

**HALL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
STAFF REPORT**

Applicant Randy Matheny

Request **Variance to Section 8.6** | to sign standards

Proposed Use Monument sign

Size 2.97± acres

Zoning Light Industrial (I-1)

Location **4595 Winder Highway** | Tax Parcel 15037A000031

Commission District One

Commission Date August 13, 2026

Staff Recommendation **Approval**, as hardship exists pursuant to the criteria of 11.1.1.D.11

Record Number HVAR26-0026

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the applicant's request with the following conditions:

1. Signage shall be permitted in accordance with the submitted site plan dated May 15, 2026 and sign renderings received July 3, 2026, modified as necessary for compliance with conditions herein and development standards enforced at the time of site plan approval.
2. All existing freestanding signs shall be removed prior to the issuance of a building permit for the proposed monument sign.

Summary Analysis

The applicant is requesting a variance from Section 8.6 to allow for one monument sign to be setback 1 foot from the front property line along Winder Highway where 15 feet is required. The subject property is approximately 2.97± acres in size and zoned Light Industrial (I-1).

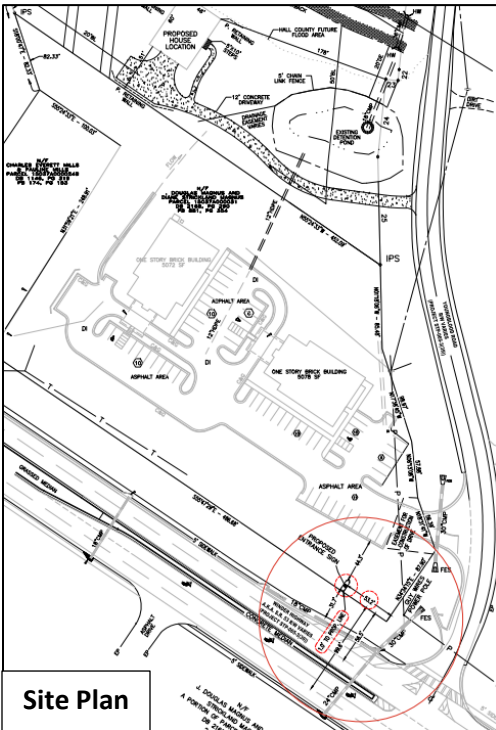
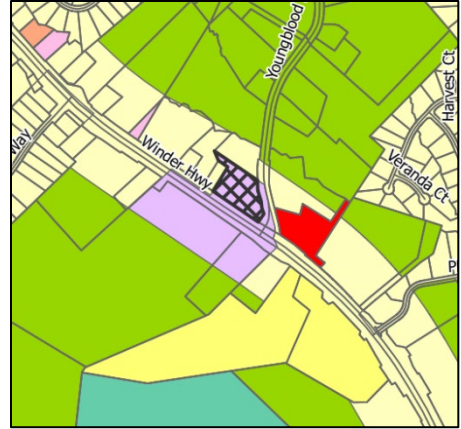
The property is currently developed with two one-story brick buildings, one measuring 5,072 square feet and the other 5,078 square feet, with a total of 62 parking spaces provided on site.

The surrounding properties are zoned and developed as outlined below:

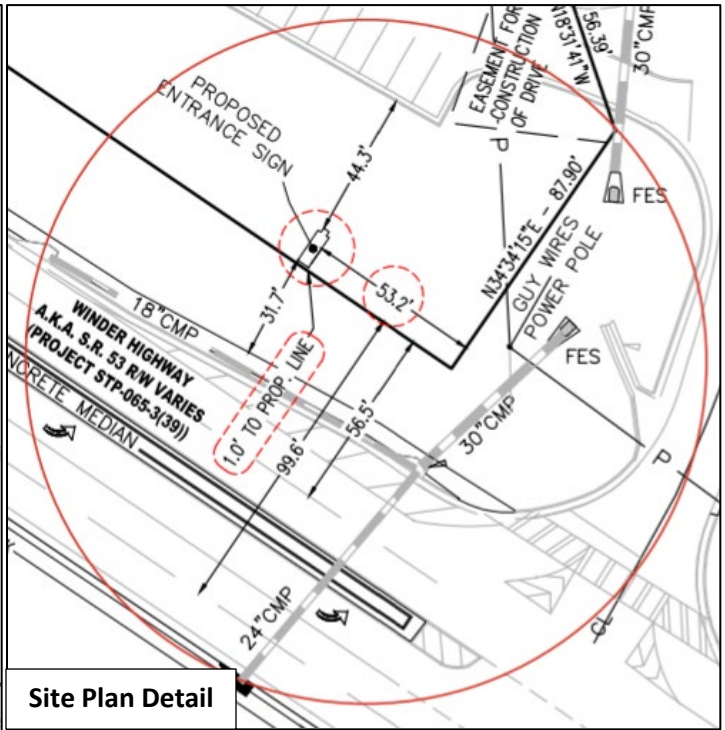
North: Residential 1 (R-1): single-family residence

- East: Residential 1 (R-1) & Highway Business (H-B): single-family residences
 South: Light Industrial (I-1): single-family residences
 West: Residential 1 (R-1) & Light Industrial (I-1): single-family residences

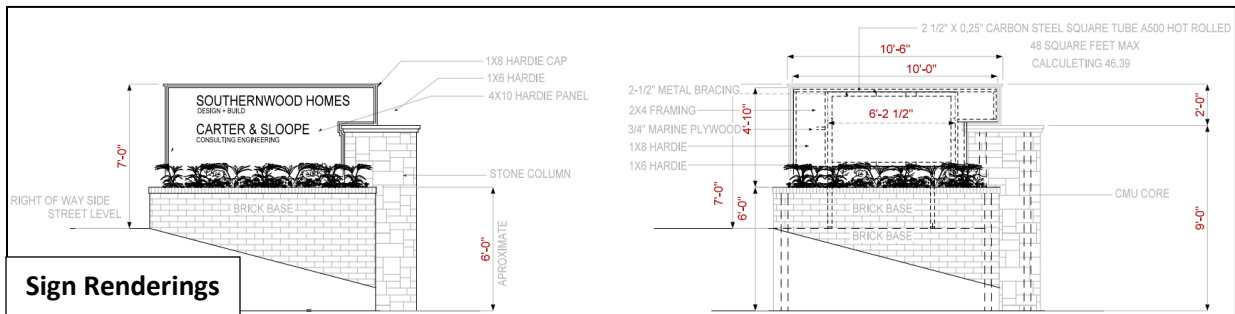
Per the Statement of Hardship, the applicant is requesting a reduced front setback of 1-foot, where 15 feet is required, to install a primary monument sign for the existing commercial center. Due to the site's topography, the proposed sign location is positioned on a downward slope from Winder Highway, which would significantly limit visibility if the sign were placed at the full setback. Allowing a 1-foot setback is necessary to provide adequate visibility for motorists and clear identification of the center.



Site Plan



Site Plan Detail



Sign Renderings

The submitted elevations reflect the site's physical layout. One unpermitted sign is located within the Winder Highway right-of-way which must be removed. The proposed monument sign location meets vision setback requirements, and the proposed sign elevation meets sign area and height standards.



Looking toward parking lot from Winder Hwy



Winder Hwy frontage



Looking toward Winder Hwy from parking lot



Corner of Winder Hwy & Youngblood Rd

One (1) **variance** related to freestanding sign standards will be required if the site plan as presented is approved.

- **Section 8.6.12.B.4 - Monument Signs** – Signs must be at least 15 feet from all property lines.
 - The applicant proposes a monument sign 1 foot from the property line along Winder Highway.

Zoning Analysis

The Commission may grant variances in individual cases of unnecessary hardship upon a finding of the board that:

1. There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the lot in question because of its size, shape, or topography (the hardship must relate to the physical character of the lot and not to a personal or economic hardship); **The subject property has extraordinary conditions related to its topography. As noted in the Statement of Hardship, the elevation and slope of the lot in relation to Winder Highway create visibility challenges for a freestanding sign. This hardship stems from the physical characteristics of the property, not from any personal or economic circumstance.**
2. The application of the requirements of this UDC to this particular piece of property would create an unusual hardship; **The application of the requirements of the UDC would limit the visibility of the signage due to the topography and the site's physical layout.**
3. Such conditions are peculiar to the particular piece of property involved and are not common to other properties in the neighborhood; **The conditions are not unique to this property. The subject property has a distinct physical condition, specifically, its downward slope from the frontage, that limits the feasible placement and visibility of the freestanding sign when applying the standard setback.**
4. Such conditions are not the result of any actions of the property owner; **The size, shape, and topography of the lot are not the result of any actions of the property owner and limit the visibility of a freestanding sign if required setbacks are applied.**
5. Relief, if granted, would not cause substantial detriment to the public good or impair the purposes and intent of this UDC; provided, however, that no variance may be granted for a use of land or building or structure that is prohibited by this UDC or for a Conditional Use Permit which has been denied by the Planning Commission; **Relief, if granted, will not impair the purposes and intent of the Unified Development Code of Hall County.**

Development Support and Constraints

Hall County Environmental Health

In a memorandum dated July 7, 2026, the Hall County Environmental Health Department stated, "No comment."

Georgia Department of Transportation

In an email dated July 2, 2026, Christopher Hash, P.E. D1 Traffic Operations Supervisor, stated, "On system. No impacts expected. No coordination required. There shall be no encroachment into State Right-of-Way."

Hall County Public Works and Utilities

In a memorandum dated July 15, 2026, Jorge Gomez, Director of Public Works and Utilities, provided the following comments:

Engineering:

No comment.

Traffic:

There are no concerns with traffic for this sign variance.

Utilities:

No comment. Property is connected to Hall County sewer.

Hall County Fire Marshal

In a memorandum dated July 10, 2026, the Hall County Fire Marshal's Office stated, "The Hall County Fire Marshal's Office has no comments as proposed."

Hall County Building Inspections

In a memorandum dated July 15, 2026, Kristie Turner, Director of Development Services, stated: "A commercial addition permit HCADD24-0025 was submitted on 5/10/2024 and was renewed on 10/3/2025. The permit is currently in inspection phase."