

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
STAFF REPORT****Date: August 2, 2021****CASE NUMBER**

6401/6221

APPLICANT NAME

Victor Sign Company

LOCATION

7261 and 7311 Airport Boulevard
(Southeast corner of Airport Boulevard and Portside Drive,
extending to the Southwest corner of Airport Boulevard
and Lakeview Drive).

VARIANCE REQUEST

SIGN: Sign Variance to amend a previously approved Sign Variance to allow a total of four (4) freestanding signs and three (3) wall signs for a single-tenant site in a B-3, Community Business District.

**ZONING ORDINANCE
REQUIREMENT**

SIGN: The Zoning Ordinance allows a maximum of three (3) signs for a single-tenant site in a B-3, Community Business District.

ZONING

B-3, Community Business District

AREA OF PROPERTY

11.5± Acres

**ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

No comments

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING
COMMENTS**

No comments.

**CITY COUNCIL
DISTRICT**

District 6

ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting a Sign Variance to amend a previously approved Sign Variance to allow a total of four (4) freestanding signs and three (3) wall signs for a single-tenant site in a B-3, Community Business District; the Zoning Ordinance allows a maximum of three (3) signs for a single-tenant site in a B-3, Community Business District.

The site has been given a Mixed Commercial Corridor (MCC) land use designation, per the adopted Future Land Use Plan and Map, adopted on May 18, 2017 by the Planning Commission. The Future Land Use Plan and Map complements and provides additional detail to the

Development Framework Maps in the Map for Mobile, adopted by the Planning Commission at its November 5, 2015 meeting.

This land use designation mostly applies to transportation corridors west of I-65 serving primarily the low-density (suburban) residential neighborhoods. MCC includes a wide variety of retail, services and entertainment uses.

This designation acknowledges existing commercial development that is spread along Mobile's transportation corridors in a conventional strip pattern or concentrated into shorter segments of a corridor.

Over time, new development and redevelopment in Mixed Commercial Corridors is encouraged to raise design quality, improve connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods; improved streetscapes; and improve mobility and accessibility for all users of the corridor.

It should be noted that the Future Land Use Plan and Map components of the Map for Mobile Plan are meant to serve as a general guide, not a detailed lot and district plan. In many cases the designation on the new Future Land Use Map may match the existing use of land, but in others the designated land use may differ from what is on the ground today. As such, the Future Land Use Plan and Map allows the Planning Commission and City Council to consider individual cases based on additional information such as the classification request, the surrounding development, the timing of the request, and the appropriateness and compatibility of the proposed use and, where applicable, the zoning classification.

The Zoning Ordinance states that no variance shall be granted where economics are the basis for the application; and, unless the Board is presented with sufficient evidence to find that the variance will not be contrary to the public interest, and that special conditions exist such that a literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in an unnecessary hardship. The Ordinance also states that a variance should not be approved unless the spirit and intent of the Ordinance is observed and that substantial justice is done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood.

Variances are not intended to be granted frequently. The applicant must clearly show the Board that the request is due to very unusual characteristics of the property and that it satisfies the variance standards. What constitutes unnecessary hardship and substantial justice is a matter to be determined from the facts and circumstances of each application.

The purpose of the Sign Regulations is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the City of Mobile and the general aesthetics of the city by providing for uniform standards for the locations, spacing, height, setback, lighting, and other regulation of off-premise and on-premise signs within the city.

The applicant states:

1. *The purpose is to allow for the rebranding of the dealership.*
2. *The Zoning Ordinance does not allow for the quantity and type of signage needed to fulfill the branding designation of the dealership.*

3. *This is not to ask for additional signage rather to allow for the change of existing signage that was allowed in a previous sign specific variance.*
4. *This property is an automotive dealership all neighboring properties are occupied by retail and service vendors.*

The subject site was granted a Sign Variance in 2018 for Mullinax Ford-Lincoln to allow four (4) freestanding signs and seven (7) wall signs for a single-tenant site. Since then, the dealership has dropped its affiliation with Lincoln and is strictly a Ford dealership. As one of the approved freestanding signs and one of the approved wall signs was for the Lincoln brand, and those signs are no longer applicable, the applicant is proposing to replace those signs with Ford branding. There are two Ford wall signs existing on the building and three existing Ford freestanding signs. Four of the other wall signs and one of the freestanding signs approved in the previous variance were informational/directional signs over 20 square feet each which are to remain.

The subject site is expansive with approximately 945 feet of frontage along Airport Boulevard alone. One of the existing Ford signs is for Ford Body Shop, and one is a standard Ford oval logo. The sign proposed to replace the Lincoln sign is for Ford Trucks. The wall sign proposed to replace the Lincoln logo sign is a standard Ford oval logo. Inasmuch as the previous variance allowed extra signage, and the approval was specific to the sign design, replacement with different designs would seem to be in order for the site and the Board should consider this request for approval.

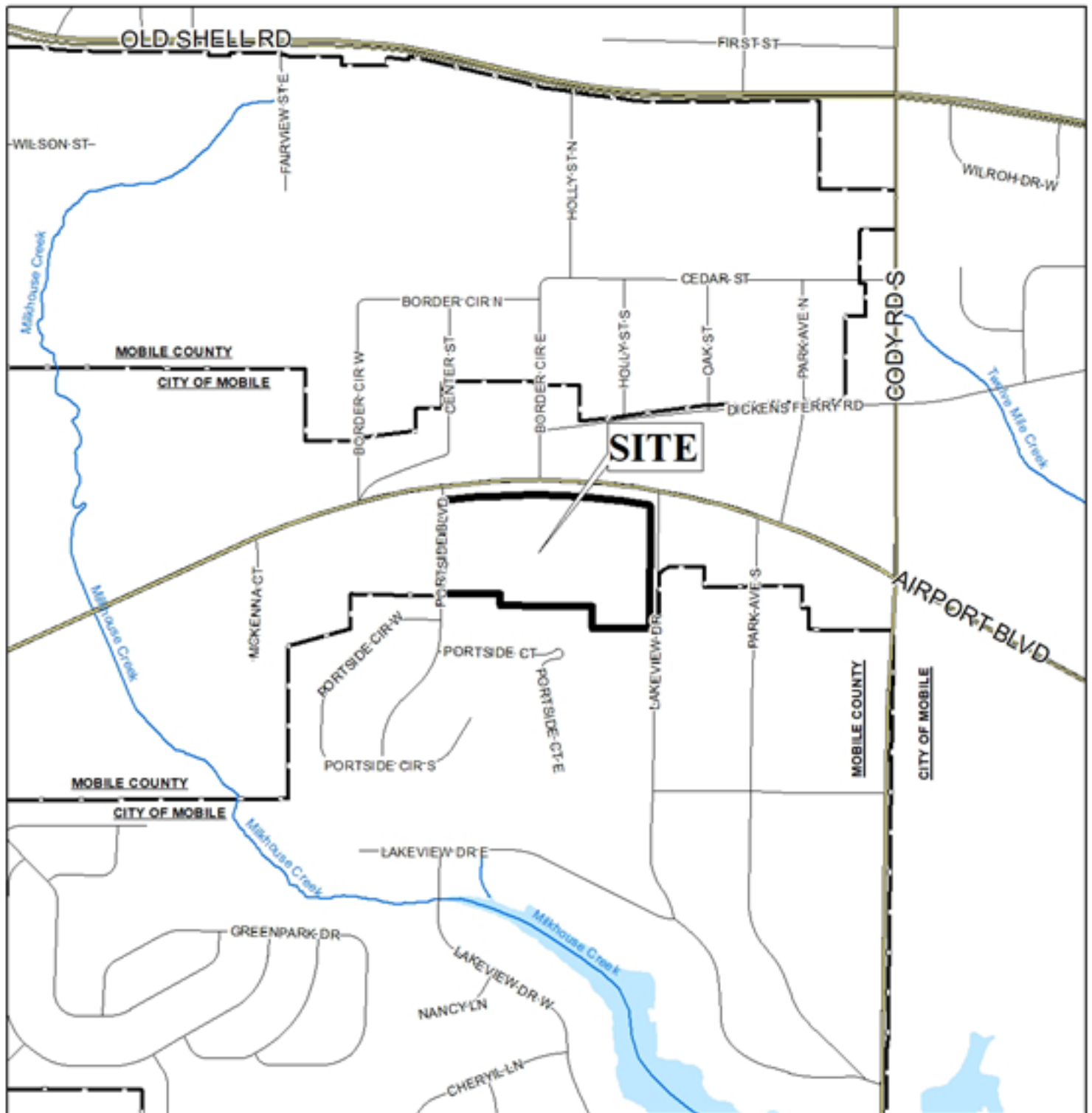
RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends to the Board the following findings of fact for Approval:

- 1) Approving the variance will not be contrary to the public interest in that it is similar to the previous Sign Variance approved for the subject site;
- 2) Special conditions (the limitation of the design of the previously-approved signs) exist such that a literal enforcement of the provisions of the chapter will result in an unnecessary hardship; and
- 3) The spirit of the chapter shall be observed and substantial justice shall be done to the applicant and surrounding neighborhood by granting the variance because it will allow for a design change to existing signage.

The Approval is subject to the following conditions:

- 1) obtaining the necessary sign permits for the signs; and
- 2) full compliance with all other municipal codes and ordinances.

LOCATOR MAP



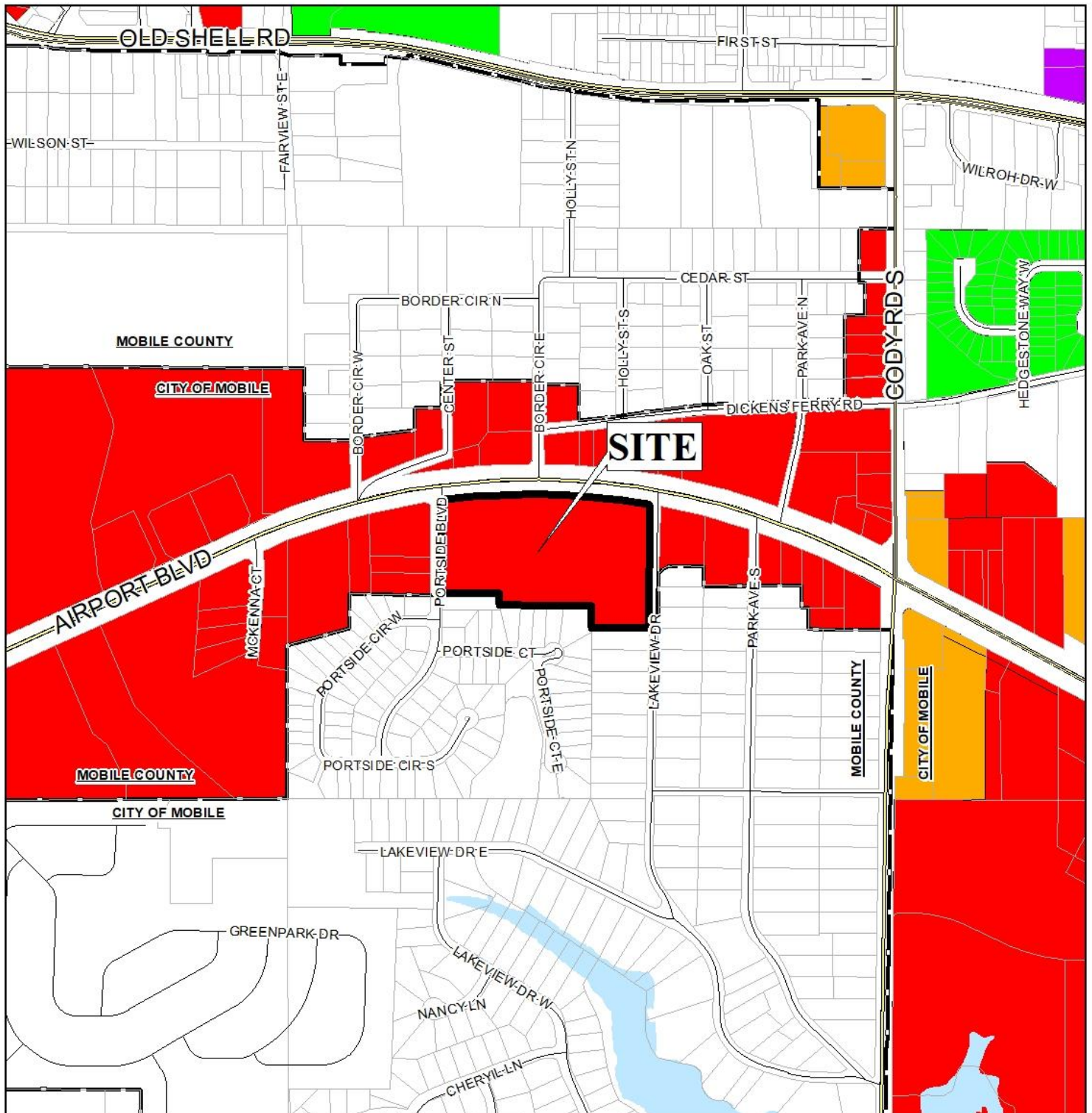
APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021

APPLICANT Victor Sign Company

REQUEST Sign Variance



LOCATOR ZONING MAP



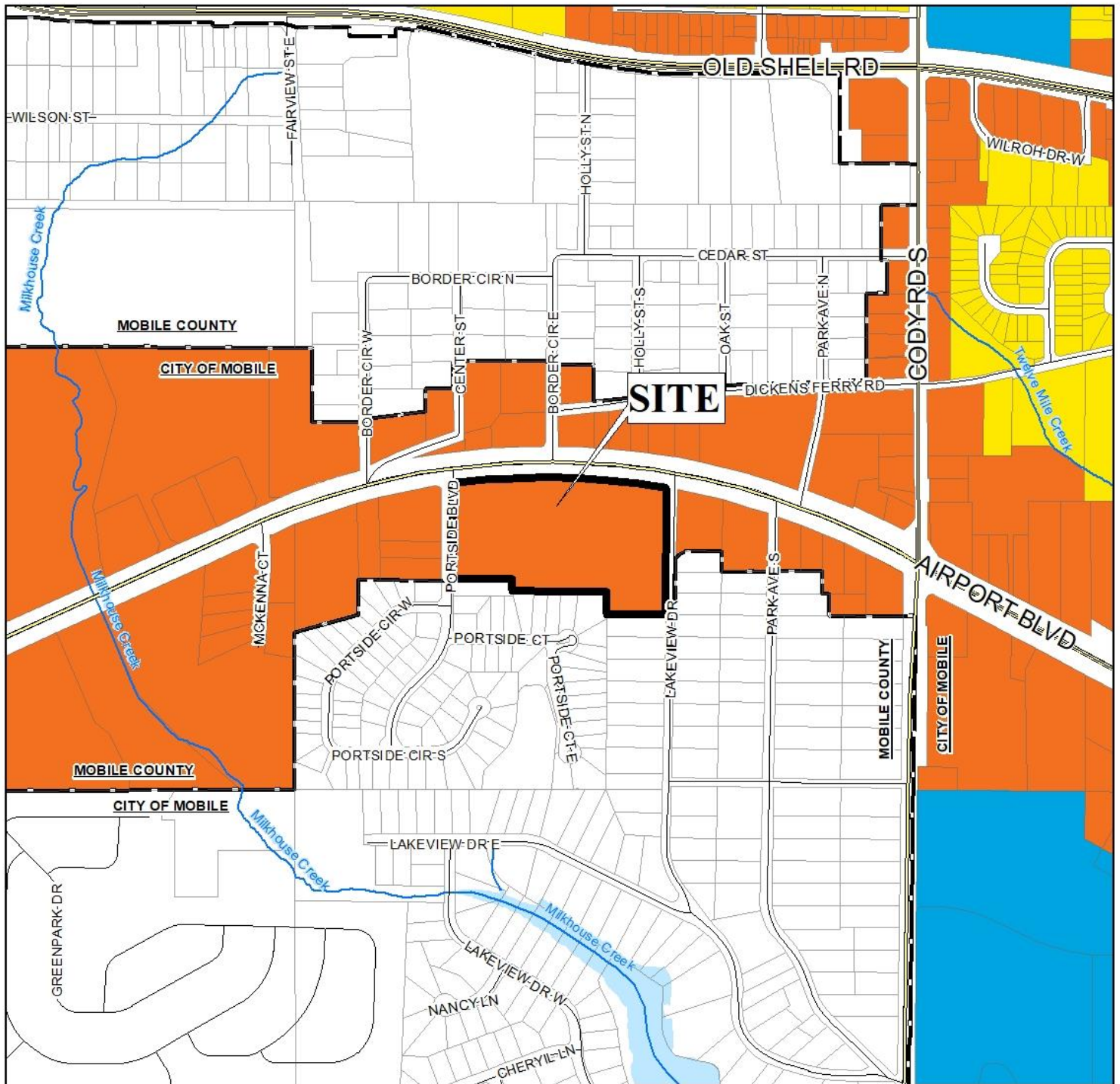
APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021

APPLICANT Victor Sign Company

REQUEST Sign Variance



FLUM LOCATOR MAP



APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021

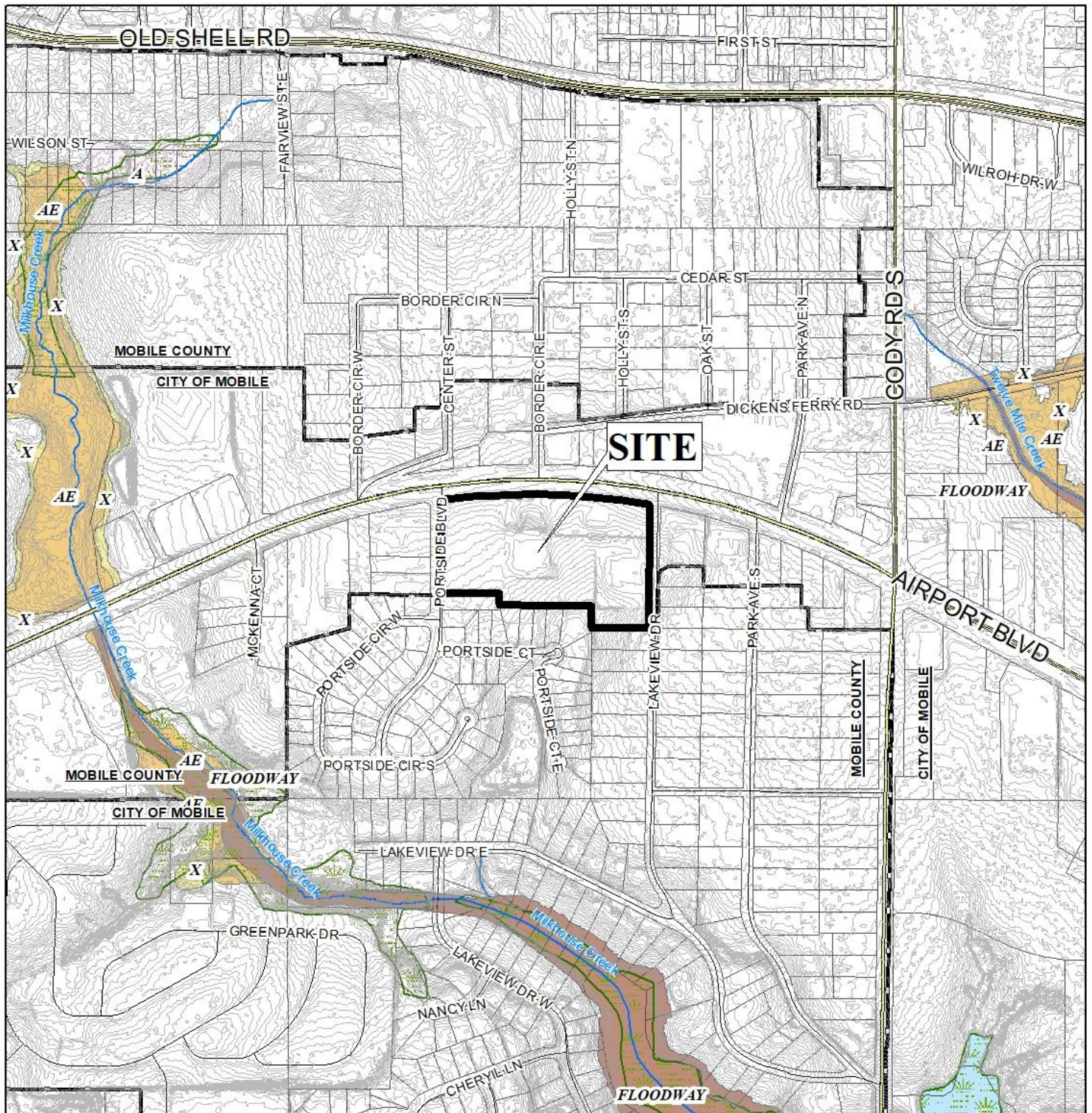
APPLICANT Victor Sign Company

REQUEST Sign Variance

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Low Density Residential | Neighborhood Center - Traditional | Downtown Waterfront | Parks & Open Space |
| Mixed Density Residential | Neighborhood Center - Suburban | Light Industry | Water Dependent |
| Downtown | Traditional Corridor | Heavy Industry | |
| District Center | Mixed Commercial Corridor | Institutional | |



ENVIRONMENTAL LOCATOR MAP



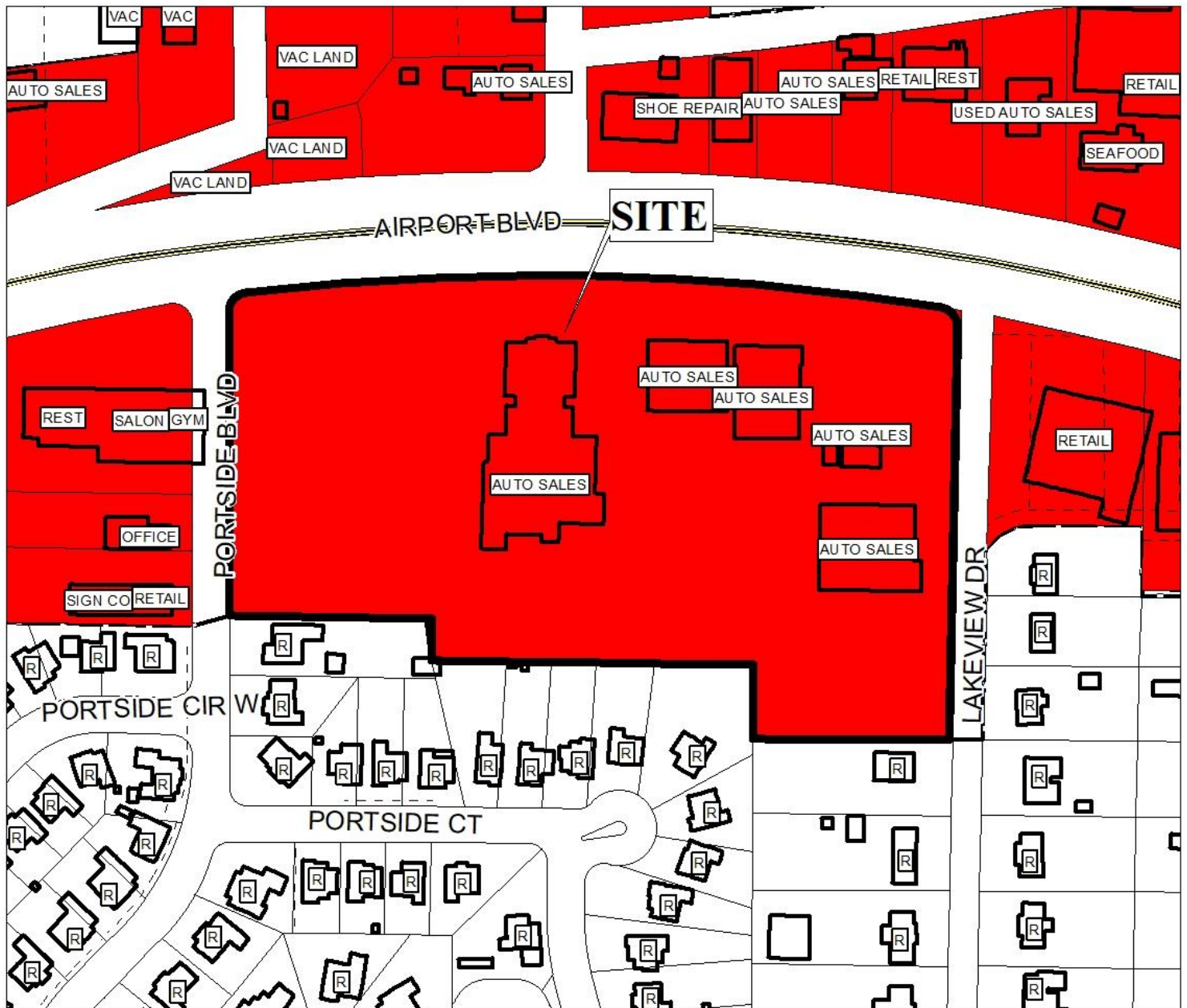
APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021

APPLICANT Victor Sign Company

REQUEST Sign Variance



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by commercial sites to the north and residential units to the south.

APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021

APPLICANT Victor Sign Company

REQUEST Sign Variance

 R-A	 R-3	 T-B	 B-2	 B-5	 MUN	 SD-WH	 T5.1
 R-1	 R-B	 B-1	 B-3	 I-1	 OPEN	 T3	 T5.2
 R-2	 H-B	 LB-2	 B-4	 I-2	 SD	 T4	 T6



BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING AERIAL



The site is surrounded by auto sales sites, single family residential units, retail units and vacant lands.

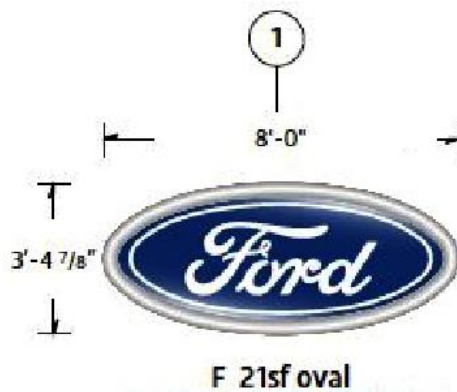
APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021
 APPLICANT Victor Sign Company
 REQUEST Sign Variance



DETAIL SITE PLAN



BEFORE



EXISTING SIGN TO REMAIN

APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021

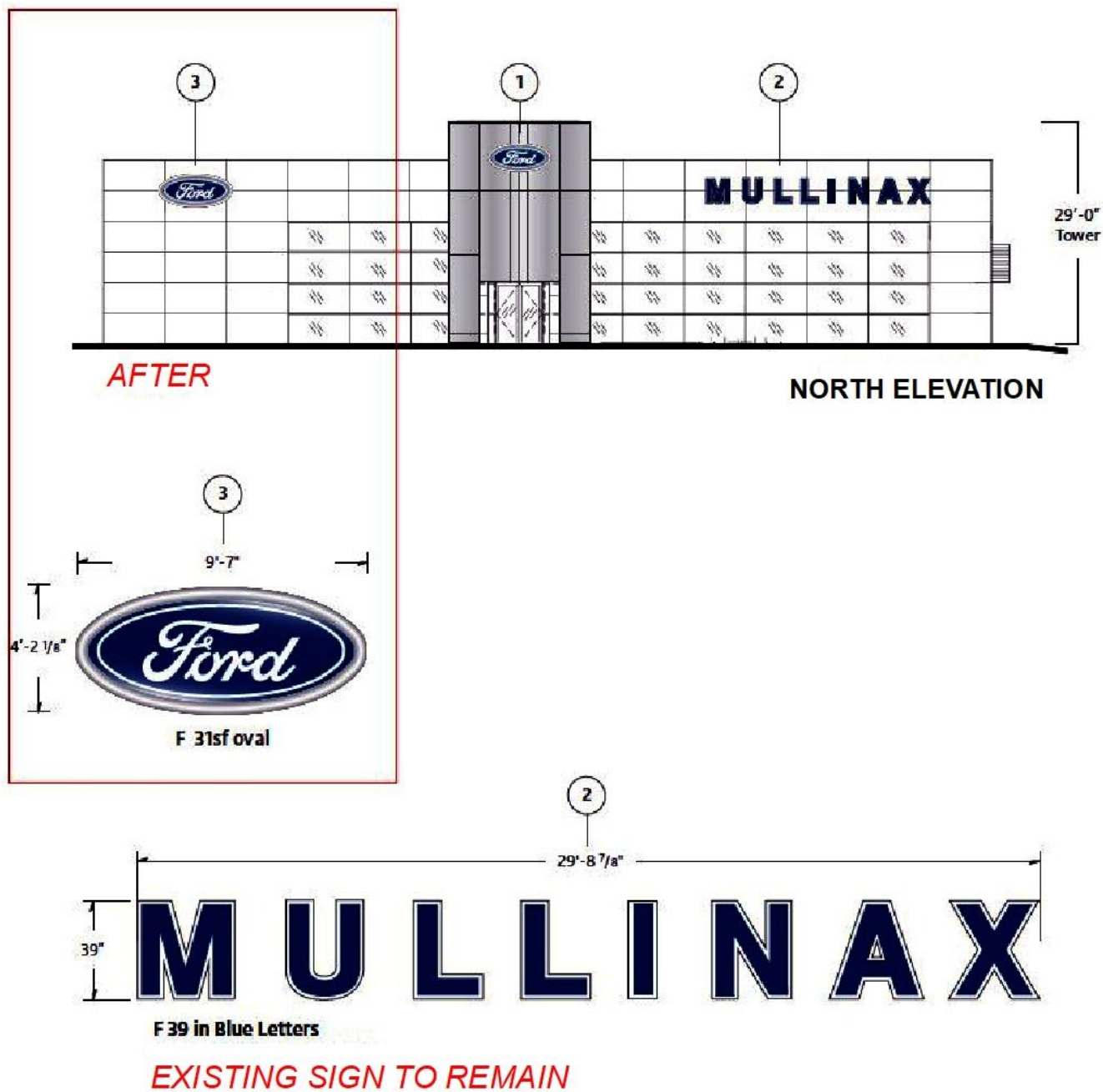
APPLICANT Victor Sign Company

REQUEST Sign Variance



NTS

DETAIL SITE PLAN



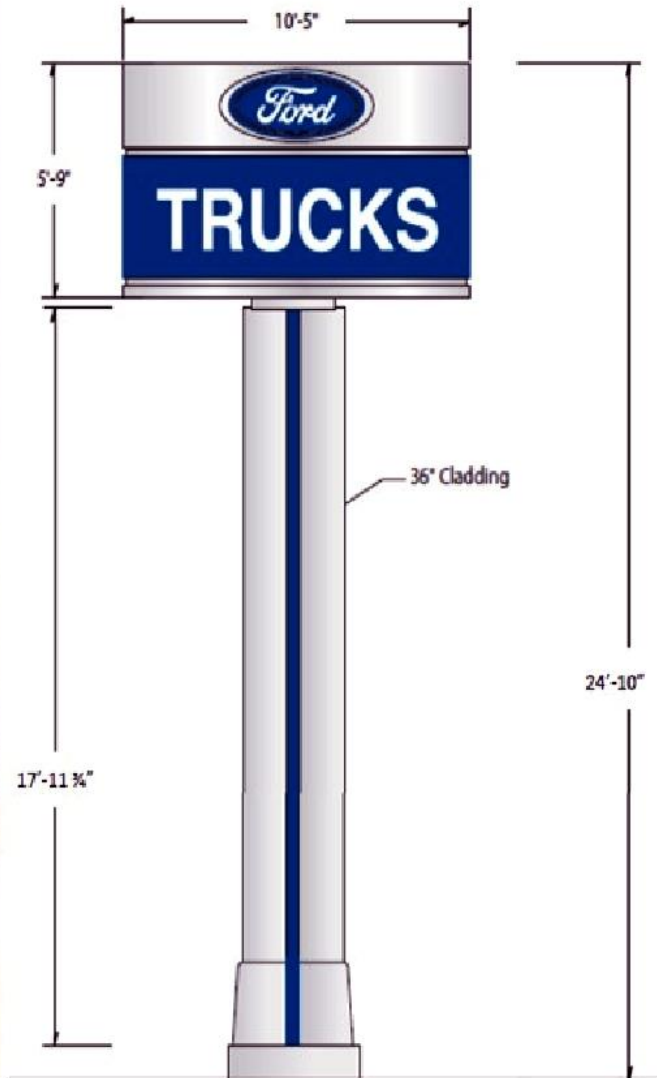
APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021
APPLICANT Victor Sign Company
REQUEST Sign Variance



DETAIL SITE PLAN



EXISTING SIGNAGE



PROPOSED SIGNAGE

APPLICATION NUMBER 6401 DATE August 2, 2021

APPLICANT Victor Sign Company

REQUEST Sign Variance



NTS