



Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 6:00 PM
City Hall
101 W. First Street
Lowell, North Carolina 28098

**** Revised ****

1: Call to Order

- 1A. Call to Order
- 1B. Determination of Quorum
- 1C. Pledge of Allegiance
- 1D. Changes to and Approval of Agenda

2: Approval of Minutes

- 2A. DRAFT - November 6th, 2023 Planning Board Meeting Minutes

3: Old Business

4: New Business

- 4A. Master Sign Plan Application - 831 S. Main Street, Lowell, NC 28098 -
Gastonia Chevrolet, Buick, GMC Dealership is seeking approval of their proposed master sign plan.
Presented Joe Gates - Planning
By: Director
- 4B. Planning Board Monthly Report

5: Adjournment

Date Posted: December 5, 2023



City of Lowell

Planning Board Memorandum

Prepared By: Joe Gates

DRAFT - November 6th, 2023 Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting	Agenda Group
Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 6:00 PM	Approval of Minutes Item: 3A
Reference File	Presented By

To: Planning And Zoning Board

From: Joe Gates, Planning Director

Date: December 5th, 2023

Re: Meeting Minutes - Draft, November 2023

See attached.

Attachments

DRAFT - November 6, 2023 Planning Board Minutes.pdf

MINUTES

Lowell Planning and Zoning Board
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, November 6, 2023, 6:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Scott Wilson, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Planning Board members present: Troy Roberts Sr., Norris Lamb, and Heather Seay. David Jennings was absent. Staff members present: Joe Gates, Planning Director, Stormwater Administrator Jamie Watkins, and Cheryl Ramsey, City Clerk. Amy Bowen was the officer on duty. Members of the public were in attendance.

II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM –it was determined a quorum was reached.

III. CHANGES TO AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA – No changes.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - led by Scott Wilson

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 3, 2023, MEETING.

A motion was made by Board Member Lamb to approve the previous minutes, seconded by Board Member Roberts. The vote was unanimously in favor.

VI. OLD BUSINESS – None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. **Presentation – City of Lowell Downtown Master Plan presented by Demetri Baches from Metrocology.** Mr. Gates showed the renderings for the Master Plan to board members. Mr. Baches then did his presentation via Zoom. After the presentation there was a brief discussion. Board Member Roberts said it was a lot to take in and requested the presentation slides. Mr. Gates said he will provide via email. Mr. Gates told the board that the same presentation was given to the LCC (Lowell Community Committee), and the plan for staff is to present it to City Council for their approval and adoption of the conceptual plan for downtown. Meetings have been held with staff, DOT, and property owners in the downtown area in getting people to use their imagination of what could happen in our downtown area. Chairman Wilson mentioned the new roads concept of the presentation and how the idea has always been to get the large trucks out of the downtown area.

Board Member Lamb asked what are the phases for this type of project? Mr. Baches said there would be a combination of things that would happen

simultaneously. It's hard to pick a spot and say this is where we will start, etc. The big-ticket items would be to get the pilot project going, or showing what Main St could look like, with DOT as well as the 3rd St ideas. The biggest thing to do is to get the downtown property owners involved so they understand what is going on that will benefit them. Then you could begin developing projects like building City Hall which could set the tone for the rest of the vision.

With no further questions, Board Member Seay made a motion to move this forward to City Council, seconded by Board Member Roberts. The vote was unanimously approved.

B. Application for Appointment to Lowell Planning and Zoning Board –

Applicant Natasha Shuford. Mr. Gates stated this is for information purposes only to let the board know what was coming up for vote with City Council. He stated the rules and procedures say you can have up to seven members [on the Planning Board]. We received the application for Ms. Shuford, and it will be going forward to council next week [November 14, 2023]. Board Member Seay said she spoke to someone else who was interested in being on the Planning Board and they stated they never heard anything back. The City Clerk stated she had been seeing items in her email going straight to her spam folder but will check tomorrow for any that may have slipped her review and get in contact the interested applicant. Mr. Gates added that this is an open meeting and she or anyone is welcome to come see what the Planning Board does.

C. EPA Multipurpose Grant for 1602 N. Main St – Introduction to Grant

Funding. Staff is seeking support of the board as it applies for grant funding through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Community Wide Brownfield Assessment Grant to continue cleanup and revitalization of the proposed Riverside Park. Mr. Gates said staff are always looking for grant money and this is an opportunity from the EPA for a multipurpose grant. He directed members to the agenda packet for the purpose of the funding. He said this is for the old chemical plant. He stated that there have been approved grants for several million dollars to aid with getting stuff down and moving things along. We believe our project would be eligible for these funds. The grant can be up to \$1 million dollars and staff is seeking the boards' approval to apply for the grant. We have missed the deadline for the current cycle but will come back to the board in a couple months when the new cycle comes back around and after proper preparation (studies and narratives written by staff) for support. He wanted to mention it now to get it on the board's radar.

Chairman Wilson asked if we have to pay it back? Mr. Gates said no. Chairman Wilson said it is an amazing opportunity for us to apply. He asked how many millions of grants have we been awarded, like \$19 million per Candy [Funderburk of City Council]? Mr. Gates did not know the exact amount but agreed the city has been awarded a substantial amount of money in grant funds over the last few

years. He thinks Gaston County has received the most money in grant funds in the State this budget year.

With no other questions, Board Member Lamb made a motion to move forward in seeking this grant, seconded by Board Member Seay. The vote was unanimously approved.

- D. **Planning Department Updates** – Information only. Mr. Gates gave the board updates on what he has been up to in the last month. See agenda packet for updates.

VIII. ADJOURN

With no other discussion, a motion was made to adjourn by Board Member Seay, seconded by Board Member Roberts. The vote was unanimously in favor. Adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

AFFIRM:

Chair, Scott Wilson

Cheryl Ramsey, City Clerk



City of Lowell

Planning Board Memorandum

Prepared By: Joe Gates

Master Sign Plan Application - 831 S. Main Street, Lowell, NC 28098 -

Gastonia Chevrolet, Buick, GMC Dealership is seeking approval of their proposed master sign plan.

Meeting	Agenda Group
Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 6:00 PM	New Business Item: 5A
Reference File	Presented By
	Joe Gates - Planning Director

To: Lowell Planning and Zoning Board

From: Joe Gates, Planning Director

Date: Thursday, November 30, 2023

Re: Consideration of Master Sign Plan Application, File # MSP23-01

PROPERTY OWNER: McKenney Rentals LLC

APPLICANT: Rick Gonzalez, Automotive Management Services, Inc.

LOCATION: 831 S. Main Street, Lowell, NC 28098

ACREAGE: 5.65 ac

ZONING DISTRICT: US Highway 74 Commercial District (C-74)

Background and Site Description

The subject property consists of a dealership/showroom, vehicle service areas and parking lot areas located on the site. The building is approximately 49,000 square feet and has visibility from Interstate 85 and US Highway 74 and S. Main Street.

Section 17.10-2 (B) Master Sign Plan, Application, states that "Commercial, institutional, industrial, or mixed-use developments containing three (3) or more acres in area" are eligible to apply for a master sign plan. This property is 5.65 acres, thus meeting this requirement.

The applicant has submitted a complete application, site plan and other supporting documentation to support their request to replace one (1) of their walls signs .

Proposed Request

Replace existing "McKenney" sign with a new sign that says "Gastonia".

Code References

- Article 17 - Sign Regulations
- Section 17.7-1 (A) - Only one general attached sign (blade, V-type, of flat) is allowed per street frontage)
- Table 17.1 Permanent Sign Standards and Criteria, Permanent Attached Signs - General
- Section 17.10 Master Sign Plan
- Section 17.13 Nonconforming Signs

Per Article 17 - Sign Regulations, Section 17.10 Master Sign Plan, the Lowell Development Ordinance allows applicants to submit applications for signs of different sizes, types, locations, placement, and height from those otherwise enumerated in Article 17 - Sign Regulations. The Planning Board is charged with reviewing the application per the procedure outlined in

Section 17.10-4 Review Procedure. In reviewing the proposed master sign plan, the Planning Board and City Council shall take the following matters into consideration.

(1.) The extent to which the proposed master sign plan deviates from the sign allowances otherwise applicable in this Article.

(2.) The rationale provided by the applicant for the deviations.

(3.) The extent to which the master sign plan promotes City goals associated with community character, wayfinding, pedestrian-orientation, and business identification.

(4.) The degree to which the master sign plan creatively and effectively addresses the issues and constraints unique to the site with regard to signage.

The Planning Board shall provide a recommendation to the City Council whether to DENY or APPROVE the proposed master sign plan in part or in total and shall further recommend conditions regarding approval where deemed warranted. The following pages contain the application and other related documentation related to this request.

Based on the application and provided material, staff is recommending APPROVAL of this application as submitted.

Attachments

City of Lowell - signed app.pdf

Permitting Brand Book for Gastonia Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac- BAC #318314-111523 Revised 11.20.23.pdf

City of Lowell Letter (1).pdf

Zoning map - City Lowell.pdf

Adjoining owners.pdf

Gaston County Printout.pdf



MASTER SIGN PLAN APPLICATION

TO: THE CITY OF LOWELL
101 W. First Street
Lowell, NC 28098

APPLICATION #: MSP23-01
DATE FILED: 10/31/2023
FEE PAID: YES

The undersigned does (do) hereby respectfully make application and request to the City of Lowell to allow creativity in order to address site issues and constraints as outlined in regards to Article 17 of the Lowell Development Ordinance pertaining to sign regulations and requirements on the below listed property and in such ways as proposed.

- 1) The real property sought to be amended is owned in fee simple by:
"McKenney Rentals LLC" (formerly named J & R Rentals)
as evidenced in Deed Book 4510 Page 1151 of the Gaston County Register of Deeds Office. There are no restrictions or covenants of record appearing in the chain of title which would prohibit the property from being subject to this request.
- 2) The address of the real property sought to be amended is: 831 S. Main St., Lowell, NC 28098 and/or further legal description by metes and bounds of said realty is attached to this application.
- 3) The following are all adjoining property owners who own land adjacent to all sides, front and rear, which shall include properties across the street from the property sought to be amended. The names and addresses listed below shall be determined by the most recent tax listing as recorded in the Gaston County Tax Office. (Use additional pages if necessary.)

NAME

ADDRESS

See attached name and address list - "Adjoining Owners"

- 4) A map or drawing identifying the real property requesting the Master Sign Plan and all attached properties with their designated zoning districts shown shall be attached to this application. See attached "Zoning Map"
- 5) Master Sign Plan proposal illustrating the proposed signs, their proposed location, and their proposed purpose, along with a statement as to why the existing sign code cannot or should not be followed in the subject case. See attached "Permitting Brand Book" & "City of Lowell Letter"

- 6) An analysis showing how the proposed signage plan differs from what could be provided under the existing sign regulations set forth in Article 17 of the Lowell Development Ordinance. See attached "Permitting Brand Book" & "City of Lowell Letter"
- 7) Other similar information determined by the *Planning, Zoning & Subdivision Administrator* to be necessary for understanding the purpose and intent of the proposed Master Sign Plan application.

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____

NOT APPLICABLE

- 8) The applicant understands that a letter stating the date, time and place for the Public Hearing for the Master Sign Plan request of said property shall be mailed to each of the parties listed in Section 3 above at least ten (10) days prior to the Public Hearing.
- 9) If the applicant is not the legal owner of the property seeking approval of the Master Sign Plan, the legal owner(s) names and addresses shall be listed below. Owner(s) shall be determined by the most recent tax listing as recorded in the Gaston County Tax Office. (Use additional pages if necessary.) (Please attach Notarized Public Hearing Consent Form provided by the City of Lowell) N/A

NAME

ADDRESS

ATTACHED IN PACKET

Applicant(s) Name: McKenney Rentals LLC
Address: 525 STUART RIDGE Cramerton NC 28032
Telephone: 704 813 6958

Applicant(s) Signature:

H Ray McKenney
H RAY McKenney

City of Lowell
101 W. First Street
Lowell, NC 28098

Telephone: 704-824-3518

General Motors Facility Image
Dealer Signage Package



General Motors Facility Image



Dealer Signage Package

GASTONIA CHEVROLET BUICK GMC (318314)
LOWELL NC 28098

General Motors Facility Image Dealer Signage Package



PACKAGE

The Dealer Signage Package is issued to the Dealer Principal for review and approval. This document outlines the proposed FI signage for the Dealership.

APPROVAL

Dealer Principal is to review sign placement, sign size and enclosed quote. Once the Dealer Principal approves the sign package, Dealer Principal is to sign off on each enclosed rendering showing sign placement as well as the enclosed quote. Dealer Principal is to return to Architectural Graphics, Inc. copies of the approved renderings as well as signed quote and issue the 50% deposit payment.

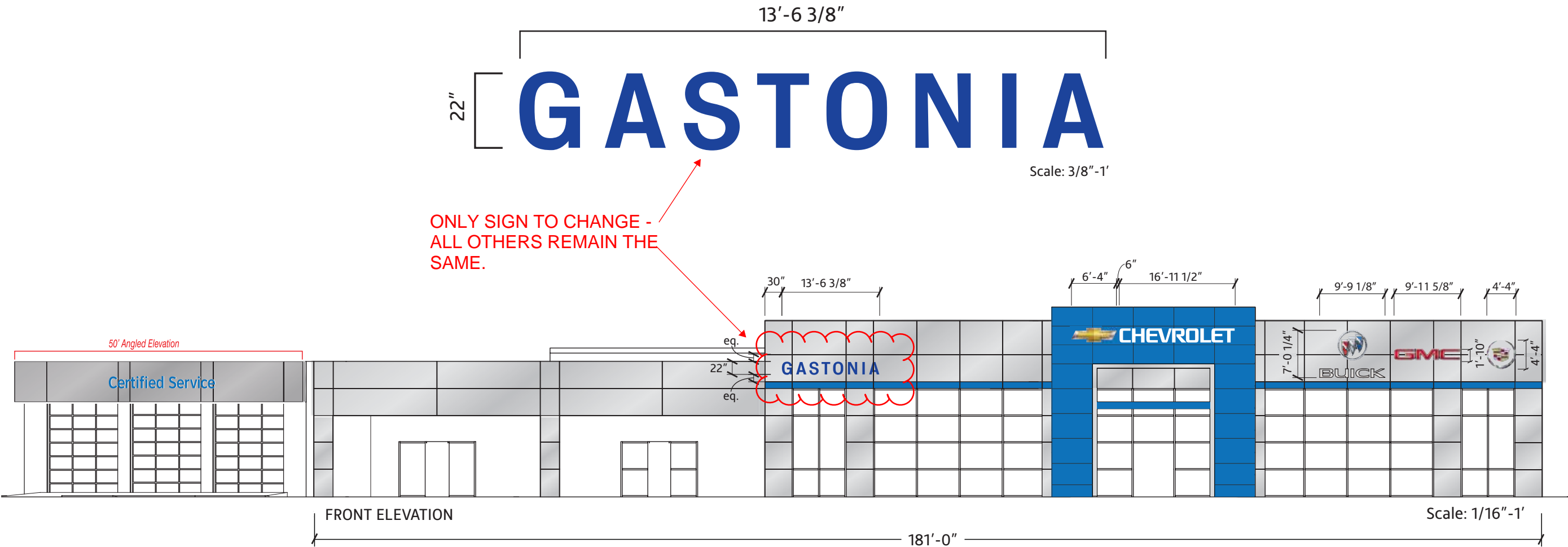
NEXT STEPS

Upon receipt of the deposit payment, Architectural Graphics Inc. will proceed with permitting the signs. Once all signs are permitted, AGI will coordinate manufacturing, shipping and installing the signs based on FI building readiness.



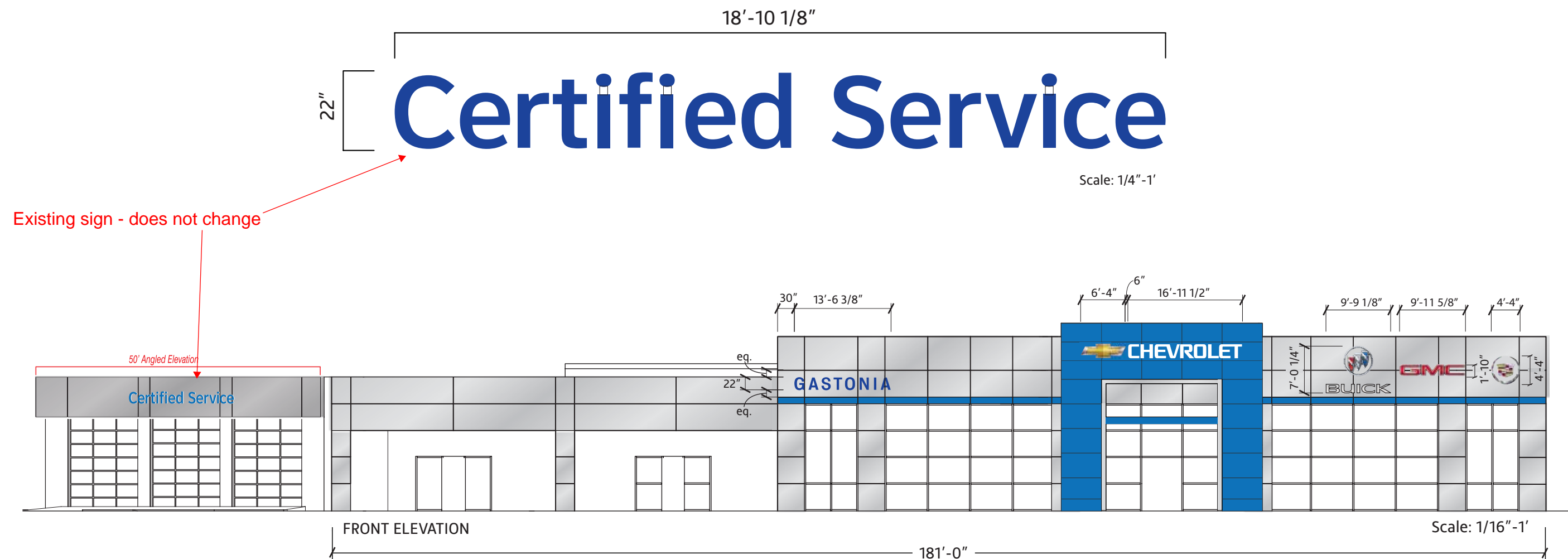
ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS: Each sign requires a dedicated 120v circuit

Dealer Name Letterset				
A HEIGHT	B LENGTH	SQUARE FT.	WEIGHT	ELECTRICAL
22"	13'-6 3/8"	25.38	8 lbs/ltr	.4 amps/ltr



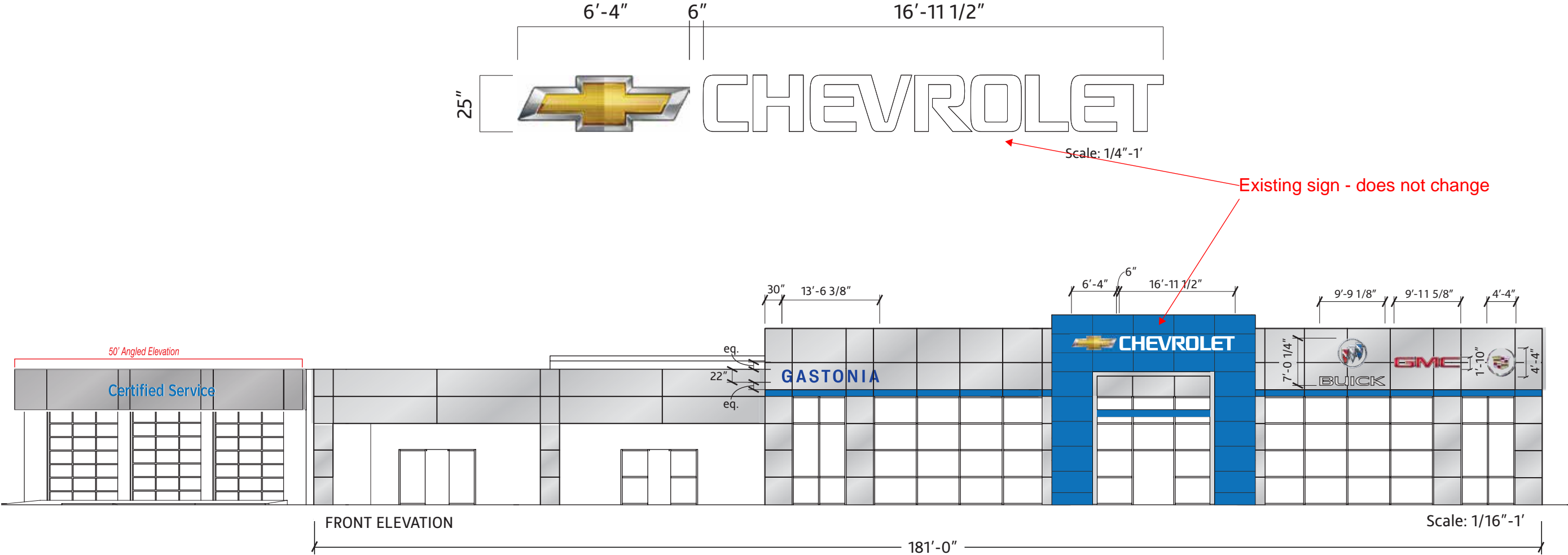
ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS: Each sign requires a dedicated 120v circuit

Certified Service Letterset				
A HEIGHT	B LENGTH	SQUARE FT.	WEIGHT	ELECTRICAL
22"	18' - 10 1/8"	34.54	80 lbs	1 amp



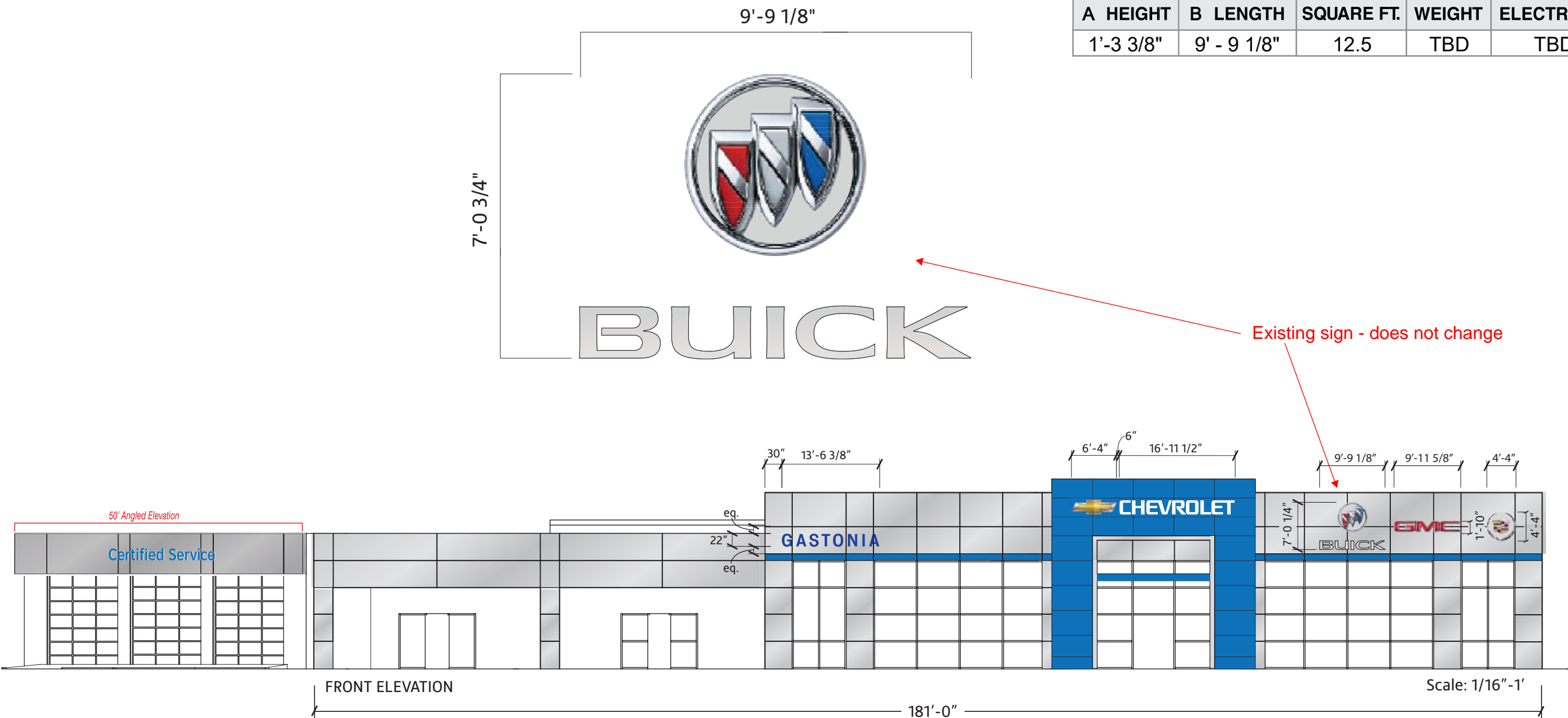
ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS: Each sign requires a dedicated 120v circuit

Chevrolet Bowtie 2010				
A HEIGHT	B LENGTH	SQUARE FT.	WEIGHT	ELECTRICAL
25"	6' - 4"	13.37	15 lbs	1 amp
Chevrolet Signature				
A HEIGHT	B LENGTH	SQUARE FT.	WEIGHT	ELECTRICAL
25"	16' - 11 1/2"	35.37	72 lbs	1 amp



ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS: Each sign requires a dedicated 120v circuit

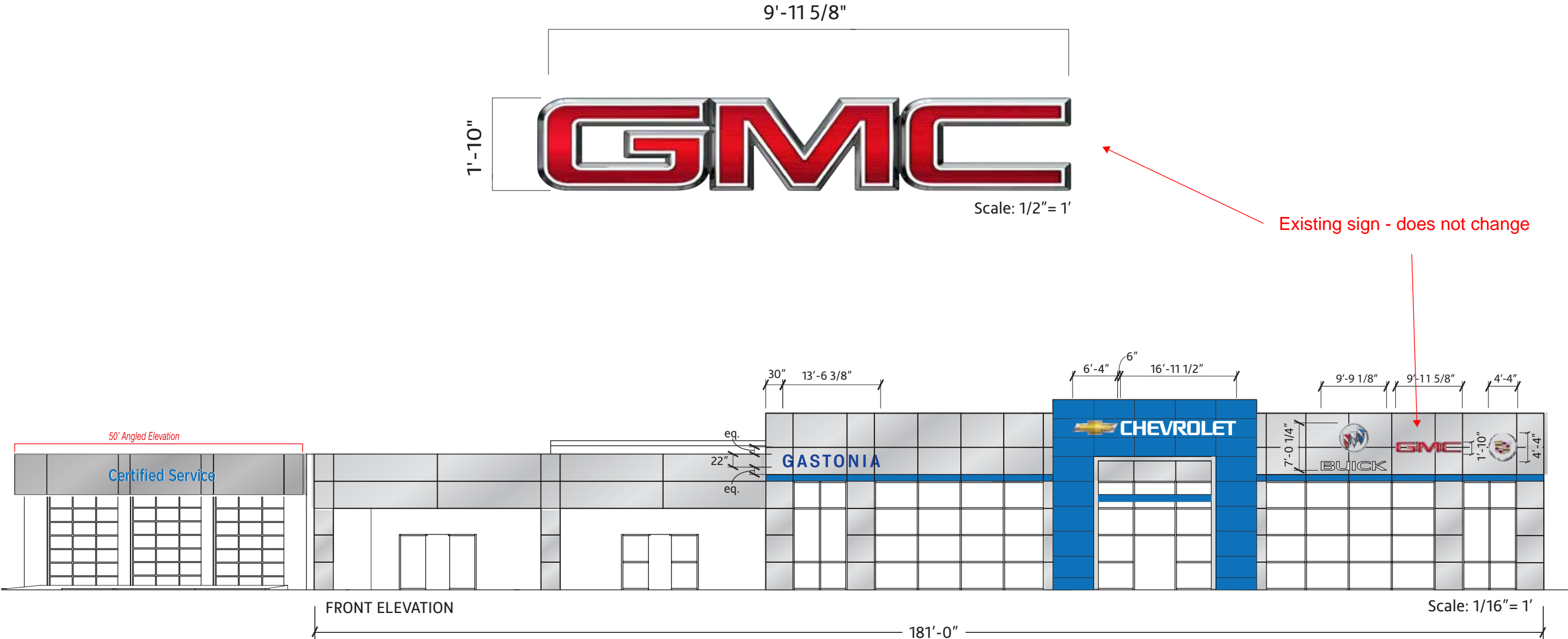
Buick Emblem				
A HEIGHT	B LENGTH	SQUARE FT.	WEIGHT	ELECTRICAL
4'-6 3/8"	4'-6 3/8"	20.5	TBD	TBD
Buick Signature				
A HEIGHT	B LENGTH	SQUARE FT.	WEIGHT	ELECTRICAL
1'-3 3/8"	9' - 9 1/8"	12.5	TBD	TBD



Existing sign - does not change

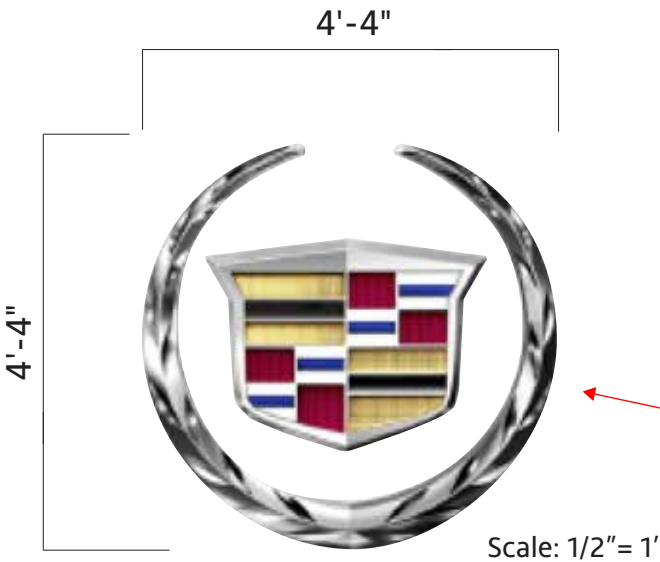
ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS: Each sign requires a dedicated 120v circuit

GMC Wall Sign				
A HEIGHT	B LENGTH	SQUARE FT.	WEIGHT	ELECTRICAL
1'- 10"	9'- 11 5/8"	18.78	TBD	TBD

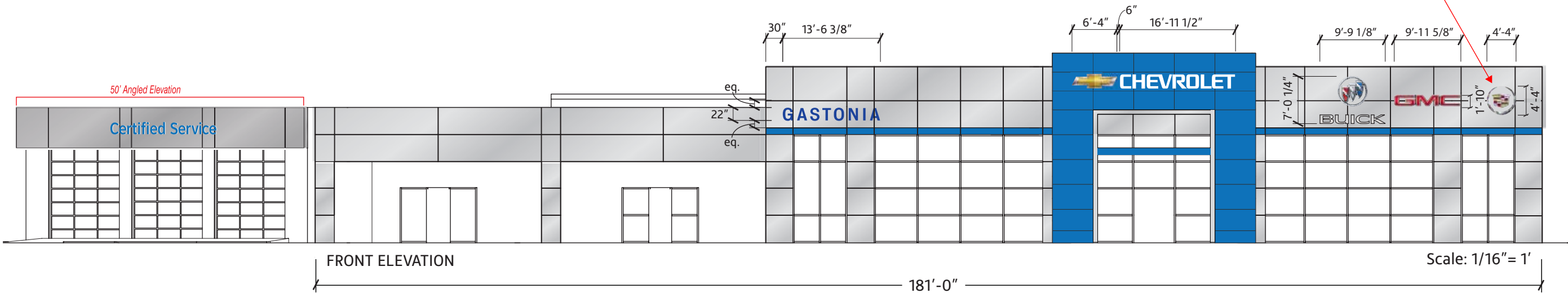


ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS: Each sign requires a dedicated 120v circuit

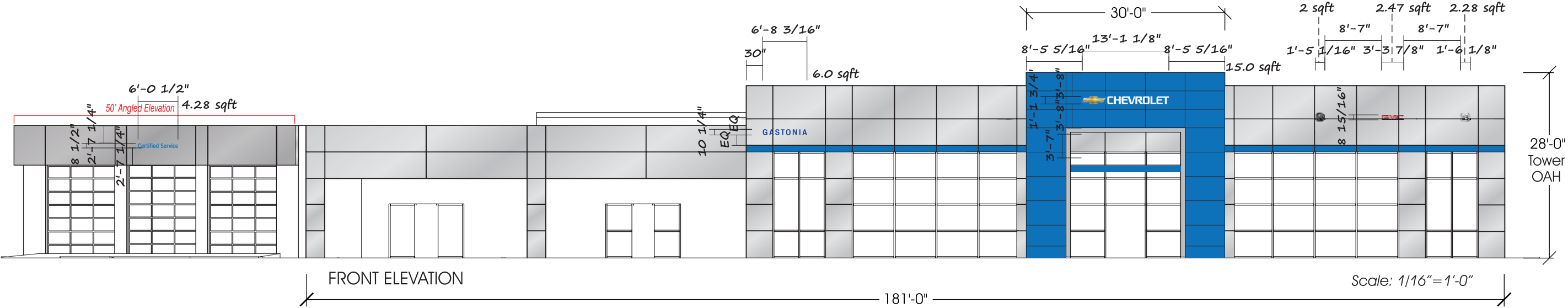
Large Cadillac Emblem				
A HEIGHT	B LENGTH	SQUARE FT.	WEIGHT	ELECTRICAL
4'- 4"	4'- 4"	18.78	TBD	TBD



Existing sign - does not change



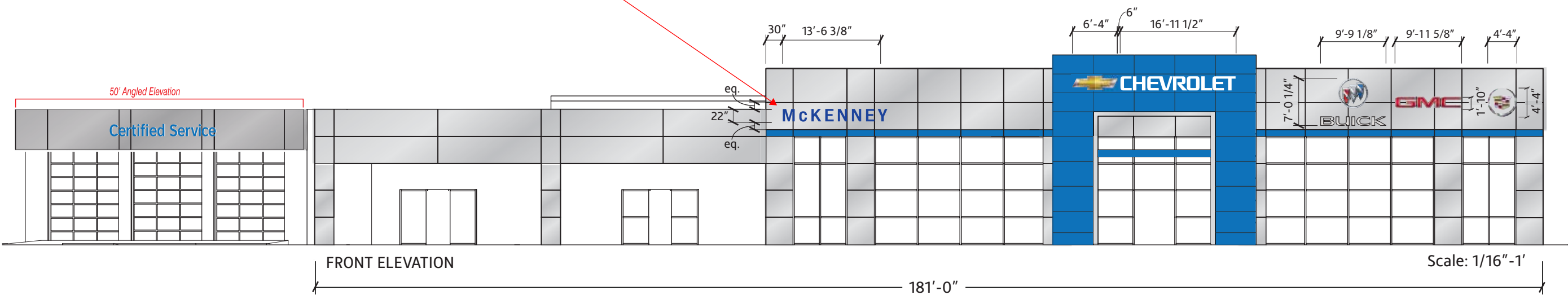
Example of signage at 32 Square Feet per Request from city



McKENNEY OPTION



This sign replaced with Gastonia as shown on page 3.



11/21/2023

City of Lowell - Planning

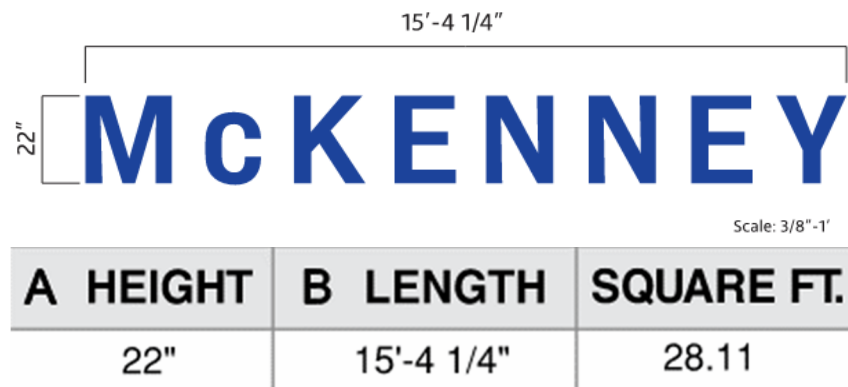
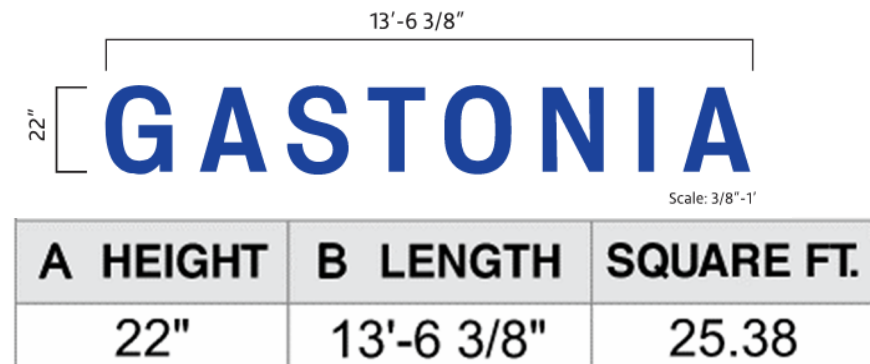
101 W 1st Street

Lowell, NC 28098

Re: Gastonia Chevrolet Buick GMC

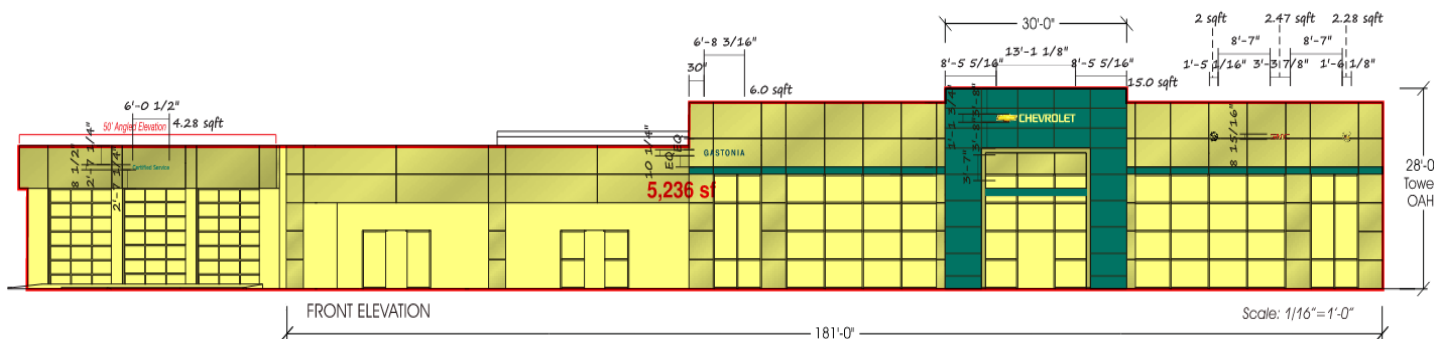
To whom it may concern:

Our request is to replace 1 sign (28.11SF) with a smaller sign (25.38SF), saving 3SF of space. We understand that we are unable to replace our store facade signage at our Gastonia Chevrolet Buick GMC store due to recent changes made to the City of Lowell's signage policy, also known as the "Master Sign Plan". This change does not allow us to replace a portion of signage without looking at everything on the front facade and ensuring all signage is ≤ 32 SF. Our current overall signage represents 179.22 SF representing 3.4% of the building facade, which is low compared to our other stores being 5% and greater. We are only trying to swap names from McKenney to Gastonia which would decrease the overall signage footprint, as mentioned above. All other signage would remain the same. Please see dimensions directly below showing the sign difference.



Architectural drawing of the front elevation of the Gastonia Chevrolet Buick GMC dealership. The drawing shows a long, low building with a flat roof and large glass windows. The facade is divided into sections for "Certified Service", "GASTONIA", "CHEVROLET", "BUICK", and "GMC". Dimensions are provided for various sections and heights. A red line indicates a 50-degree angled elevation. The total width is 181'-0" and the scale is 1/16" = 1'.

32sf (signage) / 5,236 sf facade = 0.61% of facade



As you can see from the illustrations below, it is nearly 200 ft from Wilkinson Blvd to the building facade. If the signage size is reduced to 32SF consumers will be unable to read the building signage from the street while driving which we believe will cause confusion and create potential safety issues as drivers start to slow down right in front of the dealership as they are trying to read signage with 8-10" letters from 200' away.



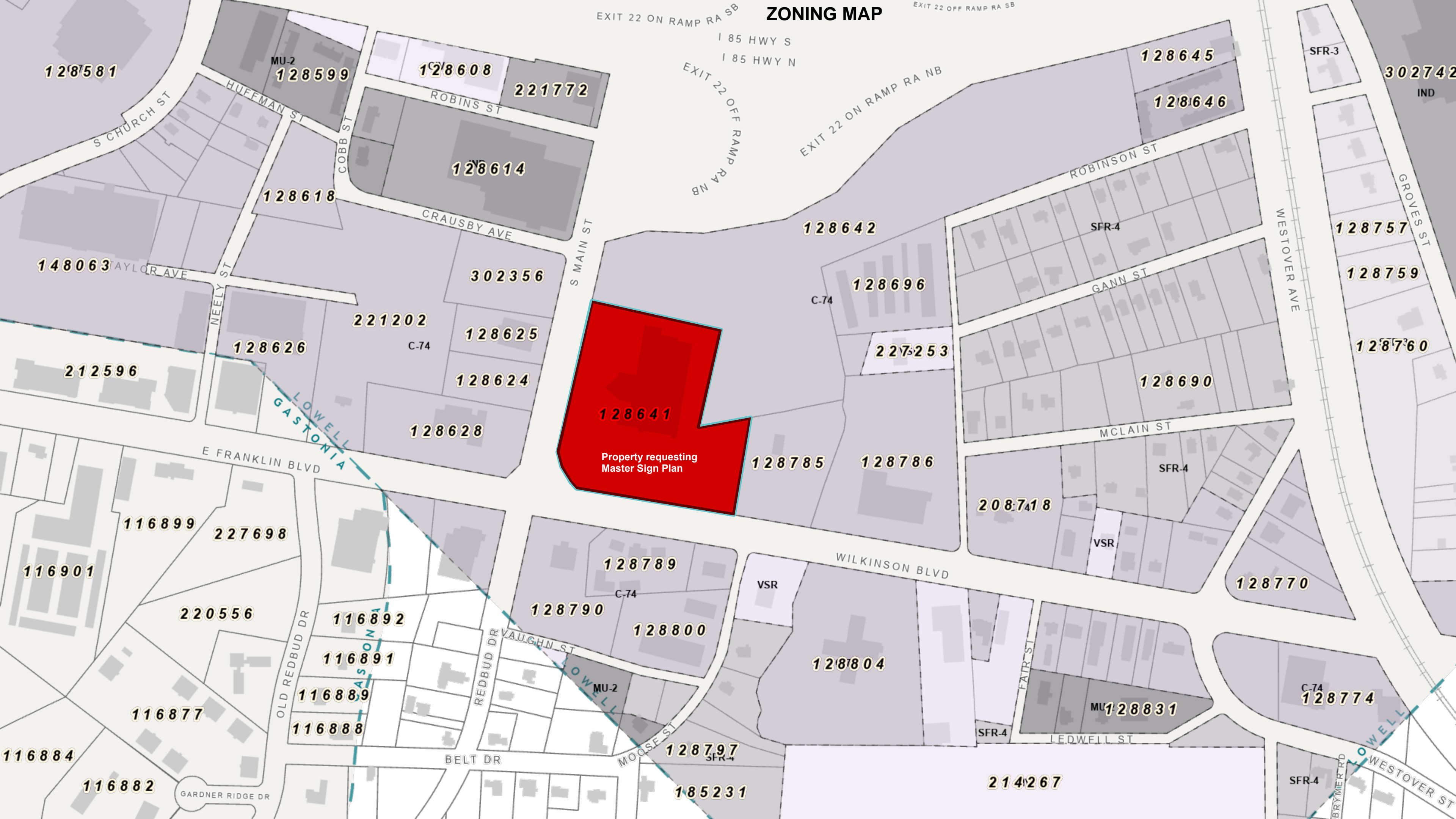
We believe that allowing us to replace the one name sign with a similar sign that has less footprint is a win-win-win situation for the City and your customer.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Rick Gonzalez

ZONING MAP



ADJOINING OWNERS

Parcels 128642, 128785, 128790 GRAY FAMILY PROPERTIES, LTD (2976 ROBINWOOD RD, GASTONIA, NC 28054)

Parcel 302356 J & G REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS LLC (8110 EAST INDEPENDENCE BLVD, CHARLOTTE, NC 28227)

Parcel 128625 LAND GROWTH LLC (8110 EAST INDEPENDENCE BLVD, MINT HILL, NC 28227)

Parcel 128624, 128780 LEWIS MOTORS INC (PO BOX 788, GASTONIA, NC 28052)

Parcel 128628 GUNTER MICHAEL D LLC (759 OAKLAWN AVE, WINSTON SALEM, NC 27104)

Parcel 128798 HOUSER PROPERTY INVESTORS LLC (1351 ROBINWOOD RD APT A222, GASTONIA, NC 28054)

Parcel 128788 MEM INVESTMENTS LLP (2228 WINDSOR WOODS DR , GASTONIA, NC 28054)

PRIMARY PROPERTY ADDRESS	TAX INFORMATION	
831 S MAIN ST, LOWELL, NC 28098 PROPERTY INFORMATION CITY LIMITS: LOWELL ETJ: NOT IN ETJ POLICE DISTRICT: LOWELL FIRE DISTRICT: LOWELL SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA: LOCAL WATERSHED: CRAMERTON CENSUS TRACT: 313.03 TAX VALUES MARKET LAND VALUE: \$2,835,230 MARKET IMPR. VALUE: \$3,003,650 MARKET VALUE: \$5,838,880 FARM DISCOUNT: NO EXEMPT: NO TAXABLE VALUE: \$5,838,880	PARCEL #: 128641 PIN #: 3575157119 CURRENT OWNERS: MCKENNEY RENTALS LLC MAILING ADDRESS: PO BOX 708 , BELMONT, NC 28012- NBHD #: LW006 NBHD NAME: REDBUD/WILKINSON TOWNSHIP: SOUTH POINT TOWNSHIP LEGAL DESC: . 05 015 012 00 000 DEED BOOK: NAME PAGE: CHNG DEED RECORDING DATE: 6/20/2011 SALES AMOUNT: \$0 PLAT BOOK: PAGE: STRUCTURE TYPE: DEALERSHIP - SHOWROOM YEAR BUILT: 2001 SQUARE FOOTAGE: 49265 VACANT: IMPROVED BASEMENT: NO BED: 0 BATH: 0 HALF-BATH: 0 MULTI-STRUCTURES: NO ACREAGE: 5.65 TAX CODE: 210 TAX DISTRICT: LOWELL CITY VOLUNTARY AG DISTRICT: NO PROPERTY USE: COMMERCIAL	   <p>GASTON COUNTY GIS</p>
		

Disclaimer: The information provided is not to be considered as a legal document or description. The map & parcel data is believed to be accurate, but Gaston County does not guarantee its accuracy. Values shown are as of January 1, 2023. - Document created for printing on November 30, 2023



City of Lowell

Planning Board Memorandum

Prepared By: Joe Gates

Planning Board Monthly Report

Meeting	Agenda Group
Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 6:00 PM	New Business Item: 5B
Reference File	Presented By

From: Joe Gates, Planning Director

Date: Friday, December 1, 2023

Re: November 2023 - Monthly Planning Report

Code Enforcement:

- Multiple nuisance violation letters issued.

Enforcement Action:

- 1 NOV corrected by Public Works staff.

Zoning:

- Processed (3) zoning permits in November.
- Permit count (161) for calendar year 2023 to-date.
- Attended on-site construction meeting for River Heights regarding sidewalks and final inspections of townhomes.
- Attended on-site Preconstruction meeting with Times Oil to begin construction of new gas station at the corner of S. Main Street and Kenworthy.
- Planner Director met with NCDOT and Project Engineer for Willow Creek Meadows about entrance placement along Groves Street.
- Planning Director and other Lowell staff met with Construction Manager for Northpoint regarding construction of a new road.

Planning:

- Lowell Community Committee meeting 11/27/2023.
- Attend monthly GCamp meeting at Gaston County Admin Building.
- Attended meeting with Centralina Regional Council.

Other:

- Attended monthly department head meeting.
- Attended November City Council Meeting.
- Attended Polimorphic Monthly update meeting.
- Planning Director attended two (2) Leadership Gaston sessions this month and received certificate of completion.