

# Sumter City-County Board of Zoning Appeals

July 9, 2025

## BOA-25-22, 1475 Alice Dr. (City)

The applicant (Jay Davis) is requesting a variance from the sign requirements found in *Article 8, Exhibit 8-8: Permanent Sign Development Standards by Zoning District* of the *City of Sumter Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance* in order to construct 1 free-standing sign up to 40 ft. in height along Alice Dr. on TMS# 203-00-03-025 The maximum height of free-standing signs in the GC zoning district is 30 ft. The property is located at 1475 Alice Dr., is zoned General Commercial, and is represented by TMS# 203-00-03-025.



Appeals - Variance - Special Exception

# Sumter City-County Zoning Board of Appeals

July 9, 2025

**BOA-25-22, 1475 Alice Dr. (City)**

## I. THE REQUEST

**Applicant:** Jay Davis

**Status of the Applicant:** Authorized Agent for Property Owner

**Request:** The applicant is requesting a variance from the sign requirements found in *Article 8, Exhibit 8-8: Permanent Sign Development Standards by Zoning District* of the *City of Sumter Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance* and any other variances as may be required in order to construct a free-standing pylon sign up to 40 ft. in height.

**County Council District** Ward 1

**Location:** 1475 Alice Dr.

**Present Use/Zoning:** Commercial and Undeveloped / General Commercial (GC) and Residential-15 (R-15)

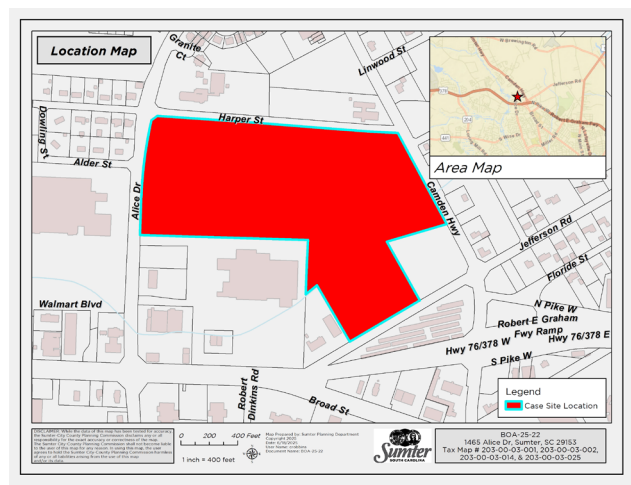
**Tax Map Reference:** 203-00-03-025

## II. BACKGROUND

***Note:** The scale and scope of this request was modified after the legal ad and property posting took place. This report reflects the current scaled down request as detailed on page 3 of this report.*

The applicant is seeking a variance from the *City of Sumter Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance (the Ordinance)* in order to install one (1) free-standing sign on the subject property at a height taller than that allowed by the Ordinance.

The combined property is 43.12 acres and includes 3 parcels zoned General Commercial (GC) and 1 parcel zoned Residential-15 (R-15).

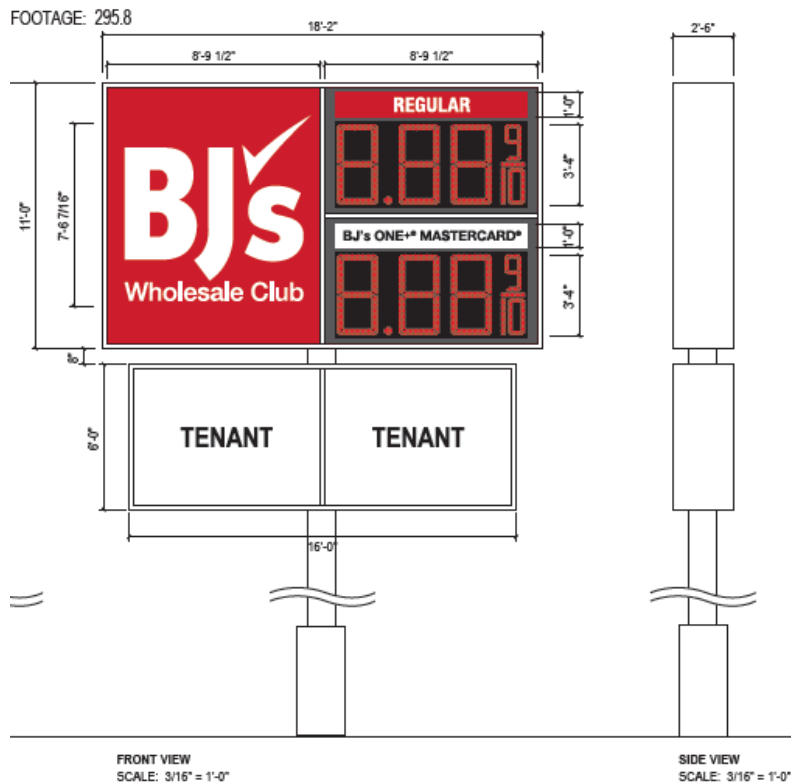


The property is bounded by Alice Dr. on the west, Harper St. to the north, and Camden Hwy. (US-521) to the east. The property is shown in red on the map on the first page of this report.

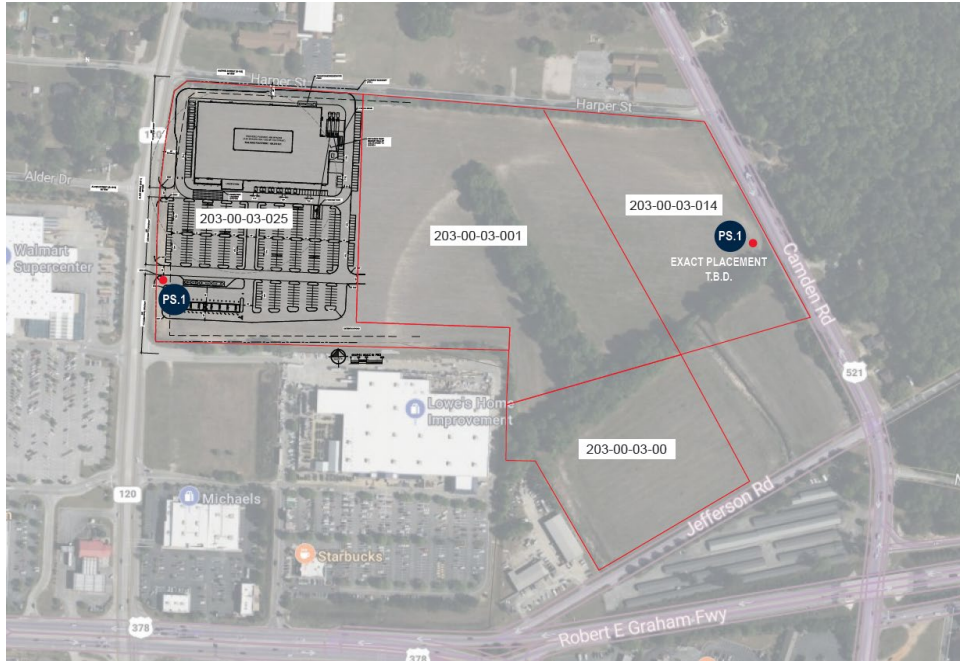
The request was originally advertised for sign-height variances for a proposed 50 ft. tall free-standing sign on Alice Dr. and a proposed 50 ft. tall free-standing sign on Camden Hwy. The applicant has withdrawn the request for the sign on Camden Highway and has agreed to request a 40 ft. maximum sign height vs. a 50 ft. maximum sign height. As such, this report is tailored for a single 40 ft. tall freestanding sign on Alice Dr. only.

The undeveloped parcels associated with the larger property are anticipated to develop into an internally connected commercial center over time. Any new signage on Camden Hwy. or on other road frontages will be tailored toward a branded commercial center development and will be designed as plans for the remaining parcel developments come into focus.

The signage proposed by the applicant on Alice Dr. is an 18 ft, 2 in x 11 ft illuminated rectangular cabinet with a digital fuel price display affixed to a pylon for the BJ's use with a separate 16 ft. x 6 ft. rectangular cabinet for two other future site tenants (total size 295.8 sq ft), as shown in **Figure 1**. The top of the sign is proposed to be 40 ft. above ground level.



**Figure 1 - Proposed Pylon Sign Dimensions**



**Figure 2 - Site Plan Diagram with Sign Location for Alice Dr. Marked (PS.1) and future sign for Camden Hwy identified**



**Figure 3 - Pylon Sign (Alice Dr.) at Ordinance Maximum Height of 30 ft.**



**Figure 4** - Proposed Pylon Sign (Alice Dr.) at Variance Requested Height of 40 ft.



## Ordinance Requirements:

### Article 8.h., Exhibit 8-8 – Permanent Sign Development Standards By Zoning District

#### EXHIBIT 8-8 PERMANENT SIGN DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS BY ZONING DISTRICT

Zoning District	Maximum Area of Free-Standing Sign (sq. ft.) <sup>1, 2, 3, 7</sup>	Height	Front/Side Setbacks	Percentage of Wall Area Maximum <sup>4</sup>
All Residential Districts (GR, R-6, R-9, R-15, RMF)	See Note #5 and #6	See Note #5 and #6	See Note #5 and #6	N/A
Professional Office (PO)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage, Not To Exceed 50 sq. ft.	15 ft.	10 ft.	10%
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage Not To Exceed 200 sq. ft.	30 ft.	10 ft.	10%
Limited Commercial (LC)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage Not To Exceed 200 sq. ft. (see note #6 for Residential Uses)	30 ft.	10 ft.	10%
General Commercial (GC)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage Not To Exceed 200 sq. ft. (see note #6 for Residential Uses)	30 ft.	10 ft.	10%
Central Business District (CBD)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage Not To Exceed 50 sq. ft. (see note #6 for Residential Uses)	15 ft.	10 ft.	25%
Light Industrial-Warehouse (LI-W)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage Not To Exceed 150 sq. ft. (see note #6 for Residential Uses)	15 ft.	10 ft.	5%
Heavy Industrial (HI)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage Not To Exceed 150 sq. ft. (see note #6 for Residential Uses)	15 ft.	10 ft. (front) 20 ft. (side)	5%
Agricultural Conservation (AC)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage Not To Exceed 100 sq. ft. (see note #6 for Residential Uses)	10 ft.	10 ft. (front) 20 ft. (side)	10%
Conservation/Preservation (CP)	1 sq. ft. per linear foot of street frontage Not To Exceed 36 sq. ft. (see note #6 for Residential Uses)	10 ft.	10 ft. (front) 20 ft. (side)	10%

#### Notes:

1. Lots fronting on two or more streets are allowed the permitted free-standing signage for each street frontage, but permitted signage area cannot be accumulated and used on 1 street in excess of that allowed for lots with only 1 street frontage.
2. Where two or more detached commercial zoned buildings occupy the same parcel, each may have 1 free-standing sign, provided the total sign area does not exceed the allowable limits as specified in this Exhibit.
3. Shopping Center Rules: Shopping Centers shall be allowed 2 free-standing signs per street front; provided that the gross floor area of the buildings which comprise the center is at least 50,000 sq. ft., and the property has at least 200 ft. of frontage on the secondary street front earning the second sign. Each freestanding shopping center sign shall not exceed 350 sq. ft. Wall-mounted signs shall be limited to 10% of the storefront to which the sign is attached.
4. The wall area maximum shall be figured by the percentage of the area of the wall on which the sign is a part or to which each such sign is most nearly parallel. Permitted wall signage area cannot be accumulated or pro-rated for any single wall that would permit wall signage in excess of the stated wall area % maximum.
5. Free-Standing Sign (Certain Uses in Residential Zoning Districts) – 1 free-standing sign is allowed for each non-residential use, subdivision, multi-family apartment, group housing, attached housing, cluster housing, or manufactured home park or entrance thereto, provided the sign does not exceed 40 sq. ft. in area nor 20 ft. in height, and is set back at least 5 ft. from all property lines. If illuminated, only indirect or muted lighting is permitted. - Wall Sign (Non-Residential Uses in Residential Zoning Districts) – Wall signs for non-residential uses in residential zoning districts shall not exceed 10% of the wall area of each building face in accordance with Exhibit 8-5 Note#4.
6. Free-Standing Sign (All Individual Residential Uses) - 1 free-standing sign with a 6 sq. ft. maximum area is allowed on any residentially used parcel. This provision is separate and in addition to all other sign provisions and no permit is required. - Wall Sign (All Individual Residential Uses) - Only address and name of occupant allowed on sign, except for a commercial message drawing attention to an activity legally offered on the premises. The maximum permitted area for residential use wall signs shall not exceed 2 sq. ft.
7. Free-Standing Sign (Non-Residential Uses) - 1 additional free-standing sign with a 20 sq. ft. area maximum is permitted on all non-residentially used parcels. This provision is separate and in addition to all other sign provisions and no permit is required.

## The Request:

The applicant (Jay Davis) is requesting a variance from the sign requirements found in *Article 8, Exhibit 8-8: Permanent Sign Development Standards by Zoning District* of the *City of Sumter Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance* (and any other variances as may be required) in order to construct a free-standing sign up to 40 ft. in height. The maximum height of free-standing signs in the GC zoning district is 30 ft.

### III. FOUR PART TEST

In order to grant the requested variances, the request must meet all parts of a State mandated four-part test. When reviewing a variance request, the Board may not grant a variance that would do the following:

- Allow the establishment of a use not otherwise permitted in a zoning district;
- Extend physically a nonconforming use of land;
- Change zoning district boundaries shown on the Sumter City-County Official Zoning Map.

The fact that a property may be utilized more profitably should a variance be granted shall not be considered grounds for approving a variance request. In granting a variance, the Board may attach to it such conditions regarding location, character, or other features of the proposed building, structure, or use as the Board may consider advisable to promote the public health, safety, or general welfare.

#### **Staff Review:**

**1) *There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular piece of property.***

The property at 1475 Alice Dr. is currently being developed for a warehouse club retail use (BJs) with a co-located gas station. Prior to this development, the property was used for row-crop farming. The property is located along Alice Dr., which is a state-owned and maintained street functionally classified as a minor arterial roadway, with an average annual daily traffic of 8,300 vehicles. Alice Dr. in this location also serves as a connection between two US- routes (US-521 and US-378) each of which carry over 20,000 AADT. The site is located off of the primary Broad St. corridor behind other big box development. The applicant has stated concerns with sign visibility from the major traffic generators, Camden Hwy. and Broad St. if constructed in accordance with current 30 ft. sign height requirements for the GC zoning district.

**2) *These conditions do not generally apply to other property in the vicinity.***

1475 Alice Dr is adjacent to two other large retail outlets to the west and south (Wal-Mart and Lowes) that have direct signs onto Broad St. The BJ's site only has direct frontage on Alice Dr. Additional commercial/retail development is expected on the vacant land to the east in the near future. All commercial properties in the vicinity of the site are subject to *Article 8.h* signage development standards, including the maximum height requirement, as are all commercial parcels in the City.

- 3) *Because of these conditions, the application of the ordinance to the particular piece of property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property.*

Application of the ordinance to this particular piece of property requires the property owner to comply with the maximum dimensions outlined in *Article 8.h.* of the Ordinance. The Ordinance prevents the applicant from constructing the sign at the height proposed.

- 4) *The authorization of a variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or to the public good, and the granting of the variance will not harm the character of the district.*

BJ's Wholesale Warehouse will be one of the anchor tenants of the larger commercial development anticipated for the property. Other planned free-standing signs for the larger property, anticipated to be located on Camden Hwy. and Jefferson Rd. frontages, will be designed to be uniform in appearance with direct advertising of the larger shopping center to be on the sign in addition to individual tenants. As more free-standing signs are anticipated, the proposed sign on Alice Dr. is directly focused for BJ's side as Alice Dr. is a minor arterial roadway, not a major arterial roadway. It is noted that the sign will be directly across Alice Dr. from the Wal-Mart site and not from the adjacent residential development north of the Wal-Mart site.

Staff has some concerns about the precedent such an approval will set for future development in the GC district. However, the applicant's agreement to reduce the proposed sign height from 50 ft. to 40 ft. will result in less potential for harmful impacts.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

If the Board of Zoning Appeals makes the findings necessary to grant the requested sign height variance for the proposed pylon sign at 1475 Alice Dr., staff recommends that the Board include the following condition:

1. Signage for the subject parcels must be consolidated into a uniformly designed "shopping center" signs for the remaining street frontages (Camden Hwy., Jefferson Rd. Harper St.).

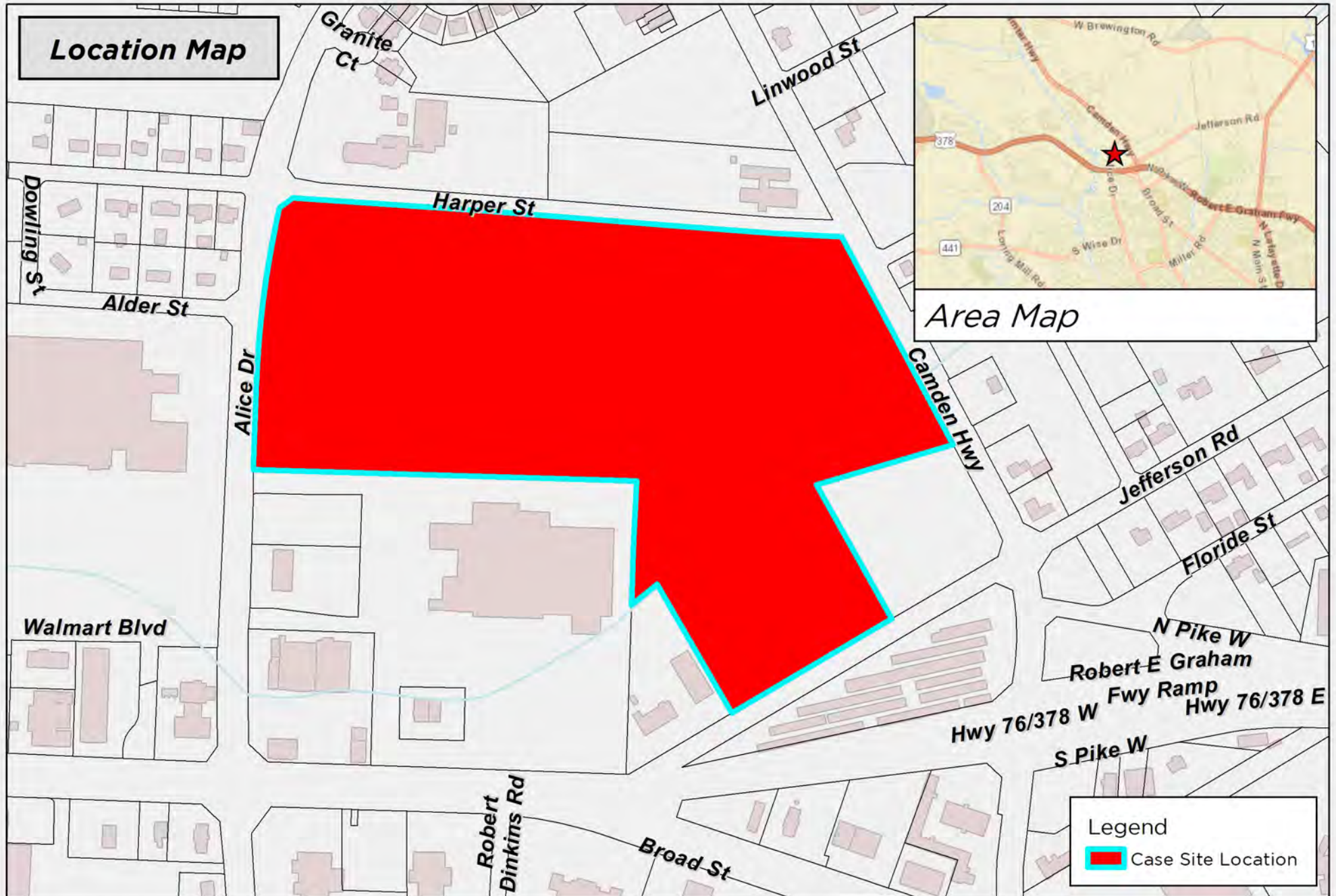
#### **V. DRAFT MOTIONS FOR BOA-25-22**

- A. I move that the Zoning Board of Appeals **approve** BOA-25-22, subject to the findings of fact and conclusions developed by the BZA and so stated:
- B. I move that the Zoning Board of Appeals **deny** BOA-25-22, subject to the following findings of fact and conclusions:
- C. I move that the Zoning Board of Appeals enter an alternative motion for BOA-25-22.

#### **VI. BOARD OF APPEALS – July 9, 2025**



## Location Map



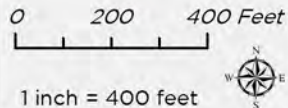
## Area Map



## Legend

■ Case Site Location

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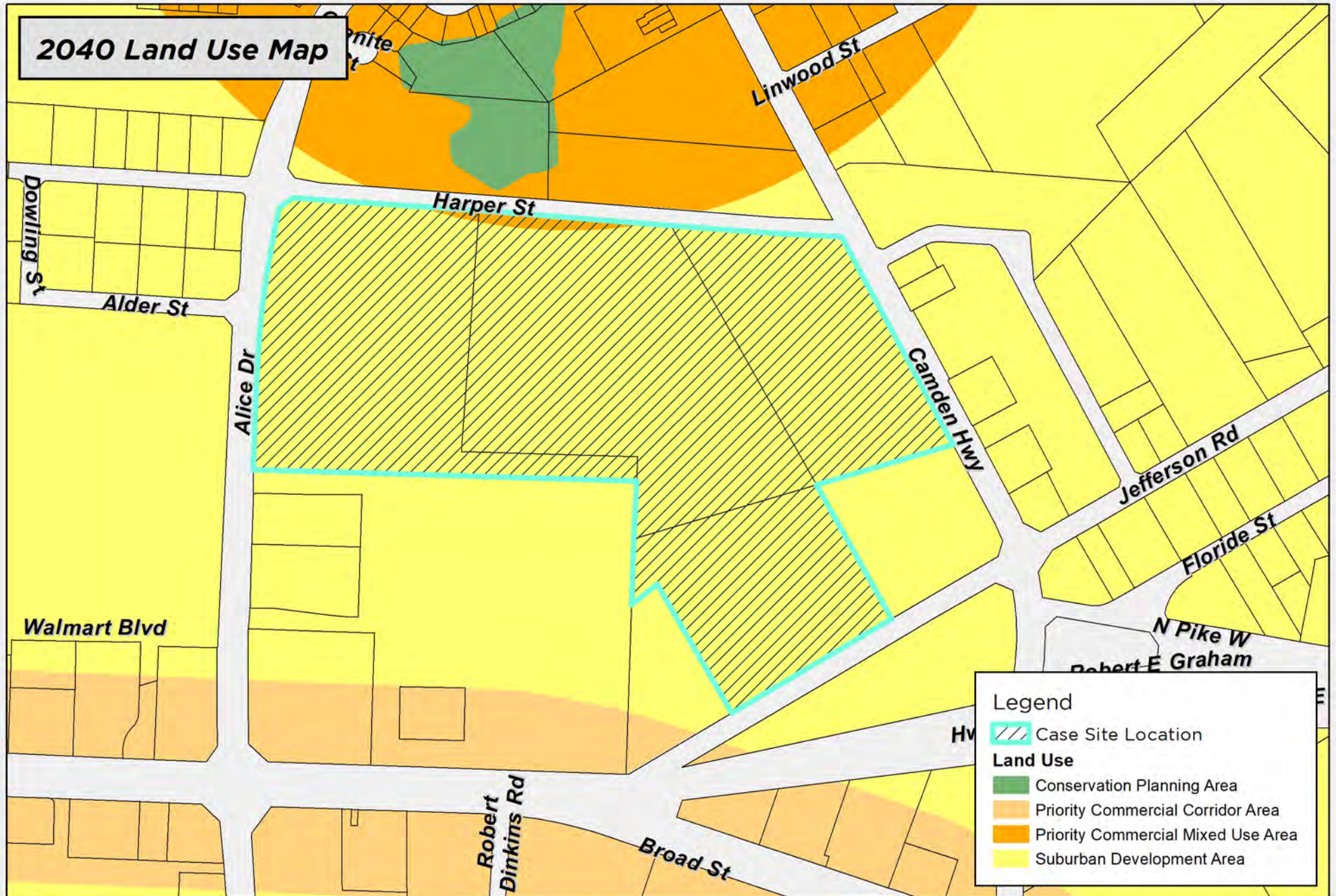
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Document Name: BOA-25-22



BOA-25-22  
1465 Alice Dr, Sumter, SC 29153  
Tax Map # 203-00-03-001, 203-00-03-002,  
203-00-03-014, & 203-00-03-025



# 2040 Land Use Map



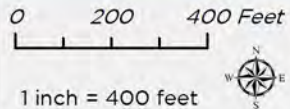
**Legend**

Case Site Location

**Land Use**

- Conservation Planning Area
- Priority Commercial Corridor Area
- Priority Commercial Mixed Use Area
- Suburban Development Area

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# 2025 Aerial Photography Map



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0 200 400 Feet  
1 inch = 400 feet

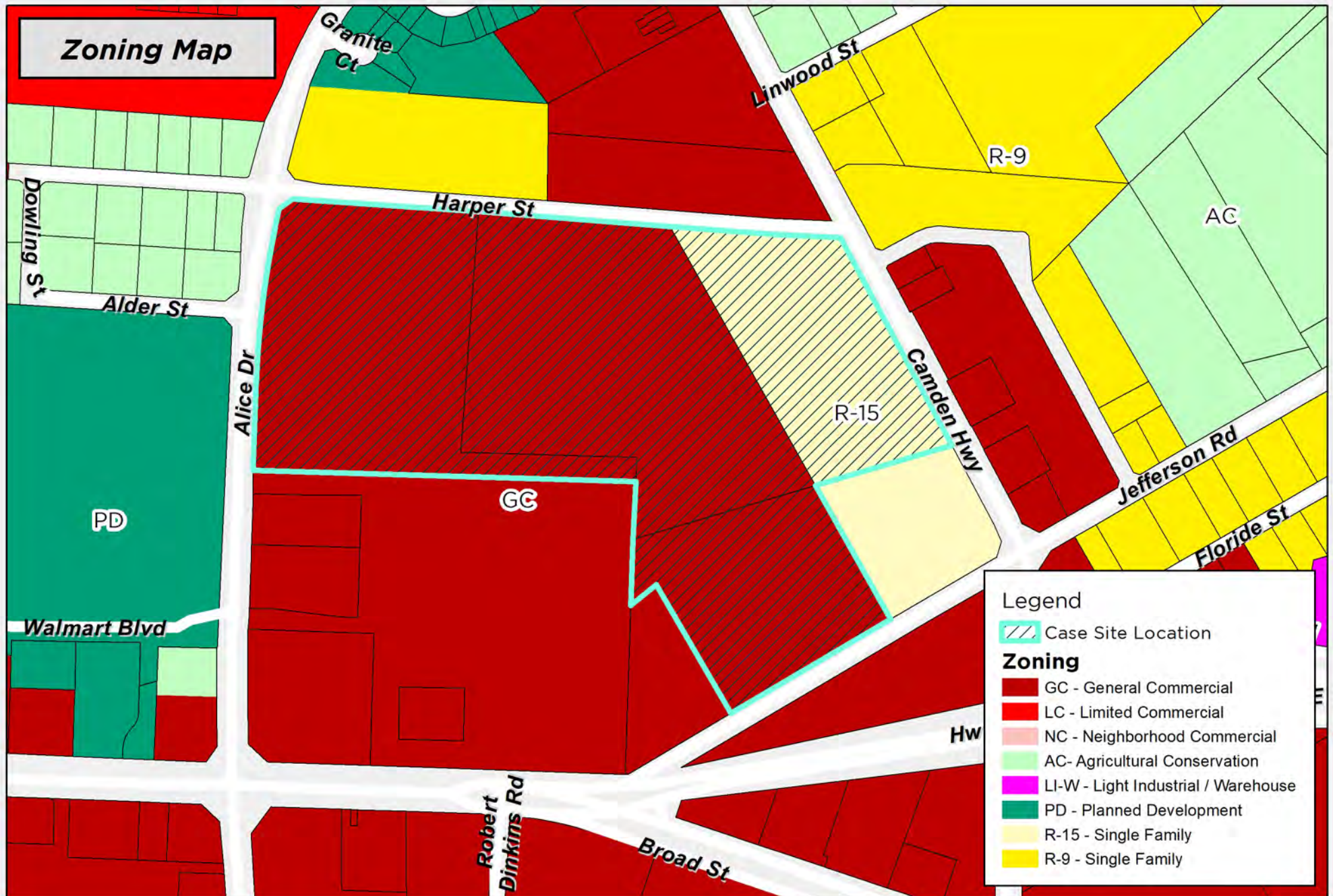
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# Zoning Map



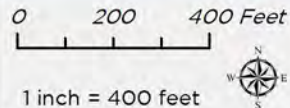
## Legend

Case Site Location

## Zoning

- GC - General Commercial
- LC - Limited Commercial
- NC - Neighborhood Commercial
- AC - Agricultural Conservation
- LI-W - Light Industrial / Warehouse
- PD - Planned Development
- R-15 - Single Family
- R-9 - Single Family

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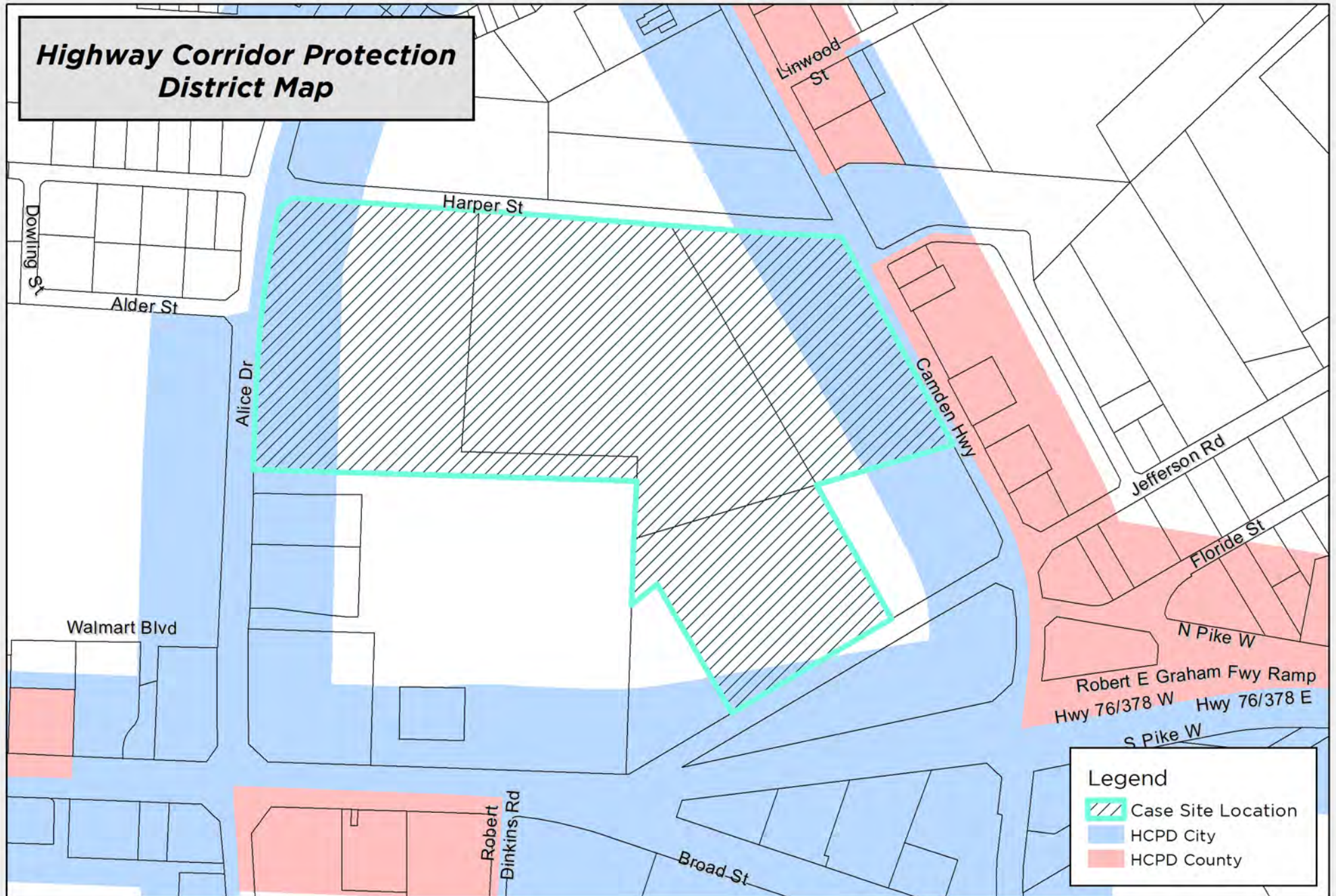
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203-00-03-014, & 203-00-03-025



# Highway Corridor Protection District Map



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