

CITY OF PORTAGE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

AGENDA

**Monday, October 13, 2025
7:00 PM**

**Portage City Hall
Council Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. May 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

- * 1. ZBA #25-01, Metro Signs & Lighting on behalf of Raising Cane's, 6005 S Westnedge Ave

OTHER BUSINESS:

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

ADJOURNMENT:

Star (*) indicates printed material within the agenda packet.

CITY OF PORTAGE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Minutes of Meeting – May 12, 2025

The City of Portage Zoning Board of Appeals meeting was called to order by Chair Eichstaedt at 7:00 p.m. four people were in the audience.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jay Eichstaedt, David Bergher, John Sloan, Ken Seybold, Lena Jomaa, Aimee Potts, Linda Fry

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Michael Stempihar

A motion was made by Jomaa, and seconded by Fry, to excuse the absent board member. Upon voice vote, the motion passed 7-0.

IN ATTENDANCE: Jeff Mais, Zoning & Codes Administrator; Alex Johnson, City Planner; Josh Thall, Assistant City Attorney.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Potts, and seconded by Bergher, to approve October 14, 2024, minutes. Upon voice vote, motion passed 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

ZBA #24-06; 3630 E Shore Dr: Staff presented background on the proposal, maps, pictures, conforming alternatives, mitigating circumstances, the review standards, and recommendations for the variance to construct a roof over a deck that is 5.3 feet from the side property line where an 8-foot setback is required. The applicant had nothing more to add and concurred with staff. Eichstaedt asked for clarification on a conforming alternative of moving in the post 2.7 feet and having a 16" roof overhang, and what that would look like.

A public hearing was opened. No one spoke for or against the request. Motion by Fry, seconded by Jomaa, to close the public hearing.

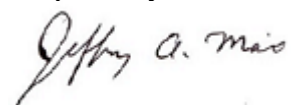
A motion was made by Seybold, seconded by Sloan to approve the variance to construct a roof over a deck that is 5.3 feet from the side property line where an 8-foot setback is required for the following reasons: there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the property that do not generally apply to other properties in the zoning district which include the existing location of the dwelling on the lot; the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right similar to that possessed by others in the same zoning district, the right to a covered deck; the need for the variance request was not caused by the applicant; the variance will not be detrimental to adjacent property or the surrounding neighborhood; and the variance will not materially impair the intent and purpose of the ordinance. In addition, the application and supporting materials, staff report, and all comments, discussion and materials presented at this hearing be incorporated in the record, and that the action of the Board be final and effective immediately Upon roll call vote: Eichstaedt-Yes, Seybold-Yes, Bergher-Yes, Sloan-Yes, Potts-Yes, Jomaa-Yes, Fry-Yes. The motion passed 7-0.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Fry, seconded by Jomaa to close the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Mais
Zoning & Codes Administrator

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals **DATE:** October 13, 2025

FROM: Peter Dame, Chief Development Officer

SUBJECT: ZBA #25-01, Metro Signs & Lighting on behalf of Raising Cane's, 6005 S Westnedge Ave

CODE SECTION: Section 45-552H; [Signs] B-2, community business; B-3, general business; and CPD, commercial planned development districts.

APPEAL: Requesting a variance for two additional signs putting the total sign allowance 160.58 square feet over the allowance of wall signage.

STAFF

RECOMMENDATION: The applicant is requesting the variance per the enclosed application, sign package, and related materials. The 0.85 acre zoning lot is zoned B-3 General Business and was combined from three former parcels: 6005 South Westnedge Avenue, 6021 South Westnedge Avenue, and 120 East Milham Avenue. The zoning lot is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of South Westnedge Avenue and East Milham Avenue. The subject property abuts a residential neighborhood to the east, and is adjacent to other commercial properties to the north, west and south.

The subject property received administrative approval in April 2025 to construct a Raising Cane's restaurant. At the time of writing this report, it is currently under construction. As background for the Board, there have been four previous variances granted (ZBA #83-49, #83-64, #93-41, and #07-21) for the property, which included a freestanding sign setback and several subsequent panel changes. However, this parcel has been cleared for construction, including the freestanding sign, and the previous variances granted are no longer applicable and are unrelated to this variance request.

The applicant has already received approval for six wall signs totaling 189.08 square feet in area where a maximum 200 square feet of wall signage is allowed. The applicant, however, proposes to erect two additional wall signs measuring a combined 171.5 square feet, which would put the total signage at 360.58 square feet, thereby exceeding the maximum wall sign area by 160.58 square feet. A variance is therefore requested.

The applicant claims that the busy intersection and two drive entrances are a practical difficulty. It is noted, however, that the building will be located only 54 feet from East Milham Avenue and 69 feet from South Westnedge Avenue. Reading even much smaller signs than have already been approved at those distances should pose no difficulty whatsoever at those distances. There is already a good deal of visual clutter at this busy intersection, and it should be pointed out that sign regulations limiting wall sign size are intended to reduce visual clutter along busy streets. A variance to increase

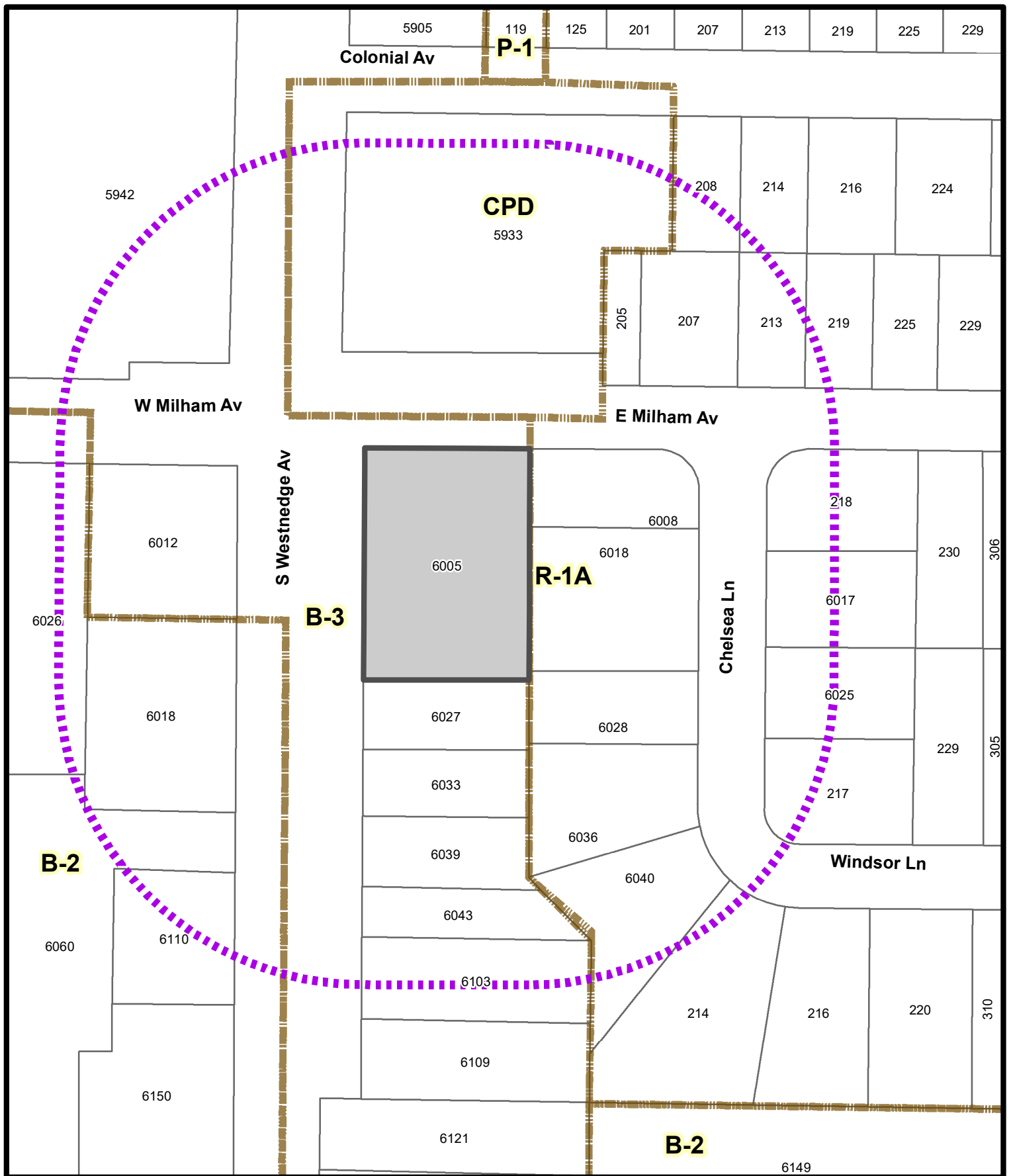
the amount of signs in this situation would run counter to the intent of the sign ordinance. There are no exceptional circumstances that apply to this property that do not apply generally to other properties in the vicinity and same zoning district. The variance is not necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of the property right similar to that possessed by other properties in the same zoning district in the vicinity, and because there are conforming alternatives available, including using signs which meet code, such as those already approved by staff. For these reasons, the variance can not be recommended.




**PRACTICAL
DIFFICULTY:**

Applicant cites busy intersection. Staff finds no practical difficulty.

Attachments:

1. ZBA #25-01 300' Notification Map
2. ZBA #25-01 Aerial Map
3. Cover Letter and Application
4. Approved Signage July 11 2025
5. Proposed Signage ZBA #25-01



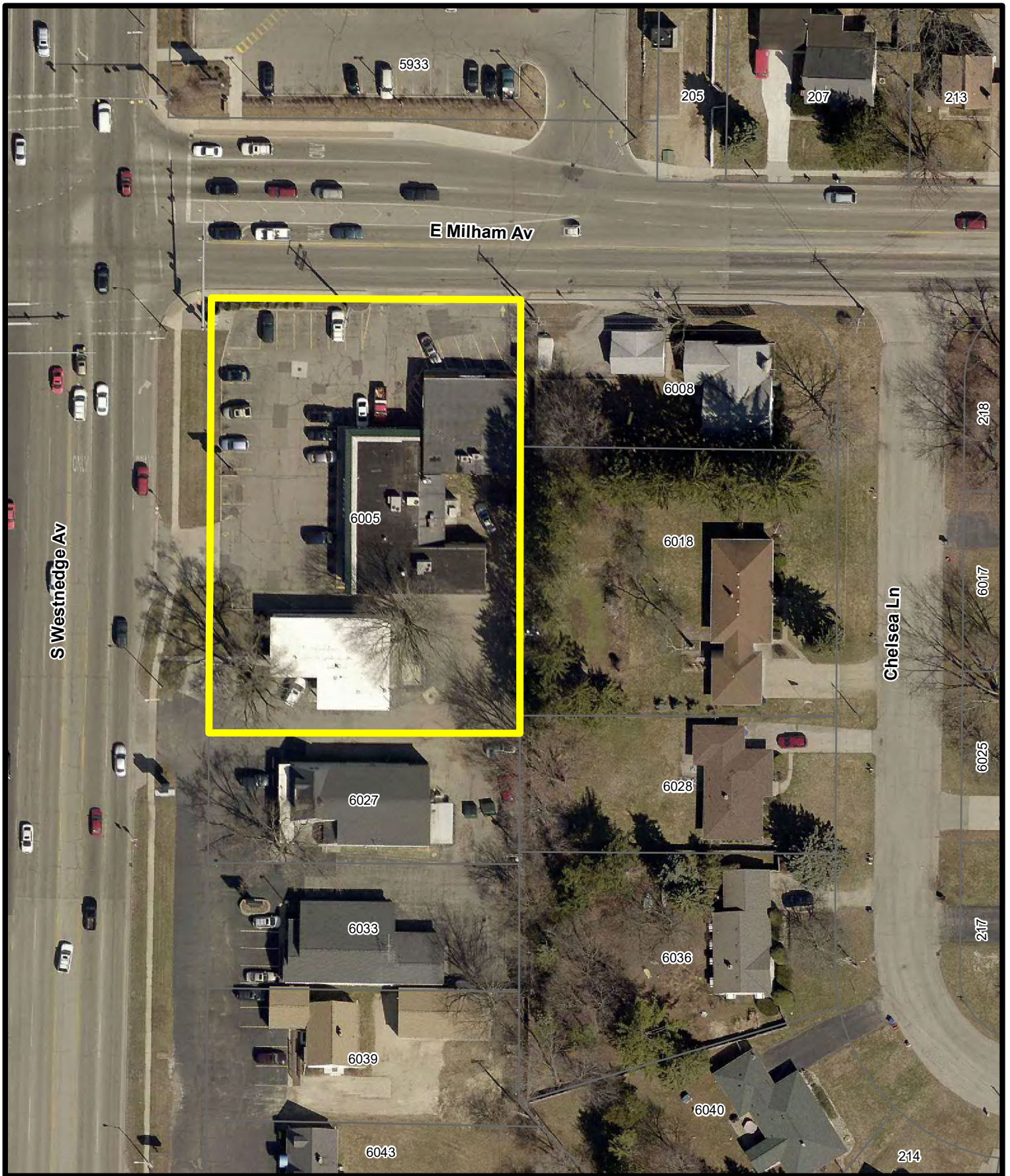
-  300' Notification Area
-  Subject Property
-  Zoning Boundary

ZBA #25-01


6005 S Westnedge Ave



1 inch = 125 feet



ZBA #25-01
6005 S Westnedge Ave
Aerial Photography

 Subject Property



1 inch = 67 feet



DATE: 8/28/25
TO: Jeff Mais at City of Portage
FROM: Kevin Deters
Metro Signs & Lighting
RE: Raising Cane's at 6005 S. Westnedge Ave.

ZBA Cover Letter

We are applying for a total of 360.58 sq feet of wall signage at Raising Cane's. The following signage already has permit approval:

- Three wall sign A's at 3'-10.125" x 8' (30.75 sq feet each)
- Wall sign B on the rear elevation is 2'-10.625" x 6' (17.31 sq feet)
- Wall sign E the Drive Thru Arrow is 3'-11" x 15'-11.25" (62.42 sq feet)
- Wall sign F One Love is 1'-8" x 10'-3.375" (17.1 sq feet)

The total approved wall signage currently is 189.08 sq feet combined.

We are applying to the ZBA to add two more wall signs as follows:

- Sign K painted Raising Cane's Portage is 9' x 15.5' (139.5 sf)
- Sign L Red Dog is 4' x 8' (32 sf)

The total additional signage requested is 171.5 sq feet.

Here is our ZBA application with five sets of the drawings and a \$374 check for the fee. Feel free to call me at (586)759-2700 if anything else is needed. Thank you for your assistance.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

FOR COMPLETION BY APPLICANT

Application Date _____

Name of Applicant Metro Signs & Lighting Paul B. Wette
Print Signature
Applicant's Address 11444 Kaltz Ave. Warren, MI 48089 Phone No. 586-759-2700

Name of Property Owner (if different from Applicant) Westnedge Milham, LLC
Address 700 Mall Dr. Portage, MI 49024 Phone No. _____

Address of the Property that is the subject of this Application:
Street Address 6005 S Westnedge

For Platted Property: Lot _____ of _____ Plat _____

[If The Property Is Unplatted, the Legal Description is needed. Please attach on a separate sheet.]

Applicant's interest in Property that is the subject of this Application: Sign Contractor

Application Fee _____ (Residential Uses) _____ (All Other Uses)

Type of Appeal (Please check one of the following **bold choices** and provide the requested information):

☒ **Variance from Zoning Ordinance:** Article 4 Section 42-452 Paragraph _____
Regarding: Use _____ Area X Yards _____
Setbacks _____ Parking _____ Other _____

Reason for Request (Also complete page 2 of application): 200 sq feet of wall signage is allowed. We are requesting a total of 360.58 sq feet of wall signage for Raising Canes.

☐ **Appeal of Administrative Decision:** Article _____ Section _____ Paragraph _____
Reason for Request: _____

☐ **Interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance:** Article _____ Section _____ Paragraph _____
Reason for Request: _____

☐ **A Temporary Permit for:** Building _____ Use _____ Other Approval _____
Article _____ Section _____ Paragraph _____
Reason for Request: _____

FOR STAFF USE

Application Number:	Filing Date:	Tentative Hearing Date:
Previous Application Filed Regarding This Property:		

Reason For Variance

1. Please explain how the property has characteristics such as narrowness, shallowness, irregular shape, topography, or natural features that prevent compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

The site is at the intersection of two busy roads (Westnedge Ave and Milham Ave) with multiple ingress and egress points. The already approved signage helps visitors identify and navigate the site. The proposed murals add to the aesthetic and charm of the Cane's brand.

2. Are the physical characteristics you explained above unique and not shared by neighboring properties? (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

Most of the neighboring properties are much larger parcels with more room to navigate.

3. Can the property be reasonably used for the uses permitted in the zoning district without granting the variance? (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

The property could be reasonably used, but the murals add to the aesthetic appeal and help establish the unique story that is central to the Raising Cane's brand.

4. Is the variance the minimum necessary to permit reasonable use of the land and buildings, or would a lesser variance be fair and equitable to the applicant as well as logical and just to other property owners in the area? (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

The proposed murals are appropriately sized given the sight lines and speed of traffic surrounding the location.

5. Explain how the variance would not result in adverse affects on adjacent properties or alter the character of the area. (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

The proposed murals are externally illuminated with subtle downlighting, so as to minimize any adverse effects on adjacent properties or alter the character of the area.

6. Explain how the variance would not result in increased traffic congestion, noise, or other potential concerns, or in dangers from fire, flood or other hazards, that would be detrimental to the property or to the area. (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

The proposed murals are merely to improve the aesthetic and/or charm of the site. They would not be detrimental to either the property or the surrounding area.

7. Is the reason for the request, the practical difficulty or the hardship created, due to an act of the applicant or due to an act by the previous property owner? (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

The request would help this location more fully participate in the branding and guest experience that has been pivotal in Raising Cane's ability to differentiate itself from other more established competitors.

8. Explain how the variance would fulfill the spirit and intent of the Zoning Ordinance. (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

The spirit and intent of the ordinance is to provide means for tasteful, effective identification that doesn't create a proliferation of signage. The proposed murals meet that intent.

Paul Deters

Signature of Applicant

8/25/2025

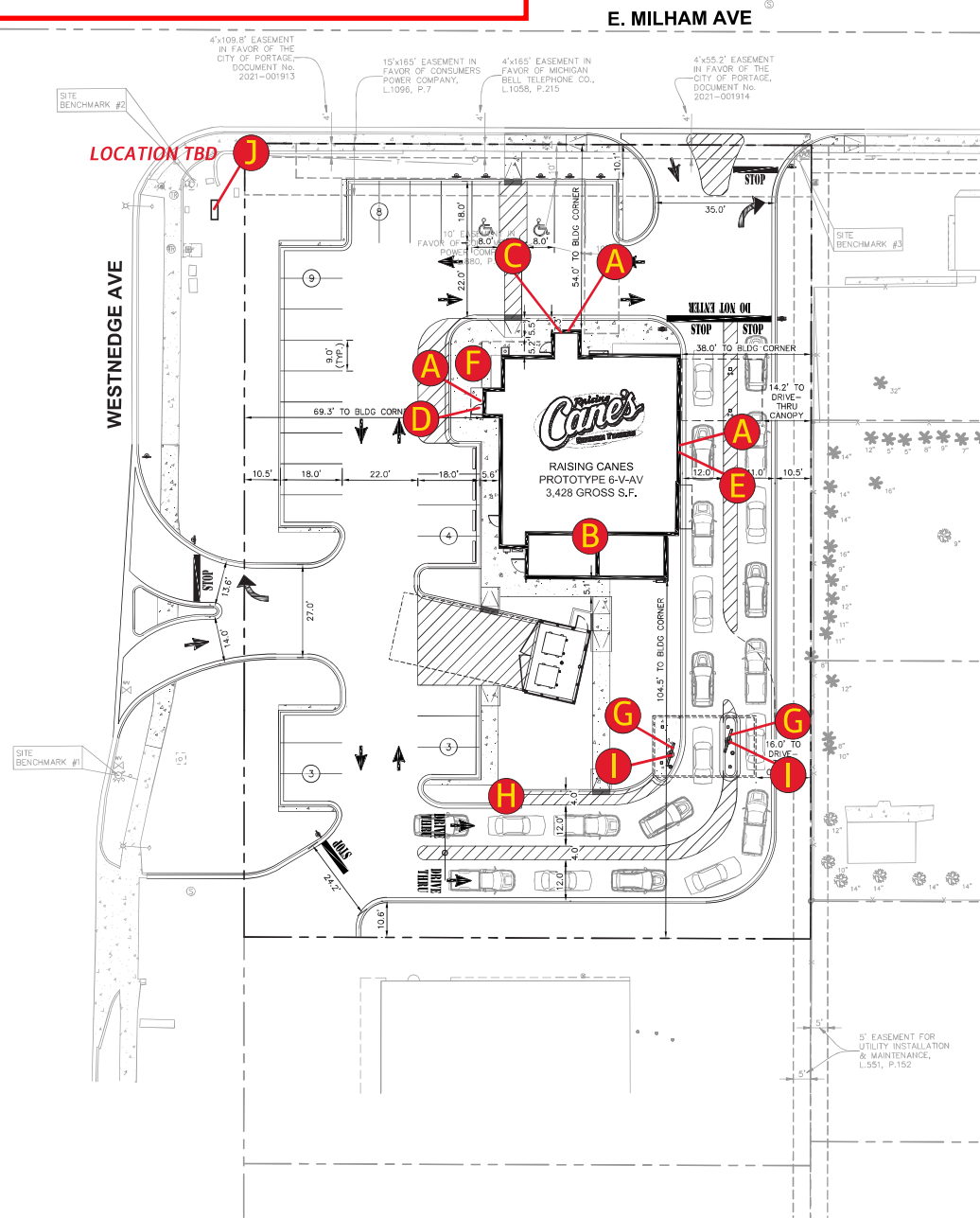
Date

7900 South Westnedge Avenue ♦ Portage, Michigan 49002 ♦ (269) 329-4477
www.portagemi.gov



Approx. 6011 S Westnedge Ave/RC1085
 Portage, MI 49002
 06/24/2025

DRAWING REVISIONS	
DATE	CHANGE
11/26/24	Updated siteplan, elevations, & signage
6/24/25	Updated signage



QTY.	CODE	DESCRIPTION
3	WS-8FT	4x8 Wall Sign
1	WS-6FT	3x6 Wall Sign
1	ONS	Open Sign
1	CFNS	Chicken Fingers Neon Sign
1	PAMRL	Painted Arrow Mural
1	CAN	One Love Canopy Letters
2	DTMB	DT Menuboard
1	DTPS	Pre Sell Board
2	DTSP	Speaker Post
1	PYLON	7x14 Pylon @ 25' OAH

No MSP or LL restrictions noted 3/15/23.

Pylon: 1sf/2.5 street frontage, 120sf max @25'oah on corner w/ 10' property line setbacks and located 6'+ (horizontally) or 12' (vertically) from overhead electrical conductors. EMC: counts towards sign allowance.

Wall: Combined area NTE 15% of the total wall area, NTE 100sf per street frontage. 125sf if bldg linear frontage is >100'. If no freestanding sign, increase to 33% of wall area.

Window: Not regulated, no permit required.
Cove light: Subject to Review during Site Plan review
Menu/PS: Not regulated, building permit required only
Murals/Art: Counts as sign if copy
RD: Counts as sign if copy, no permanent banners

	YES	NO
RED DOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MURAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FLAGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OLH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

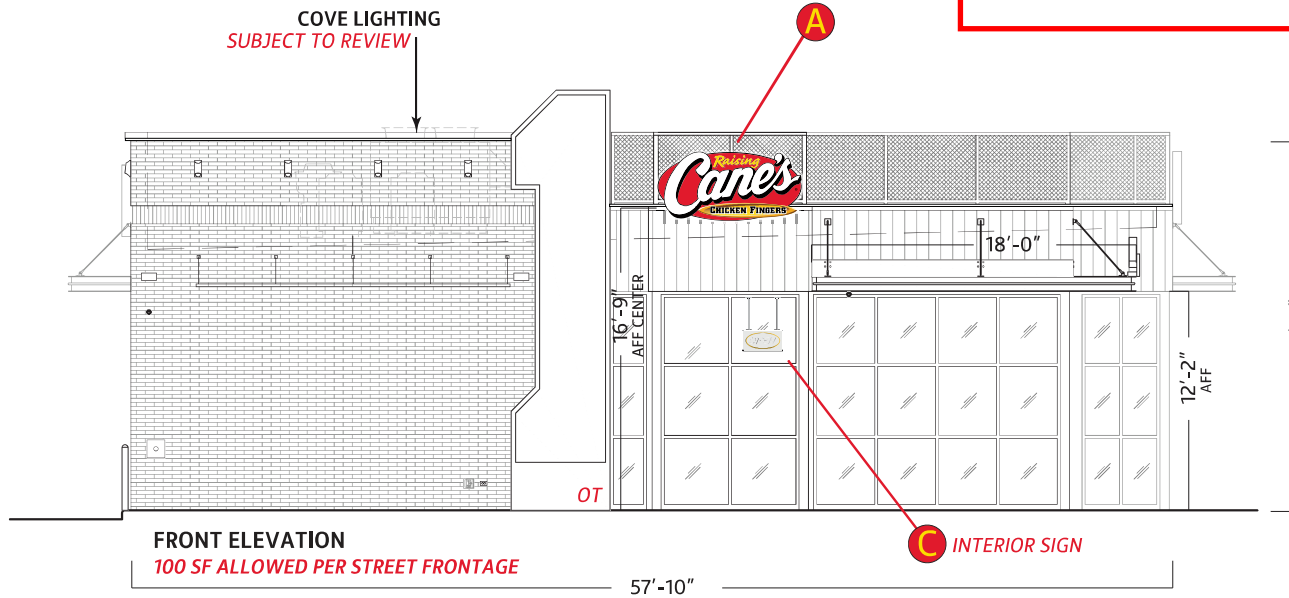
Site ID: RC1085

AGI PM: Chris Russell

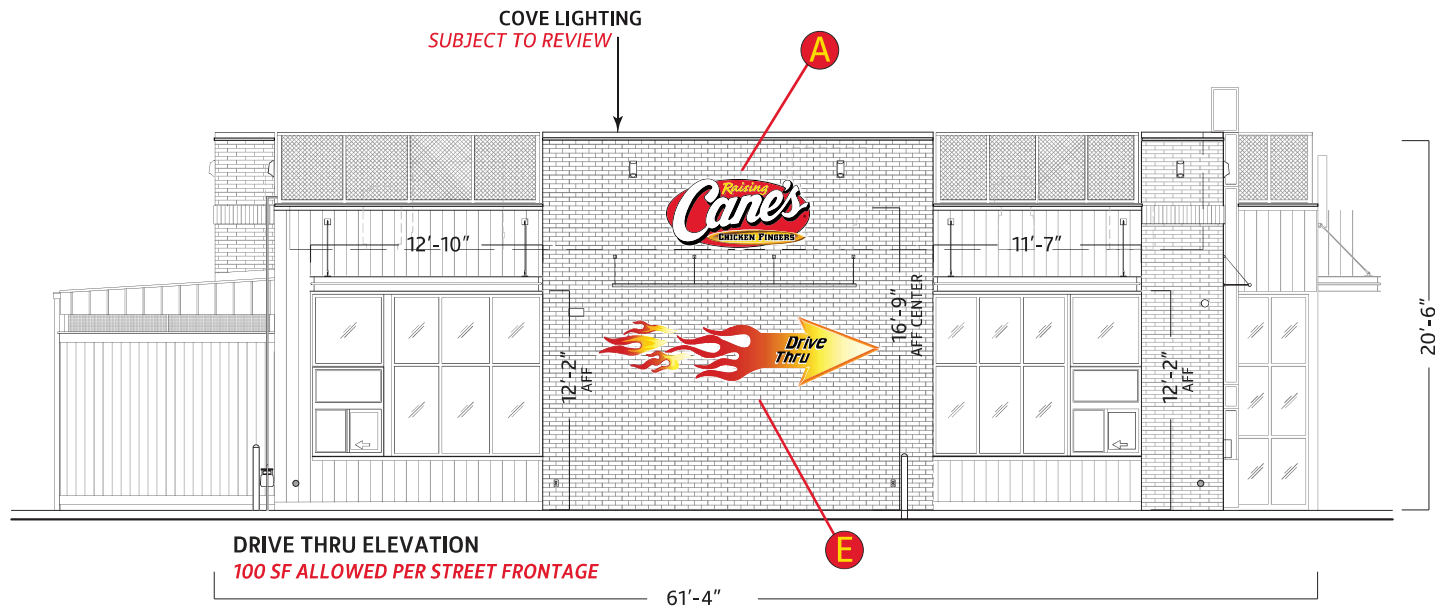
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APPROVED SIGNAGE JULY 11, 2025

ELEVATIONS



	QTY.	CODE	DESCRIPTION
A	3	WS-8FT	4x8 Wall Sign
B	1	WS-6FT	3x6 Wall Sign
C	1	ONS	Open Sign
D	1	CFNS	Chicken Fingers Neon Sign
E	1	PAMRL	Painted Arrow Mural
F	1	CAN	One Love Canopy Letters
G	2	DTMB	DT Menuboard
H	1	DTPS	Pre Sell Board
I	2	DTSP	Speaker Post
J	1	PYLON	7x14 Pylon @ 25' OAH



Scale: 3/32"=1'



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

Site ID: RC1085

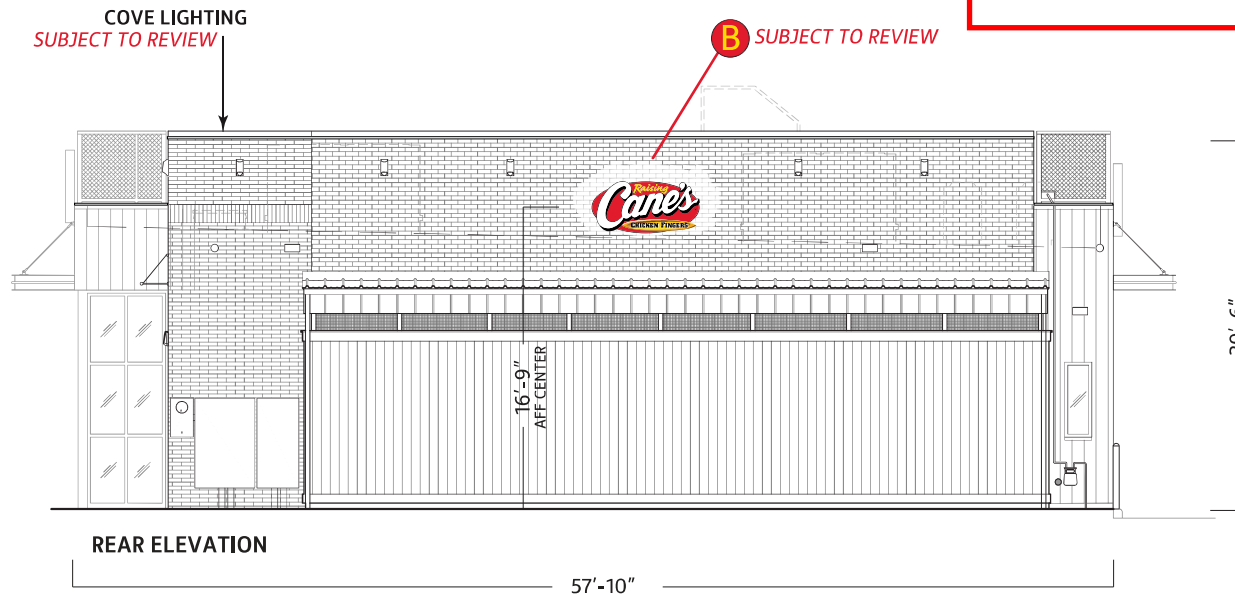
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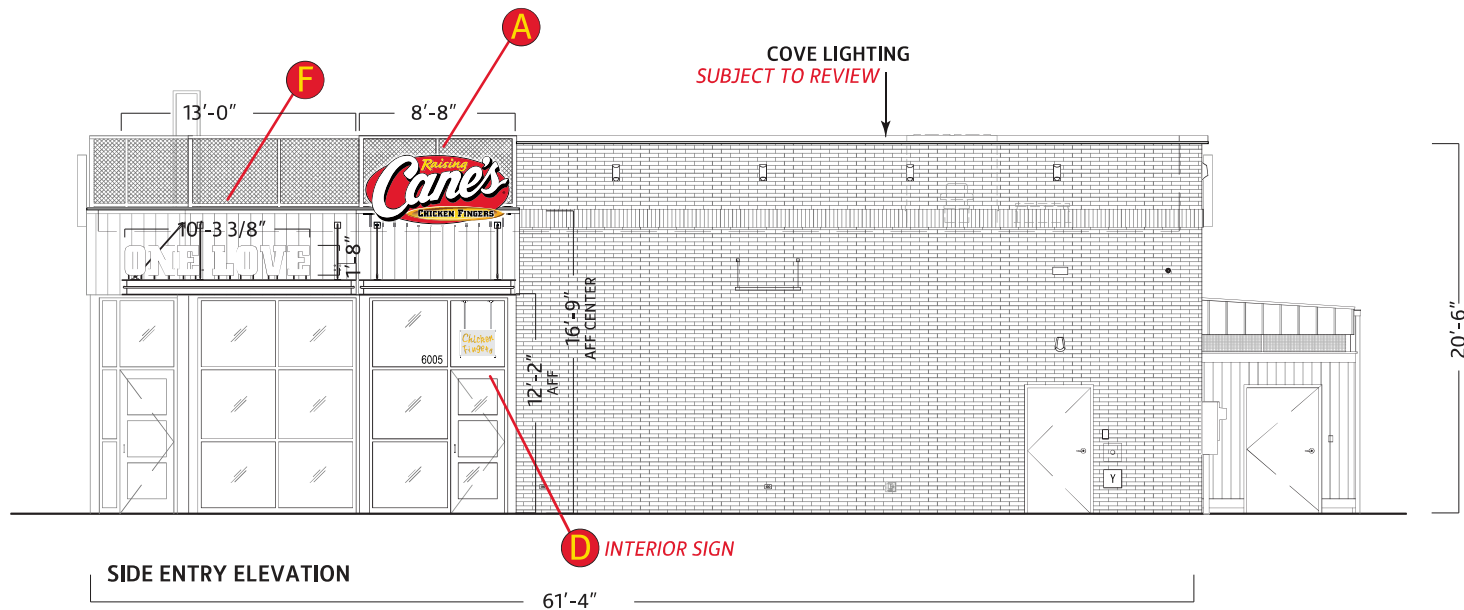
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(12)



	QTY.	CODE	DESCRIPTION
A	3	WS-8FT	4x8 Wall Sign
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C	1	ONS	Open Sign
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F	1	CAN	One Love Canopy Letters
G	2	DTMB	DT Menuboard
H	1	DTPS	Pre Sell Board
I	2	DTSP	Speaker Post
J	1	PYLON	7x14 Pylon @ 25' OAH



Scale: 3/32"=1'



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

Site ID: RC1085

AGI PM: Chris Russell

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Scale: 3/16"=1'



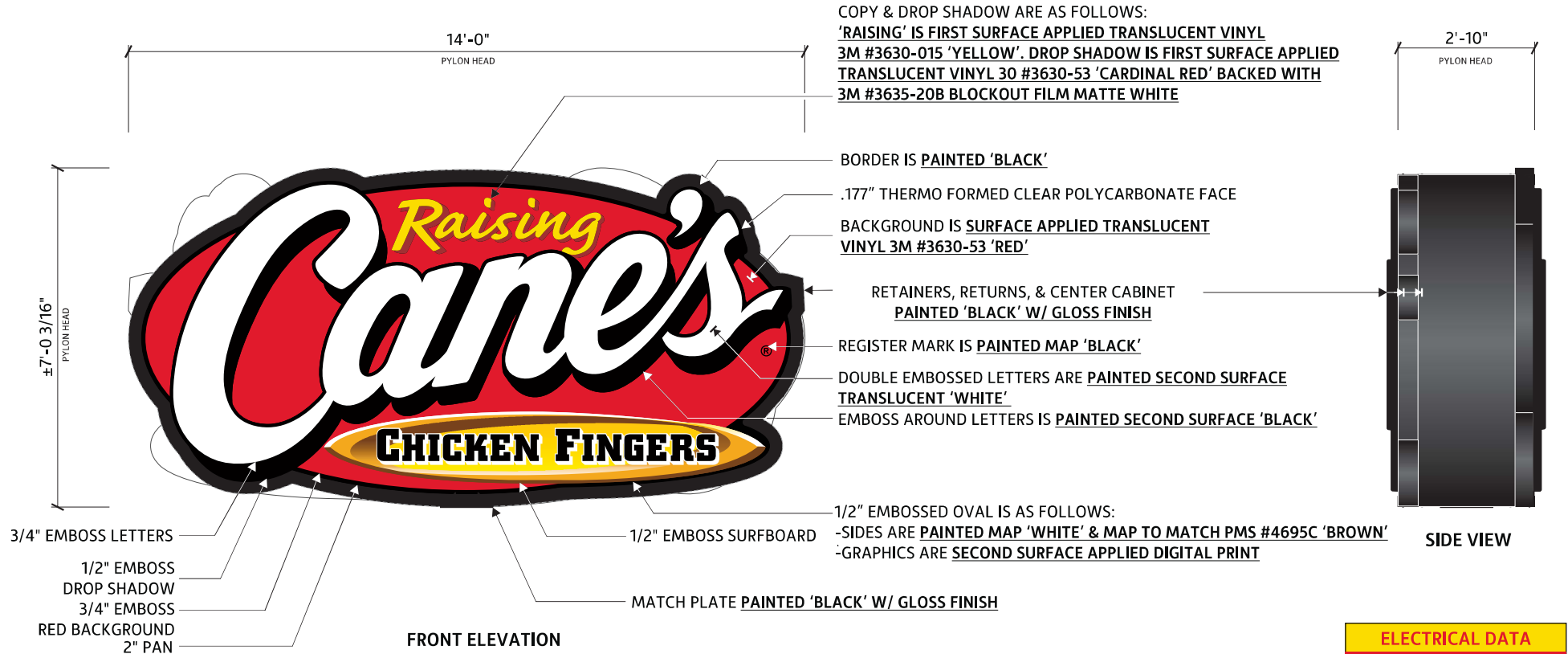
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Site ID: RC1085

AGI PM: Chris Russell



ELECTRICAL DATA

VOLTAGE	208
AMPERAGE	1.56

COLOR CHART

	3M #3630-15 'YELLOW'
	3M #3630-73 'RED'
	3M #3630-53 'CARDINAL RED'



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

Site ID: RC1085

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A

APPROVED SIGNAGE JULY 11, 2025

CUTSHEET

WS-8FT

COMBINED AREA NTE 15% TOTAL WALL AREA, NTE 100 SF PER STREET FRONTAGE

REAR ELEVATION: MUST BE NO LESS THAN 200' FROM RESIDENTIAL LOT AND NOT SHINE INTO ANY WINDOW, SUBJECT TO REVIEW

COPY & DROP SHADOW ARE AS FOLLOWS: 'RAISING' IS FIRST SURFACE APPLIED TRANSLUCENT VINYL 3M #3630-015 'YELLOW', DROP SHADOW IS FIRST SURFACE APPLIED TRANSLUCENT VINYL 3M #3630-53 'CARDINAL RED'

BORDER IS PAINTED 'BLACK'

BACKGROUND IS SURFACE APPLIED TRANSLUCENT VINYL 3M #3630-73 'RED'

.150" THERMO FORMED CLEAR POLYCARBONATE FACE REGISTER MARK IS PAINTED 'BLACK'

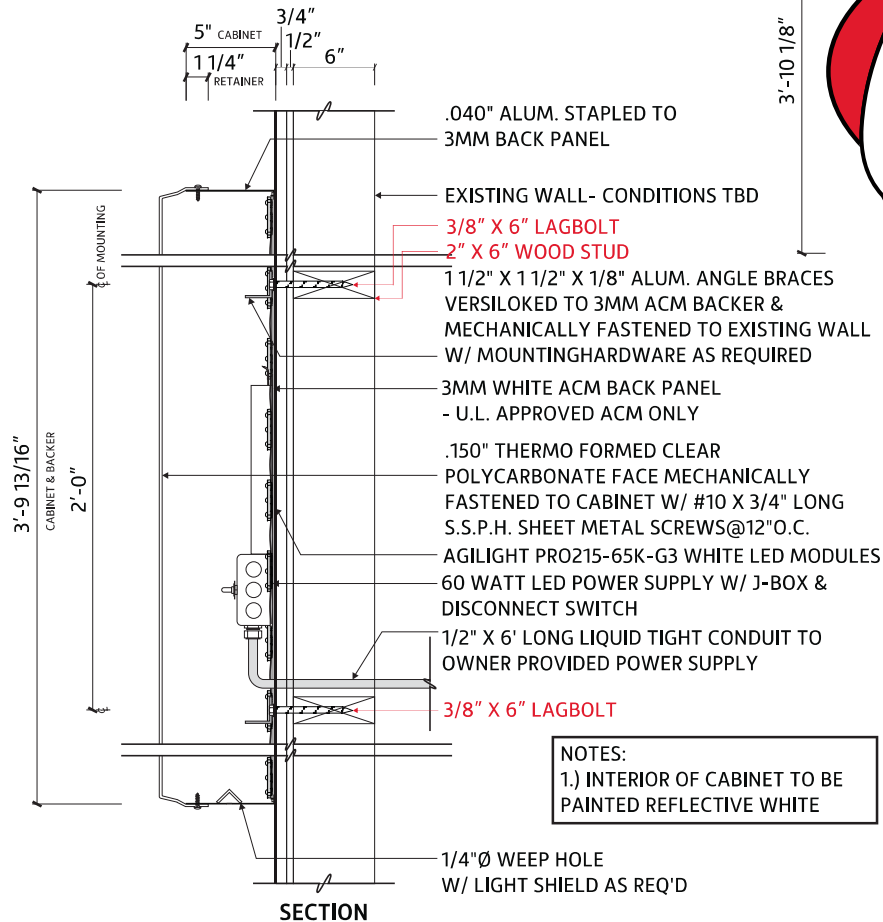
DOUBLE EMBOSSED LETTERS ARE PAINTED SECOND SURFACE 'WHITE'

EMBOSS AROUND LETTERS IS PAINTED SECOND SURFACE 'BLACK'

EMBOSSED SURFBOARD IS AS FOLLOWS:
-SIDES ARE PAINTED TO MATCH PANTONE #109C 'YELLOW'
-GRAPHICS ARE SECOND SURFACE APPLIED DIGITAL PRINT



FRONT ELEVATION



NOTES:

1.) INTERIOR OF CABINET TO BE PAINTED REFLECTIVE WHITE

1/4"Ø WEEP HOLE
W/ LIGHT SHIELD AS REQ'D

SECTION

ELECTRICAL DATA

VOLTAGE	120
AMPERAGE	1.8

COLOR CHART

	3M #3630-15 'YELLOW'
	3M #3630-73 'RED'
	3M #3630-53 'CARDINAL RED'



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

Site ID: RC1085

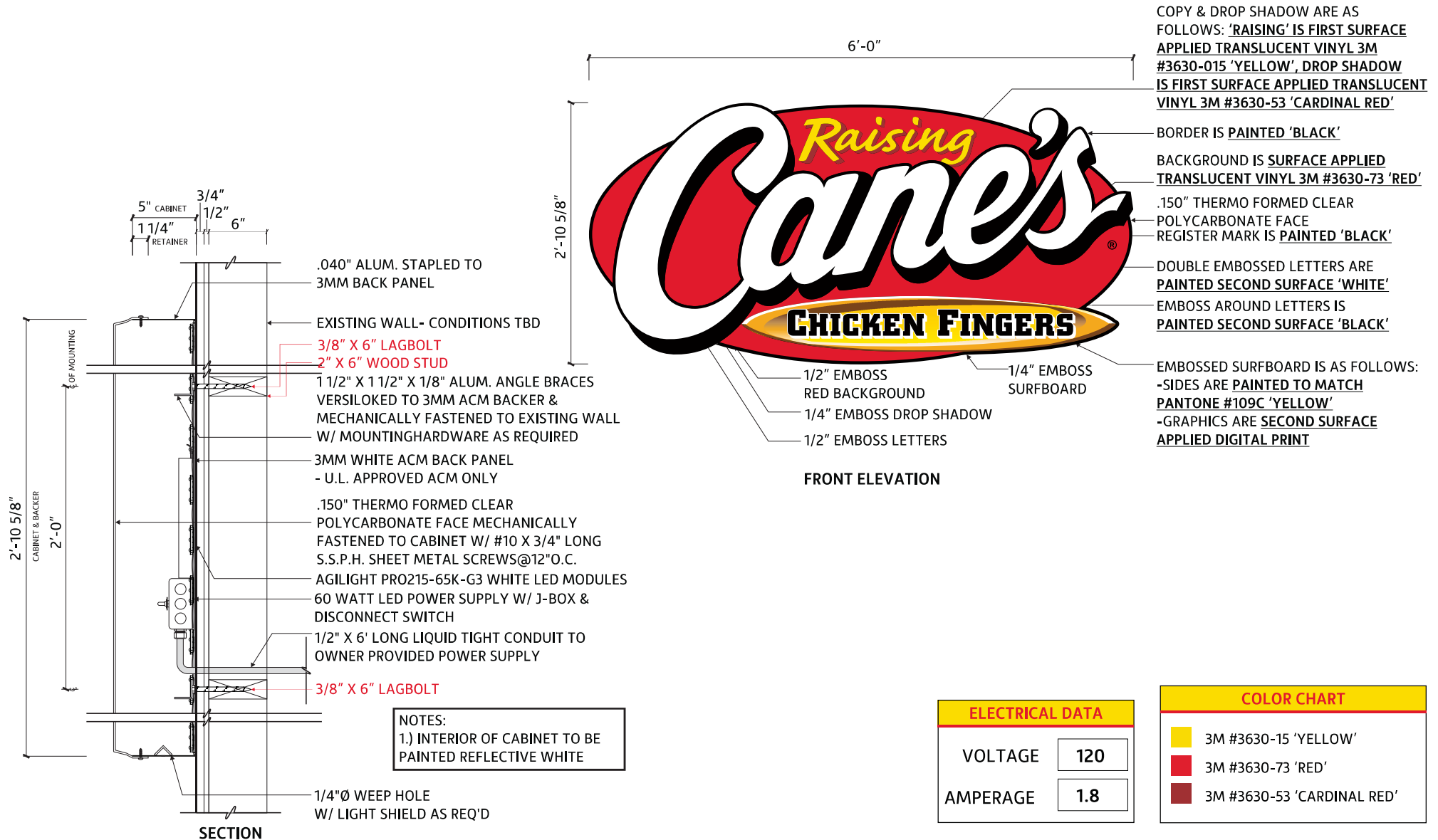
AGI PM: Chris Russell

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Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

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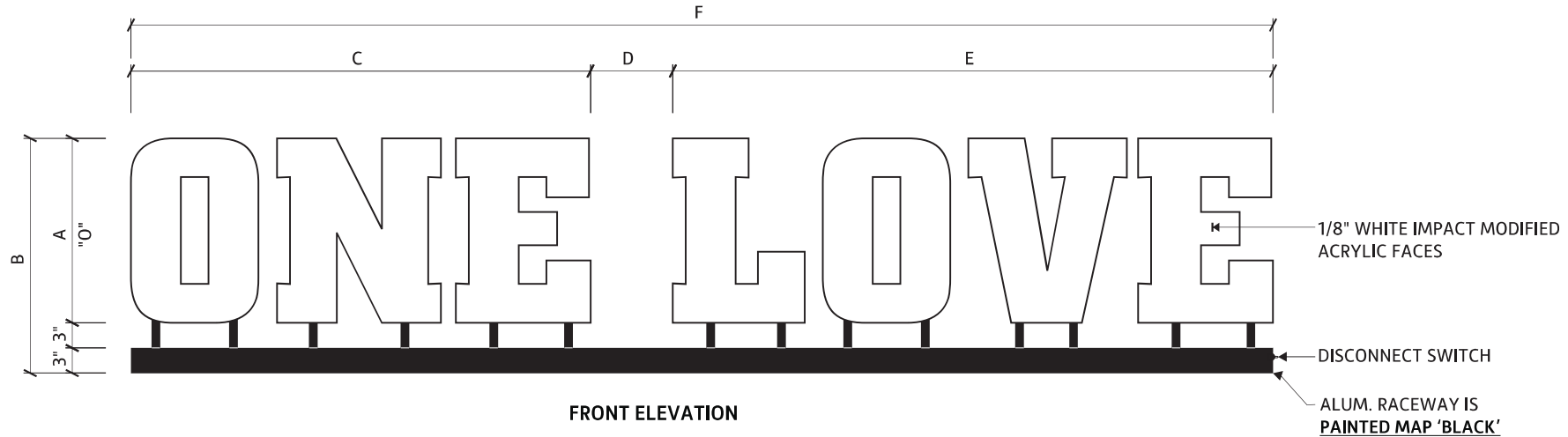


APPROVED SIGNAGE JULY 11, 2025

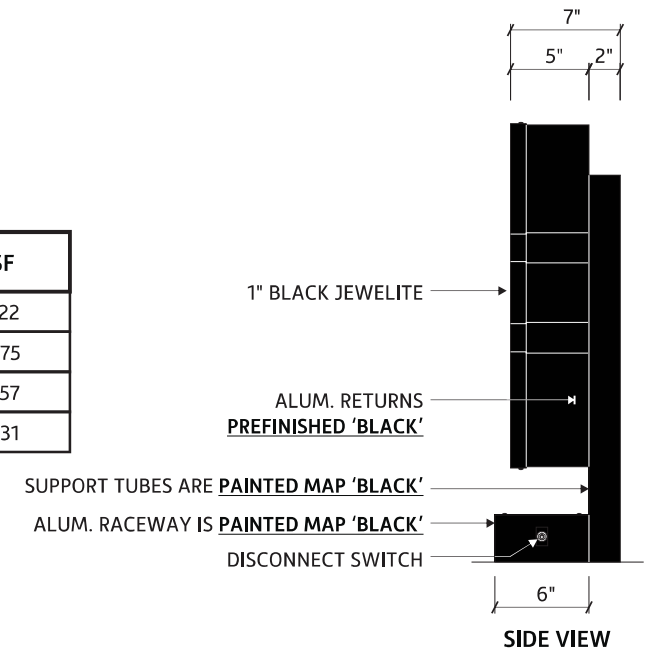
CUTSHEET

One Love 20" Canopy Letters

COUNTS TOWARDS SIGNS



SIGN SIZE	A	B	C	D	E	F	SF
OL-16	16"	±1'-10 9/16"	±3'-3 13/16"	±7 1/8"	±4'-4"	±8'-3"	11.22
OL-18	18"	2'-0"	±3'-8 13/16"	±8"	±4'-10 1/2"	±9'-3 3/8"	14.75
OL-20	20"	2'-2"	±4'-1 13/16"	±8 15/16"	±5'-5"	±10'-3 3/8"	17.57
OL-22	22"	2'-4"	±4'-6 3/4"	±9 13/16"	±5'-11 1/2"	±11'-4 1/8"	21.31



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

Site ID: RC1085

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K

Proposed Additional Sign 'K'

CUTSHEET
PMRL (0915)
COUNTS AS SIGN



139.50

Square Footage

FOR ARTIST RENDERING USE ONLY
MURAL PROVIDED BY OTHER VENDOR



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

Site ID: RC1085

AGI PM: Chris Russell

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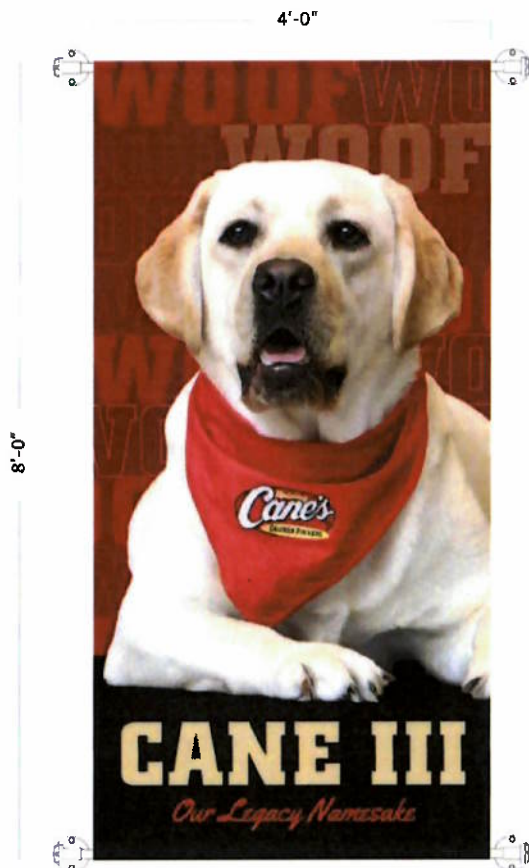
L

Proposed Additional Sign 'L'

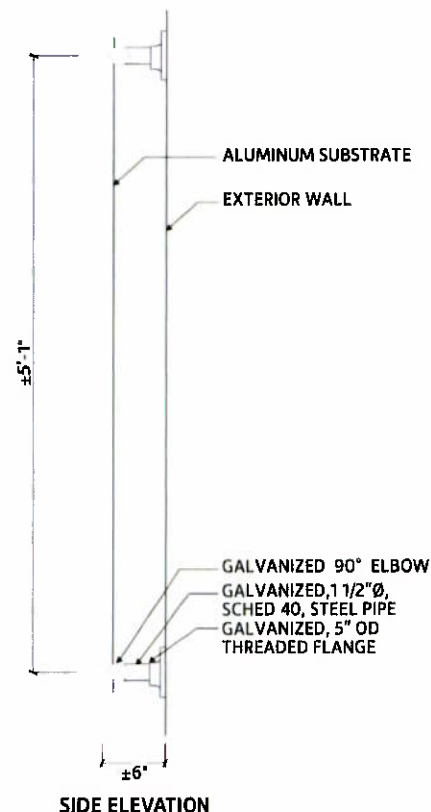
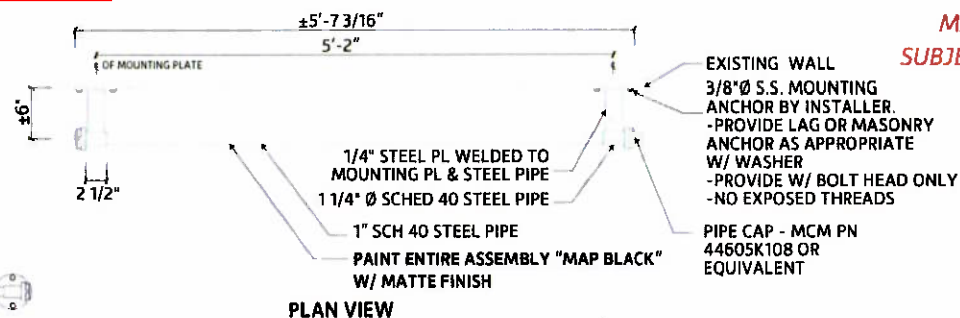
CUTSHEET

Red Dog

MAY REQUIRE VARIANCE
SUBJECT TO REVIEW AS ART



THIS IS A DIGITAL PRINT ON
ALUMINUM SUBSTRATE AND RIGID.



Location: Valdosta, GA

Date: 08/28/2024

Site ID: RC1231

AGI PM: Megan Layland

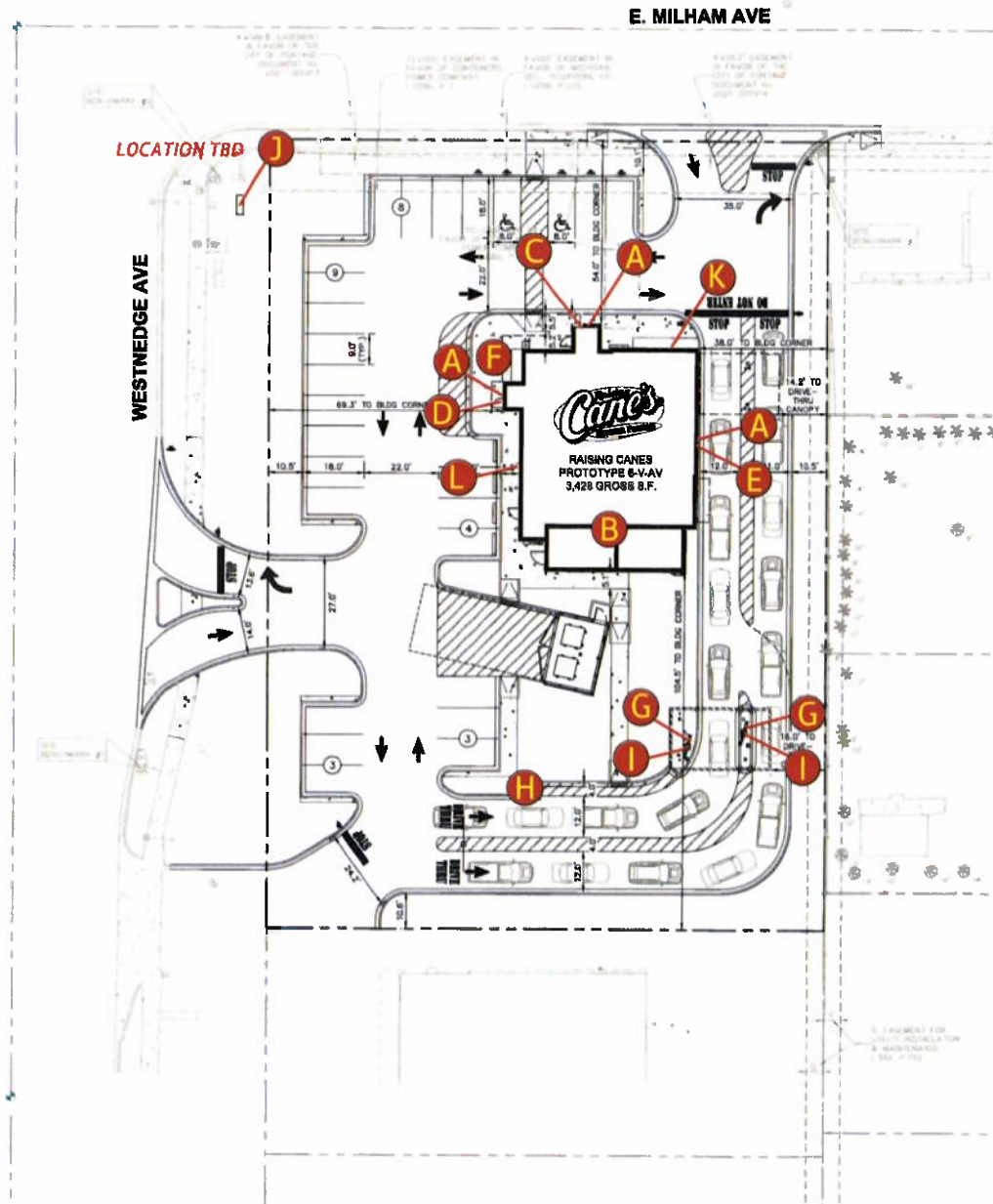
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PROPOSED SIGNAGE LAYOUT

SITEMAP



	QTY.	CODE	DESCRIPTION
A	3	WS-8FT	4x8 Wall Sign
B	1	WS-6FT	3x6 Wall Sign
C	1	ONS	Open Sign
D	1	CFNS	Chicken Fingers Neon Sign
E	1	PAMRL	Painted Arrow Mural One
F	1	CAN	Love Canopy Letters DT
G	2	DTMB	Menuboard
H	1	DTPS	Pre Sell Board
I	2	DTSP	Speaker Post
J	1	PYLON	7x14 Pylon @ 25' OAH
K	1	MURAL	Painted Mural
L	1	RD	Red Dog Art Panel

No MSP or LL restrictions noted 3/15/23	YES	NO
Pylon: 1sf/2.5 street frontage, 120sf max @25' oah on corner w/ 10' property line setbacks and located 6'+ (horizontally) or 12' (vertically) from overhead electrical conductors. EMC: counts towards sign allowance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wall: Combined area NTE 15% of the total wall area, NTE 100sf per street frontage. 125sf if bldg linear frontage is >100'. if no freestanding sign, increase to 33% of wall area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Window: Not regulated, no permit required. Cove light: Subject to Review during Site Plan review Menu/PS: Not regulated, building permit required only Murals/Art: Counts as sign if copy RD: Counts as sign if copy, no permanent banners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

Site ID: RC1085

AGI PM: Chris Russell

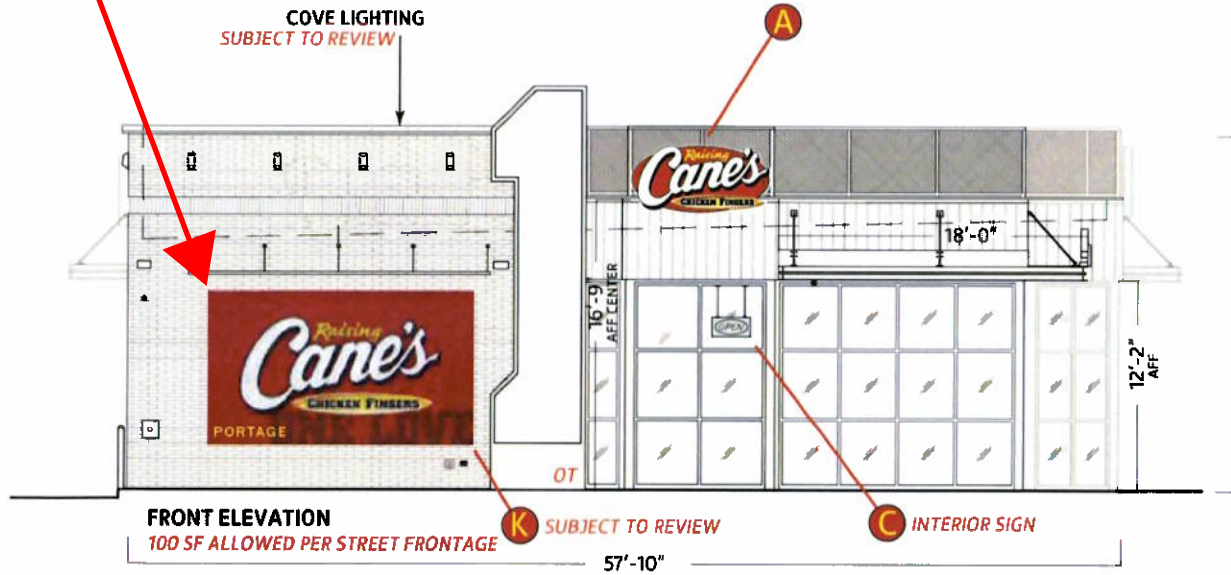
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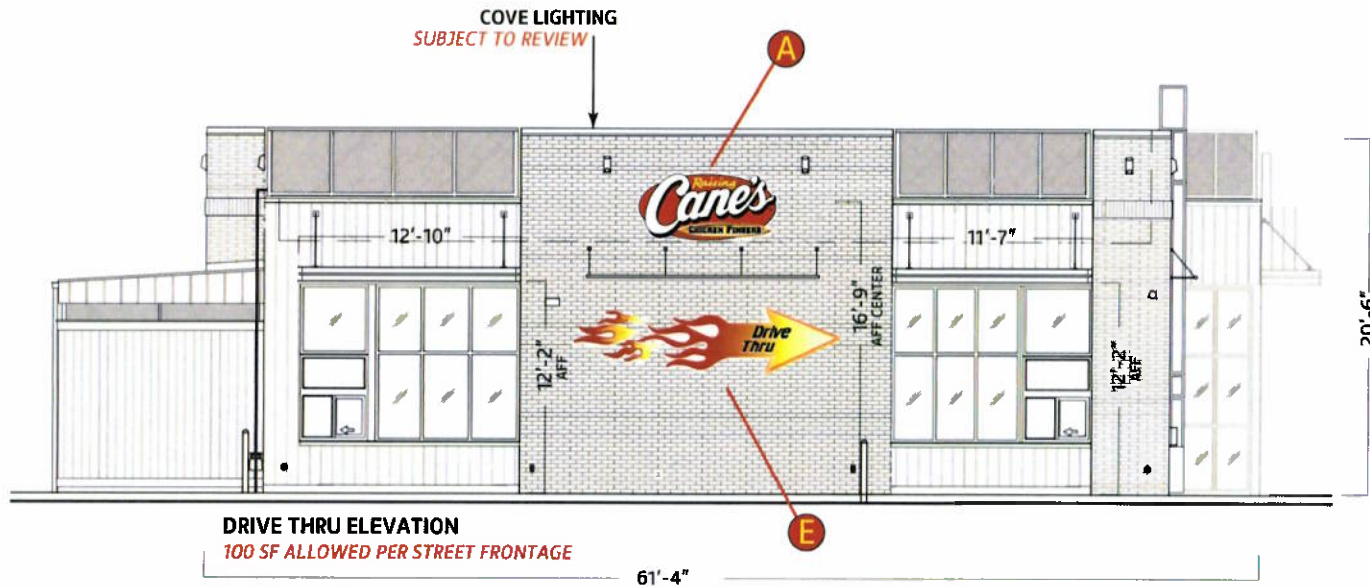


PROPOSED SIGNAGE LAYOUT 'K'

ELEVATIONS



QTY.	C	DESCRIPTION
A 3	WS-8FT	4x8 Wall Sign
B 1	WS-6FT	3x6 Wall Sign
C 1	ONS	Open Sign
D 1	CFNS	Chicken Fingers Neon Sign
E 1	PAMRL	Painted Arrow Mural One
F 1	CAN	Love Canopy Letters DT
G 2	DTMB	Menuboard
H 1	DTPS	Pre Sell Board
I 2	DTSP	Speaker Post
J 1	PYLON	7x14 Pylon @ 25' OAH
K 1	MURAL	Painted Mural
L 1	RD	Red Dog Art Panel



Scale: 3/32"=1'



Location: Portage, MI

Date: 06/14/2023

Site ID: RC1085

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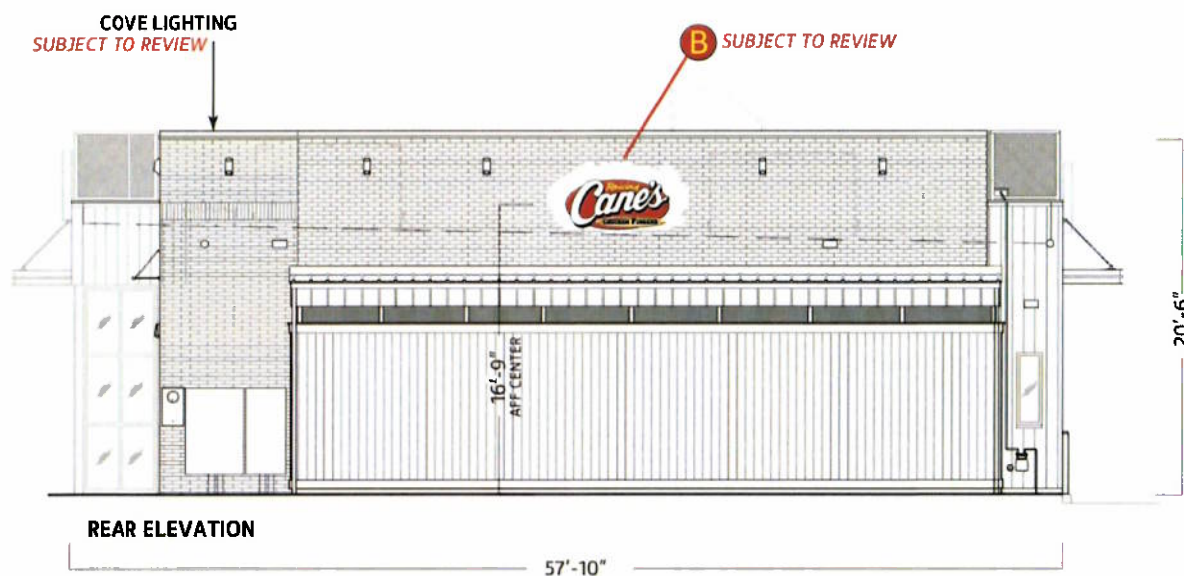
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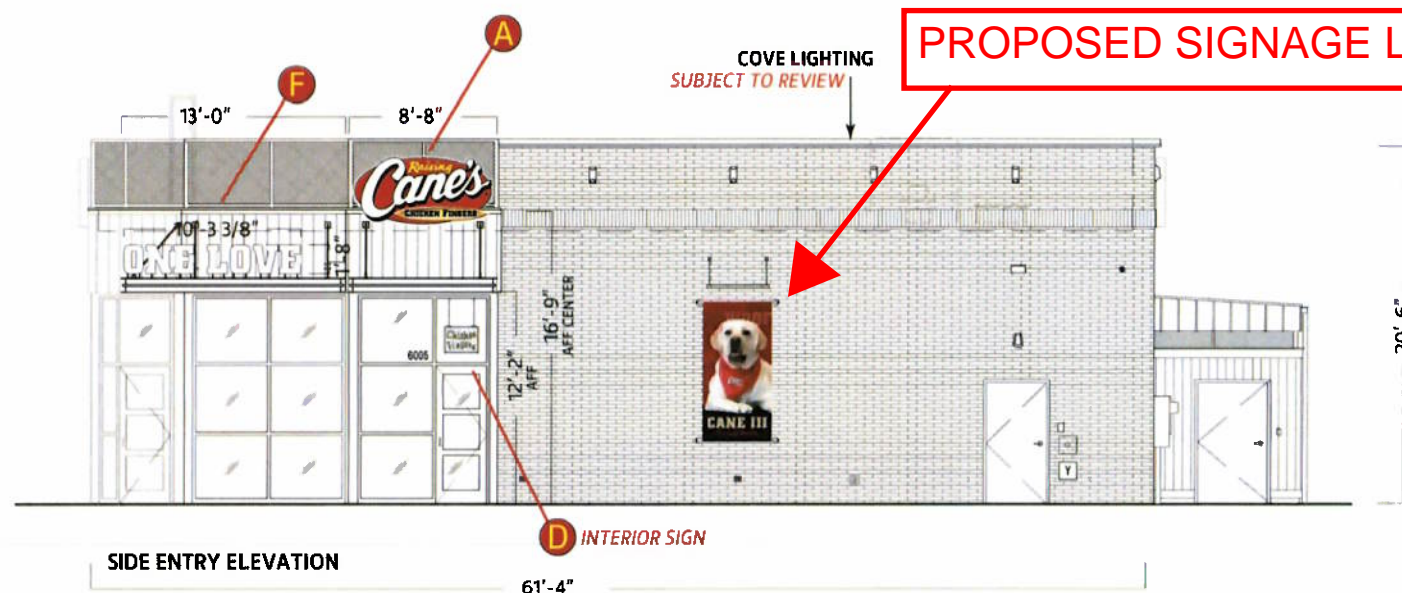


(23)

ELEVATIONS



	QTY.	C	DESCRIPTION
A	3	WS-8FT	4x8 Wall Sign
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L	1	RD	Red Dog Art Panel



Scale: 3/32"=1'



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The researchers also measured the degree to which the design research team perceived that the use of the design research process was a valuable tool for their design team. They measured this by asking the team to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "The design research process is a valuable tool for our design team." The researchers found that the team perceived the design research process to be a valuable tool for their design team.

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