



# FORM-BASED ZONING REPORT

**▶ FILE #:** 4-A-26-OB **AGENDA ITEM #:** 12  
 POSTPONEMENT(S): 4/9/2026, 5/14/2026 **AGENDA DATE:** 6/11/2026  
**▶ APPLICANT:** RYAN ROBERTSON  
 OWNER(S): Doyle E Arp Kerbela Temple Holding Corp.

TAX ID NUMBER: 109 A B 00103 [View map on KGIS](#)

JURISDICTION: City Council District 1

STREET ADDRESS: 315 KERBELA AVE

**▶ LOCATION:** South side of Sevier Ave, west side of Dawson St

**▶ APPX. SIZE OF TRACT:** 5.7 acres

SECTOR PLAN: South City

GROWTH POLICY PLAN: N/A (Within City Limits)

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Access is via Kerbela Ave, a local road with 21-27 ft of pavement width within 35-40 ft of right-of-way, via Mimosa Ave, a local road with 20-26 ft of pavement width within 35-40 ft of right-of-way, via Dawson St, a local road with 21 ft of pavement width within 24-30 ft of right-of-way, and via Sevier Ave, a major collector with 30 ft of pavement width within 46-58 ft of right-of-way.

**UTILITIES:** Water Source: Knoxville Utilities Board  
 Sewer Source: Knoxville Utilities Board

FIRE DISTRICT: Knoxville Fire Department

WATERSHED: Tennessee River

**▶ ZONING:** SW-6 (South Waterfront, Henley Gateway), SW-5 (South Waterfront, Bell Tower Walk)

**▶ EXISTING LAND USE:** Public/Quasi Public Land

**▶ PROPOSED USE:** Multifamily

**HISTORY OF ZONING:** The property was rezoned from C-2 and R-3 to SW-6 and SW-5 as part of the adoption of the South Waterfront Form Code District (10-Y-06-RZ).

**SURROUNDING LAND USE AND ZONING:**  
 North: Agriculture/forestry/vacant land, office, multifamily - SW-5 (South Waterfront, Bell Tower Walk), SW-6 (South Waterfront, Henley Gateway)  
 South: Single family residential, multifamily residential, agriculture/forestry/vacant land - SW-3 (South Waterfront, Sevier Avenue), SW-6 (South Waterfront, Henley Gateway), RN-4 (General Residential Neighborhood)  
 East: Multifamily residential, public-quasi public (church) - SW-3 (South Waterfront, Sevier Avenue)  
 West: Multifamily residential, public-quasi public (parking structure) - SW-6 (South Waterfront, Henley Gateway)

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT This property is located at the southern terminus of Gay Street, between the established commercial and residential districts along Sevier Avenue to the east and Blount Avenue and Chapman Highway to the west.

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

- ▶ **Per Article 7.0.2.G., the Planning Commission should consider this request based on the approval criteria in subsection 8.a. and the attached Zoning Administrator report.**

**COMMENTS:**

This request is a Level III, Alternative Compliance Review, of the Form Base Code Districts (Article 7.0.2.G.), which requires approval by the Planning Commission. Alternative compliance review is intended to allow developments and nonprohibited uses that would not otherwise be allowed under a strict interpretation of the Form District regulations but nevertheless comply with the intent of the applicable Form District and Plan.

**REQUESTS**

The applicant is requesting relief from the following seven standards of the SW5 and SW6 South Waterfront Form-Based Code districts as a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review pursuant to Article 7.0.2.G.

1. Request to increase the maximum perimeter block size from 1,400 feet to the existing condition (approximately 3,000 feet), in the SW5 and SW6 Districts (Articles 7.1.3.F.3.a/b & 7.1.3.G.3.a/b).
2. Request to increase the maximum lot size from 3 acres to the existing condition (approximately 5.7 acres), in the SW5 and SW6 Districts (Articles 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4).
3. Request to increase the maximum building footprint/floorplate from 30,000 sqft to 39,000 sqft in the SW5 District (Article 7.1.3.F.4).
4. Request to increase the front setback from 0' to 69'-0" from Sevier Avenue, in the SW5 and SW6 Districts (Articles 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4).
5. Request to reduce the minimum building frontage at the setback from 75% to 0%, in the SW5 District (Article 7.1.3.F.4).
6. Request to increase the maximum side setback from 25' to 56'-0" from the Dawson Street interior side lot line and 32'-0" from the eastern interior lot line, in the SW5 and SW6 Districts (Articles 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4).
7. Request to reduce the ground level transparent glass on the principal frontage from 70% to 63%, in the SW5 and SW6 Districts (Articles 7.1.3.F.6 & 7.1.3.G.6).

**KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION FOR LEVEL III, ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE REVIEW (Article 7.0.2.G.7)**

The Commission may take any of the following actions:

1. The Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission must hold a public hearing subsequent to notification, consistent with its Administrative Rules and Procedures.
2. The Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission must approve or deny the application, or send the application back to the Administrative Review Committee for additional consideration.
3. In the exercise of its approval, the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission may impose such conditions regarding the location, character or other features of the proposed buildings as it may deem advisable in the furtherance of the general purposes of the applicable Form District Plan.

**Approval Criteria (Article 7.0.2.G.8)**

a. In reviewing an application for Alternative Compliance Review in cases other than applications concerning reconstruction or expansion of nonconforming structures in which nonconforming uses operate, the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission must consider the following:

- i. Consistency with the applicable adopted Plan;
- ii. That the development will not have a substantial or undue adverse effect upon the neighborhood, the character of the area, traffic conditions, parking, public infrastructure, and other matters affecting the public health, safety and general welfare;
- iii. That the development will be constructed and operated to be compatible with the district;
- iv. That the proposed development can be adequately served by public facilities;
- v. That the proposed development will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any significant natural, scenic, or historical district, site, or feature;
- vi. Compliance with the intent of the applicable Form District and Plan;
- vii. Compliance with all applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements;
- viii. Compliance with all applicable Subdivision regulations;

- ix. Compliance with the Major Road Plan;
- x. Compliance with the One Year Plan; and
- xi. Compliance with the Stormwater and Street Ordinance.

#### PLAN REVISIONS

The revised plan sheet, response document, and new perspective renderings and contextual images, submitted on 5/27/2026, incorporate the following modifications and clarifications. See the applicant's response document (Exhibit D) for justification of why certain comments were not addressed and confirmation of the requested zoning standard calculations.

NOTE: The plan set pages are not numbered sequentially, and some of the page numbers are out of order because the revised plan sheet page numbers do not match those of the original plan set. See the Rendered Site Plan (New Design), revised 5/27/2026, for the most current site plan (page 34 of the plan set).

1. Extension of the east–west pedestrian pathway approximately 75 ft from the western “ghost stair” to a newly proposed public plaza that is 1,400 sqft within a public use area of 2,400 sqft. The measurements are based on the information presented in the revised site plan. [Rendered Site Plan (New Design), page 34 of the plan set (revised 5/27/2026)]

2. Installation of approximately 155 ft of sidewalk and other streetscape improvements along Mimosa Avenue that would not otherwise be required per Article 7.1.5, Streetscape Standards, of the South Waterfront Form Code (SW code). [Rendered Site Plan (New Design), page 34 of the plan set (revised 5/27/2026)]

NOTE: The required streetscape improvements along the subject property's frontages on Sevier Avenue, Dawson Street, Mimosa Avenue, and Kerbela Avenue remain unchanged from the original submittal.

3. Lighting the existing rock pile and providing an art installation to activate the Sevier Avenue and Dawson Street corner of the property. [Rendered Site Plan (New Design), page 34 of the plan set (revised 5/27/2026), and the corner activation narrative in Exhibit D, applicant's response document]

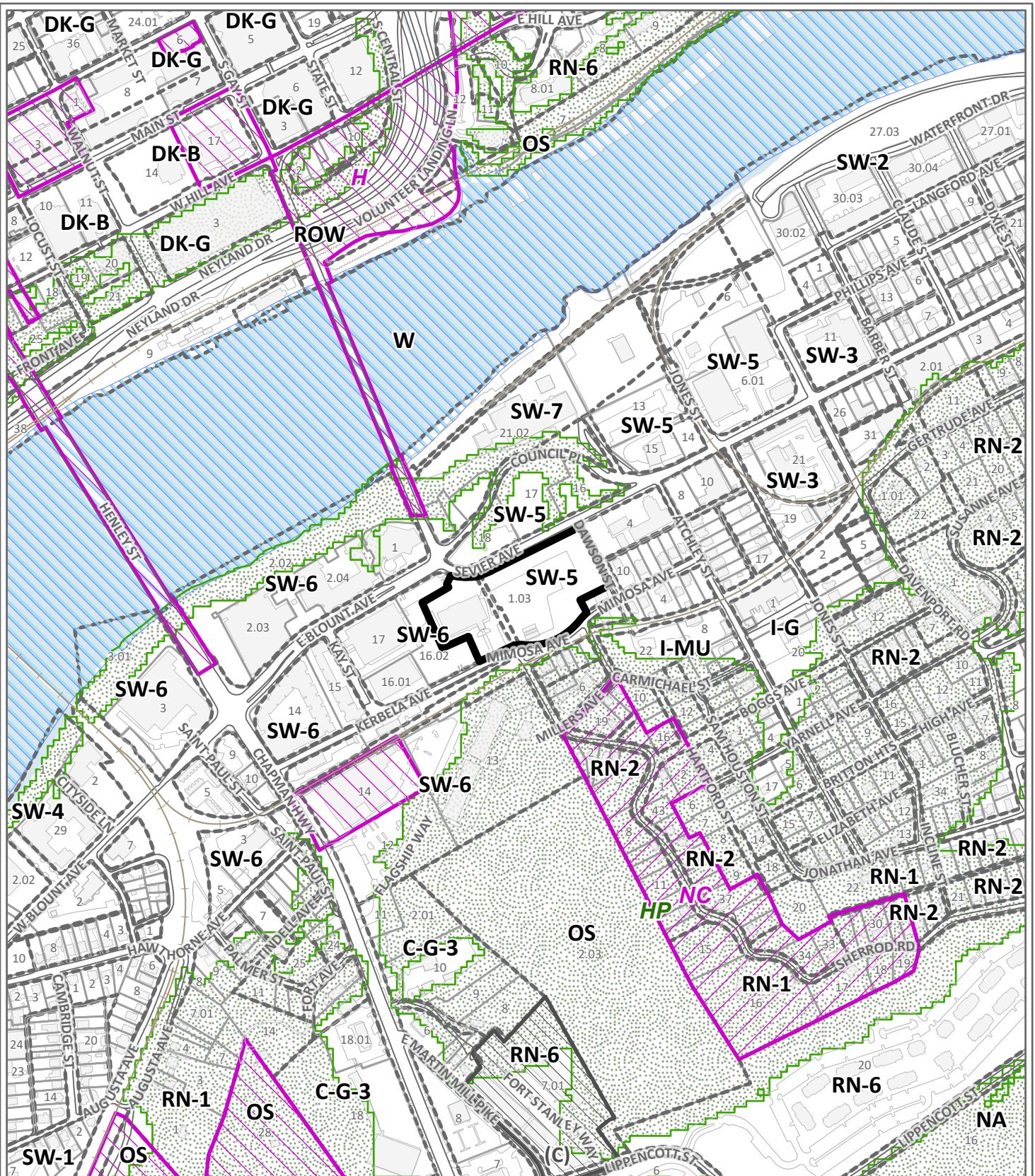
4. Lighting the ghost stairs. [Rendered Site Plan (New Design), page 34 of the plan set (revised 5/27/2026), and Exhibit D, applicant's response document]

NOTE: The nighttime renderings in the original submittal showed the ghost stairs illuminated, implying that lighting would be installed, but the plan did not explicitly state this.

5. Replacing the brick exterior on the eastern and westernmost massings that are oriented perpendicular to Sevier Avenue (and the river) with a stacked stone veneer to match the inner massings that are also perpendicularly oriented. [Perspective, pages 42, 43, and 44 with the revision date 5/27/2026]

NOTE: The material change is based on the three new nighttime perspective renderings; however, this change was not noted in any other submittal documents. The applicant's intent is unknown. The SW Code building envelope and materials standards are in Article 7.1.4.B.

Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission's approval or denial of this request is final, unless the action is appealed to the Knoxville City Council. The date of the Knoxville City Council hearing will depend on when the appeal application is filed. Appellants have 15 days to appeal a Planning Commission decision in the City.



**OTHER BUSINESS**

**4-A-26-OB**

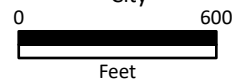
**Petitioner:** Ryan Robertson



Purpose of Request: Level III Alternative Compliance Review in the SW-6 and SW-5 (South Waterfront) district for a proposed multi-family development

**Map No:** 109

**Jurisdiction:** City



**Original Print Date:** 3/2/2026

Knoxville - Knox County Planning Commission \* City / County Building \* Knoxville, TN 37902

# Exhibit A. Contextual Images



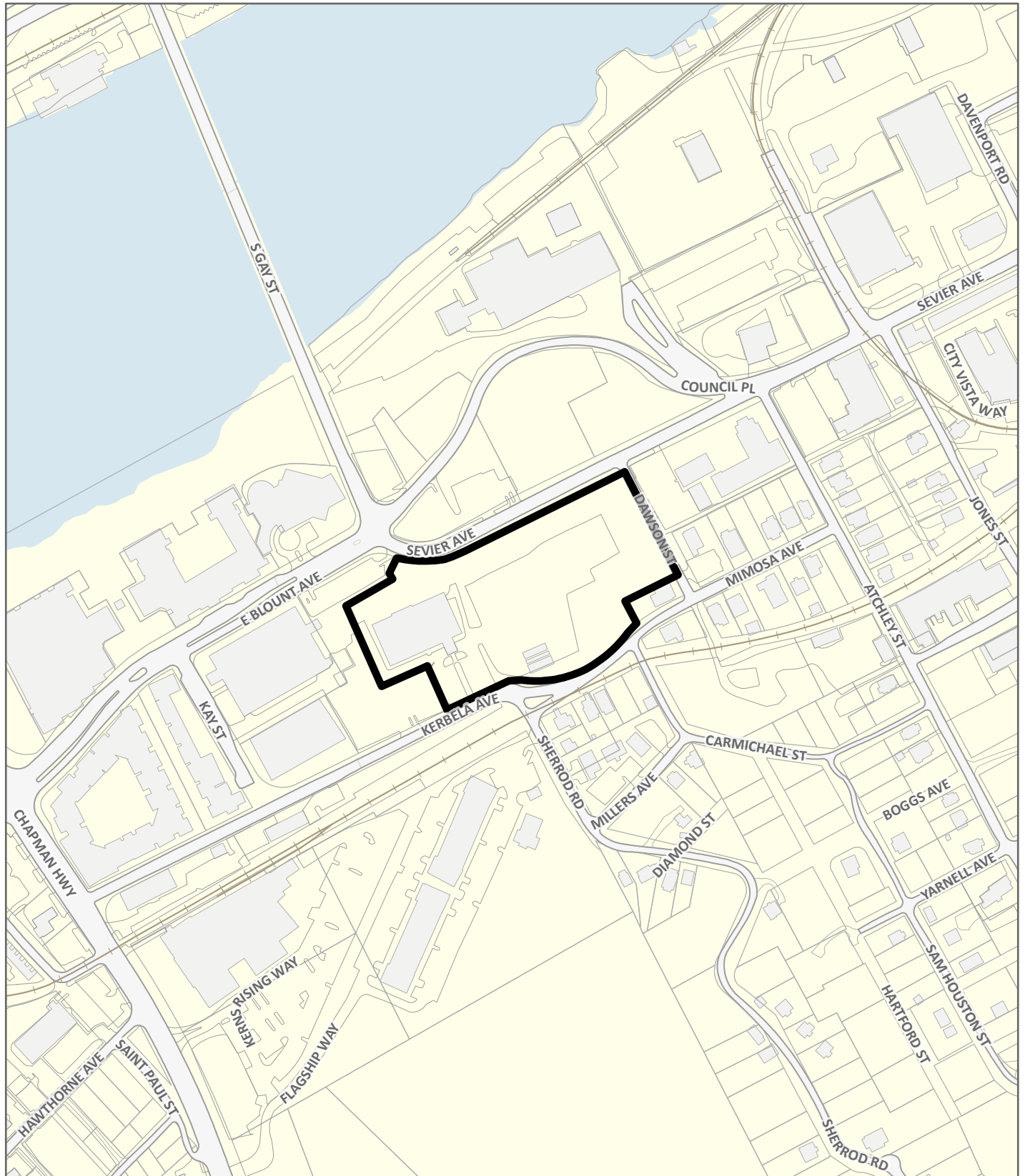
## AERIAL MAP



Case boundary



# Exhibit A. Contextual Images



**LOCATION MAP**

**4-A-26-OB**



Case boundary





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**Zoning Administrator Report for Level III: Alternative Compliance Review**

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**315 Kerbela Avenue**

Peter Ahrens, Director  
City of Knoxville, Plans Review and Building Inspections

## **I. Summary**

At the May 14, 2026, Planning Commission meeting, the application for a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review pursuant to Article 7.0.2.G was considered and subsequently remanded to the Administrative Review Committee (ARC) for further review of issues related to site layout, connectivity, and consistency with the applicable South Waterfront Form-Based Code districts (SW-5 and SW-6).

Following the remand, the applicant submitted revised plans and a written response addressing comments from both the Planning Commission and prior ARC review in accordance with the alternative compliance process outlined in Article 7.0.2.G.1, which allows consideration of proposals that may not strictly meet dimensional standards but are intended to meet the overall district vision.

The revised submittal includes modifications to pedestrian circulation intended to address prior concerns related to block configuration and connectivity under Articles 7.1.3.F.3 and 7.1.3.G.3. Specifically, the applicant proposes a revised east–west pedestrian pathway along Sevier Avenue with a connection to Dawson Street. This pathway is intended to provide public access and improve connectivity across the site, while maintaining visual access toward the Tennessee River, consistent with the “window-to-the-water” concept identified in the SW-5 district intent statement.

The applicant’s response indicates that a north–south pedestrian connection was evaluated but determined to be impractical due to site constraints, including slopes exceeding 20 percent along the site perimeter and steeper grades within the interior. The east–west alignment is identified as an alternative approach that responds to these site conditions while providing connectivity through the site.

The revised plans also identify a public plaza along the western portion of the property, which functions as an open space element integrated into the pedestrian circulation system. This feature is presented in relation to the open space and pedestrian-oriented development patterns contemplated in Articles 7.1.3.F and 7.1.3.G, as well as the broader Vision Plan framework.

In addition, the applicant has indicated streetscape and sidewalk improvements along Sevier Avenue, Kerbela/Mimosa Avenue and Dawson Street, which relate to the frontage and streetscape provisions of Article 7.1.5 and general development standards in Article 7.1.4.D, including pedestrian accommodations and landscape integration. Final design of right-of-way improvements will be subject to subsequent engineering and zoning review.

The resubmittal further proposes a connection to the Gulf and Ohio (G&O) Trail, which is intended to support multimodal access consistent with the connectivity goals of the South Waterfront Vision Plan and the pedestrian network expectations embedded within the Form-Based Code framework.

The plans continue to incorporate the preservation of the existing historic “ghost” stairs, which are shown as part of the site’s internal pedestrian network and connected to the proposed east–west pathway. This element responds to prior discussion regarding site features and integration of existing conditions into the development plan.

Overall, the revised submittal reflects changes made in response to the Planning Commission remand and ARC comments, with a focus on site layout, building placement, pedestrian access, and streetscape improvements, as well as the flexibility allowed under the alternative compliance provisions.

## **II. Administrative Review Committee**

The application was reviewed by the Administrative Review Committee (ARC) in multiple rounds beginning March 18, 2026, with revisions submitted following each review. The Planning Commission considered the application on May 14, 2026, and remanded it to the ARC for further review. The applicant submitted revised drawings and responses on May 26, 2026, initiating an additional ARC review.

Based on the most recent submittal, the following comments remain or were identified by the ARC on June 3, 2026:

- Article 7.1.3.F.3.a/b & 7.1.3.G.3.a/b - Guide lot layout and outline the maximum block perimeter and building setbacks permitted in this district to ensure walkable neighborhoods. Block size -Maximum perimeter of 1,400 feet. This development appears to exceed the maximum block size perimeter of 1,400 feet. The development will need to be subdivided or this development will need approval as a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review.
- Article 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4 – Lot Size Max – 3 acres. This development exceeds the lot size maximum for both the SW-5 and SW-6 district of 3 acres and will need to be subdivided or this development will need approval as a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review.
- Article 7.1.3.F.4 – Footprint/Floorplate (max) – 30,000sf; does not apply to structured parking. This development exceeds the footprint/floorplate max of 30,000sf on the SW-5 zoned portion of the property with a provided measurement of 39,000sf (overall total 58,000sf). This standard will need approval as a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review.
- Article 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4–Principal Building Siting – Front Setback – 0’. The site plan provided shows a front setback of 69’-0” from Sevier Avenue. This does not meet the front setback standard and will need approval as a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review.
- Article 7.1.3.F.4 –Principal Building Siting – Frontage at Setback (min) – 75% to River Rd. and Sevier Ave. The site plan provided shows the building sited beyond the front setback and therefore the development does not meet the frontage at setback minimum of 75%. This will need approval as a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review.
- Article 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4 –Principal Building Siting – Side Setback (max) – 25’. The site plan provided shows the building sited at 56’-0” from the Dawson St. interior side lot line and the building sited 32’-0” from the eastern interior lot line both of which are over the maximum side setback of 25’. This will need approval as a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review.
- Article 7.1.3.F.6 & 7.1.3.G.6– Building Entries – Ground Level - Min 70% transparent glass at the ground level on the principal frontage. The provided elevations show a ground floor glazing calculation of 63%. This will need approval as a Level III: Alternative Compliance Review.

- Article 7.1.3.F.9.c & 7.1.3.G.9.c – Sustainability – Reflectivity, Heat Island Reduction, Roof and Surface Lots. Surface lots shall provide shade and/or use light-colored/high albedo materials with a solar reflectance of at least 0.3 (30%). Applicant has indicated that a mix of pervious and impervious materials will be used for the surface parking lot; however, specific details regarding the materials used and their capability of meeting this standard have not been provided. Please provide additional details regarding the materials being used to show that compliance will be met.
- Article 7.1.3.F.9.c & 7.1.3.G.9.c – Sustainability – Roofs shall use an Energy Star Compliant (highly reflective) for a minimum of 75% of the roof surface. Please provide specific details regarding the materials used for roofing and how they will meet this standard.
- Article 7.1.4.D.2. – Structured parking - New parking facilities must be designed in such a way that does not adversely affect their surroundings. The driveway from Dawson points vehicles directly to the side of the adjacent single-family house. How will headlights be mitigated?
- Does the “IDP – Public Property” connect to anything to the west?
- Provide all elevations of the proposed project to review compliance with Article 7.1.4.B Building Envelope and Materials.
- Minimum ROW sidewalk width is 5 feet. Additional sidewalk width, landscape strip width, or other ROW impacts will be subject to detailed design review and may require modifications to the widths and layouts shown as part of the ARC submittal. Deferral of that detailed ROW review is acceptable at this time to allow ARC and Planning Committee review to proceed, with the understanding that those approvals would not be impacted by revised ROW improvements, provided onsite structure locations and required setbacks remain unchanged.
- When scaled, at least two locations still appear to exceed 2H:1V slopes. Detailed design review may require additional retaining walls so as not to impact the site layout.
- In accordance with Sections D106.2 and D106.3 of Appendix D in the 2024 International Fire Code, two separate and approved fire apparatus access roads are required for this project. If the two access points/parking lots do not connect, then approved turnarounds must be provided.
- Please provide dimensions verifying the remoteness required by IFC D106.3.
- A landscape plan is required for ARC review in order to determine if the landscape-specific requirements of the form-based code will be met.
  - If exact species to be planted are not known at this time, trees and shrubs can be represented by symbols that show proposed quantities, locations, and spacing and additional details can be added at a later date. At minimum, trees should be denoted as shade trees (mature height 50ft or greater) or ornamental (mature height <50ft) or evergreen. The plan should show any trees to be preserved, as well. Include a schedule including the quantities of all proposed trees and shrubs.
  - See additional comments for a list of code requirements.

- The Tree Protection Ordinance will apply for the total property size. The exact size was not provided and the lot is not platted, but an estimate based on KGIS of ~5.75 acres is used for the calculations below.
  - Sec. 14-34(b) requires preservation of 6 trees per acre which would be ~35 trees for the total estimated property size. There are few trees that could count toward preservation along the hillside, but not 35 total. Any that are preserved will count proportionally toward the planting requirement in Section 14-36 (8 trees per acre) which would be a total of ~46 trees, half of which must reach a mature height of 50ft or greater.
  - Article 7.1.3.F.2.c.ii. also requires preservation of either 1 healthy large tree per lot or 6 per acre, whichever is greater (6/ac is greater in this case and will be applied in accord with the Tree Protection Ordinance since the requirement is the same).
  - We will want to see diversity in the tree species selected. Use the requirements in Article 12.4.B as a guide.
  - Planting space and terrain was expressed as a concern. Because the site is large and varied and will be excavated for building construction, space for trees should be included in the excavation. Tree pits can be dug out similar to downtown street trees or soil can be added on top of the rock. Tree species that can grow with limited root space include eastern redcedar, catalpa, overcup oak, ginkgo, Frontier elm, Kentucky coffeetree, trident maple, and others.
- The general development standards in Article 7.1.4.D.1. require:
  - b. A visual buffer of landscaping between surface parking and adjacent properties
    - This will apply to the west parking area where 8 parking spaces abut the adjacent lot.
  - c. Any parking lot adjoining a public street shall be screened from view to a height of 3 feet by walls, berms or landscaping or a combination of these 3. If landscaping only is used, the planting bed shall be a minimum of 10 feet wide.
    - This will apply to the west parking area that most closely abuts Kerbela Ave.
  - d. Separate parking areas from buildings by use of a raised walkway or planting strip. Avoid directly abutting parking aisles or spaces to the edge of a building.
    - This will apply where parking abuts the building.
- The vision plan lists streets as ST-42-24-PL to the east and west. This also applies to the corner side Dawson St. Article 7.1.5.D. requires street trees at 30' OC, 5' wide continuous planting strip for this street type. We will defer to Engineering and Zoning for whether the planting strip will be required along the sidewalks.

- Note that street trees in the ROW (outside of private property) do not normally count toward the density requirements listed above. If the planting strip is not required by Engineering, the trees that would have been planted in the ROW can potentially be incorporated along the property lines but on private property to serve some of the same intent (provide shade for the walking paths, creating the tree-lined street aesthetic, reduced noise, etc.).

### **III. Administrator Action**

It is the Administrator's recommendation that the Planning Commission consider the proposed Level III: Alternative Compliance Review in light of these unique site conditions, the applicant's ongoing coordination with the Administrative Review Committee, and the efforts undertaken to address both regulatory requirements and community input in regards to massing and public connectivity.

Respectfully,



Peter M. Ahrens  
Director of Plans Review and Inspections



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** 05/13/2026  
**TO:** Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Peter Ahrens, Director of Plans Review & Inspections  
**RE:** 315 Kerbela

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### **Project Introduction:**

The purpose of this communication is to reiterate the role of the Planning Commission in its consideration of the proposed development at 315 Kerbela Avenue under a Level III Alternative Compliance Review.

### **Process:**

Pursuant to Article 7.0.2.G of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission's responsibility is to evaluate whether the proposed development, while not compliant with the strict interpretation of the form district regulations, nevertheless complies with the intent of the form district plan and the approval criteria.

### **Context:**

The Planning Commission should recognize that the property is split-zoned between the SW 5 and SW 6 districts, making it uniquely situated within the South Waterfront. Each district carries distinct visions, intents, and siting standards, and applying these standards to a single large parcel creates practical challenges not typically encountered on smaller, single-zoned properties.

If the site were subdivided into compliant parcels and the building(s) were sited in accordance with the code's prescriptive requirements, a development of comparable scale and intensity could largely be achieved by right. Therefore, the request before the Planning Commission is not fundamentally about use or density, but rather about flexibility in site design and building placement across a unified development, as opposed to a fragmented, prescriptive approach.

Additionally, the site presents significant topographical challenges, including steep slopes and elevation changes, which limit the ability to fully comply with build-to lines, frontage requirements, and other siting standards without substantial grading or impractical design solutions.

The development team has also engaged in an ongoing design process with both staff and members of the surrounding community. In response to feedback, the applicant has made significant revisions, including reductions in building height and massing, and has incorporated enhancements to public access and connectivity, including pedestrian linkages, preservation of existing features, and efforts to maintain views toward the Tennessee River.

### **Recommendation:**

The Administrator respectfully submits that this request represents a circumstance in which alternative compliance is appropriate, not as a means to circumvent the ordinance, but to enable a cohesive

development that might otherwise be achieved in a more fragmented and less coordinated manner under strict compliance.

**Planning Commission Evaluation Process:**

In summary, the Commission's review should focus on whether the development meets the established approval criteria, while also recognizing the unique site conditions, split zoning, and design considerations that necessitate an alternative compliance approach. The applicable approval criteria are as follows:

- i. Consistency with the applicable adopted Plan;
- ii. That the development will not have a substantial or undue adverse effect upon the neighborhood, the character of the area, traffic conditions, parking, public infrastructure, and other matters affecting the public health, safety, and general welfare;
- iii. That the development will be constructed and operated in a manner compatible with the district;
- iv. That the proposed development can be adequately served by public facilities;
- v. That the proposed development will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any significant natural, scenic, or historical district, site, or feature;
- vi. Compliance with the intent of the applicable Form District and Plan (see attached Vision and Intent sections);
- vii. Compliance with all applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements;
- viii. Compliance with all applicable Subdivision regulations;
- ix. Compliance with the Major Road Plan;
- x. Compliance with the One Year Plan; and
- xi. Compliance with the Stormwater and Street Ordinance.



TO: City of Knoxville Administrative Review Committee  
 FROM: Knoxville-Knox County Planning  
 DATE: May 20, 2026  
 PLANNING FILE #: 4-A-26-OB  
 SUBJECT: 315 Kerbela Ave. – Level III Alternative Compliance Review

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At its May 14, 2026, meeting, the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission referred the Level III Alternative Compliance Review back to the Administrative Review Committee for further consideration. The Planning Commission reviewed each item identified as requiring a Level III Alternative Compliance Review approval. Below is a summary of the comments provided for each.

The Commission's discussion and comments focused primarily on block size, building scale, and public access through the site. While the Commission had little discussion and stated there is no concern with some of the requested modifications, these may be more of a point of discussion if the primary concern of allowing north/south public access through the site is not addressed.

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS**

- **Article 7.1.3.F.3.a/b & 7.1.3.G.3.a/b – SW5 and SW6 Districts, Block Size Max (perimeter) – 1,400 feet**

The Planning Commission did not believe it was necessary to subdivide the lot to accommodate the maximum block size perimeter of 1,400 feet if the site design were adjusted. Several commissioners interested in enhanced connectivity said they could be more flexible on the building size and massing if the site plan provided more connectivity, noting the current plan's lack of engagement with the surrounding community. The single building was identified in the discussion as a barrier to increased walkability in the area, particularly relating to bicycle and pedestrian connections between the Gay Street Bridge and the neighborhoods and apartment complexes along Mimosa and Kerbela Avenues. It was noted that the block size and the building's layout, being placed horizontally to the river, resulted in a building of a massive scale. Several Commissioners recommended separating the structure into two or more buildings to provide north/south access, perpendicular to the river. Public spaces like an arcade or a plaza were mentioned as potential site amenities that could facilitate connectivity and connection within the site.

- **Article 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4 – SW5 and SW6 Districts, Lot Size Max – 3 acres**

The lot size was less of a concern than providing opportunities for north/south connectivity through the site.

- **Article 7.1.3.F.4 – SW5 District, Building Siting and Configuration, related to Building Footprint/Floorplate (max) – 30,000 sf**

Several Commissioners noted concerns that the building’s footprint/floorplate exceeds the 30,000 sf maximum allowed. It was again suggested that the development be separated into two or more smaller buildings and perhaps make the buildings taller to make up for lost floor space.

- **Article 7.1.3.G.4 – SW6 District, Building Siting and Configuration, related to Building Footprint/Floorplate (max) – 50,000 sf**

The Planning Commission lacked sufficient information to evaluate the request and recommended that the applicant submit additional information to the Administrative Review Committee.

- **Article 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4 – SW5 and SW6 Districts, Principal Building Siting and Configuration, related to Front Setback – 0’**

The Planning Commission recognized the site constraints and the challenges this presented to complying with the strict requirements of these two articles.

- **Article 7.1.3.F.4 – SW5 District, Principal Building Siting and Configuration, related to Building Frontage at Setback (min) – 75% to Sevier Ave**

The Planning Commission recognized the site constraints and the challenges they presented to strict compliance with this article.

- **Article 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4 – SW5 and SW6 Districts, Principal Building Siting and Configuration related to Side Setback (max) – 25’**

The Planning Commission recognized the site constraints and the challenges this presented to complying with the strict requirements of these two articles.

- **Article 7.1.3.F.6 & 7.1.3.G.6 – SW5 and SW6 Districts, Building Entries (Building Envelope Articulation) – Min 70% transparent glass at the ground level on the principal frontage**

Several Commissioners expressed the need to activate the corner of Sevier Avenue and Dawson Street. One suggested solution was to build out the ground floor to allow conversion to commercial use later.

*Note that during the meeting, it was stated that the transparency requirement was met at 62%, but the minimum is 70%.*



## Revised Notes and Code Compliance Summary

### Article 7.1.3.F.4 & 7.1.3.G.4

#### Comment

Providing a north/south connection through the site is not considered a practical or architectural solution. The slope exceeds 20% on both the east and west boundaries of the site and increases to greater than 40% down toward the center.

An east-west connection is proposed, connecting with the existing “ghost” stairs and incorporating a gathering plaza for public use (see Exhibit).

### Article 7.1.3.F.4- SW-5 Building site (footprint) Max 30,000 sf

#### Site Area and Building Footprint

- 30,000 SF
- The proposed five-level structure has an approximate 39,000 SF footprint.
- The site totals approximately 5.7 acres, with only 3.2 acres considered buildable area.
- The 39,000 SF footprint represents approximately 15% of the total acreage and roughly 27% of the 3.2 buildable acres. The form-based code allows for 23% per 3 acres - within SW-5 for max footprint- this deviate proportionally with the additional .2 acres to 27% footprint, a hardship of **4%**. The vision was 30,000 per 3 acres, at 3.2 usable are allows for 8,612 sf and the project is at **9,000 sf**. above the max allowed.
- Although the proposal exceeds 30,000 SF, the overall area is consistent with the intent of the form-based code for 3.2 acres.

### Article 7.1.3.G.4 SW-6 Max footprint – 50,0000

#### SW-6 – 50,000 SF Standard

The project conforms to the form-based code because the proposed development occupies approximately 19,000 SF.

#### Conclusion

Under SW-5 (30,000 SF) and SW-6 (50,000 SF) standards, the total between the two zones is 80,000 sf. This project and proposed development is **60,000 total** for max footprint. The overall design and footprint meet the vision of the SW waterfront form-based code and is below the allowable total ‘max footprint’ development area.

**Article 7.1.3.F.6 & 7.1.3.G.6– Building Entries – Ground Level - Min 70% transparent glass at the ground level on the principal frontage.**

The provided elevations show a ground floor glazing calculation of 71%; however, there is a note that suggests that the ground floor area of the garage was excluded from the calculations. The ground floor area of the garage shall be included in the calculations, and the complete ground floor transparency calculation is unable to be determined on your elevation plan. Our updated ground floor glazing elevation reaches 63% due to the slope perpendicular to Dawson Street exceeding 22%.

**Corner Activation Narrative**

The Sevier/Dawson corner will serve as a primary activation point for development, transforming the existing condition through thoughtful architectural and hardscape enhancements. The design establishes a dynamic connection between the historic “ghost stairs” and the proposed east-west pedestrian corridor, strengthening pedestrian access to the project’s core public spaces while creating a more engaging streetscape experience.

A central feature of this connection is the existing rock pile, which will be preserved and elevated as a distinctive landmark element. Integrated landscape lighting will enhance its visual character and improve safety and visibility at the corner. Complementing this feature will be a signature public art installation — a large-scale bicycle sculpture, as an example — celebrating the area’s artistic identity while reinforcing the prominence of the adjacent bike lane and multimodal connectivity. Working with local sculptors to curate the most impactful installation for this area.

Together, these elements support the broader vision for Knoxville’s SW Waterfront District by creating a memorable gateway experience that blends art, placemaking, and pedestrian connectivity.

**Design Intent**

- Activate the Sevier corner as a prominent public and visual focal point.
- Strengthen connectivity between the historic ghost stairs and east-west pedestrian circulation.
- Enhance safety, visibility, and character through integrated landscape lighting.
- Celebrate local culture, creativity, and multimodal connectivity through public art.
- Support and reinforce the long-term vision for the SW Waterfront District.

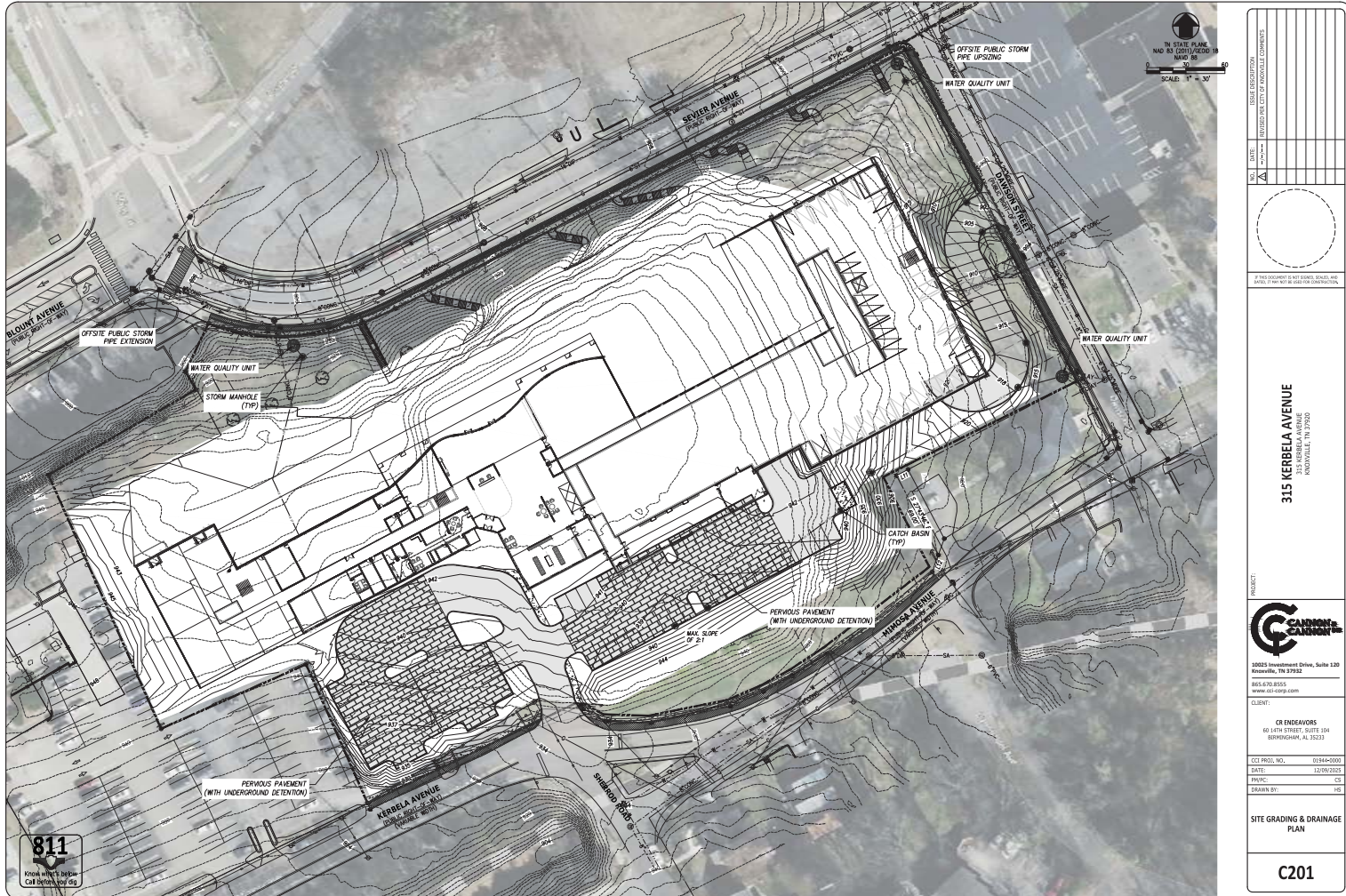
315 Kerbela Ave  
Knoxville, TN  
April 27, 2026



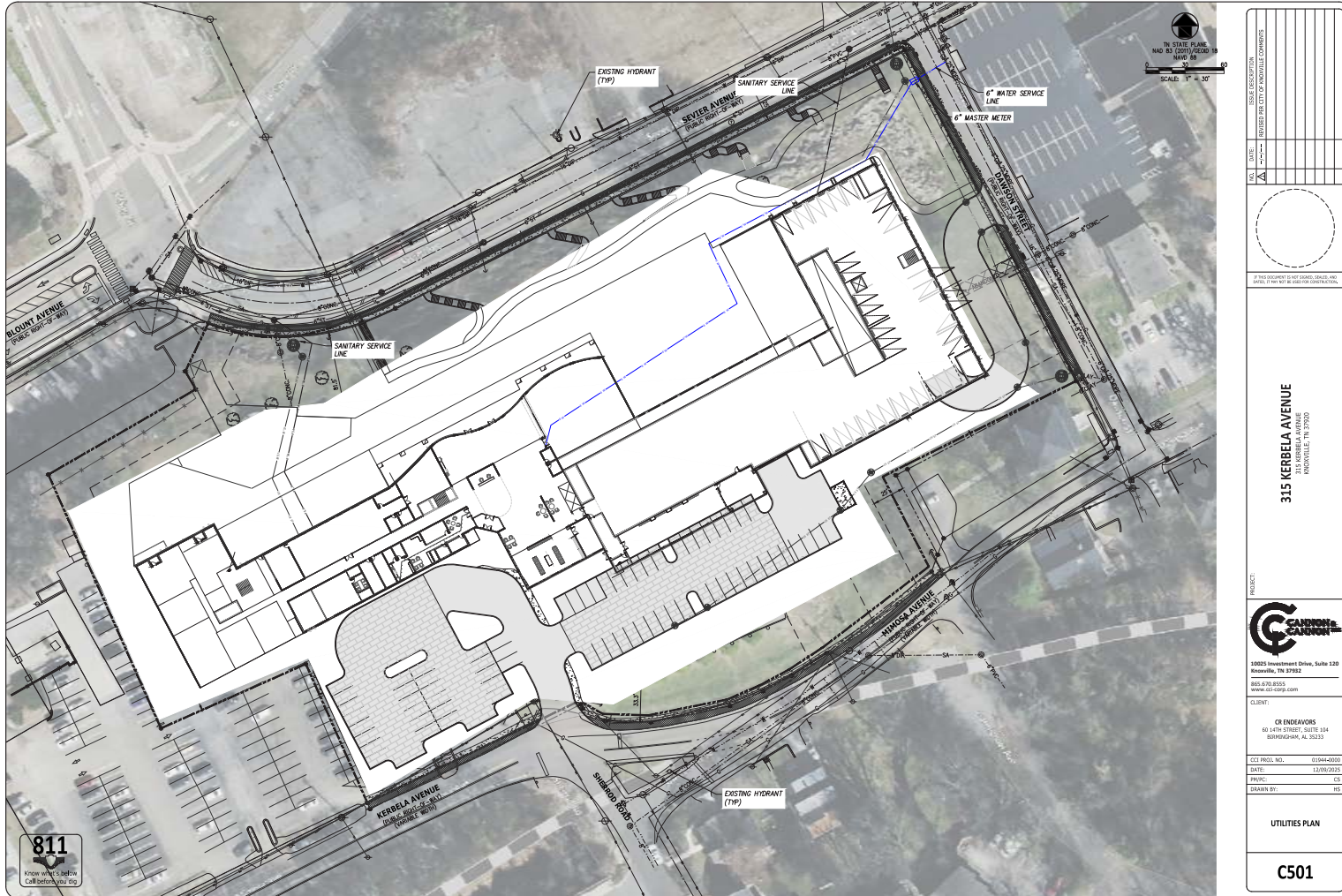




# Civil Plan - Site Grading & Drainage Plan



# Civil Plan - Utilities Plan



# Transportation Diagram

## Site Access

The site is located at the termination of the Gay St. Bridge and Sevier Ave. The South Waterfront Master Plan calls for multi-modal transportation options around the site including bike infrastructure, bus stops, and accessible pedestrian connections. The Mid River portion of the Master Plan prioritizes connectivity to this green way network and the sites centralized location allow for easy access to enjoyable active transportation options.

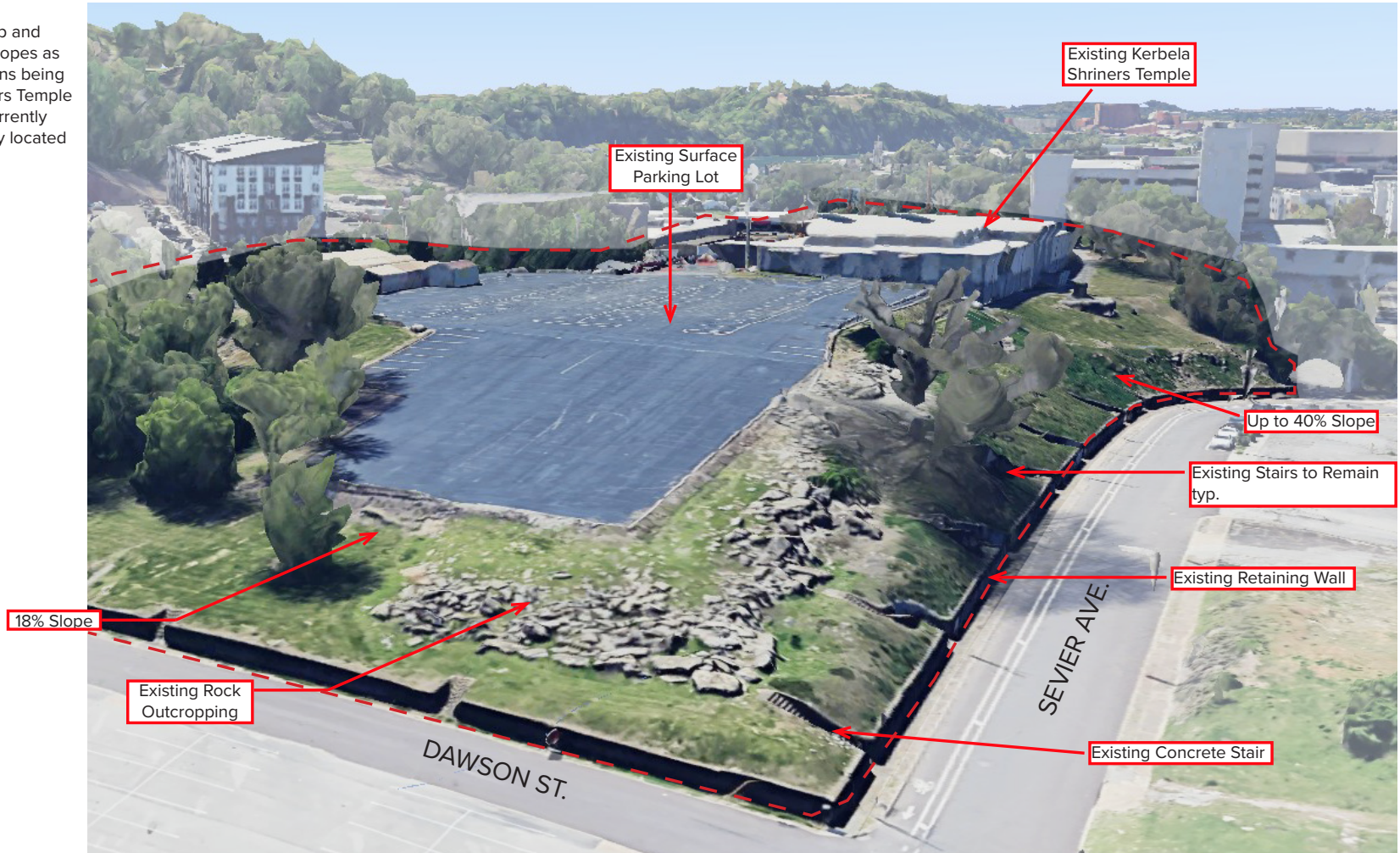


- Bus Stop
- Existing Greenway
- Proposed Complete Street
- New Complete Street
- Existing Complete Street
- Proposed Greenway
- Proposed Greenway
- Existing Public Space
- Existing Complete Street
- Existing Pedestrian Bridge

# Site Topography

## Existing Site Conditions

The site topography is generally steep and rocky. The perimeter of the site has slopes as steep as 40% with the worse conditions being along Sevier Ave. The Kербela Shriners Temple and a large surface parking lot are currently occupying the buildable area centrally located on the site.



# Site Topography: Reference Images

## Existing Site Conditions

A large surface parking area encompasses the majority of the central portion of the site. This parking area slopes up to 20% towards Dawson St.



Image Key



1. Facing North along Kerbela Ave.



2. Facing South along Sevier Ave.



3. Facing West along Dawson St.



4. Facing Northeast from the peak of site

# Site Topography: Reference Images

## Existing Conditions at Sevier Ave

A series of existing concrete stairs are present that originally provided access to a row of demolished houses set back from the road to avoid the steepest part of the slope. These stairs terminate in an existing retaining wall that runs the length of the property line along Sevier Ave. While not currently code compliant, the stairs provide an interesting architectural feature that references the history of the site and will be incorporated into future site planning. The slope of Sevier Ave. is not currently ADA accessible. While it is appropriate to maintain pedestrian connections and bike infrastructure, the grade and existing site features present a unique hardship that impedes the ability to create a complete street with building frontage.

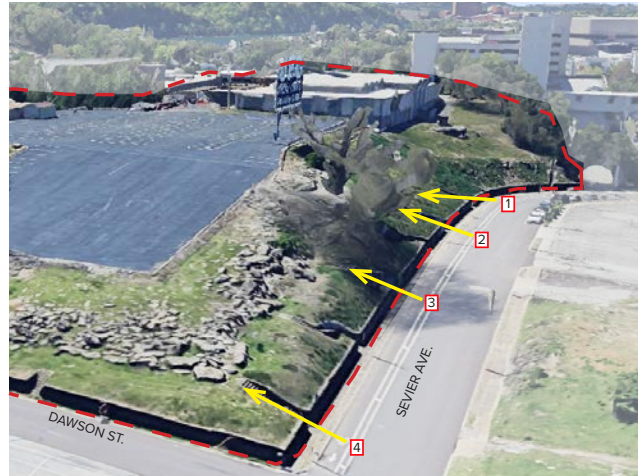


Image Key



1. Existing Concrete Stairs along Sevier Ave.



2. Existing Concrete Stairs along Sevier Ave.

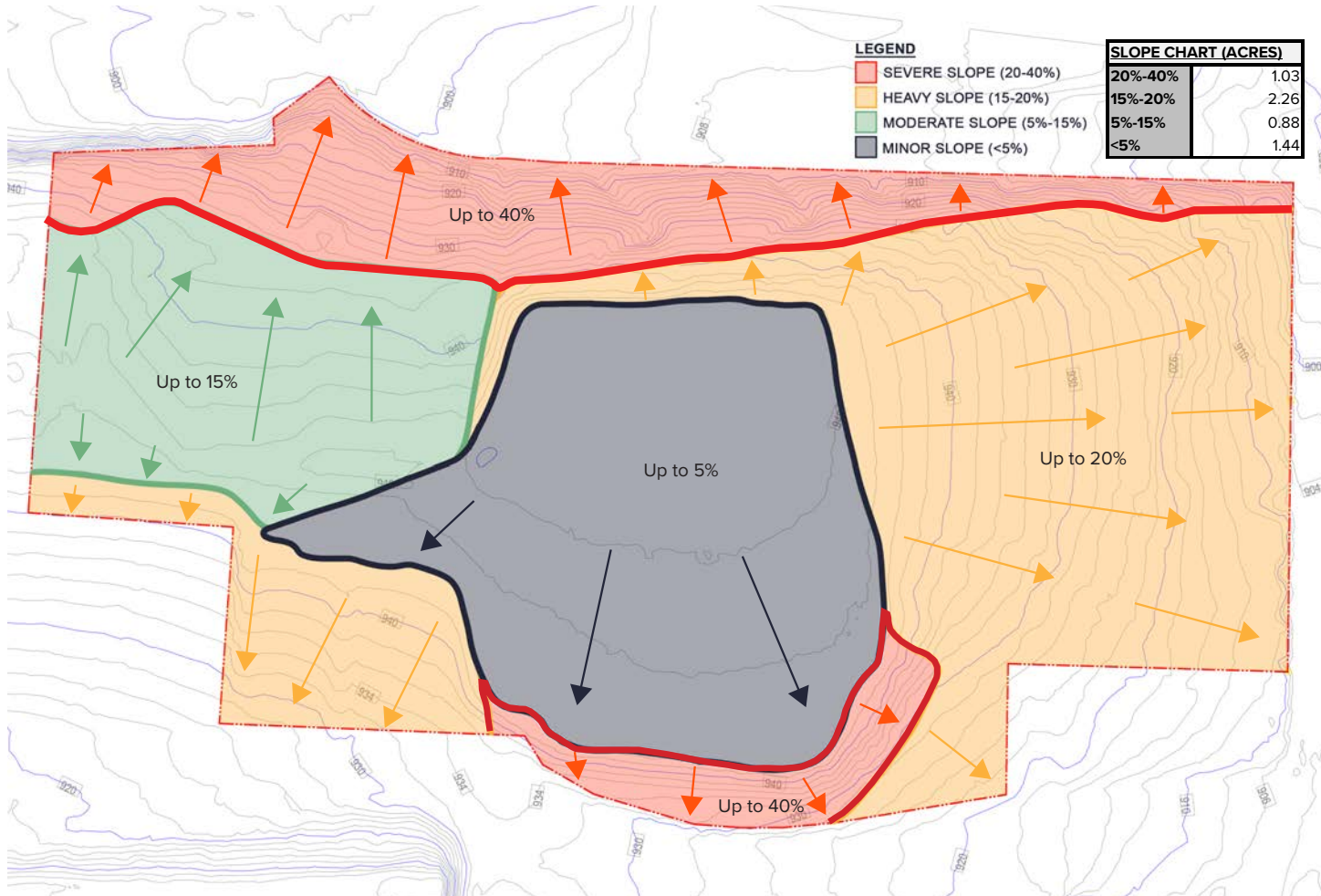


3. Existing Concrete Stairs along Sevier Ave.



4. Existing Rocky Outcropping along Sevier Ave.

# SITE GRADING DIAGRAM



# Site Topography

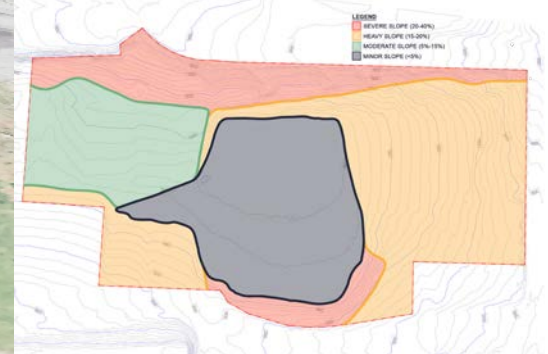


## LEGEND

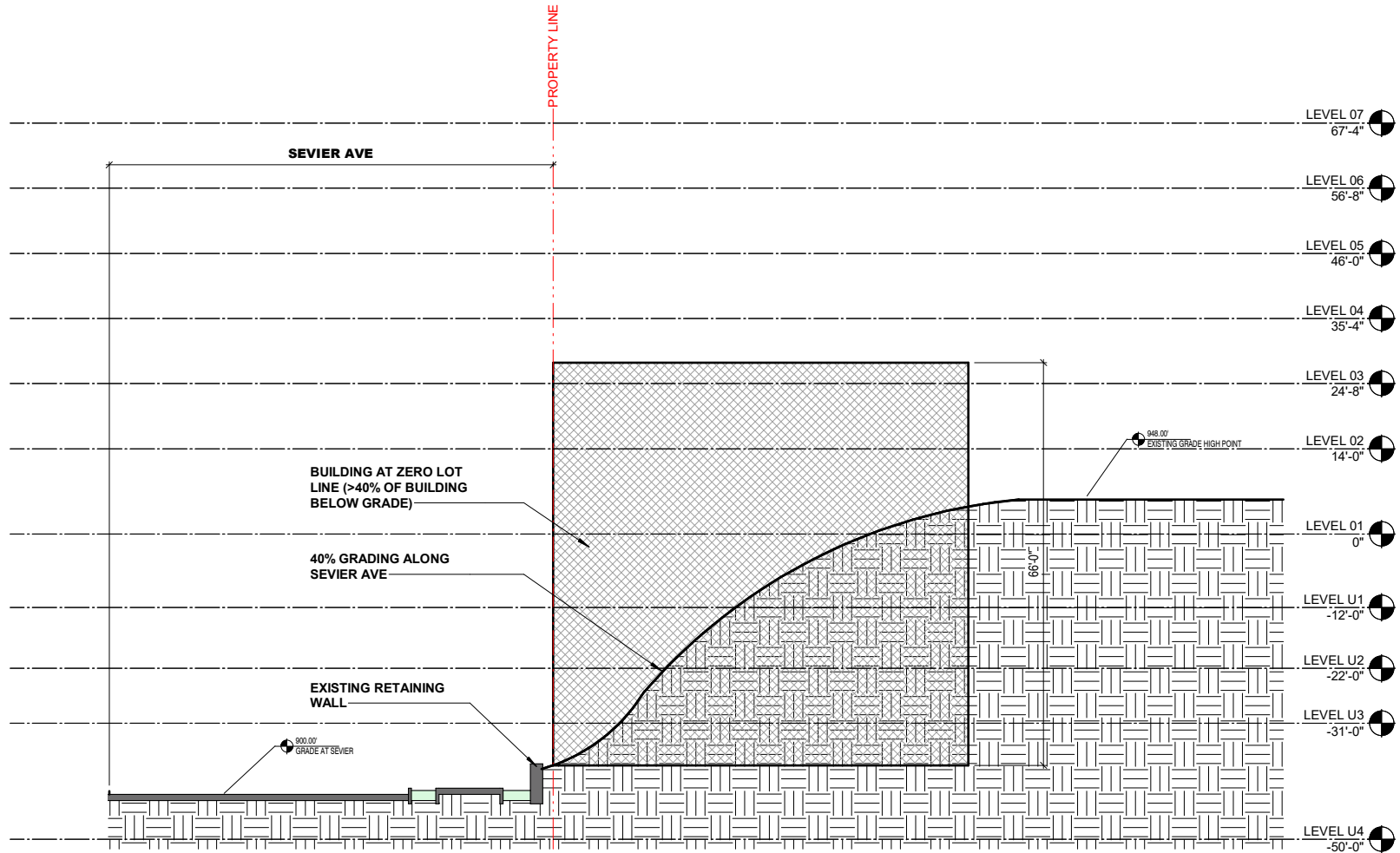
- SEVERE SLOPE (20-40%)
- HEAVY SLOPE (15-20%)
- MODERATE SLOPE (5%-15%)
- MINOR SLOPE (<5%)

## SLOPE CHART (ACRES)

20%-40%	1.03
15%-20%	2.26
5%-15%	0.88
<5%	1.44

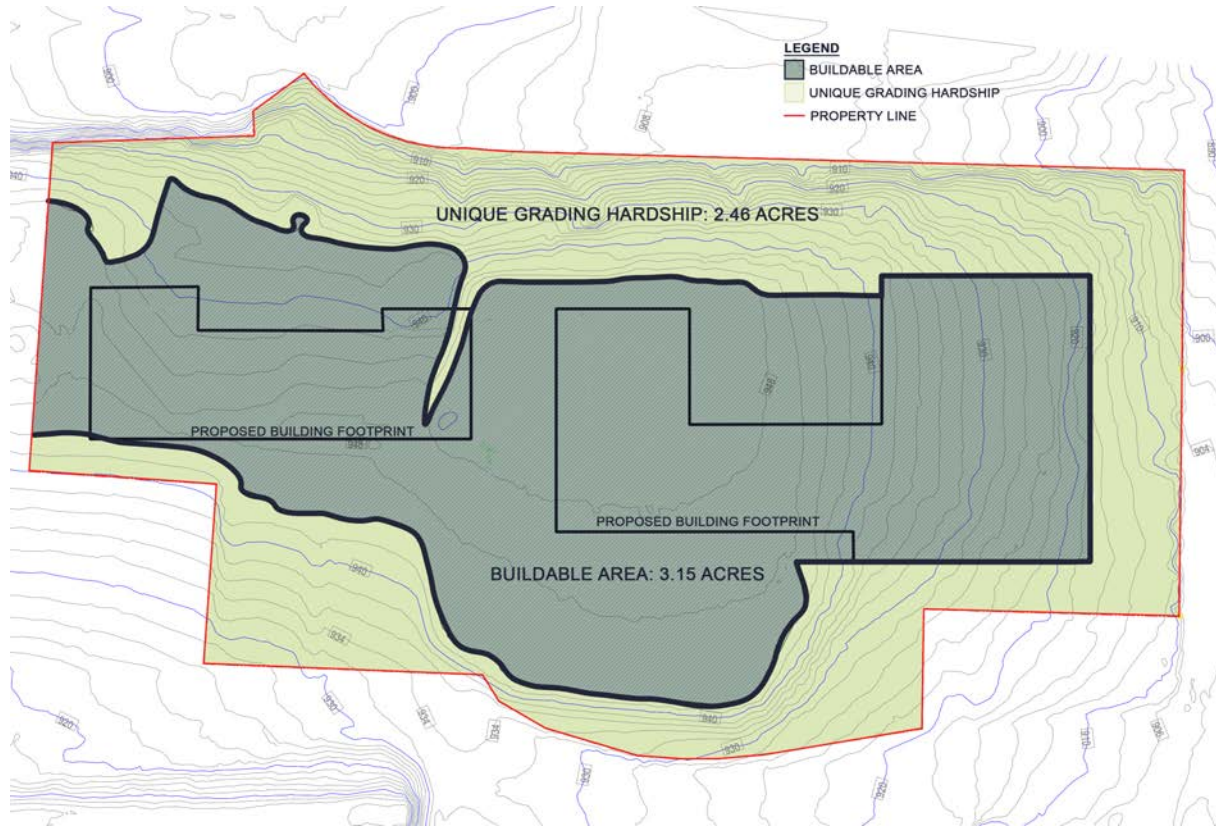


# BUILDABLE AREA



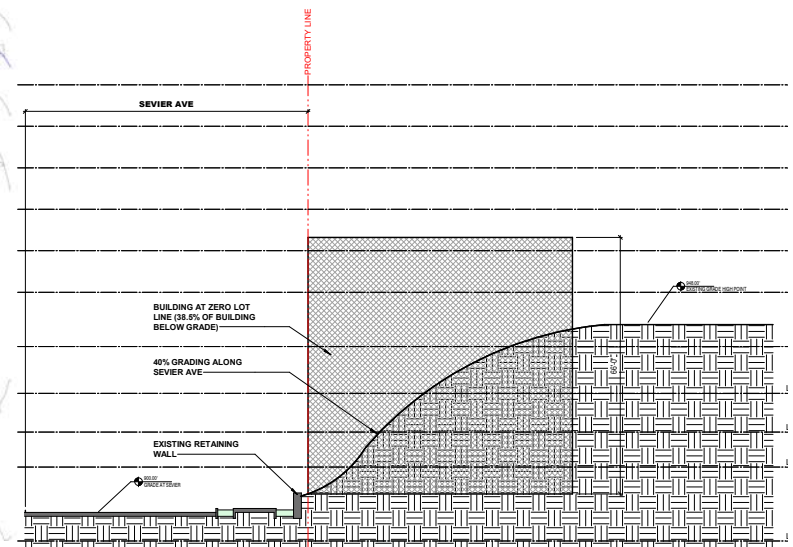
SECTION AT "ZERO LOT LINE"

# BUILDABLE AREA



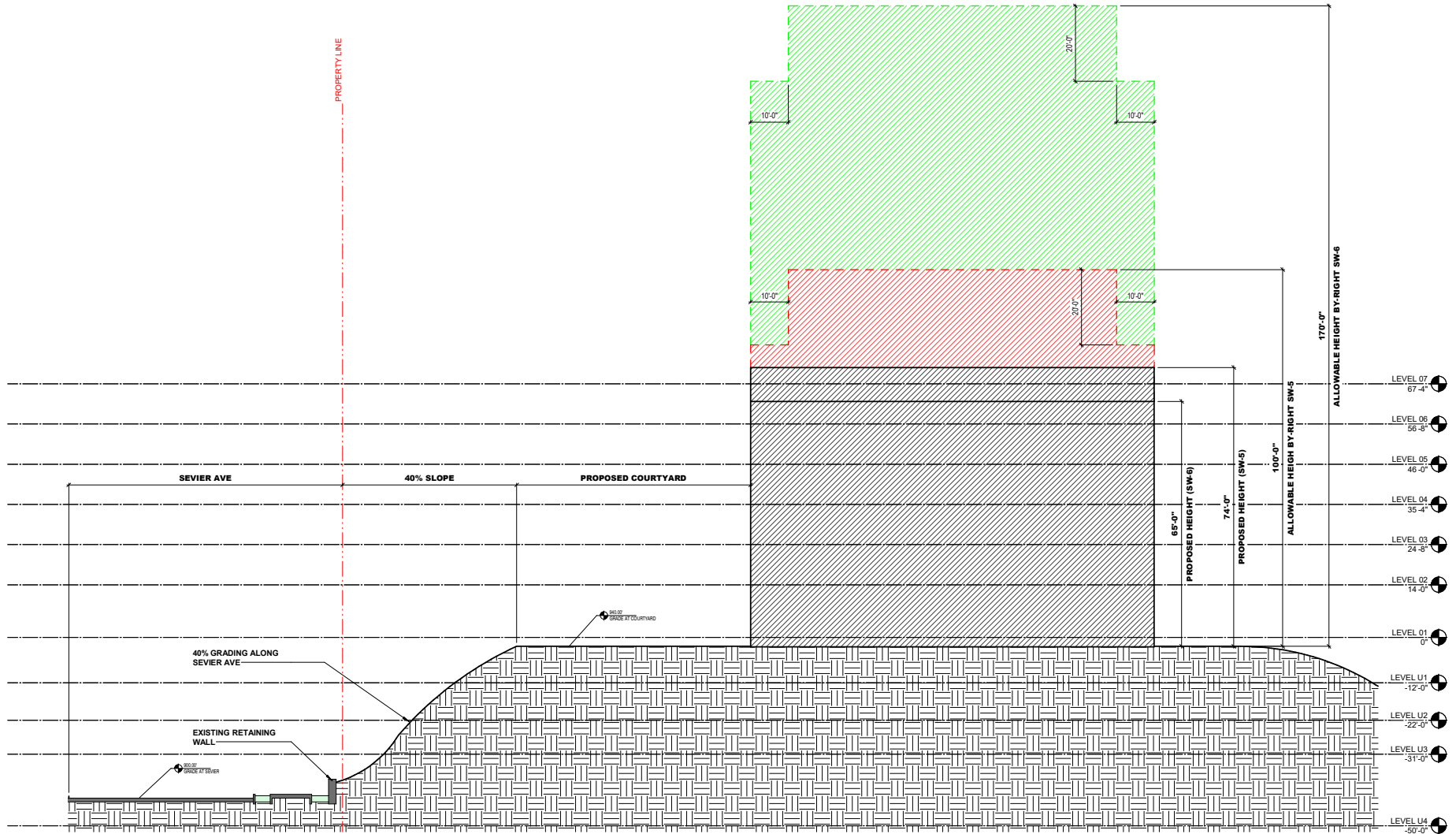
BUILDABLE AREA DIAGRAM

OVERALL LOT BUILDABLE AREA CHART (ACRES)			
	BUILDABLE AREA	UNIQUE GRADING HARDSHIP	TOTAL
SITE	3.15	2.46	5.61
RATIO	56.10%	43.90%	100%

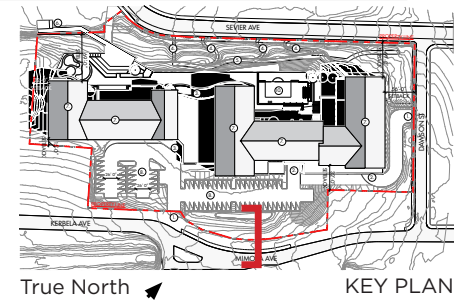
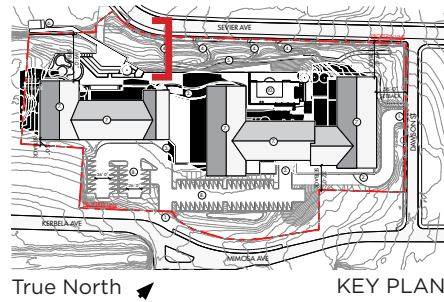
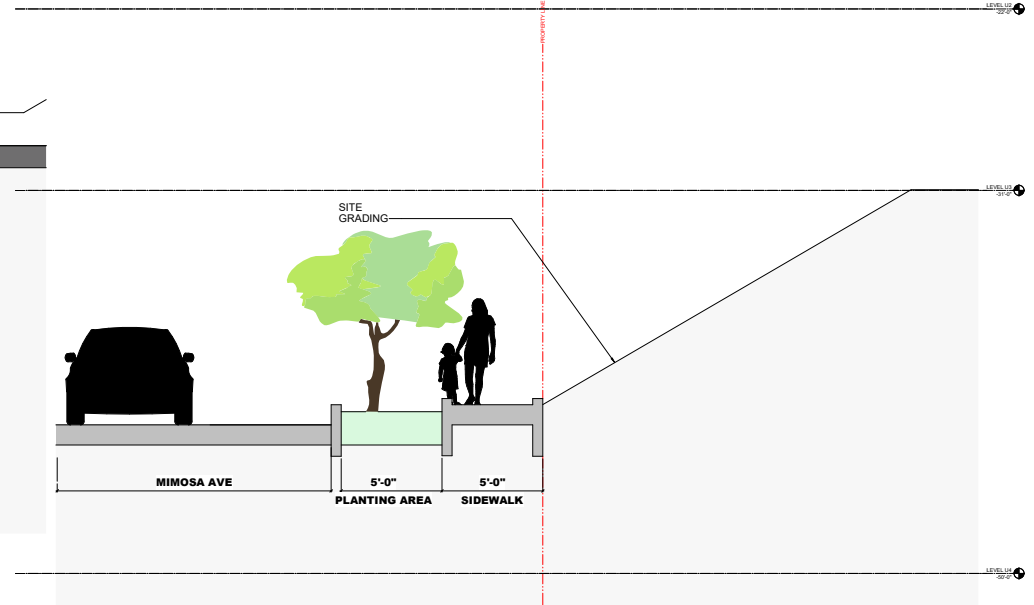
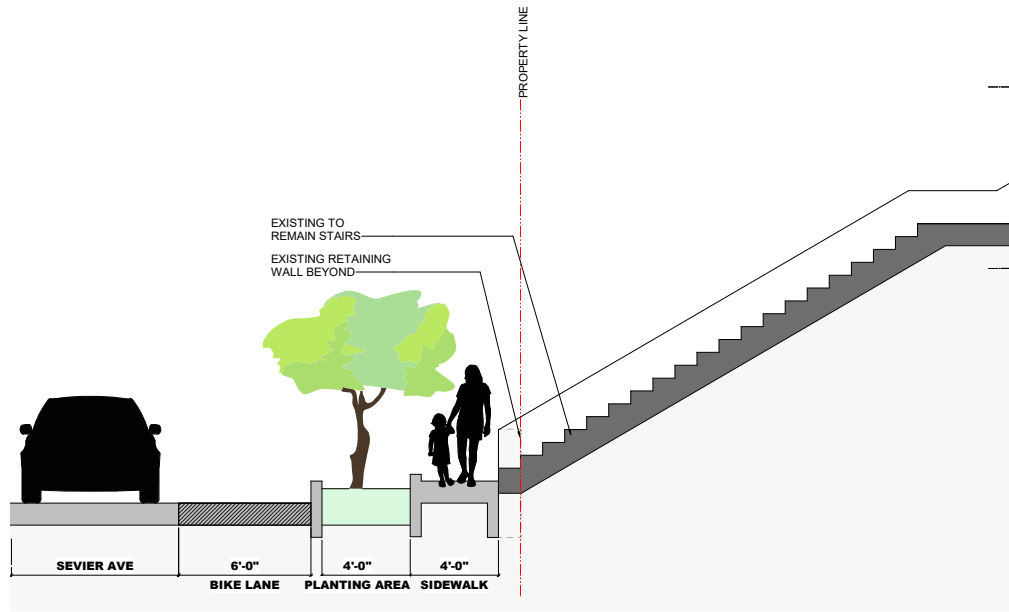


SECTION AT "ZERO LOT LINE"

# BUILDABLE HEIGHT DIAGRAM



# Streetscape - Sevier Ave.



# Site Precedent | Connecting the Waterfront

Site Information



*Bowline Apartments | Champlin, MN*



*South Banks Apartments, Knoxville | Riverfront Connectivity*



*Livano Knoxville | South Waterfront District - Down River*



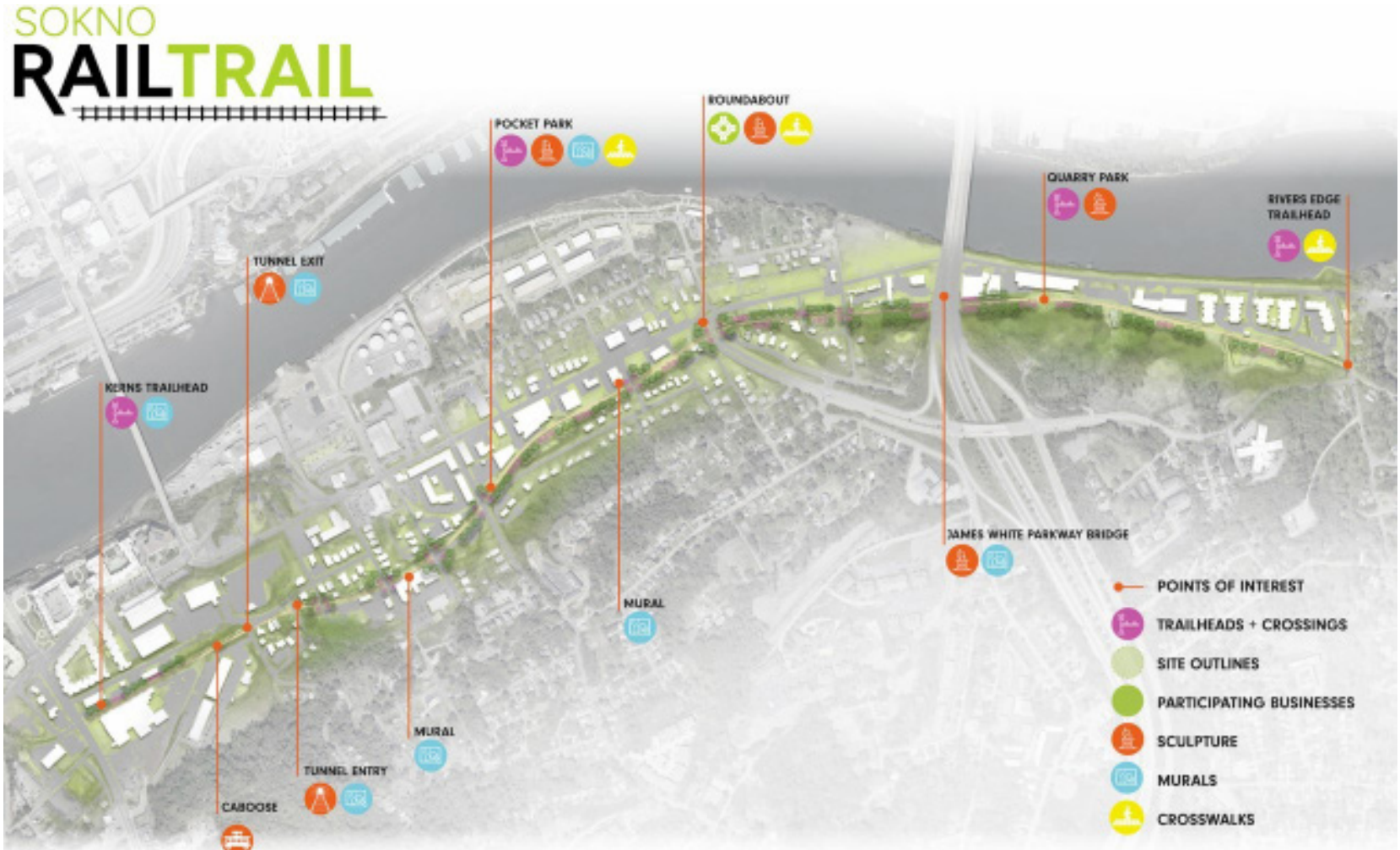
*Marina Square Waterfront Apartments | Seattle, WA*



*Apex Hudson Riverfront Apartments | Yonkers, NY*

# Site Precedent | SOKNO Rail Trail

The SOKNO Rail Trail follows the Tennessee River, linking the South Knoxville neighborhoods with the city's expanding network of greenways and outdoor spaces. As it connects to the downtown via the Gay Street pedestrian bridge, the trail helps knit together both sides of the river with a continuous, walkable route for cyclists, runners, and daily commuters. With Knoxville continuing to grow, development around the trail is expected to encourage mixed-use spaces, outdoor recreation, and shared public areas that strengthen community camaraderie and make the riverfront an even more vibrant gathering place.



Livano Knoxville | South Waterfront District - Down River

# Architectural Narrative



## Project Parameters:

Overall Building GSF = 366,901 SF  
Number of Units – 217-223  
Indoor Amenity - 18,000 - 25,000 SF  
Outdoor Courtyard Amenity- 47,036 SF  
Number of Parking Spaces –  
228-235 Total  
69 Surface Spaces  
159-163 Structured Garage Spaces

## Project Overview

315 Kerbela is a 5.7-acre, split-zoned (SW-5 / SW-6) site in Knoxville's Southwest Waterfront District. The proposal is an active-adult apartment community of approximately 217 units composed of two buildings connected at ground level by a shared lobby and resident gathering space. The design transforms an unimproved lot into a walkable, mixed-use edge that advances the district vision and form-based code objectives.

## Response to Context and Vision

The project implements the Southwest Waterfront district framework by activating the street edge, supporting appropriate density, and preserving adjacent waterfront stairs and viewpoints along Sevier Ave. Repairs and preservation of existing stairs will allow public to walk and use the stairs for views along the river walk. The development reinforces the district's goal of creating a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented urban neighborhood that balances new residential growth with civic benefit and historic character.

## Site and Urban Design

Two distinct but related volumes (East wing — six stories; West wing — five stories) bookend a landscaped central courtyard. The massing steps down toward the west to reduce perceived scale from the street. The central courtyard and adjacent hardscape form flexible gathering space for residents, drawing activity into the site and reinforcing a human-scaled block pattern. New sidewalks along Mimosa and Kerbela Ave will be added to improve walkability with a landscape buffer. Along Sevier Ave- improvements and landscape will be added to the existing sidewalks.

## Form-Based Code and Material (SW-5 / SW-6 Compliance)

Materials follow the SW form-based code emphasis on durable, high-quality, street-oriented facades: masonry (primary), natural stone and stone-treated concrete accents, and expansive glazing at ground level for visual permeability and activation. Secondary materials include carefully detailed board-and-batten panels and select siding accents to articulate façade bays, create rhythm, and reflect Knoxville's heritage. Warm, finished wood tones are used at the primary connection and lobby to provide a pedestrian-scaled, inviting material expression. Large window openings and private balconies are composed of activating façades while maintaining modulation and human scale. Articulated banding, recessed entries, and vertical/fenestration breaks reduce perceived mass and align with SW-5/6 façade requirements.

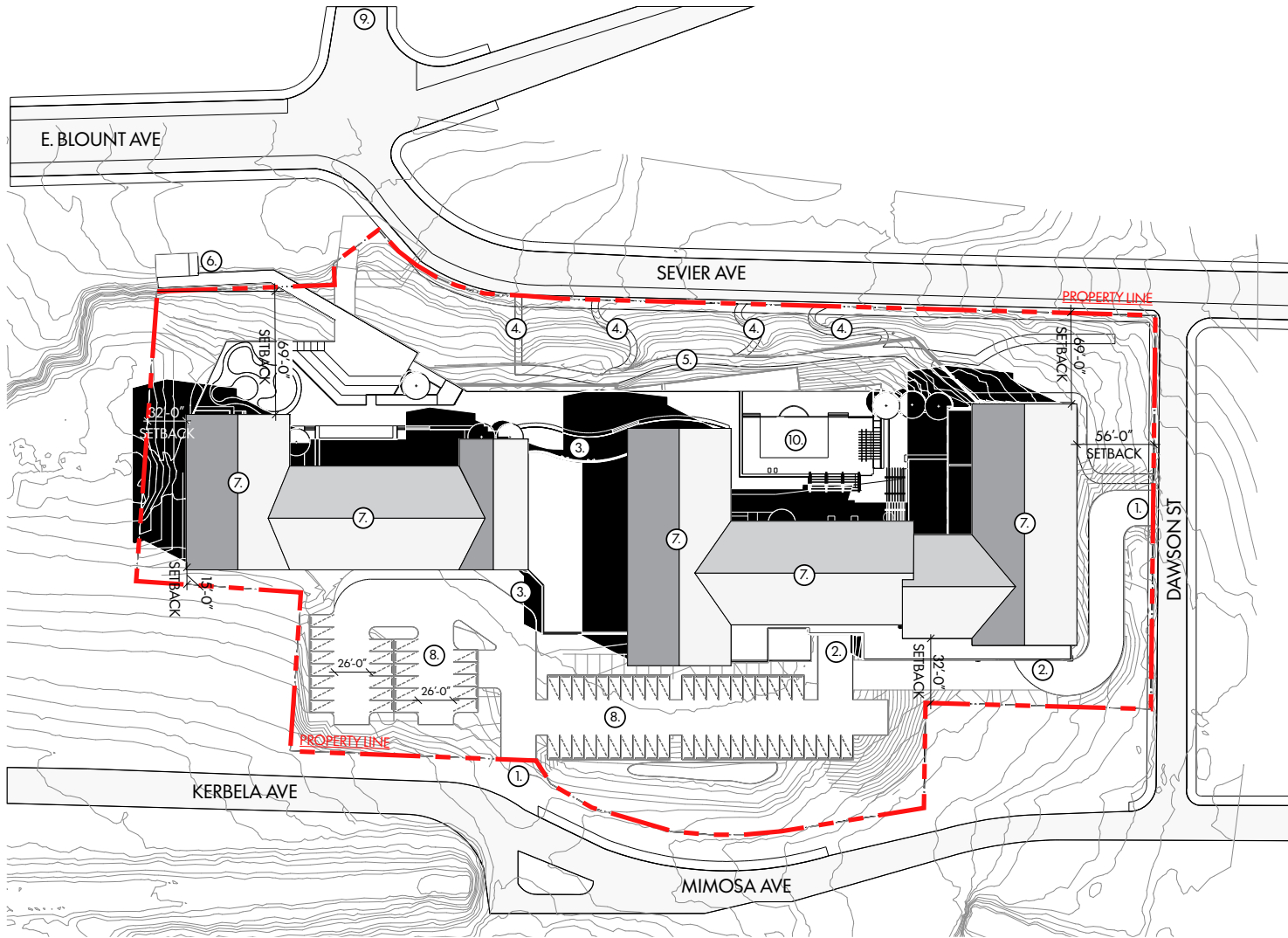
## Sustainability, Mobility, and Public Benefit

The design prioritizes walkability and multimodal access: new sidewalks, improved street lighting, on-site bike parking for residents and storage, and connections to nearby transit and waterfront trails.

Stormwater management strategies and durable low-maintenance materials reduce long-term lifecycle costs and improve site resiliency.

The project delivers public benefits through site improvements, increased local housing supply per the Southwest Framework vision (active adult market), and enhanced property tax revenue to support municipal services.

# Site Plan - Architectural (New Design)



- KEY
1. Vehicular Entry
  2. Garage Entry
  3. Bulding Entry
  4. Existing to Remain Stairs
  5. Public Walking Path
  6. Public Elevator
  7. HVAC Well
  8. Surface Parking
  9. Gay Street Bridge Beyond
  10. Swimming Pool

SCALE: 1"=80'

True North 

# Rendered Site Plan (New Design)



**KEY**

- 1. Main Entrance
- 2. Vehicular Entry
- 3. Garage Entry
- 4. Building Entry
- 5. Surface Parking
- 6. Swimming Pool

SCALE: 1"=80'

True North

4-A-26-OB  
Revised: 5/27/2026

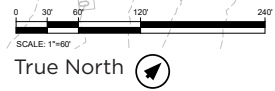


# LEVEL 02



## SPACE USAGE

- 1BD
- 1BD+DEN
- 2BD
- 2BD+DEN
- 3BD
- AMENITY



# TYPICAL (LEVEL 03-05)

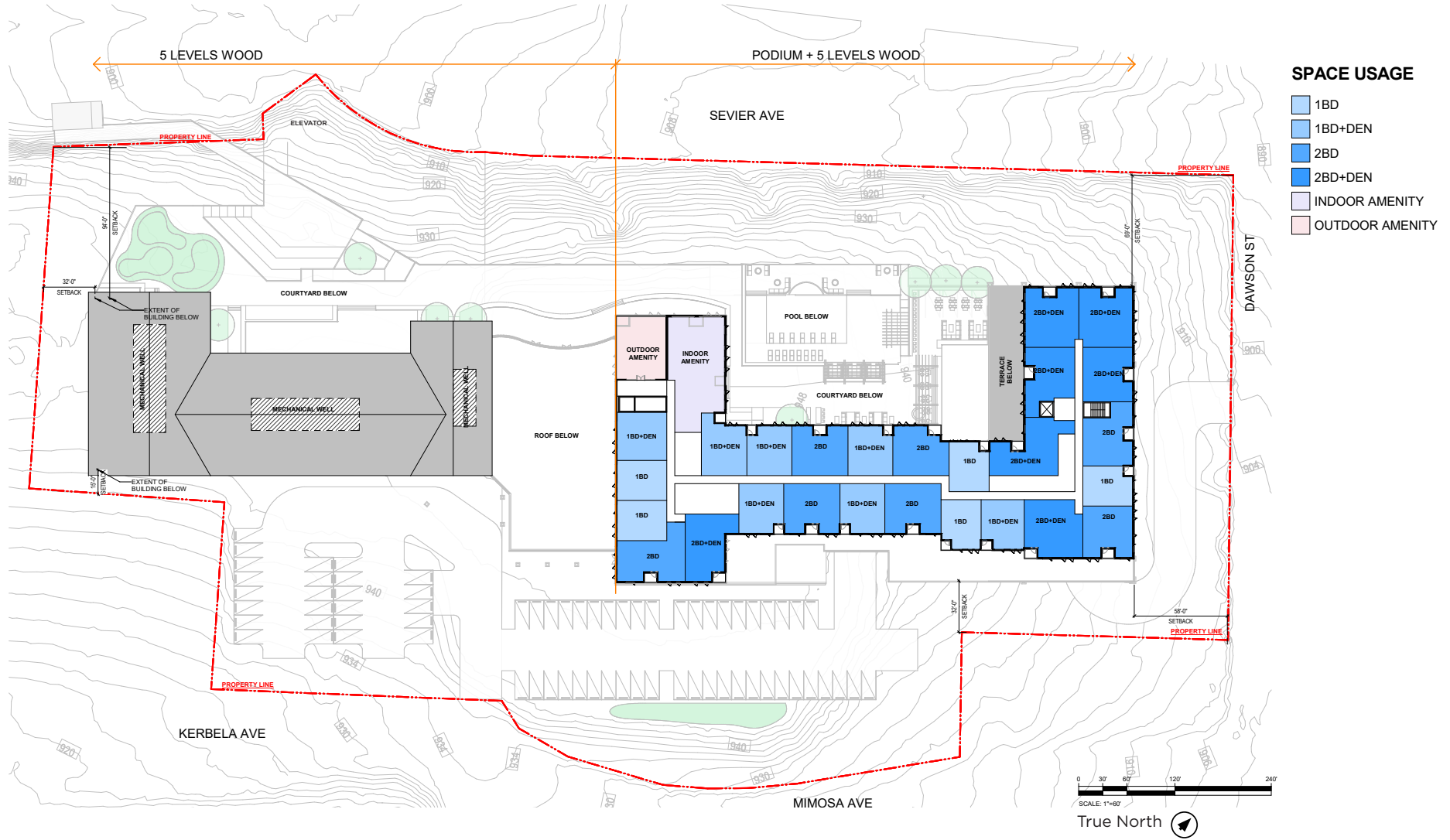


## SPACE USAGE

- 1BD
- 1BD+DEN
- 2BD
- 2BD+DEN
- 3BD



# LEVEL 06



# Perspective 01



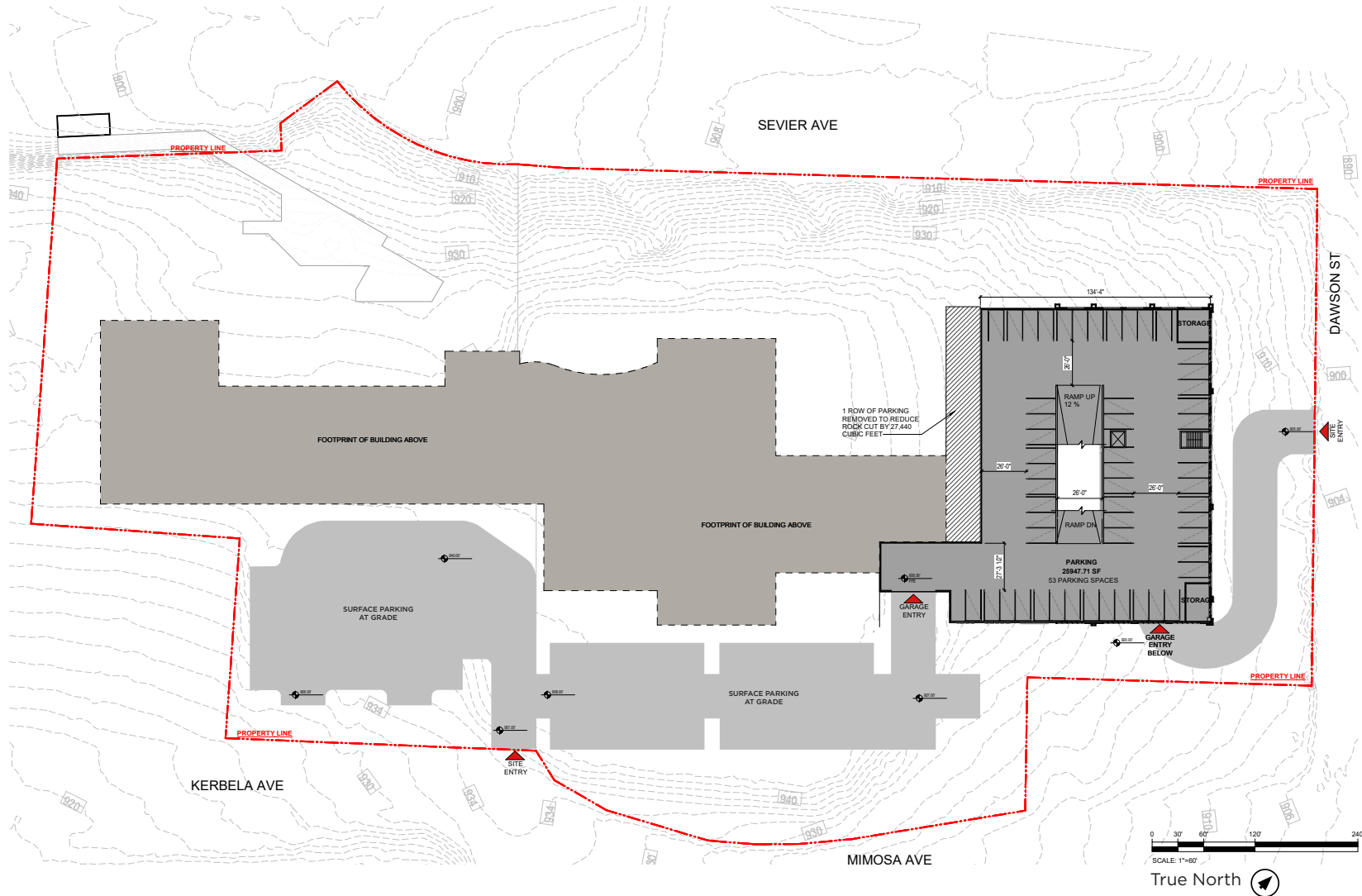
# Perspective 02



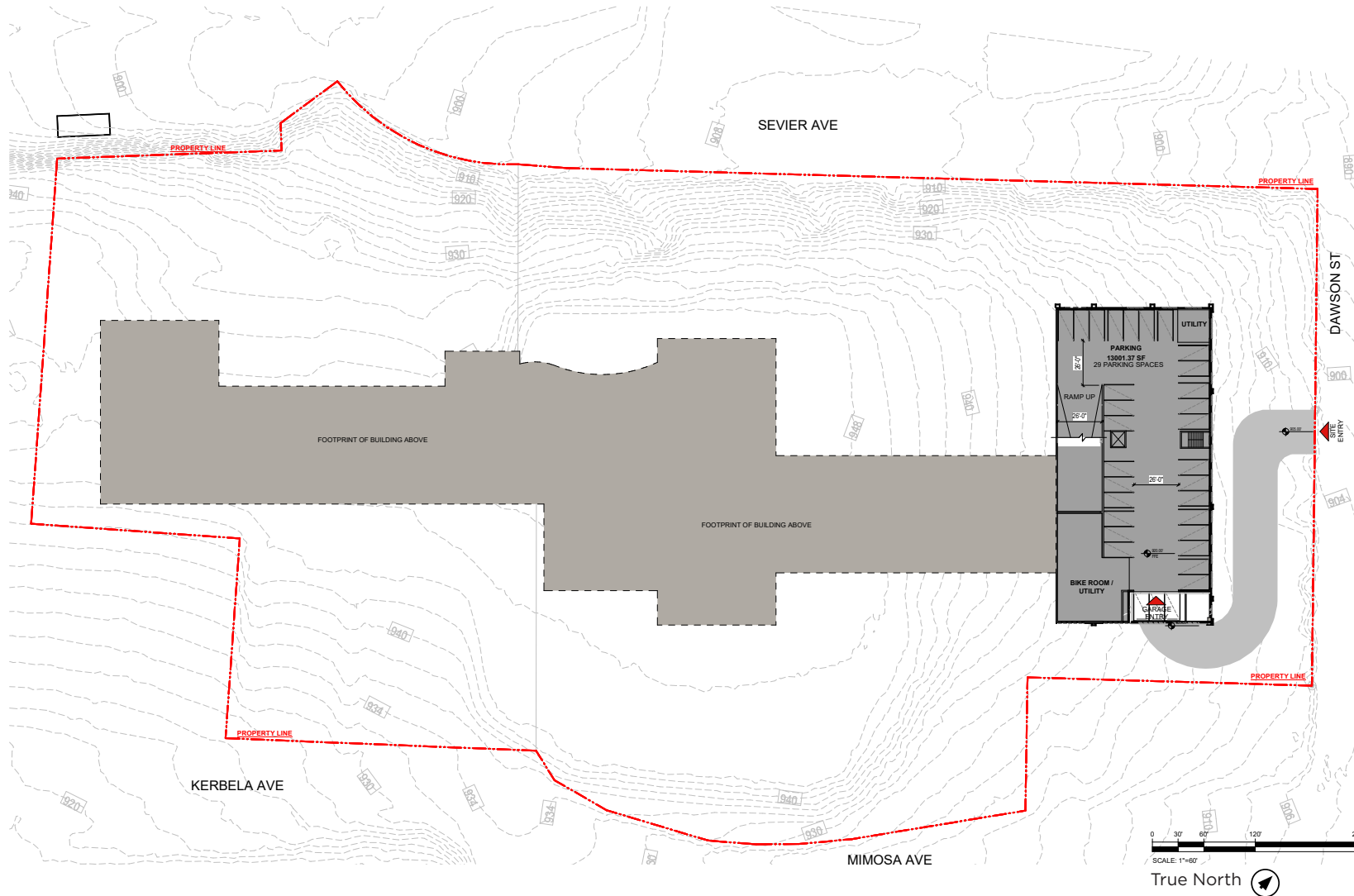
# Perspective 03



# GARAGE LEVEL 01



# GARAGE LEVEL 02 (STREET LEVEL)



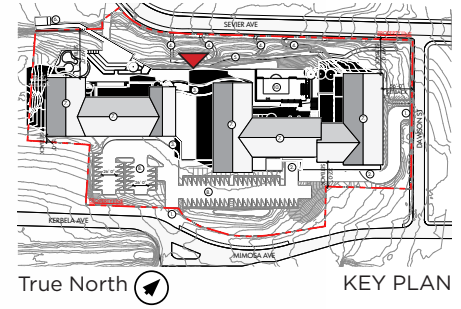
# North Elevation

Ground Floor Glazing Calculation:  
 Wall Area: 5,714 SF\*  
 Glazing Area: 4100 SF\*  
 Percentage: 71.7%

\*Glazing percentages do not include garage area



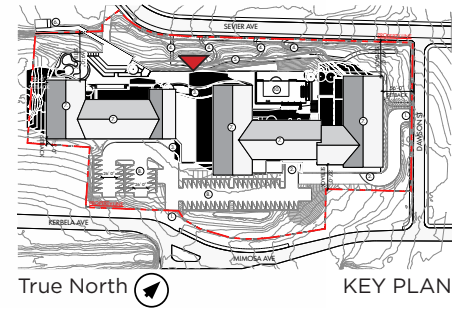
SCALE: 1"=60'



KEY PLAN



SCALE: 1"=60'

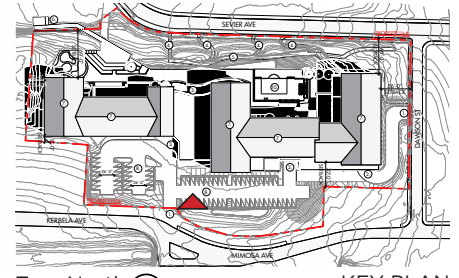


KEY PLAN

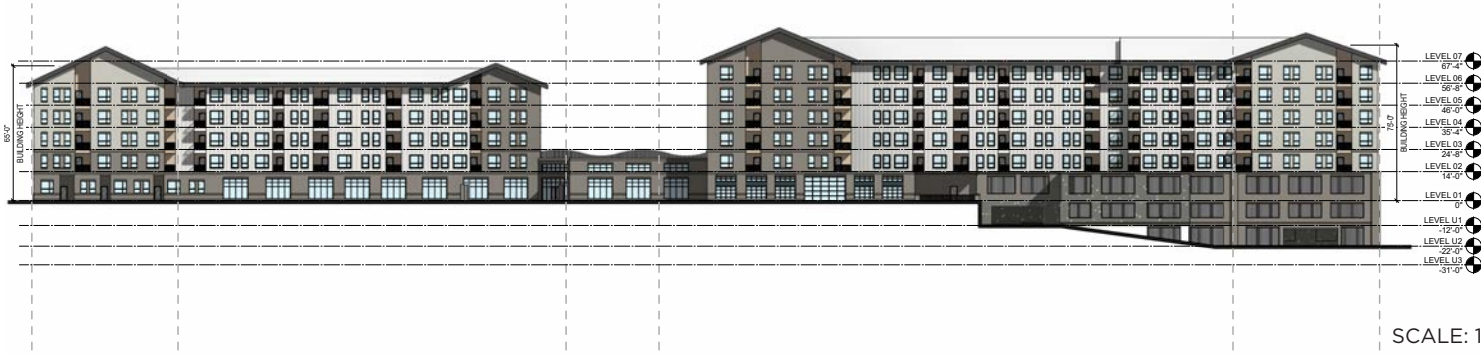
# South Elevation



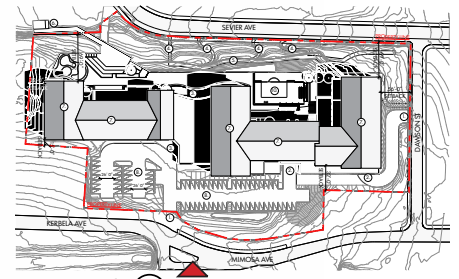
SCALE: 1"=60'



KEY PLAN



SCALE: 1"=60'



KEY PLAN

# Enlarged Elevation - Sevier Ave



**MATERIAL KEY:**  
**FCP:** Fiber Cement Panel  
**ST:** Stone Veneer  
**BR:** Brick Masonry



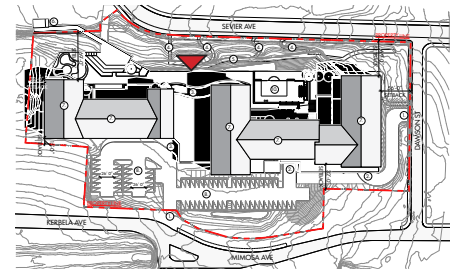
**ST01** - Stone Veneer



**FCP01** - White Board and Batten Fiber Cement



**FCP02** - Wood Textured Fiber Cement Siding



True North

KEY PLAN

# Perspective



# Enlarged Elevation - Sevier Ave.



**MATERIAL KEY:**  
**FCP:** Fiber Cement Panel  
**ST:** Stone Veneer  
**BR:** Brick Masonry



**ST01** - Stone Veneer



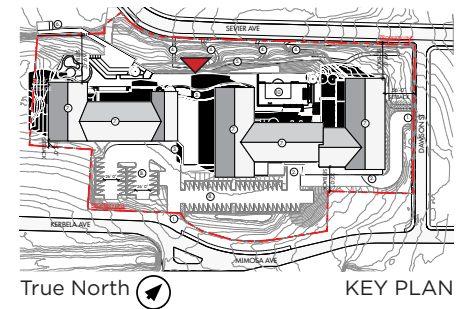
**FCP01** - White Board and Batten Fiber Cement



**FCP02** - Wood Textured Fiber Cement Siding



**BR01** - Brick Masonry, Brown and Grey Blend



KEY PLAN

# Perspective



# Perspective





4-A-26-OB  
Revised: 5/27/2026



4-A-26-OB  
Revised: 5/27/2026



4-A-26-OB  
Revised: 5/27/2026



4-A-26-OB  
Revised: 5/27/2026



REGULATING PLAN



Site shown in royal and light blue. Hatched areas indicate public use.

# Public Notice and Community Engagement

Planning strives to provide community members with information about upcoming cases in a variety of ways. In addition to posting public notice signs, our agency encourages applicants to provide information and offer opportunities for dialogue related to their upcoming case(s). The contact information you provide in your application may be used for that purpose. We require applicants to acknowledge their role in this process.

## Sign Posting and Removal

The Administrative Rules and Procedures of the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission require a sign to be posted on the property for each application subject to consideration by the Planning Commission.

**Planning staff will post the required sign.** If a replacement sign(s) is needed, the applicant is responsible for picking up the new sign(s) from Planning and will be charged \$10 for each replacement.

### Location and Visibility

The sign must be posted on the nearest adjacent/frontage street and in a location clearly visible to vehicles traveling in either direction. If the property has more than one street frontage, the sign should be placed along the street that carries more traffic. Planning staff may recommend a preferred location for the sign to be posted at the time of application.

### Timing

The sign(s) must be posted not less than 12 days prior to the scheduled Planning Commission public hearing and must remain in place until the day after the meeting. In the case of a postponement, the sign can either remain in place or be removed and reposted not less than 12 days prior to the next Planning Commission meeting. The applicant is responsible for removing the sign after the application has been acted upon by the Planning Commission.

### Acknowledgement

*By signing below, you acknowledge that public notice signs must be posted and visible on the property consistent with the guidelines above and between the dates listed below.*

3.28.26

Date to be Posted

4.10.26

Date to be Removed

Have you engaged the surrounding property owners to discuss your request?

Yes  No

No, but I plan to prior to the Planning Commission meeting

Applicant Signature



RYAN ROBERTSON  
Applicant Name

Date

2.20.26