

DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals

Department of Planning & Sustainability 178 Sams Street, Decatur, GA 30030

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Planning Department Staff Analysis



Cedric Hudson

Interim Director

Chief Executive Officer

N2. Case No: A-24-1247285

Parcel ID(s): 18 145 16 003

Commission District 04 Super District 07

Applicant: Atlantic Development Group LLC c/o Battle Law, P.C. 3562 Habersham at Northlake Bldg. J Ste. 100 Tucker, GA 30084

Owner:Atlantic Development Group LLC3562 Habersham at Northlake Bldg. J Ste. 100Tucker, GA 30084

- Project Name: 2825 Lawrenceville Convenience Store
- Location: 2825 Larenceville Highway, Tucker, GA 30084

Request: Variance from Section 27-2.24.1 of the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance to reduce front yard setback from 50 feet to 10 feet to facilitate development of a convenience store with fuel pumps within the C-1 (Local Commercial) zoning district.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions

Conditions for Approval:

- 1. The applicant shall provide two pedestrian pathways: one connecting to Lawrenceville Highway and another along the western portion connecting to Montreal Road, both leading to the convenience store entryway.
- 2. Applicant must list the case number, approval date, type of variance and all conditions on any site plans submitted for this property.

STAFF FINDINGS:

Atlantic Development Group is planning to develop a convenience store with fuel pumps on about 0.869 acres of land at 2825 Lawrenceville Highway in Tucker, GA. To make this happen, they're asking for a variance to reduce the front yard setback from 50 feet to 10 feet, as required by the current zoning rules.

1. There is an extraordinary or exceptional physical condition(s) pertaining to the particular piece of property (such as, but not limited to, lot size, lot shape, specimen tree(s), steep slope(s), or preservation of historic characteristics of the property), which was not created by the current owner, previous owner, or applicant; by reason of a clearly demonstrable condition(s), the strict application of the requirements of this chapter would deprive the property owner of rights and privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the same zoning district, as distinguished from a special privilege or convenience sought by the property owner.

The subject property is a small, triangular corner lot, approximately 0.869 acres in size, located at the intersection of Lawrenceville Highway and Montreal Road. Its unique shape and size severely limit the buildable area, making it difficult to develop in compliance with the current zoning requirements. The property is in a C-1 (local commercial) zoning district, which mandates a 60-foot front setback on Lawrenceville Highway and a 50-foot setback on Montreal Road, along with a 20-foot side yard setback. Due to the constraints imposed by these setbacks, the applicant's proposed plan meets the required setbacks on Lawrenceville Highway and the eastern side but struggles to fit within the restricted space on Montreal Road. This results in the need for a 40-foot variance to the front yard setback along Montreal Road. The hardship is not due to any actions by the current or previous owners but stems from the property's unique shape and size. Strict adherence to the zoning requirements would render the property undevelopable, depriving the applicant of the ability to use the land in a manner consistent with other properties in the same district.

2. The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief, and does not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the zoning district in which the subject property is located:

The requested variance is the minimum necessary to provide relief for the development of the property while maintaining functionality. Although it is technically possible to build entirely within the setbacks, doing so would create significant challenges related to traffic flow, pedestrian connectivity, and the accommodation of essential structures like the gasoline canopy. Alternatively, shifting the building towards Lawrenceville Highway and relocating the parking to the Montreal Road side would lead to potential conflicts between pedestrian and vehicle traffic, which could negatively affect both the safety and efficiency of the gas station operations. Staff is also proposing a condition for approval to include two pedestrian pathways on the eastern and western portions of the property for safety. Therefore, the variance sought does not grant a special privilege but instead allows for a practical development solution that aligns with the property's constraints, while minimizing disruption to the surrounding area.

3. The grant of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zoning district in which the subject property is located:

The proposed variance will not be detrimental to public welfare or surrounding properties. The building will be set back 10 feet from the property line, with a 6-foot sidewalk and a 6-foot landscape strip providing buffers to minimize any impact on the surrounding area. Montreal Road, which separates the development from neighboring properties, serves as a buffer from the storage facility and medical office to the south. Additionally, Montreal Road is a dead-end street, serving only a limited number of properties, which reduces the potential for increased traffic. To further enhance the public welfare, the applicant will be conditioned to provide a pedestrian pathway along the eastern side of the property, connecting to the front entry and extending to Montreal Road. This ensures pedestrian access without relying on car entryways, improving safety and connectivity in the area.

4. The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this chapter would cause undue and unnecessary hardship:

The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable zoning requirements would cause undue hardship in this case. As noted in Critera 2, while it may be possible to construct a building within the setbacks, such an arrangement would create significant challenges related to traffic flow, pedestrian access, and the accommodation of necessary structures like the gasoline canopy. Strict adherence to these requirements may limit the development in a functional and economically viable way. The requested variance, therefore, addresses these practical challenges by allowing the necessary adjustments to the building layout while maintaining compliance with other key zoning provisions. Without the variance, the site may be rendered undevelopable, creating a hardship that is not of the applicant's making but is directly related to the constraints imposed by the site's size, shape, and zoning requirements.

5. The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of this Chapter and the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan Text:

The requested variance is consistent with the spirit and purpose of the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance and the purpose of the CRC (Commercial Redevelopment Corridor) character area which aims to revitalize commercial corridors by improving their function and aesthetic appeal while promoting redevelopment. Currently, these corridors often feature strip-style shopping centers with limited pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and high vehicular traffic. By allowing for this variance, the development will help address these issues by enabling a more viable commercial use of the property, with the potential to integrate better pedestrian pathways as part of the design. Staff recommends that the applicant improve pedestrian connectivity, ensuring pathways do not rely on car entryways, which would further align the project with the goals of the CRC.

FINAL STAFF ANALYSIS:

The proposed development of a convenience store with fuel pumps at 2825 Lawrenceville Highway presents unique challenges due to the property's small size and triangular shape, which severely limit buildable area under current zoning setbacks. The requested variance to reduce the front yard setback along Montreal Road from 50 feet to 10 feet is necessary to allow for practical and functional development, ensuring traffic flow, pedestrian safety, and the placement of essential structures such as the gasoline canopy. The variance is the minimum required for relief, does not constitute a special privilege, and aligns with the spirit and purpose of the zoning ordinance by facilitating redevelopment consistent with the goals of the Commercial Redevelopment Corridor character area. Therefore, staff recommends approval with conditions.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with conditions

Conditions for Approval:

 The applicant shall provide two pedestrian pathways: one connecting to Lawrenceville Highway and another along the western portion connecting to Montreal Road, both leading to the convenience store entryway.
Applicant must list the case number, approval date, type of variance and all conditions on any site plans submitted for this property.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY Chief Executive Officer

Michael Thurmond

Interim Director

Cedric Hudson

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC HEARING (VARIANCES, SPECIAL **EXCEPTIONS, APPEALS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS)**

Applicant and/or Authorized Representative:		
Mailing Address:		
City/State/Zip Code:		
Email:		
Telephone Home:	Business:	
OWNER	R OF RECORD OF SUBJECT PROPE	RTY
Owner:		
Address (Mailing):		
Email:	Telephone Home:	Business:
ADDRE	SS/LOCATION OF SUBJECT PROPE	RTY
Address:	City:	State: Zip:
District(s): Land L	.ot(s): Block:	Parcel:
Zoning Classification:	Commission District & Su	per District:
CHECK TYPE OF HEARING REQUEST	ED:	
VARIANCE (From Development	Standards causing undue hardship upo	on owners of property.)
SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS (To red	uce or waive off-street parking or loading	ng space requirements.)
OFFICIAL APPEAL OF ADMINIS	TRATIVE DECISIONS.	

*PLEASE REVIEW THE FILING GUIDELINES ON PAGE 4. FAILURE TO FOLLOW **GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN SCHEDULING DELAYS.***

Email plansustain@dekalbcountyga.gov with any questions.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

AUTHORIZATION TO REPRESENT THE PROPERTY OWNER

I hereby authorize the staff and members of the Zoning Board of Appeals to inspect the premises of the Subject Property.

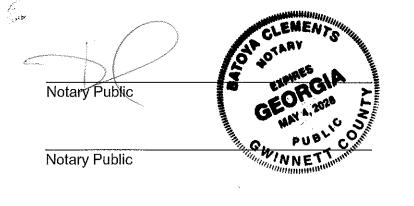
I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property and that I authorize the applicant/agent to apply for a hearing to the ZoningBoard of Appeals for the requests as shown in this application.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Group LLC Atlantic Development (I)/ (WE): (Name of Owners)

being (owner/owners) of the property described below or attached hereby delegate authority to the above signed agent/applicant.



Owner Signature

Owner Signature

Notary Public

Owner Signature



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

AUTHORIZATION OF THE PROPERTY OWNER

I hereby authorize the staff and members of the Zoning Board of Appeals to inspect the premises of the Subject Property.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property subject to the application.

17/2024 DATE: 101

Applicant Signature:

DATE: _____

Applicant Signature:



STATEMENT OF INTENT

and

Other Material Required by DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance For A Variance to Reduce the Front Yard Setback from Fifty (50) Feet to Ten (10) Feet

of

Atlantic Development Group Limited Liability Company c/o Battle Law, P.C.

for

+/-0.869 Acres of Land Being 2825 Lawrenceville Highway, Tucker, GA 30084 DeKalb County, Georgia, and Parcel Nos. 18 145 16 003

Submitted for Applicant by:

Michèle L. Battle, Esq. Battle Law, P.C. Habersham at Northlake, Building J, Suite 100 Tucker, Georgia 300384 (404) 601-7616 Phone (404) 745-0045 Facsimile <u>mlb@battlelawpc.com</u>



Atlantic Development Group Limited Liability Company (the "Applicant") is seeking to develop on +/- 0.869 acres of land being Tax Parcel No. 18 145 16 003 having frontage on 2825 Lawrenceville Highway, Tucker, GA 30084 (the "Subject Property") with a convenience store with fuel pumps. The Applicant is seeking a variance of the Subject Property from Section 2.24.1 – Dimensional Requirements to reduce the front yard setback from fifty (50) feet to ten (10) feet (See Table 2.2 Non-Residential Zoning Districts Dimensional Requirements).

This document serves as a statement of intent analysis of the criteria under the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance and contains notice of constitutional allegations as a reservation of the Applicant's rights.

II. DEKALB COUNTY VARIANCE CRITERIA

1. There is an extraordinary or exceptional physical condition(s) pertaining to the particular piece of property, which was not created by the owner, previous owner, or Applicant; by reason of a clearly demonstratable condition(s), the strict application of the requirements of this chapter would deprive the property owner of rights and privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the same zoning district, as distinguished from a special privilege or convenience sought by the property owner.

The peculiar shape and small size of the Subject Property combine with the C-1 development requirements to create a developable envelope that is entirely too small for any commercial property owner to use. The Subject Property is a 0.869-acre, triangular-shaped corner lot that fronts both Lawrenceville Highway (arterial) and Montreal Road (not labeled). The Subject Property has a CRC future land use designation, which (coupled with the C-1 zoning district) requires a sixty (60) foot front yard setback from front thoroughfares and arterials. The Zoning Ordinance requires a fifty (50) foot front yard setback but a side yard setback on the eastern side of the property. The Zoning Ordinance calls for twenty (20) feet.

The Applicant has submitted a plan that complies with the sixty (60) foot front yard setback adjacent to Lawrenceville Highway and the side yard setback on the eastern side of the Subject Property. However, it is not possible to configure the site in an economically viable way to satisfy all three required setbacks. The result in this case is that the proposed convenience store encroaches into the front yard setback adjacent to Montreal Road forty (40) feet, thus requiring the need for relief.

It is important to note that no owner has created the scenario at play on the Subject Property. Rather, the hardship stems directly from the size and shape of the Subject Property. Furthermore, strict application of the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance would deprive the Applicant of any use due to the tiny developable envelope remaining after the setback requirements are applied to the Subject Property.



2. The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief and does not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the zoning district in which the subject property is located.

The requested variance does not go beyond the minimum necessary to afford relief and does not constitute a grant of special privilege. The variance requested reduces one setback to allow for the proposed building and reduces the setback to the very edge of the building.

3. The grant of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zoning district in which the subject property is located.

The grant of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the zoning district in which the Subject Property is located. The variance will allow for the building to be built ten feet from the property line where a six (6) foot sidewalk is proposed. On the other side of the sidewalk, a six (6) foot landscape strip is also proposed, and then Montreal Road intervenes between this development and the existing storage facility and medical office to the south. Montreal Road provides access to only the storage facility, medical office, and the neighboring hotel (within the City of Tucker), as Montreal Road dead ends when it reaches Highway 285.

4. The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this chapter would cause undue and unnecessary hardship.

The literal interpretation and strict application of the applicable provisions or requirements of this chapter would prevent the Applicant or any future owner from developing the Subject Property in an economically viable way. As stated above, no property owner has created this scenario. Rather, the size and shape of the Subject Property combine with the zoning requirements to create a developable envelope that is entirely too small to be usable. Therefore, the strict application of the requirements of this chapter would unnecessarily prevent the use of the Subject Property and cause an undue hardship.

5. The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of this chapter and the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan text.

The requested variance would be consistent with the spirit and purpose of this chapter and the DeKalb County Comprehensive Plan text because it would allow for the Subject Property to be used in accordance with the applicable C-1 zoning category without the need to change the zoning or future land use category.



III. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant hereby requests that the application for a variance to reduce the front yard setback from fifty (50) feet to ten (10) feet be approved. The Applicant welcomes any questions and feedback from the planning staff.

IV. NOTICE OF CONSTITUTIONAL ALLEGATIONS AND PRESERVATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

The portions of the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance, facially and as applied to the Subject Property, which restrict or classify or may restrict or classify the Subject Property so as to prohibit its development as proposed by the Applicant are or would be unconstitutional in that they would destroy the Applicant's property rights without first paying fair, adequate and just compensation for such rights, in violation of the Fifth Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and Article I, Section I, Paragraph I of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983, Article I, Section III, Paragraph I of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983, and would be in violation of the Commerce Clause, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States.

The application of the DeKalb County Zoning Ordinance to the Subject Property which restricts its use to any classification other than that proposed by the Applicant is unconstitutional, illegal, null and void, constituting a taking of Applicant's Property in violation of the Just Compensation Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, Article I, Section I, Paragraph I, and Article I, Section III, Paragraph I of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983, and the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States denying the Applicant an economically viable use of its land while not substantially advancing legitimate state interests.

A denial of this Application would constitute an arbitrary irrational abuse of discretion and unreasonable use of the zoning power because they bear no substantial relationship to the public health, safety, morality or general welfare of the public and substantially harm the Applicant in violation of the due process and equal protection rights guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, and Article I, Section I, Paragraph I and Article I, Section III, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution of the State of Georgia.

A refusal by the DeKalb County Board of Zoning Appeals to grant the variance for the Subject Property as requested by the Applicant would be unconstitutional and discriminate in an arbitrary, capricious and unreasonable manner between the Applicant and owners of similarly situated property in violation of Article I, Section I, Paragraph II of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983 and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Any Variance of the Property subject to conditions which are different from the conditions requested by the Applicant, to the extent such different conditions would have the effect of further restricting Applicant's utilization of the property, would also constitute an arbitrary,



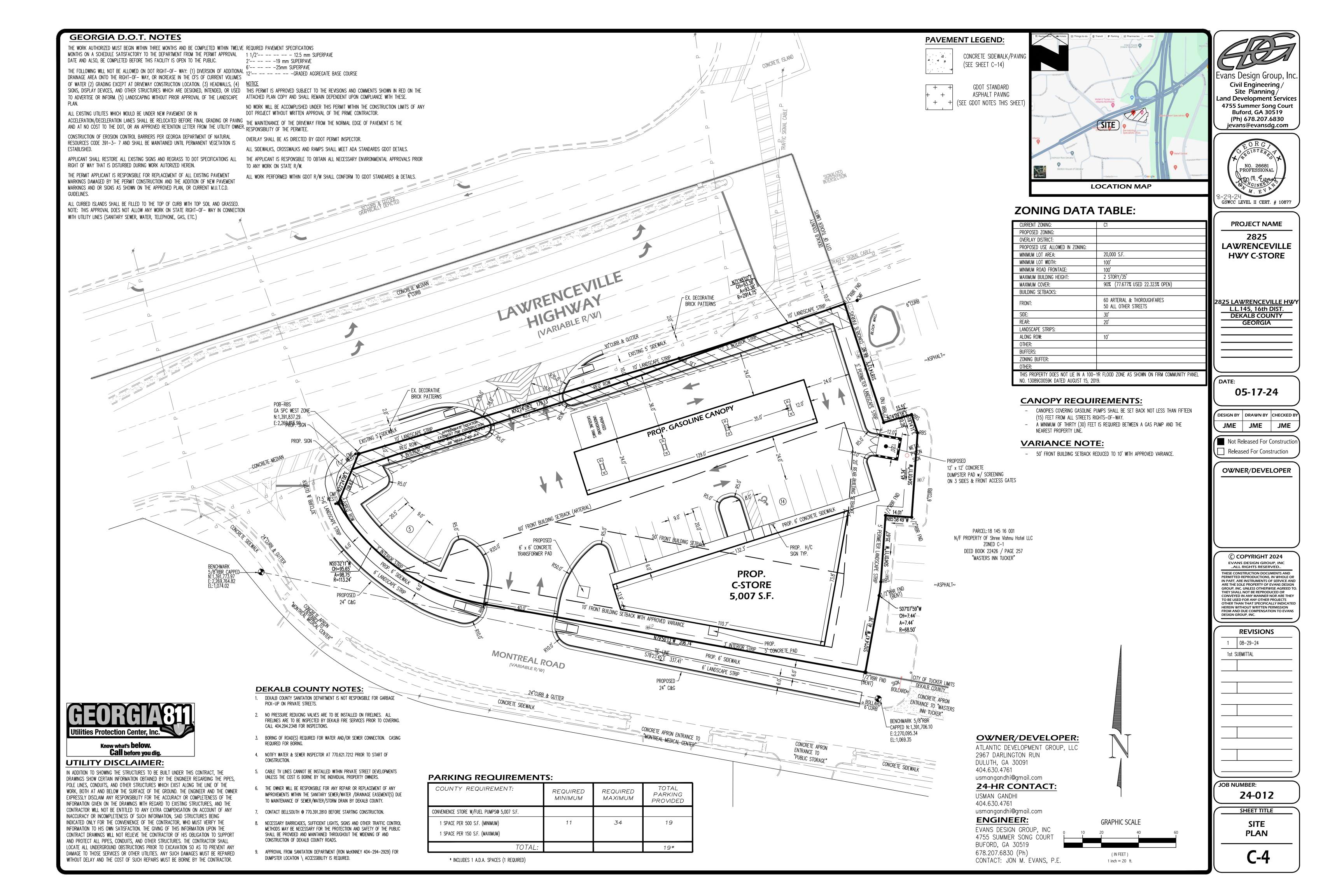
capricious and discriminatory act in zoning the Subject Property to an unconstitutional classification and would likewise violate each of the provisions of the State and Federal Constitutions set forth hereinabove.

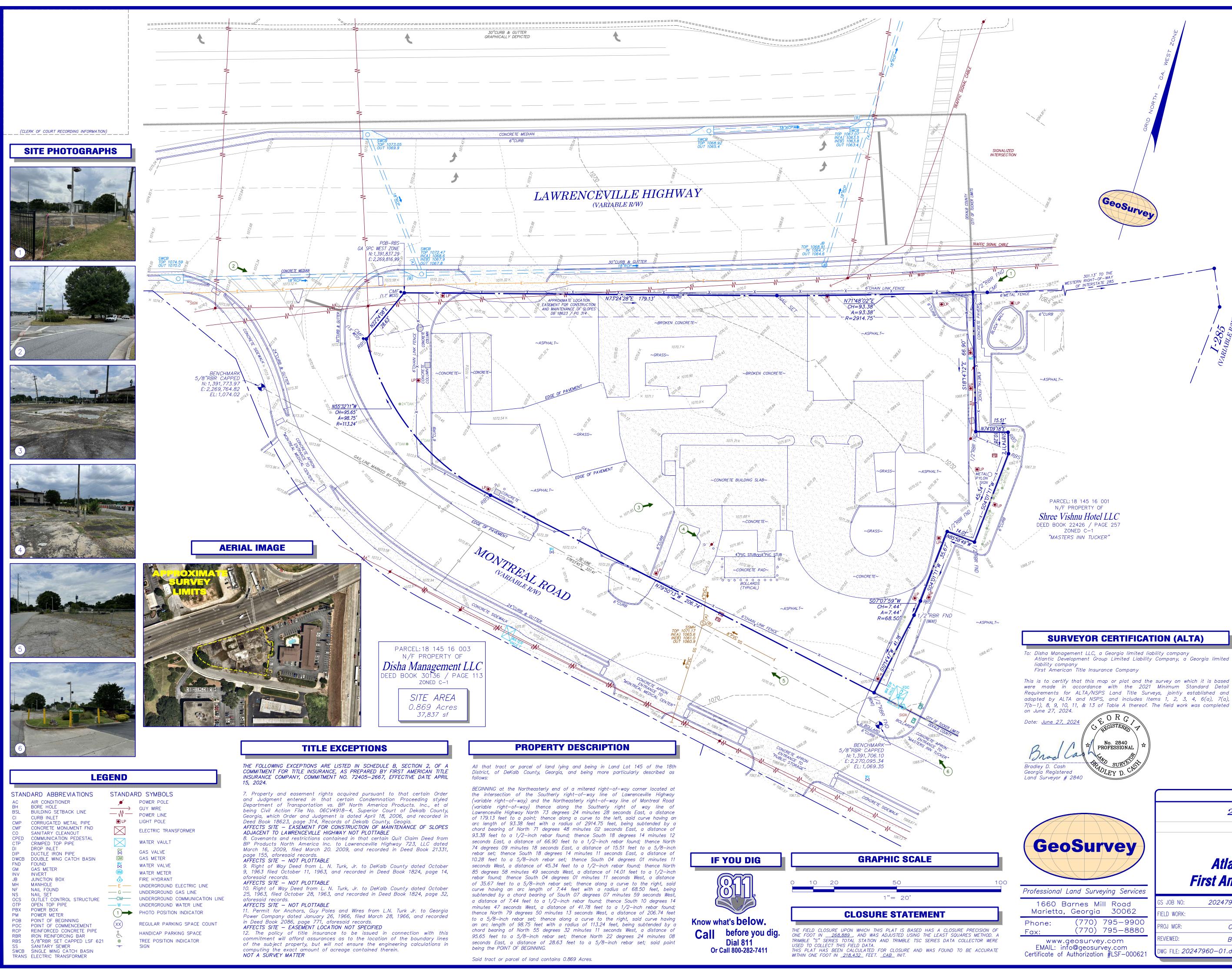
A refusal to allow the variance in question would be unjustified from a fact-based standpoint and instead would result only from constituent opposition, which would be an unlawful delegation of authority in violation of Article IX, Section II, Paragraph IV of the Georgia Constitution.

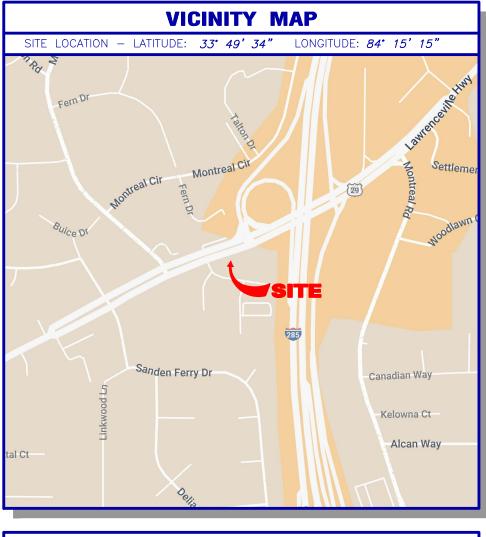
A refusal to allow the variance in question would be invalid inasmuch as it would be denied pursuant to an ordinance which is not in compliance with the Zoning Procedures Law, O.C.G.A Section 36-66/1 et seq., due to the manner in which the Ordinance as a whole and its map(s) have been adopted.

The existing land use designation and/or zoning classification on the Subject Property is unconstitutional as it applies to the Subject Property. This notice is being given to comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. Section 36-11-1 to afford the County an opportunity to revise the Property to a constitutional classification. If action is not taken by the County to rectify this unconstitutional land use designation and/or zoning classification within a reasonable time, the Applicant is hereby placing the County on notice that it may elect to file a claim in the Superior Court of DeKalb County demanding just and adequate compensation under Georgia law for the taking of the Subject Property, diminution of value of the Subject Property, attorney's fees and other damages arising out of the unlawful deprivation of the Applicant's property rights.

> Michele L. Battle, Esq. Attorney for the Applicant







GENERAL NOTES

THIS SURVEY HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE PERSON OR ENTITIES NAMED HEREON. NO EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON IS TO BE EXTENDED TO ANY PERSONS OR ENTITIES OTHER THAN THOSE SHOWN HEREON.

REVISIONS LISTED ON THIS SURVEY APPLY ONLY TO THE SPECIFIC CHANGES REFERENCED, AND DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN UPDATE OF OTHER DATA ON THIS SURVEY. THE "SURVEY DATE" SHOWN HEREON IS THE APPLICABLE DATE AS RELATED TO PROVISIONS OF STATUTES OF LIMITATION UNLESS SPECIFICALLY NOTED OTHERWISE.

THIS PROPERTY IS NOT LOCATED IN A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA BASED ON THE FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP FOR THIS AREA. THE MAP NUMBER FOR THIS AREA IS XX, AND THE DATE OF SAID MAP IS XX. THIS DETERMINATION WAS MADE BY GRAPHICALLY DETERMINING THE POSITION OF THIS SITE ON SAID FIRM MAPS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

PLEASE NOTE: TREES 6-INCH DBH (DIAMETER AT BREAST HEIGHT) AND LARGER WERE LOCATED FOR THIS SURVEY. PLEASE NOTE: ABOVE GROUND UTILITIES ARE SHOWN HEREON.

THE DATUM FOR THIS SITE WAS ESTABLISHED UTILIZING GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEMS, AND BASED ON POSITIONAL VALUES FOR THE VIRTUAL REFERENCE STATION NETWORK DEVELOPED BY eGPS SOLUTIONS. THE HORIZONTAL REFERENCE FRAME IS NORTH AMERICAN DATUM OF 1983(2011)—STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM OF GEORGIA—WEST ZONE. THE VERTICAL REFERENCE FRAME IS NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988. ANY DIRECTIONS OR DIMENSIONS SHOWN ARE A RECTANGULAR, GROUND LEVEL PROJECTION OF THE STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM.

NO ZONING REPORT OR ZONING LETTER WAS PROVIDED TO THE SURVEYOR. THE SITE IS ZONED "C-1" (LOCAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) AS SHOWN ON THE ZONING MAP OF DEKALB COUNTY THE MINIMUM YARD SETBACKS ARE

FRONT THOROUGHFARES AND ARTERIALS - 60 FEET; FRONT - ALL OTHER STREET - 50 FEET; SIDE – INTERIOR LOT – 20 FEET,

NO UNDERGROUND UTILITIES WERE MARKED OR LOCATED.

SIDE – CORNER LOT ON PUBLIC STREETS – 50 FEET; REAR - 30 FEE ZONING AND SETBACKS SHOULD BE CONFIRMED AND VERIFIED BY PLANNING AND

ZONING PRIOR TO DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES SHOWN ON THIS SURVEY THAT ARE NOT ACTUAL BOUNDARIES OF THE SUBJECT TRACT(S) ARE DEPICTED GRAPHICALLY AND ARE

SHOWN APPROXIMATELY FOR INFÓRMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. SAID RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES SHOULD NOT BE UTILIZED FOR DESIGN PURPOSES SURVEY REFERENCES

1. ALTA/ACSM SURVEY FOR BP PRODUCTS NORTH AMERICA INC., PREPARED BY HARKLEROAD AND ASSOCIATES, DATED DECEMBER 7, 2005.

This is to certify that this map or plat and the survey on which it is based were made in accordance with the 2021 Minimum Standard Detail Requirements for ALTA/NSPS Land Title Surveys, jointly established and adopted by ALTA and NSPS, and includes Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6(a), 7(a),

Professional	Land Surve	eying Services
	arnes M Georgia	ill Road 30062
Phone: Fax:		795-9900 795-8880
www.e EMAIL: in	geosurve fo@geosur	y.com vey.com

SURVEYOR CERTIFICATION (GA)

This plat is a retracement of an existing parcel or parcels of land and does not subdivide or create a new parcel or make any changes to any real property boundaries. The recording information of the documents, maps, plats, or other instruments which created the parcel or parcels are stated hereon. RECORDATION OF THIS PLAT DOES NOT MPLY APPROVAL OF ANY LOCAL JURISDICTION, AVAILABILITY O PERMITS, COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL REGULATIONS OR REQUIREMENTS, OR SUITABILITY FOR ANY USE OR PURPOSE OF THE LAND. Furthermore, the undersigned land surveyor certifies that this plat complies with the minimum technical standards for property surveys in Georgia as set forth in the rules and regulations of the Georgia Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors and as set forth in O.C.G.A. Section 15-6-67.

Bradley D. Cash Georgia Registered Land Surveyor # 2840

ALTA/NSPS LAND TITLE SURVEY

2825 Lawrenceville Highway

FOR

Disha Management LLC Atlantic Development Group LLC First American Title Insurance Company

GS JOB NO:	20247960	DRAWING SCALE:		1 "=	20'	SURVEY DATE:			06–27–2024		
FIELD WORK:	ER	CITY:	TUCKER			No.	RE Date	VISIONS Descri		GENERAL I	VOTES)
PROJ MGR:	CAB	COUNTY:	FULTON	STATE:	GA				I		
REVIEWED:	BDC	LAND LOT:	: 145								
DWG FILE: 2024	7960–01.dwg	DISTRICT:	18TH								