



**Community Development Department  
Plan Commission Staff Report  
January 11, 2012  
Updated for Common Council on February 2, 2012**

**Agenda Item F.1. Special Use Permit – Electronic Message Center – 59 Racine St, Parcel No. 5-00001-00**

**Applicant:** Kenneth J. Brusda, North Star Asset Management, Inc., agent for Vern Larsen, Property Owner.

**Requested action:** Special Use Permit approval, as required by Sec 13-1-67(d)(1)(a)

**Proposed:** Installation of an Electronic Message Center

**Location:** 59 Racine St.

**Existing Zoning:** C-1 General Commercial

**Surrounding Zoning:** C-2 Central Business District (West and Northwest), C-1 General Commercial (North, South and East), and R-1 Single Family Residence (Northeast)

**Existing Land Use:** Commercial Offices

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**1. General**

Northstar Asset Management, Inc. is proposing to install an Electronic Message Center on their existing Monument Sign. They have concurrently applied for a sign permit, which is pending until this Special Use Request is considered for approval. The subject site is zoned C-1 General Commercial District and requires a Special Use Permit as the sign will be located within two hundred (200) feet of a residential use, per Sec. 13-1-67(d)(1)(a) of the Municipal Code.

**2. Site Characteristics**

The proposed Electronic Message Center would be installed on the pre-existing monument sign, located on the southwest part of the property, immediately adjacent to Racine Street (see enclosed maps). The property is adjacent to the Central Business District to the West, multi-family condominium to the east, the

Racine Street Bridge to the South, single-family Residential to the Northeast, vacant city-owned property to the north, and the Post Office to the Northeast.

**3. Sign Dimensions & Specifications**

The proposed Electronic Message Center is 8 square feet (6'3" by 1'5"). The existing sign face is 19 square feet (see enclosed sign drawings). The proposed Electronic sign will constitute 29.6% of the total sign face, which is under the maximum 30% allowed by Sec 13-1-67(d)(4) of the Municipal Code.

As presented, the proposed digital sign complies with all other stipulations that pertain to this special use: see general sign standards (Sec 13-1-66(b)), and Electronic Message Centers (Sec 13-1-67(d)), as attached.

**4. Public Comment**

One Comment was received via email from Christopher Evenson (523 Broad St, Menasha), stating that he has no objection to the proposal (attached).

No public comment was received during the informal public hearing at the January 17, 2012 Plan Commission meeting.

**5. Recommendation**

Community Development staff finds that the proposed Electronic Message Center is compatible with surrounding land uses, as the proposed location of the digital sign screens it from all neighboring residential uses. The proposed electronic sign as proposed complies with minimum standards for this type of signage, per the Municipal Code, as outlined in Section 3 of the report.

At the January 17, 2012 Plan Commission meeting, the Plan Commission recommended approval of the Special Use Permit to install an Electronic Message Center at 59 Racine Street, parcel 5-00001-00.

  
Prepared by: Kara Homan, AICP, Principal Planner

Sec 13-1-66(b)

Zoning District	Type Permitted	Restrictions (See Sec. 13-1-67)	Allowable Sign Area per Building Exposure	Min & Max Sign Area per Business*	Max#	Max Height	Setback see Sec. 13-1-65(e)
C-1, I-1, I-2	wall - ground floor businesses, including awning, canopy, and marquee		1 sq. ft. for each linear ft. of the building exposure	at least 20 sq. ft, not to exceed 300 sq. ft.	allowable sign area may be applied per building exposure	top of wall	NA
	wall - upper floor businesses and/or tenant directory		8 sq. ft.	NA	1/entrance	at entrance, below 2nd floor windows or 20', whichever is less	NA
	monument (see Sec. 13-1-67 for electronic message centers)		1 sq. ft./sign face for each linear ft. of the building exposure, not to exceed 200 sq. ft.	not to exceed 75 sq. ft./sign face for 1 <sup>st</sup> business, 50 sq. ft./sign face for each business thereafter	1/street frontage; see Sec. 13-1-65(f) for corner lots	16'	2'
	business center	requires Special Use Permit	not to exceed 200 sq. ft.	not to exceed 75 sq. ft./sign face for 1 <sup>st</sup> business, 50 sq. ft./sign face for each business thereafter	1/business center entrance	16'	per Special Use Permit
	projecting - ground floor businesses	external or back lit/halo illumination only	25 sq. ft./sign face, not to exceed 50 sq. ft./sign	NA	1/business	below 2nd floor windows or 20', whichever is less	NA
	projecting - upper floor businesses or tenant directory	external or back lit/halo illumination only	8 sq. ft.	NA	1/entrance	at entrance below 2nd floor windows or 20', whichever is less	NA

\* The aggregate maximum sign area per business may not exceed the allowable sign area per building exposure. In order to accommodate businesses with very narrow building exposures, a minimum sign area per business is granted for certain types of signs. A sign smaller than the minimum may be erected subject to the requirements of this ordinance.

## SEC. 13-1-67 REQUIREMENTS BY SIGN TYPE

- (a) **Accessory Structure Signs.** Signs may be placed on the walls of accessory structures facing a street or customer parking lot, but the sign area used shall be deducted from the allowable wall sign area for the building exposure of the primary building.
- (b) **Awnings/Canopies/Marquees.** Awning, canopy, and marquee signs shall be permitted subject to the following standards:
  - (1) In the C-2 Central Business District, they may project into the public right-of-way, but may not be erected closer than three (3) feet to any street curb line.
  - (2) A minimum clearance of seven (7) feet shall be maintained from ground level.
  - (3) They shall not extend above the roof or parapet of the structure to which it is attached.
  - (4) Any text, logos, or other graphic representation qualifying as a sign which is placed on an awning, canopy, or marquee shall be included within the calculation of total allowable wall sign area and are subject to the requirements of this ordinance.
  - (5) Marquee signs shall be limited to buildings occupied by theaters, cinemas, performing arts facilities, or parking structures.
- (c) **Business Center Signs.** Business center signs shall be permitted subject to the following standards:
  - (1) Signs shall require a Special Use Permit and are intended to identify the entrance, the name of the business center, and/or the names of businesses within the business center.
  - (2) The boundaries of the business center shall be determined through review and approval of the Special Use Permit.
  - (3) Business center signs shall keep the first two (2) feet of the sign closest to the ground free of sign copy for the purposes of snow storage and landscaping. This portion of the sign shall not be counted toward the calculation of allowable sign area.
  - (4) The maximum height of the sign base shall be no more than 1/3 the total sign height.
  - (5) In granting a Special Use Permit, additional conditions may be required depending on the unique conditions of the business center and surrounding area. These conditions may include, but are not limited to:
    - a. location
    - b. design details
    - c. colors
    - d. materials
    - e. illumination
    - f. size
    - g. height
    - h. landscaping
    - i. number of businesses identified
  - (6) Electronic message centers are prohibited.
- (d) **Electronic Message Centers.** Signs whose informational content can be changed or altered by electronic means shall be subject to the following standards:
  - (1) Electronic message centers shall only be allowed in the C-1, I-1, and I-2 districts. Electronic message centers shall require a Special Use Permit if they are located within two hundred (200) feet of either of the following:

- a. a residential use or district;
  - b. any property use that requires a Special Use Permit.
- (2) Electronic message centers shall be allowed on monument signs only and are subject to all monument sign requirements of the applicable zoning district.
  - (3) The sign shall be equipped with photosensitive equipment which automatically adjusts the brightness and contrast of the sign in direct relation to the ambient outdoor illumination. The sign must not exceed a maximum illumination of 5,000 nits (candelas per square meter) during daylight hours and a maximum illumination of 500 nits (candelas per square meter) between dusk to dawn as measured from the sign's face at maximum brightness.
  - (4) Electronic message centers shall be integral to and a part of the original approved monument sign and may not comprise more than 30% of the sign face. Static displays consisting only of letters or numerals that are not changed more than once in a 24-hour period shall not be included in the area computation of the electronic message center. The combined square footage of the electronic message center plus any static display area may not comprise more than 75% of the total allowable square footage.
  - (5) Each message displayed on an electronic message center must be static or depicted for a minimum of 2 seconds. The minimum allowed if using a special entrance/exit method that does not violate 13-1-67(g)(4) above is 1.3 seconds.
  - (6) Electronic message centers shall not utilize animation, chasing, flashing, scintillation, scrolling or running messages, fade, or any other effect which depicts movement or is intended to draw attention to the sign.
  - (7) Multi-colored electronic message centers are prohibited.
  - (8) Including an electronic message center as part of a permanent sign will prohibit the use of any portable signs (as defined in Sec. 13-1-61) containing commercial messages.
  - (9) Electronic message centers shall not display off-premise commercial advertising.
  - (10) The Zoning Administrator shall inspect annually or at such other times as deemed necessary each electronic message center for the purpose of ascertaining whether the software settings are in compliance with the requirements of this Code. The owner of the electronic message center shall pay to the City of Menasha an annual inspection fee in an amount established by the Common Council.
- (e) **Monument Signs.** Monument signs shall be permitted subject to the following standards:
- (1) Monument signs shall keep the first two (2) feet of the sign closest to the ground free of sign copy for the purposes of snow storage and landscaping. This portion of the sign shall not be counted toward the calculation of allowable sign area.
  - (2) Monument signs must incorporate design details, materials, and colors of the associated building(s). EIFS shall not be allowed on the bottom 3 feet.
  - (3) The maximum height of the sign base shall be no more than 1/3 the total sign height.
- (f) **Pole Signs.** Pole signs are allowed on properties zoned C-1, I-1, or I-2 that directly abut WIS 441. Pole signs shall be subject to the following standards:
- (1) The structure shall be constructed on no less than two columns which must be designed to incorporate design details, materials, and colors of the associated building(s). EIFS shall not be allowed on the bottom 3 feet. Poles shall be shrouded and integrated into the overall sign design.

## Greg M. Keil

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**From:** che@sigmanlegal.com  
**Sent:** Friday, January 13, 2012 10:46 AM  
**To:** Greg M. Keil  
**Subject:** Question, Comment, or Request from Website Visitor

Name: christopher evenson  
Company:  
Phone:  
EmailConfirm: [che@sigmanlegal.com](mailto:che@sigmanlegal.com)  
Method: Email  
Comments: Electronic sign for Northstar

My wife and I discussed the proposed sign for Northstar, after we recieved notice as an affected property owner. We have no objection to the proposal.

Just wanted to let you know, so you can advise the plan commission and council, if necessary.



Site of Proposed Electronic Message Center  
North Star Asset Management, Inc.  
59 Racine St, Parcel No 5-00001-00  
Winnebago County, Menasha, WI



**City of Menasha  
Department of Community Development**

140 Main Street  
Menasha WI 54952  
(920) 967-3650 (920).967-5272 fax

**APPLICATION FOR  
SIGN PERMIT**

Date: 12/29/11	
Site Address: 59 RACINE ST.	
Zoning: C-1	Parcel #: 050000400
Name of Business: NORTH STAR ASSET MANAGEMENT, INC.	
Property Owner: VERN LARSEN	Phone: (920) 722-4293
Address: 59 RACINE ST. MENASHA, WI	Fax:
Applicant: NORTH STAR ASSET MGT. Phone: (920) 729-7908	
Contact: KEN BRUSDA	Fax: (920) 729-7904
Address: 59 RACINE ST. MENASHA, WI	Email: kbrusda@northstarinvestments.com
<p>The undersigned hereby agrees to install all signs in accordance with applicable ordinances and holds the City of Menasha harmless from any and all damages, claims or causes of action whatsoever of any nature by reason of installation, use, continuances, or maintenance of said sign(s).</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> _____ Date: 1/3/12</p> <p>Property Owner Signature _____ Date</p>	

<b>Required Submissions (staff use only)</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Site Plan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Building Elevations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sign Illustration & Description
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Permit Fee(s)
	Total: \$ 250.00 (+350 s.u. fee)
	Receipt: # 116
<b>Review &amp; Approval (staff use only)</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Zoning - Special Use Required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C-2 Central Business District Design Standards
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landmarks Commission - Historic District
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Common Council - Special Use Permit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public Works - Vision Control Area/ROW
Final Approval _____	
Conditions: _____	
_____	
_____	
Zoning Administrator _____	Date Issued _____

**Sign Permit Application Instructions**

- It is recommended that applicants consult with the Zoning Administrator during the initial planning stages to avoid delays and ensure that all proposed signage complies with City of Menasha ordinance requirements.
- Before construction or installation of any sign(s) requiring a permit, applicants shall submit a sign permit application package that includes:
  - A completed permit application form with the signature of the property owner.
  - Required permit fees for each sign.
  - For monument/pole signs, an accurate plot plan drawn to scale of the entire lot on which the sign(s) will be located showing the location of buildings, parking lots, driveways, and landscaped areas on the lot.
  - For wall-mounted signs, location of each sign on the building(s), with building elevations (e.g., over doors, over windows, awnings, etc)
  - An accurate indication on the plot plan of the location and orientation of all existing signs, each sign for which a permit is requested, and the anticipated location of future signs requiring a permit.
  - A description and illustration of each proposed sign including the following:
    - Colors and materials to be used in sign construction (e.g., limestone base with bronze letters, etc);
    - Style of lettering for all signs;
    - Appearance/location of logos or icons;
    - All sign proportions; and,
    - Types of illumination (e.g. external illumination with description of type of outdoor light fixture).
  - In addition, optional submittals may be required by the Zoning Administrator if deemed necessary due to the character of the proposed signs and/or site.

**Over – Please complete both sides of the application form**



**Appleton SIGN**  
COMPANY

**CORPORATE**  
2400 Holly Road, Neenah, WI 54956  
Tel: 920.734.1601 Fax: 920.734.1622

**BRANCH**  
6510 Aurora Road, West Bend, WI 53090  
Tel: 262.299.1601 Fax: 262.299.1622

CLIENT	NORTH STAR ASSET MANAGEMENT
STREET ADDRESS	69 Racine St.
CITY / STATE	Menasha, WI
DATE	12/30/11
SALES	JIM SLEZAK
ARTIST	ERIC CATES
PAGE TIME	.25 Hours
DRAWING ID	3152-7 (PAGE 1)

**MONUMENT SIGN - MESSAGE CENTER**

1	SIGN	EXISTING
2	POLE	EXISTING 4" SQUARE TUBE W. MATCH PLATES FOR RAISING - (SEE SHOP DRAWING)
3	NEW REVEAL	3" HIGH - FABRICATED ALUMINUM
4	COLOR	PAINTED DYE(1) COLOR (SEE C&F)
5	MESS. CENT.	19MM WATCHFIRE LED (D/F UNIT)
6	SIZE	17" HIGH X 6'-3" WIDE X 8" DEEP
7	COLOR	FULL COLOR
8	SKIN	SHEETED ALUMINUM - PAINT MAP BLACK
9	MOUNTING	BACK TO BACK ON POLE AS SHOWN
10	NOTE:	SIGN WAS FABRICATED WITH THE PURPOSE OF ADDING THIS MESSAGE CENTER

The colors shown in this drawing are conceptual only and DO NOT represent actual paint, vinyl, neon or acrylic colors. Actual samples are available for your viewing upon request.



**www.AppletonSIGN.com**



**Option #2**  
 FABRICATE & INSTALL AN LED MESSAGE CENTER ONTO AN EXISTING MONUMENT SIGN  
 (SEE LOCATION VIEW & SHOP DRAWING)

ART TO BE CLEANED UP  ART ON FILE  ART REQUIRED  FONTS REQUIRED  SHOP DRAW. REQUIRED  SURVEY REQUIRED

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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2400 Holly Road Neenah, WI 54956  
Tel: 920.734.1601 Fax: 920.734.1622

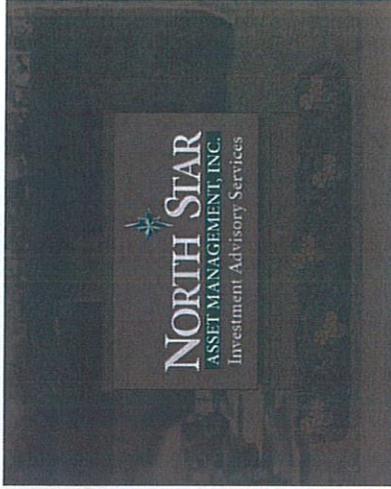
BRANCH  
6510 Aurora Road West Bend, WI 53090  
Tel: 262.299.1601 Fax: 262.299.1622

CLIENT	NORTH STAR ASSET MANAGEMENT
STREET ADDRESS	59 Racine St.
CITY/STATE	Menasha, WI
DATE	12/30/11
SALES	JIM SIZAK
ARTIST	ERIC CATES
PAGE TIME	.25 Hours
DRAWING ID	3152-7 (PAGE 2)

EXISTING VIEW (RENDERING - NOT ACTUAL PHOTO OF SIGN)



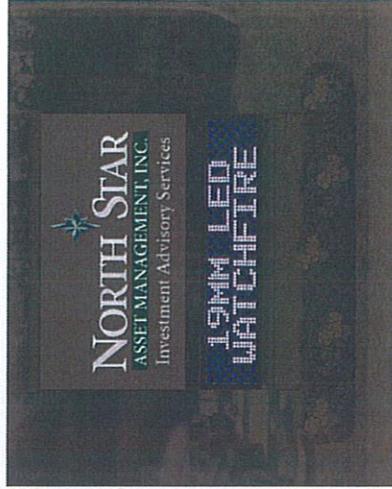
SCALE 1/4" = 1' 0"



NIGHT VIEW



SCALE 1/4" = 1' 0"



NIGHT VIEW

LOCATION VIEW

SEE SPECS ON PAGE 1

Option #2

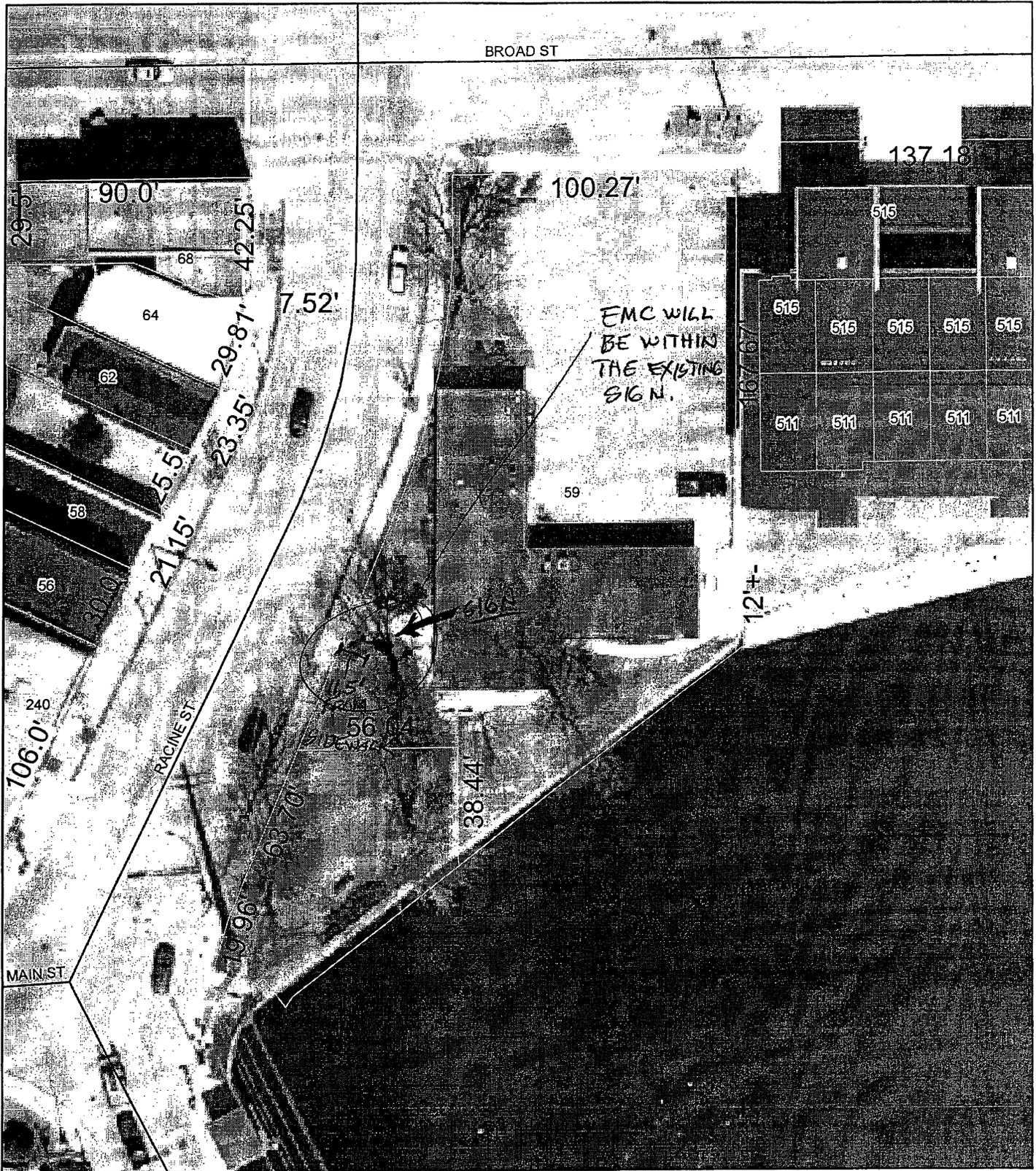
ART REQUIRED  ART TO BE CLEANED UP  ART ON FILE  FONTS REQUIRED  SHIP DRAW. REQUIRED  SURVEY REQUIRED

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

The colors shown in this drawing are conceptual only and do not represent actual colors. Actual samples are available for your viewing upon request.

Mimaki CRITICAL    [www.AppletonSIGN.com](http://www.AppletonSIGN.com)



Northstar Sign Map  
 Racine & Broad  
 Menasha, WI