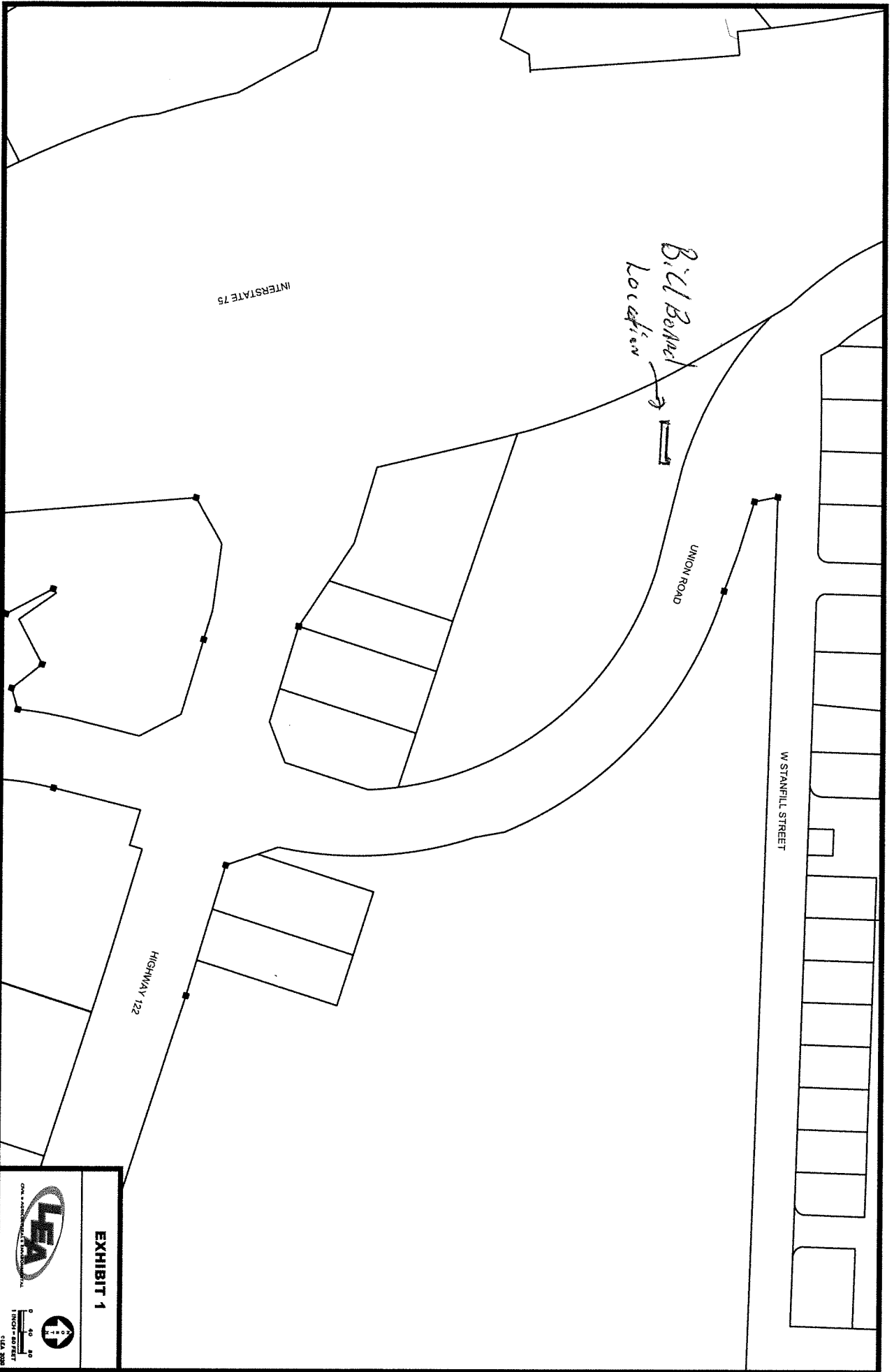


EXHIBIT 1



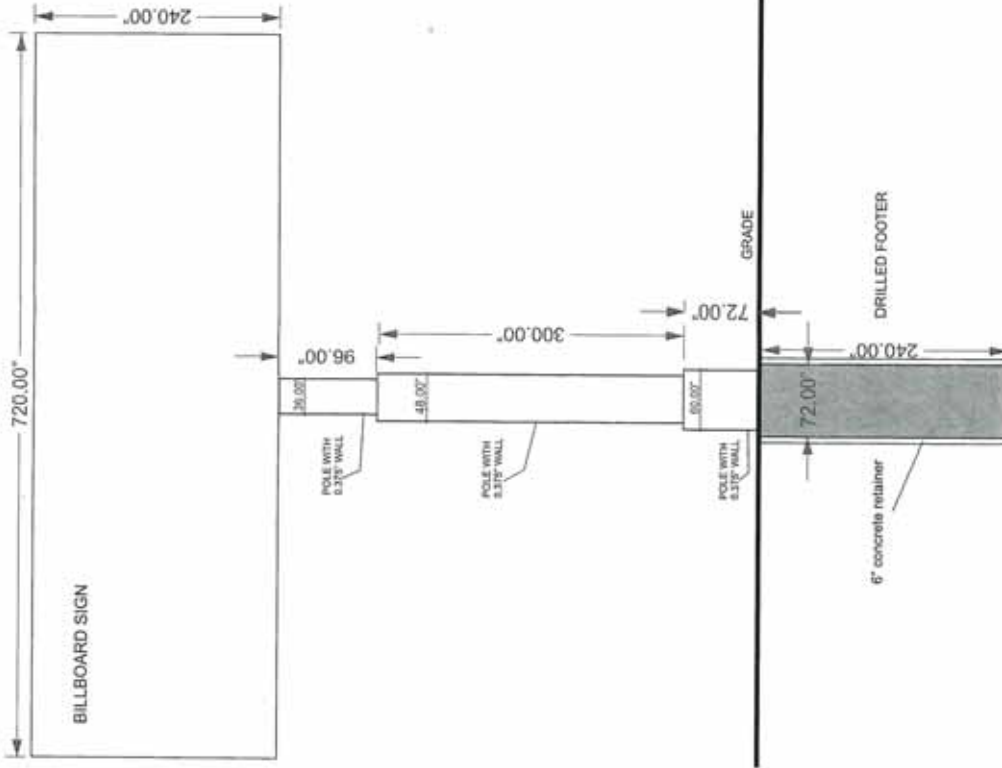
06/01/2024



A billboard for Comfort Inn & Suites. The billboard is divided into two main sections. The left section features a photograph of a multi-story hotel building with a central tower. The right section is a dark rectangle containing a large, stylized white 'C' logo. Below the logo, the text 'Comfort' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font, and 'INN & SUITES' is written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font below it. To the left of the dark rectangle, the text '13 Miles Exit 16' is displayed in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

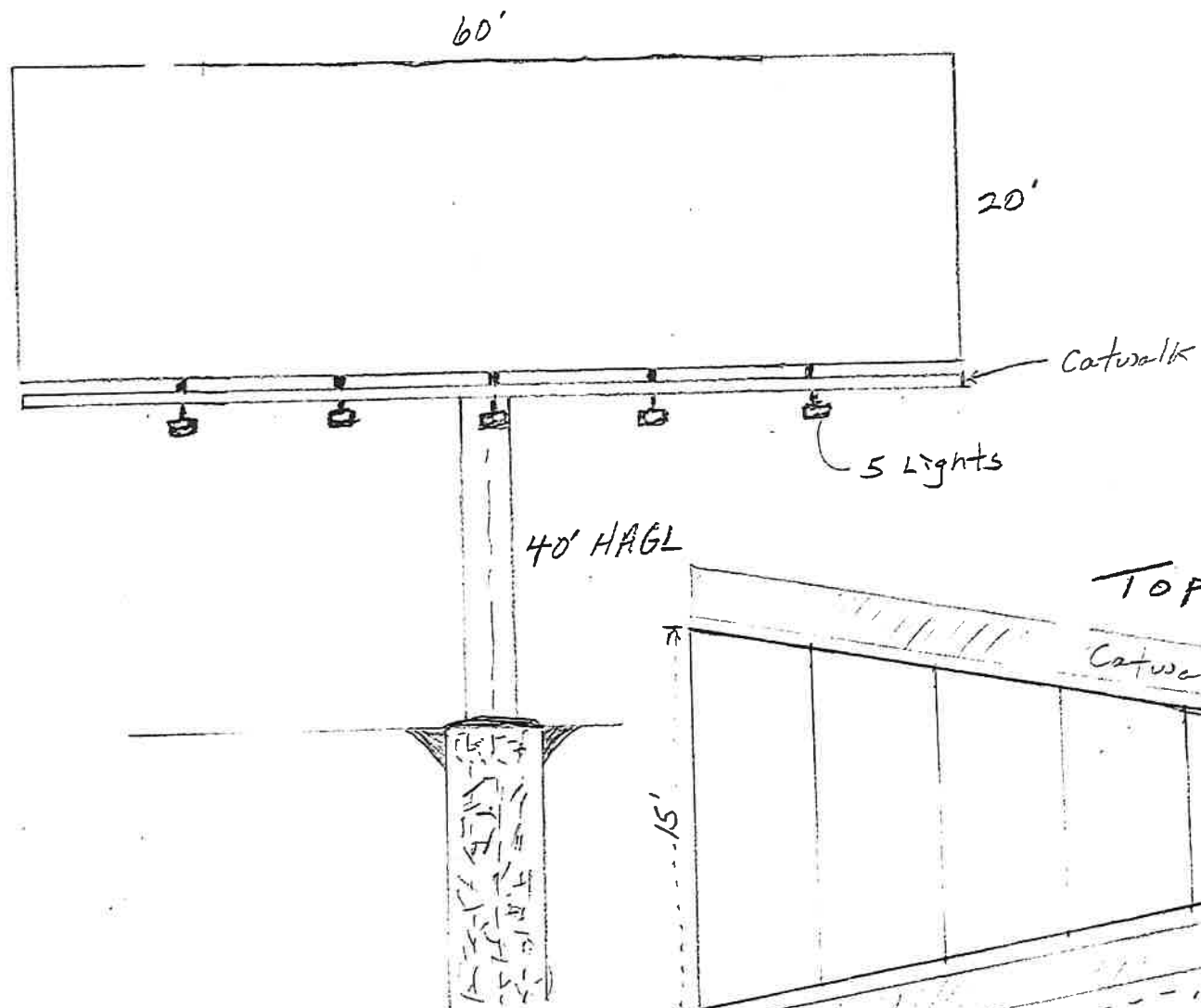
13 Miles Exit 16

Comfort
INN & SUITES

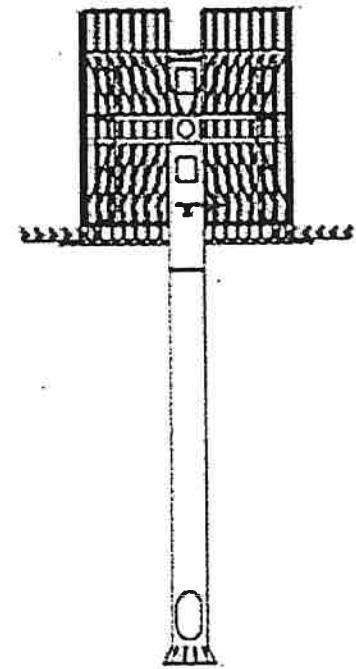


		ARTIST: Gary Dean Page: 1 of 1 © 2020 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED		Electric signs produced by ANS Signs, Inc. conform to UL48 standards and display to Underwriter Laboratories label. 		I have carefully reviewed and hereby accept the drawings as shown. I understand that any changes to the designs made before or after production may alter the contract price. All changes must be in writing and approved by both parties prior to production.	
CLIENT NAME Ryan Duren SALES CONSULTANT	DRAWING NUMBER Billboard18Aug20	PROPOSAL ID	APPROVED BY Ryan Duren SALES CONSULTANT	DATE 18Aug20	DATE		
INSTALL ADDRESS		DESCRIPTION					

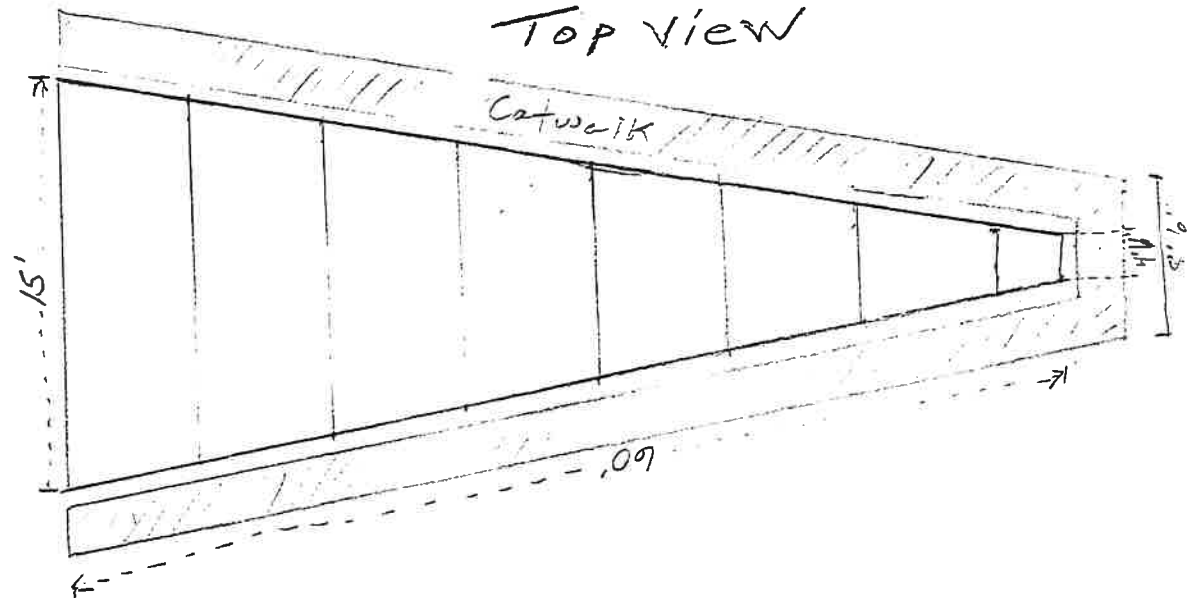
D.O.T. Outdoor Advertising Permit #A2705



Side view



Top view



Home (/CAP/CapPermitPub/Search/?Length=12)

GIS Viewer

The system will be taken down starting Friday 9/12/2025, at 11am EST for Maintenance. It will be unavailable until 12pm EST while updates are being performed. X

General Information

Permit Number: A2705
Permit Date: 10/4/1993
Permit Expiration Date: 4/1/2025
Tag Number: A2705
Owner Name: Williams Investment Co.
Inspection Date: 01/21/2025
County: Lowndes (13185)
Route: 040100
District: D4A1 (Valdosta, Tifton)
City:
Permit Type: Standard Sign
Permit Status: Active
Sign Status: Damaged
GPS Date: 08/15/2013

Inventory Photos



1/21/2025



1/21/2025



1/21/2025



1/17/2024



1/17/2024



1/17/2024

Map Location (<https://pub...expnum=0>)

Sign Description

Sign Construction V-Type
Type:
Illuminated?: ☐
Sign In Place?: ☐
Structure Height (ft): 81
Height Above Roadway (ft): 89
Structure Status: Damaged
Number of Poles: 1
Pole Type: Metal
Description:
Number of Faces: 2

Length (ft)	Height (ft)	Area (sq.ft.)	Viewed Direction	MMS Type
56.00	18.00	1008.00	S	
56.00	18.00	1008.00	N	

Sign Location

County: Lowndes
City: 1/17/2024
Route: 040100
Milepoint: 28.774
Latitude: 30.9927903
Longitude: -83.3867612
GPS Locator: DHB
GPS Date: 08/15/2013
Distance from nearest right-of-way (ft): 299.00
Side of Roadway: E
Nearest Cross Routes:
Incorporated Area?: ☐
District Name: Tifton
Zoned District?: ☐
Distance from commercial activity (ft):
Within 300 ft of Residences?: ☐
Resident Consent Form Included?:



1/17/2024



1/17/2024