



# MEMORANDUM

Date: October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
To: City of Madison Heights Zoning Board of Appeals  
From: Matt Lonnerstater, AICP – City Planner  
Subject: Sign Area Variance (Wall Sign)  
PZBA 22-08; 901 W. Whitcomb Ave.

## REQUEST

The applicant, *Emerald Steel Processing, LLC*, requests a variance from the maximum wall sign area requirement of Section 10.511(IV)(C)(4). The subject property is located at 901 W. Whitcomb Avenue and is zoned M-2, Heavy Industrial.

Per Section 10.511(IV)(C)(4), M-2 zoned properties are permitted a maximum wall sign area of 1.5 square-feet per each lineal feet of building frontage, not to exceed a total sign area of 100 square-feet. The 100 square-foot maximum area includes wall signs on all sides of the building. An existing 51.5 square-foot metal wall sign is located on the west building façade. The applicant proposes to install one (1) additional 218.5 square-foot illuminated sign on the east façade adjacent to I-75, bringing the total wall sign area to 270 square feet. As such, the applicant requests a total variance of 170 square feet. The variance request is summarized in the table, below:

<b>Maximum Wall Sign Area</b>	100 sq. ft. (all signs combined)
<b>Existing Wall Sign Area (west façade)</b>	51.5 sq. ft.
<b>Proposed Wall Sign Area (east façade)</b>	218.5 sq. ft.
<b>Total Wall Sign Area (existing and proposed)</b>	270 sq. ft.
<b>Variance Request</b>	170 sq. ft.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

Based on the building length (209 feet), the applicant would be permitted a wall sign area of 313 square feet were it not for the 100 square foot cap. Further, staff notes that businesses within the city's least-intense commercial district (B-1 – Local Business) are permitted signs up to a maximum of 600 square feet, as opposed to a 100 square foot maximum in the M-2 district. The Zoning Ordinance does not contain special sign standards or flexibility for properties with frontage on interstate highways.

The Community and Economic Development Department has initiated a comprehensive zoning ordinance rewrite project. As part of this project, the City may consider a text amendment to grant additional signage allowances for properties fronting interstate highways to eliminate the need for this type of dimensional variance request. The Zoning Board of Appeals has received several similar variance requests over the past year.

## VARIANCE FINDINGS

Section 10.804(2) outlines criteria for reviewing variance requests, summarized below with staff comments:

- ***Exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape or area of a specific piece of property at the time of enactment of the Zoning Ordinance or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary or exceptional conditions of such property.***

Staff Finding:

The subject parcel itself does not appear to contain exceptional features as it is a conforming M-2 parcel with a typical rectangular shape, and frontage along W. Whitcomb Ave and I-75. However, the property's frontage along I-75 corridor does warrant special consideration for visibility purposes.

- ***The strict application of the regulations enacted would result in peculiar or exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional undue hardship upon, the owner of such property, provided such relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purposes of this ordinance.***

Staff Finding: Staff finds that the property could continue to be used for industrial purposes in the absence of the requested variance. However, staff finds that the requested variance could be granted without causing substantial detriment to the public good and without changing the industrial character of the surrounding area.

Additional standards for reviewing variance cases are contained in Section 10.805, listed at the end of this report.

## SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE (SPRC) ACTION

The SPRC considered the variance request at their October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting and stated no objections.

## ZBA ACTION

**Any ZBA motion should include findings of fact relating to the variance criteria listed in Sections 10.804(2) and 10.805.** In granting a variance, the ZBA may attach conditions regarding the location, character and other features of the proposed use(s) as it may deem reasonable in furthering the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance.

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## CODE REFERENCES

***Sec. 10.804. - Power of zoning board of appeals.***

***(2) Variance.*** To authorize upon an appeal, a variance from the strict applications of the provisions of this Ordinance where by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape or area of a specific piece of property at the time of enactment of this Ordinance or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary or exceptional conditions of such property, the strict application of the regulations enacted would result in peculiar or exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional undue

*hardship upon the owner of such property, provided such relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purposes of this Ordinance. In granting a variance the board may attach thereto such conditions regarding the location, character and other features of the proposed uses as it may deem reasonable in furtherance of the purpose of this Ordinance. In granting a variance, the board shall state the grounds upon which it justifies the granting of a variance.*

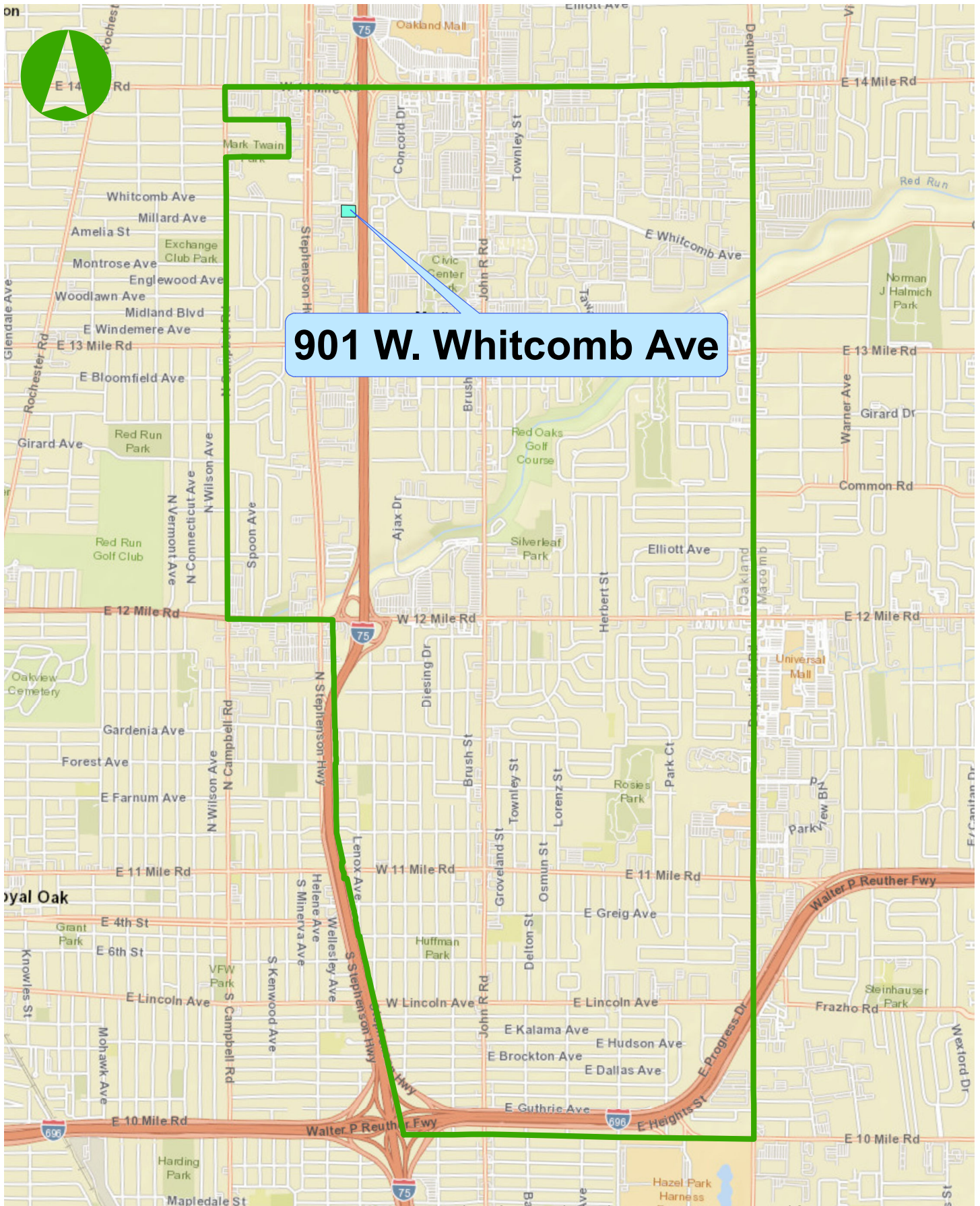
**Sec. 10.805. - Standards.**

*Each case before the city council, zoning board of appeals or plan commission shall be considered as an individual case and shall conform to the detailed application of the following standards in a manner appropriate to the particular circumstances of such case. All uses as listed in any district requiring approval for a permit shall be of such location, size and character that, in general, it will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the district in which it is situated and will not be detrimental to the orderly development of adjacent districts. Consideration shall be given to the following:*

- 1) The location and size of the use.*
- 2) The nature and intensity of the operations involved in or conducted in connection with it. (See section 10-319(4).)*
- 3) Its size, layout and its relation to pedestrian and vehicular traffic to and from the use.*
- 4) The assembly of persons in connection with it will not be hazardous to the neighborhood or be incongruous therewith or conflict with normal traffic of the neighborhood.*
- 5) Taking into account, among other things, convenient routes of pedestrian traffic, particularly of children.*
- 6) Vehicular turning movements in relation to routes of traffic flow, relation to street intersections, site distance and the general character and intensity of development of the neighborhood.*
- 7) The location and height of buildings, the location, the nature and height of walls, fences and the nature and extent of landscaping of the site shall be such that the use will not hinder or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent land and buildings or impair the value thereof.*
- 8) The nature, location, size and site layout of the uses shall be such that it will be a harmonious part of the district in which it is situated taking into account, among other things, prevailing shopping habits, convenience of access by prospective patrons, the physical and economic relationship of one type of use to another and related characteristics.*
- 9) The location, size, intensity and site layout of the use shall be such that its operations will not be objectionable to nearby dwellings, by reason of noise, fumes or flash of lights to a greater degree than is normal with respect to the proximity of commercial to residential uses, not interfere with an adequate supply of light and air, not increase the danger of fire or otherwise endanger the public safety.*



# ZBA CASE: 22 - 08

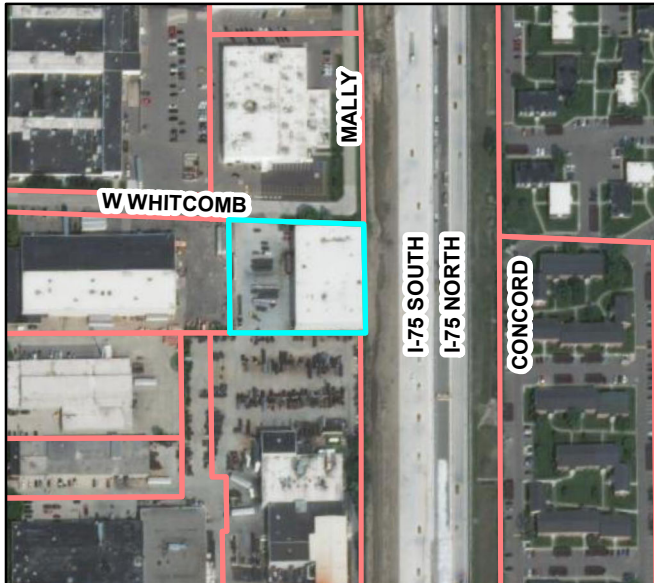


# Site Address: 901 W. Whitcomb Avenue



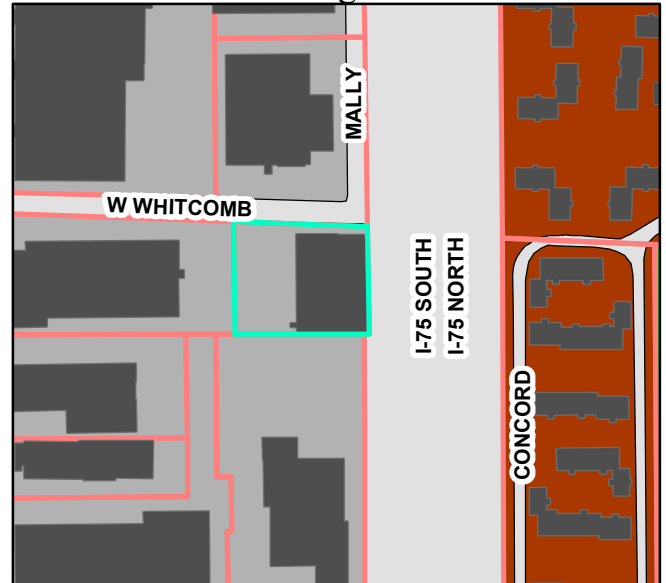
Click for map

Aerial



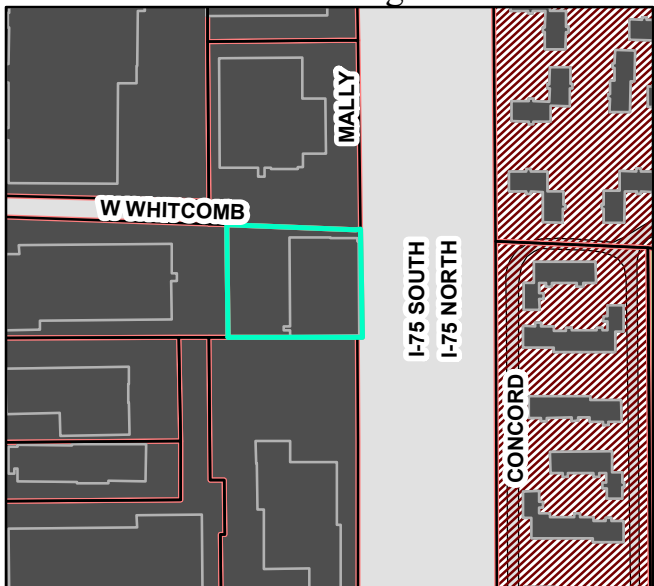
- 901 W Whitcomb Avenue
- Parcels

Existing Land Use



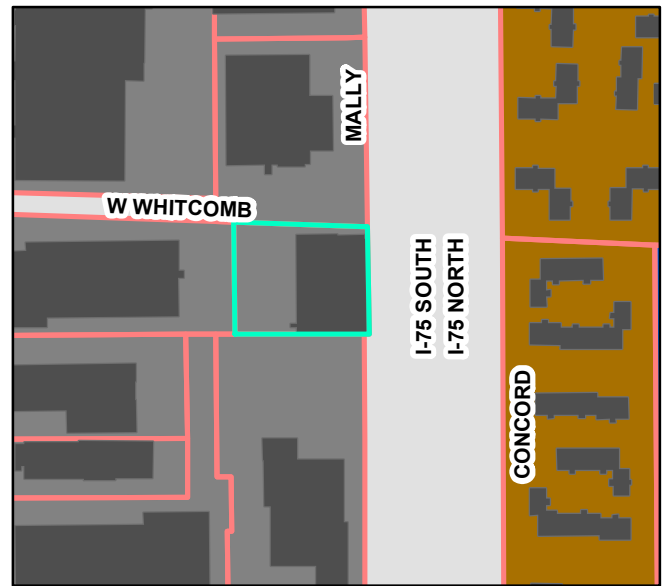
- 901 W Whitcomb Avenue
- Multiple Family
- Buildings
- Industrial
- Parcels
- Public

Zoning



- 901 W Whitcomb Avenue
- Buildings
- Parcels
- M-2 Heavy Industrial
- R-C Condominium Residential

Future Land Use

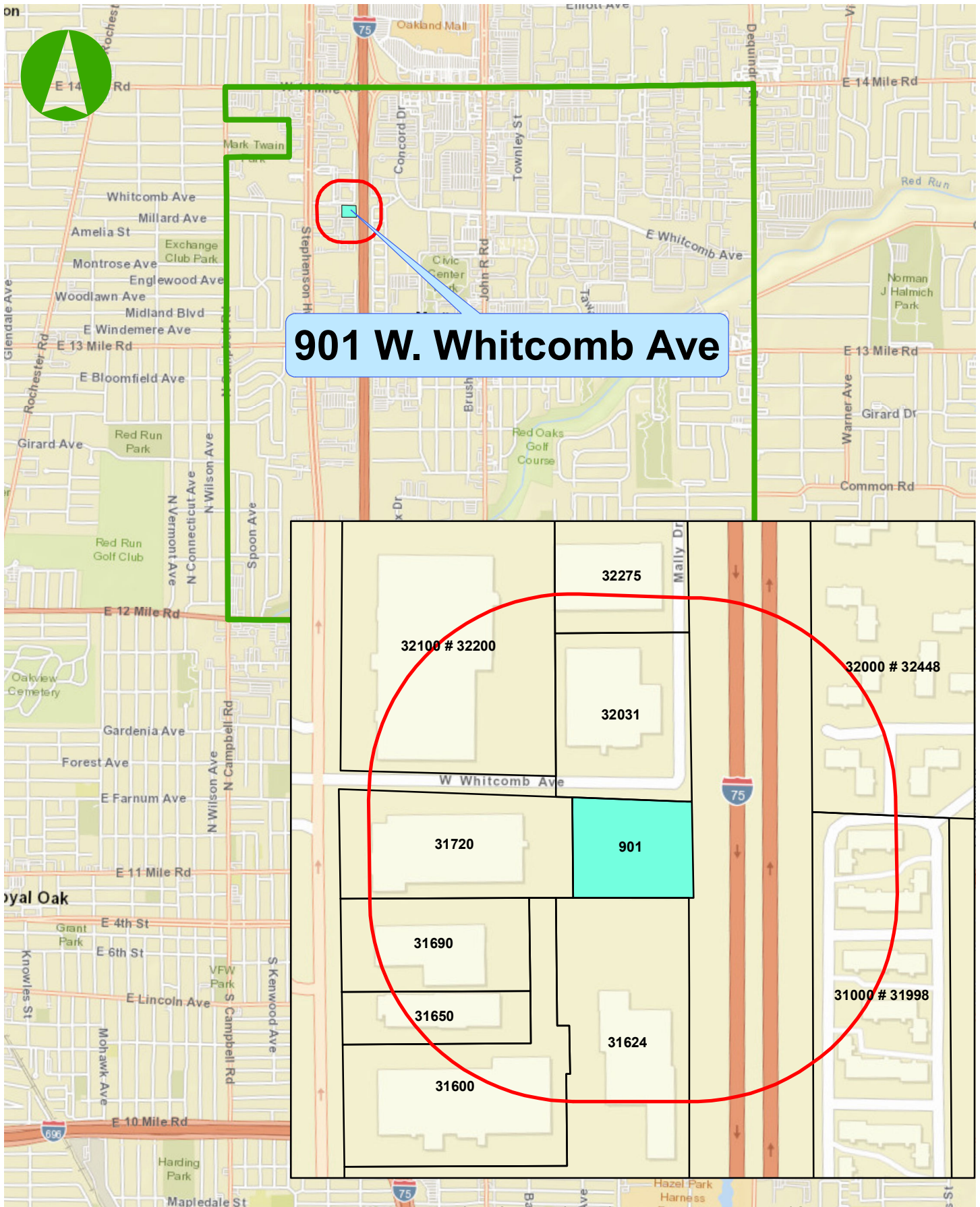


- 901 W Whitcomb Avenue
- Multiple Family
- Commercial
- Public and Schools
- Recreation
- Buildings



# ZBA CASE: 22 - 08

## Buffer 500Ft



## **NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

Notice is hereby a Meeting of the Madison Heights **Zoning Board of Appeals** will be held in the **Break Room of the Department of Public Services (DPS) Offices** at **801 Ajax Drive**, Madison Heights, Oakland County, Michigan 48071 on **Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.** to consider the following requests:

### **(A) Case # PZBA 22-08: 901 W. Whitcomb Avenue**

REQUEST: The petitioner, Kevin Lawrence, requests a variance from city sign regulations, Section 10.511(IV)(C)(4) of the Zoning Ordinance, pertaining to maximum wall sign area. The subject property is located at 901 W. Whitcomb Avenue (tax parcel # 44-25-02-328-011) and is zoned M-2, Heavy Industrial.

### **(B) Case # PZBA 22-09: 26040 Pinehurst Drive**

REQUEST: The petitioner, Firas Hanna, requests a variance from city sign regulations, Section 10.511(IV)(C)(4) of the Zoning Ordinance, pertaining to maximum ground sign height. The subject property is located at 26050 Pinehurst Drive (tax parcel # 44-25-24-251-019) and is zoned M-1, Light Industrial.

The applications and any supporting documents can be viewed during regular business hours at the Community & Economic Development Department. In addition, the agenda items can be viewed online at [www.madison-heights.org](http://www.madison-heights.org) in the Agenda Center after 4:00 p.m. on the Friday before the meeting.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can send your comments via email to: [MattLonnerstater@madison-heights.org](mailto:MattLonnerstater@madison-heights.org) and your comment will be read into the record at the meeting. Written comments may also be mailed prior to the meeting to 300 West Thirteen Mile Road, Madison Heights, Michigan, 48071. All comments will be heard at the meeting.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE  
(248) 583-0826



**CITY OF MADISON HEIGHTS  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
APPLICATION**

Application No.:

P2BA-0008

Date Filed:

(This application must be typed)

SUBMIT TWO ORIGINAL COPIES

1. **Petitioner:** Name: Kevin Lawrence  
Address: 28702 Adler Dr  
City: Warren State: MI Zip: 48088  
Telephone: 248-585-6880 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: renee@michigansignshops.com
2. **Petitioner's Interest in Property:** Sign company contracted by owner
3. **Property Owner:** (Attach list if more than one owner)  
Name: Emerald Steel Processing  
Address (Street): 31650 Stephenson Hwy  
City: Madison Heights State: MI Zip: 48071  
Telephone: 248-409-9676  
Email: jpagano@shannonpf.com
4. **Property Description:**  
Address: 901 W. Whitcomb  
Tax Parcel #: 44 - - - -  
Legal Description - Attach if metes and bounds description.  
If in a subdivision: Lot #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Subdivision name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lot size: \_\_\_\_\_  
Size of proposed building or addition: \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Present Zoning of Property:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Present Use:** \_\_\_\_\_
6. **Action Requested:** (Check the appropriate section and attach response on separate sheets)

☐ **APPEAL OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION (Administrative Review)**

The applicant requests the Board of Appeals to reverse/modify the \_\_\_\_\_  
decision/interpretation of Article \_\_\_\_\_, Section \_\_\_\_\_. The decision should be  
reversed/modified because: (On a separate sheet describe in detail the nature of the problem, the  
reason for the request and the desired remedy)



## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

6. **Action Requested:** (Continued) (Check the appropriate section and attach response on separate sheets)

☒ **VARIANCE**

Request is hereby made for permission to erect ☒ alter ☐ convert ☐ or use ☐ a

illuminated wall sign

Contrary to the requirements of Section(s) \_\_\_\_\_ of the Zoning Ordinance  
 \_\_\_\_\_ of the Zoning Ordinance  
 \_\_\_\_\_ of the Zoning Ordinance

The following questions must be answered fully on a separate sheet of paper:

- A. Clearly explain the variance desired and how the proposed building and/or use is contrary to the Zoning Ordinance.
- B. Explain the special conditions and circumstances that exist which are peculiar to the land, structure or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures or buildings in the same district. (Note: Your district includes all areas of the City sharing a zoning designation with your property. If your zoning classification were B-1 (Local Business) your district would include all City lands zoned B-1.)
- C. Explain why the literal interpretation of the provisions of this ordinance deprives you of rights commonly enjoyed by others in the same zoning district.
- D. Did the special conditions and/or circumstances result from your actions?
- E. Can you use the property in a manner permitted by the Ordinance if a variance is not granted? Is this the minimum variance you need to use the property in the way you want?
- F. Will granting the variance change the essential character of the area?

☐ **TEMPORARY PERMIT**

Applicant is requesting a Temporary Use ☐ and/or a Temporary Structure ☐

Describe in detail the proposed use or structure and the length of time requested.

☐ **INTERPRETATION OF ORDINANCE LANGUAGE IN SECTION \_\_\_\_\_**

Describe in detail the nature of the requested interpretation.

☐ **PUBLIC UTILITY BUILDING**

Describe in detail the proposed use or structure.

☐ **OTHER ACTION**

Describe in detail action requested.

7. **CASE HISTORY**

Have you been denied a permit for a building, sign or use on this property? Yes ☐ No ☒

Has there been any previous appeal involving these premises? Yes ☐ No ☒

(If yes, provide character and disposition of previous appeals.)

# ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

Application No.:

PZBA 22-0008

Applicant(s) and property owner(s) hereby consent to city staff, board and commission members, and contractors to access the property for purposes of evaluating the site for the requested action(s).

**FOR THE OWNER:**

Signature

Printed Name

Date

Joseph C. Payant

9/23/22

**FOR THE APPLICANT IF NOT THE OWNER:**

Signature

Printed Name

Date

Kevin R. Lawrence

Kevin Lawrence

9/23/22

Note: A notarized letter of authority or a power of attorney may be substituted for the original signature of the owner.

Notices are to be sent to the Applicant ☒ Owner ☐

**ATTACHED HERETO, AND MADE PART OF THIS APPLICATION, ARE THE FOLLOWING:** (All required items must be submitted with this application)

- ☐ 1. Two copies of drawings of Site Plan (no larger than 11"x 17") drawn to scale and containing all necessary dimensions and all features involved in this appeal, including measurements showing open space on abutting properties.
- ☐ 2. Dimensioned elevations of all buildings involved in the requested variance.
- ☐ 3. All required responses to above items.
- ☐ 4. Building permit application if applicable.
- ☐ 5. Letter of authority if applicable
- ☐ 6. Applicable fees:
 

A. Variance Review (Single Family)	\$300.00
B. Variance Review (Dimensional)	\$400.00 plus \$300 per variance
C. Use Variance Review	\$1,000.00

## OFFICE USE ONLY

**APPROVALS**

Approved for hearing by City Attorney

Approved for hearing by C.D.D.

Reviewed by Site Plan Committee

**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL NOTIFICATION**

Community Development Department

Fire Department

Department of Public Services

**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

APPROVED:

DENIED:

FEE: \$

PAID:

RECEIPT NO.

**A. Clearly explain the variance desired and how the proposed building and/or use is contrary to the Zoning Ordinance.**

*We are requesting a variance for a sign sized at 218.5 sq. ft. in overall sign area which exceeds code. The current zoning of the location is M2. The sign code for this zoning reads "the total sign area of a wall sign in this district shall not exceed 1.5" square feet for each linear foot of building frontage, not to exceed a total sign area of 100 square feet". Petitioner is an industry leader and Tier 1 supplier of fasteners for the Big Three Automakers and a number of other companies. The current zoning significantly limits Petitioner's ability to advertise its well-known name along the I-75 corridor.*

**B. Explain the special conditions and circumstances that exist which are peculiar to the land, structure or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures or buildings in the same district. (Note: Your district includes all areas of the City sharing a zoning designation with your property. If your zoning classification were B-1 (Local Business) your district would include all City lands zoned B-1.**

*The location of the sign and building size overall make it a unique circumstance for justifying the variance for the larger sign size. With the building's location on the I-75 corridor and the potential for greater visibility, the max size of 100 sq. ft. should have an exception. The linear frontage of this building is approx. 209 feet which makes it ideal for the 218.5 sq. ft. size sign to be seen from the expressway.*

**C. Explain why the literal interpretation of the provisions of this ordinance deprives you of rights commonly enjoyed by others in the same zoning district.**

*In addition to what's noted above, the sign's size, the building's size and the location where the sign would be installed brings it more in uniform with similar building signs in the neighboring cities.*

**D. Did the special conditions and/or circumstances result from your actions?**

*Yes, the maximum allowable square feet of signage permitted within this district is one of the reasons for seeking variance.*

**E. Can you use the property in a manner permitted by the Ordinance if a variance is not granted? Is this the minimum variance you need to use the property in the way you want?**

*Yes.*

**F. Will granting the variance change the essential character of the area?**

*No, it will not impact the character of surrounding areas. On the contrary, it would bring Petitioner's sign more in proportion to similar building signs in the neighboring cities.*





## PROPERTY OWNER AUTHORIZATION FOR SIGN PERMIT APPLICATIONS

I, Joseph C. Pagano, property owner or agent of property located at:

901 W Whitcomb  
Madison Heights, MI 48071

Do hereby give permission to:

Kevin Lawrence  
5875 New King Ct  
Troy, MI 48098

Or its agent to secure a permit and install signs at the above location.

Property Owner Emerald Steel Processing (please type or print)

Signature of owner or agent [Signature] Date 9/23/22

Owner address 31650 Stephenson Hwy  
Madison Heights, MI 48071

Telephone (248) 409-9676

# SHANNON



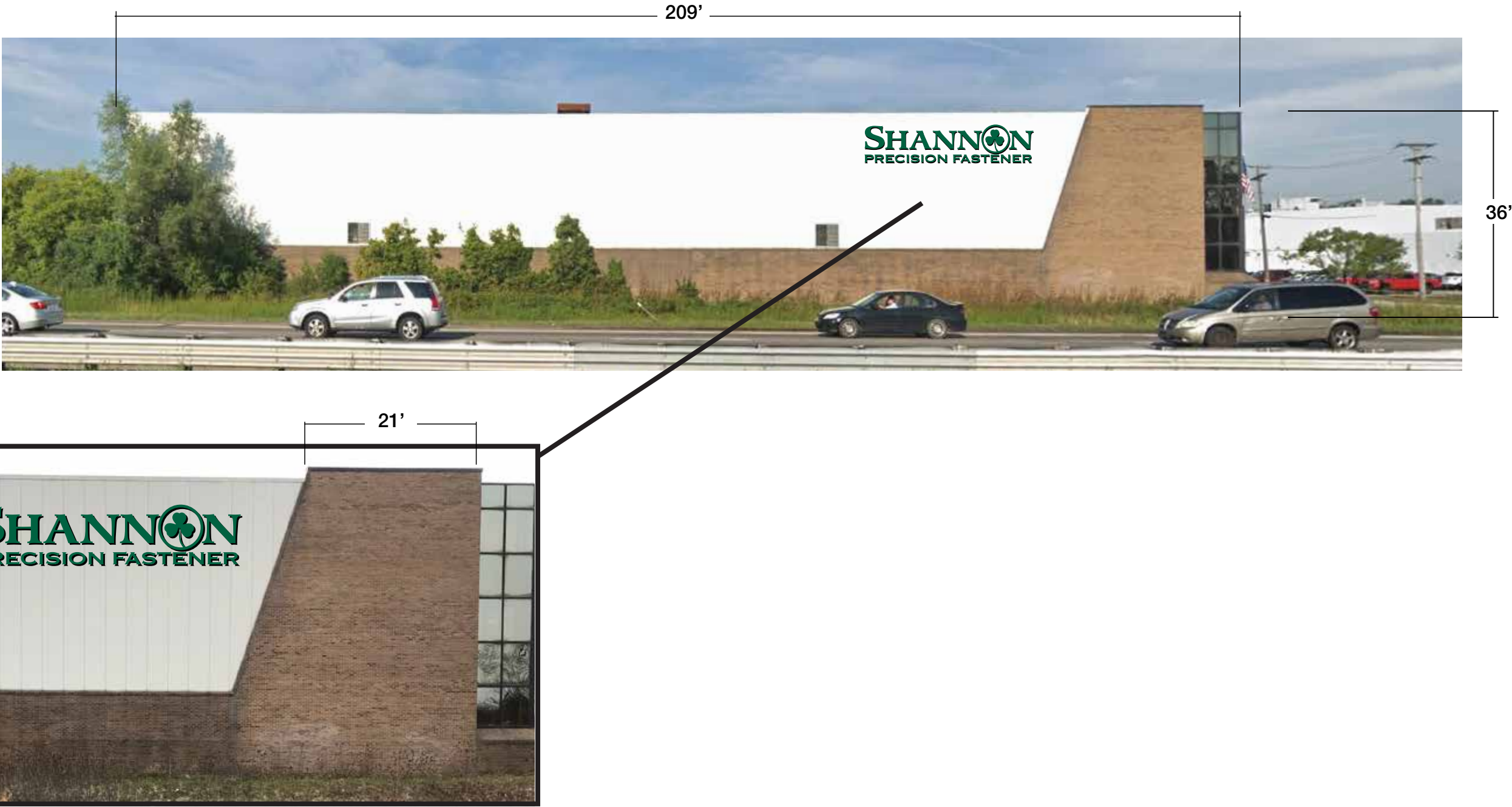
## PRECISION FASTENER

EXTERIOR SIGNAGE

31600 Stephenson Highway, Madison Heights, MI 48071

Sign #1 - Front-Lit Channel Letters  
EAST ELEVATION

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS: Next Page >>



**Front-Lit, UL Listed Channel Letters**  
3.5" Deep Front-Lit Channel Letters, Flush Mounted  
- Aluminum Backers / Returns, Color: Painted to Match Face  
- 3/16" White Acrylic Sign Faces with Translucent Vinyl Overlay & 1" Green Edgecap  
- Illuminated using White LEDs

**QTY: (1)**  
3M 3630-26 Green Translucent Vinyl

SALES: Renee W | renee@michigansignshops.com  
DRAWING: Marissa D.  
CREATED: 07/08/2021  
REVISED: 09/15/2021

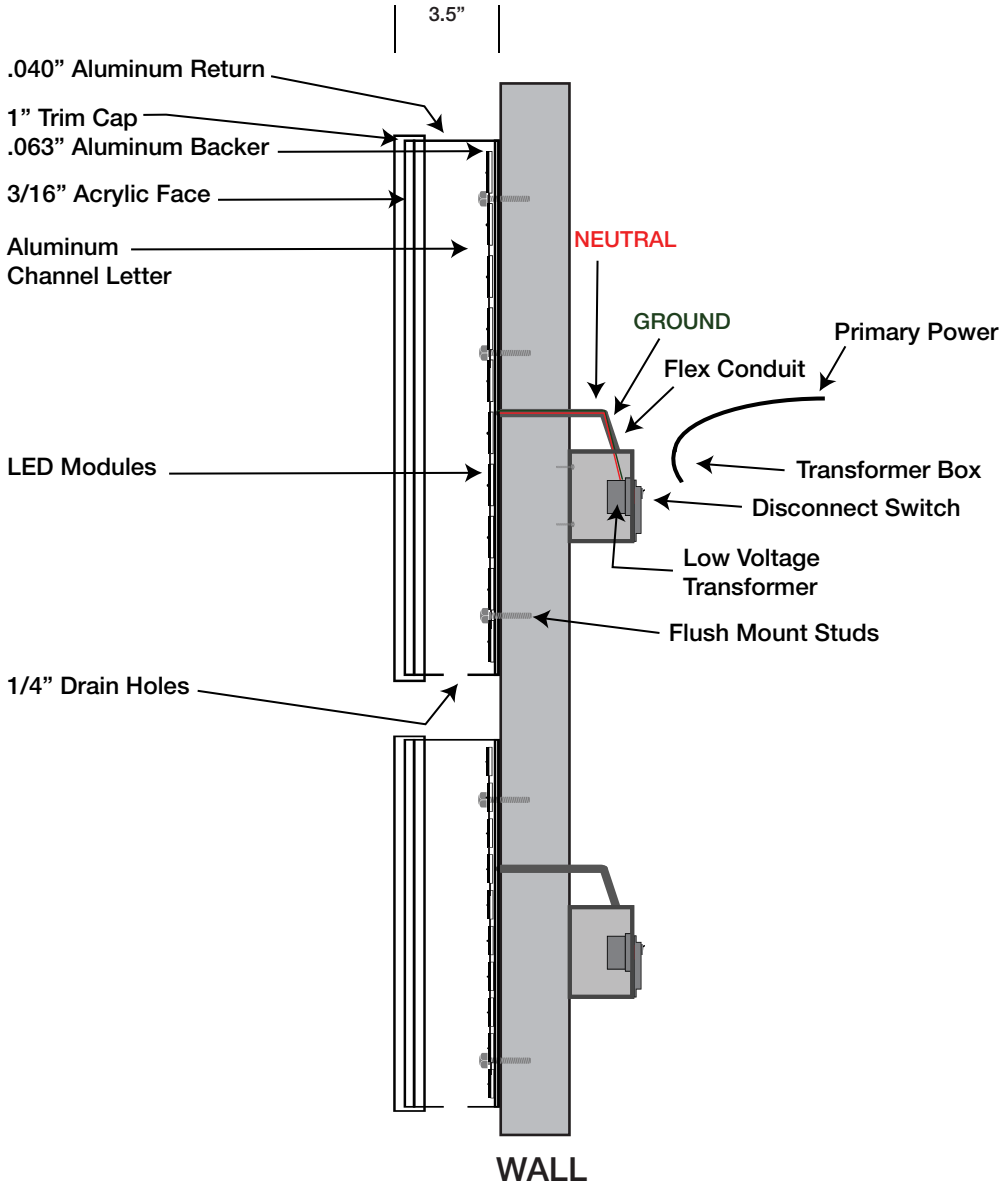


Sign #1 - Front-Lit Channel Letters  
EAST ELEVATION



PLEASE NOTE: Serifs on letters may have to be thickened for manufacturing

218.5 SF



Front-Lit, UL Listed Channel Letters  
3.5" Deep Front-Lit Channel Letters, Flush Mounted  
- Aluminum Backers / Returns, Color: Painted to Match Face  
- 3/16" White Acrylic Sign Faces with Translucent Vinyl Overlay & 1" Green Edgecap  
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