

## **STAFF REPORT**

**DATE:** November 12, 2024  
**TO:** Zoning Board of Appeals  
**FROM:** Planning Staff  
**RE:** Petition Number: 2024-55  
Applicant: John Bays  
Owner: 311 Ottawa Building LLC  
Location: 311 N. Ottawa Street  
Request: A series of Variations to allow signs that exceed the maximum permitted height and to allow an increase in total sign area for the property  
(COUNCIL DISTRICT #5)

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### **Purpose**

The petitioner requests Variations on signage in order to erect two large signs at 311 N. Ottawa Street. The Zoning Board of Appeals makes the final decision for these variance requests, which include:

- A Variance to increase maximum sign height from 20 feet to 115 feet
- A Variance to increase the total sign area for the property from 50 square feet to 396 square feet

### **Site Specific Information**

The subject property is the former John C. Murphy Building, which the Joliet Housing Authority built in 1965. The Joliet Housing Authority sold the 13-story apartment building in July 2024 to John Bays. The property is approximately 1.5 acres in size and includes two parking lots and open space. The building has frontage on four streets: Ottawa, Benton, Joliet and Crowley. The subject property is zoned B-2 (Central Business) District.

### **Surrounding Zoning, Land Use and Character**

The property is located in a lower-density area of downtown Joliet and in close proximity to the Des Plaines River. The property is at the northern end of the Central Business Zoning District (B-2), which surrounds the property on all four sides. This transitional area of the downtown includes some office, commercial, and religious uses that are surrounded by large surface lots as well as a few low-density residential uses.

### **Applicable Regulations**

- 47-17.21: Signs
- 47-17.21(3)(bb): Criteria for Granting a Sign Variation (refer to attachment)

**Discussion:**

John Bays recently acquired the former Housing Authority owned property and is in the process of renovating the 139 unit building into market-rate apartments. He seeks to rebrand the property by erecting two identically sized illuminated signs at the top of the 13-story building. One sign will face west and the other will face east. These wall elevations are void of any windows or architectural relief. Each illuminated sign is 198 square feet in size and is approximately 39' wide and 5' long. At this time, there are no plans for ground signs or other additional signage at the property. Therefore, the total sign area for the property would be 396 square feet. Regarding sign height, the base of the sign would start at a height of 109.9' and will rise to a final height of 115' off the ground. The City limits sign placement to 20' in height and total sign area to 50 square feet in the B-2 (Central Business) Zoning District for single tenant properties. Therefore, the petitioner requests approval of these variances in order to erect these two wall signs.

**Conditions**

None

**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
**CRITERIA FOR SIGN VARIATIONS**

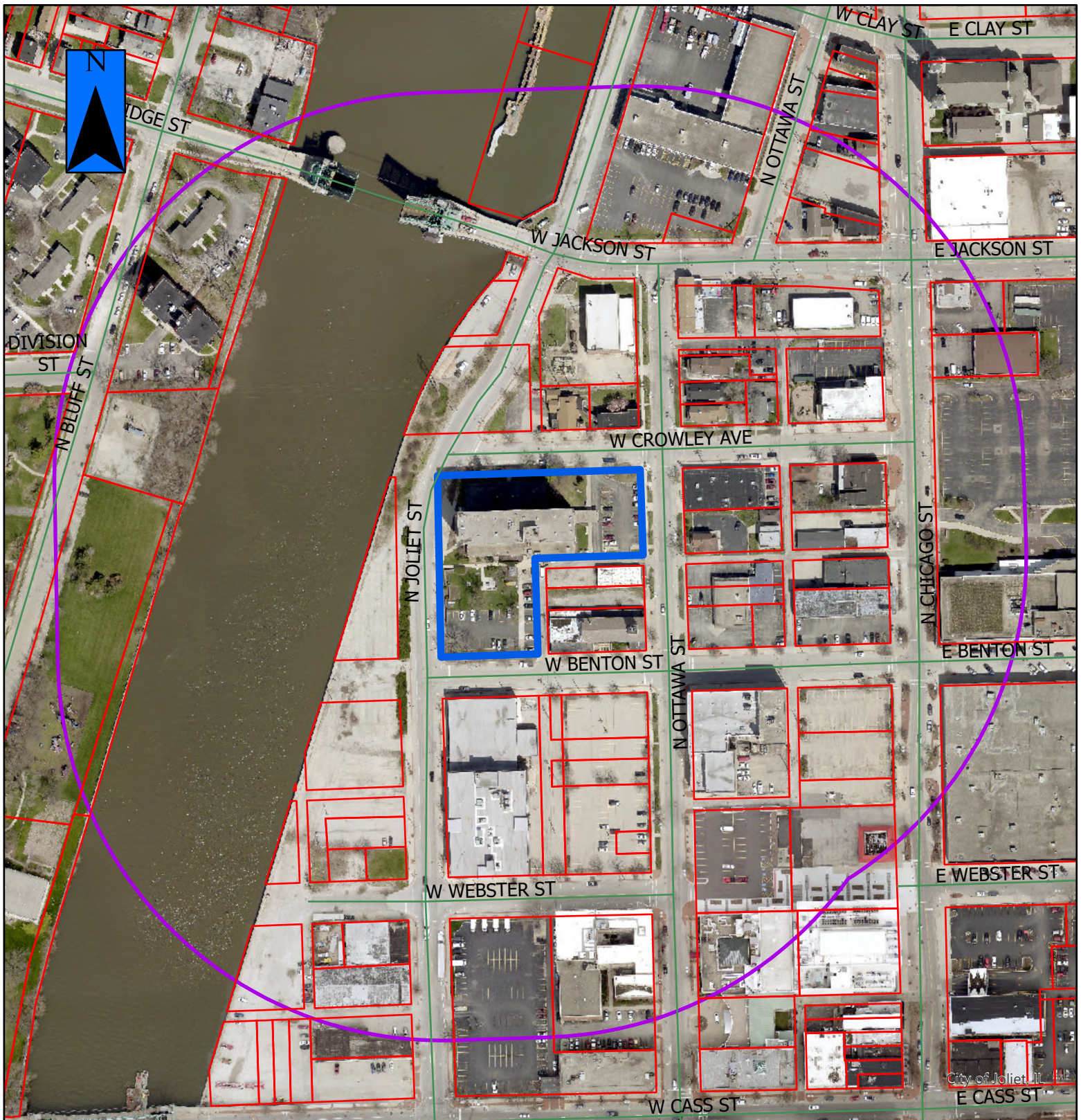
Section 47-17.21(3)(bb) of the Zoning Ordinance states:

Any sign which is not specifically permitted in any zoning district shall require the granting of a variation, obtained from the Zoning Board of Appeals. This includes signs that have flashing or pulsating illumination, animation, rotation, or overall dimensions which exceed the maximum dimensions permitted in any district.

Variation Criteria: A variation may be granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals based on all of the following criteria:



	Does the evidence presented sustain this criteria?	Comments
(a) That strict enforcement of the ordinance would cause undue hardship to the property owner due to circumstances unique to the individual property in question.		
(b) That the proposed use would not be detrimental to the use, orderly development and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes permitted under the zoning ordinance, nor substantially diminish the property value within the neighborhood.		
(c) That ownership or lease of the property in question can be demonstrated.		
(d) That approval of the variation would not be contrary to the objective of improving the overall appearance of the City.		



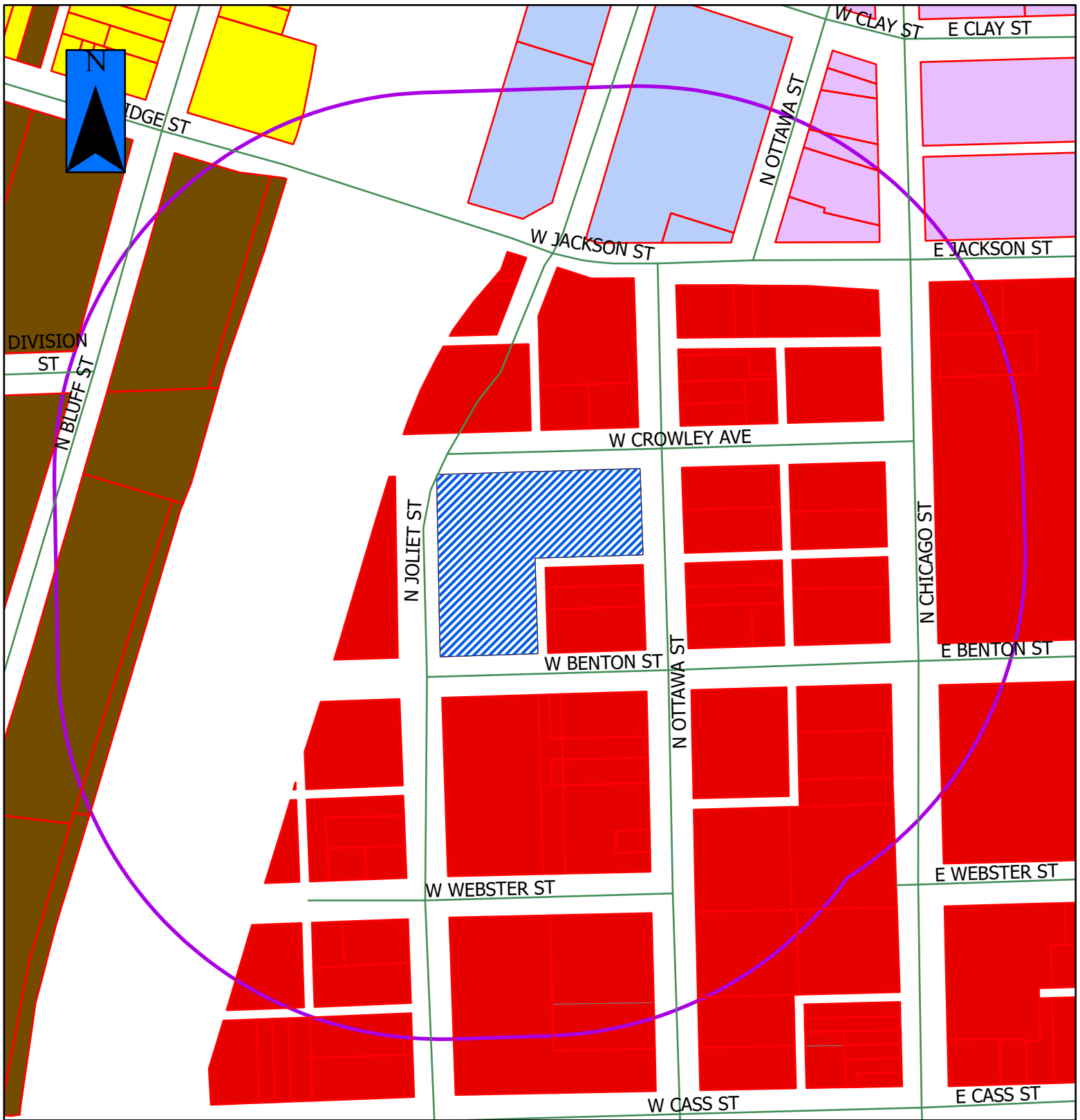


2024-55a



 = Property in Question / Propiedad en cuestión  
 = 600' Public Notification Boundary /  
 Límite de notificación pública de 600 ft (180 m)





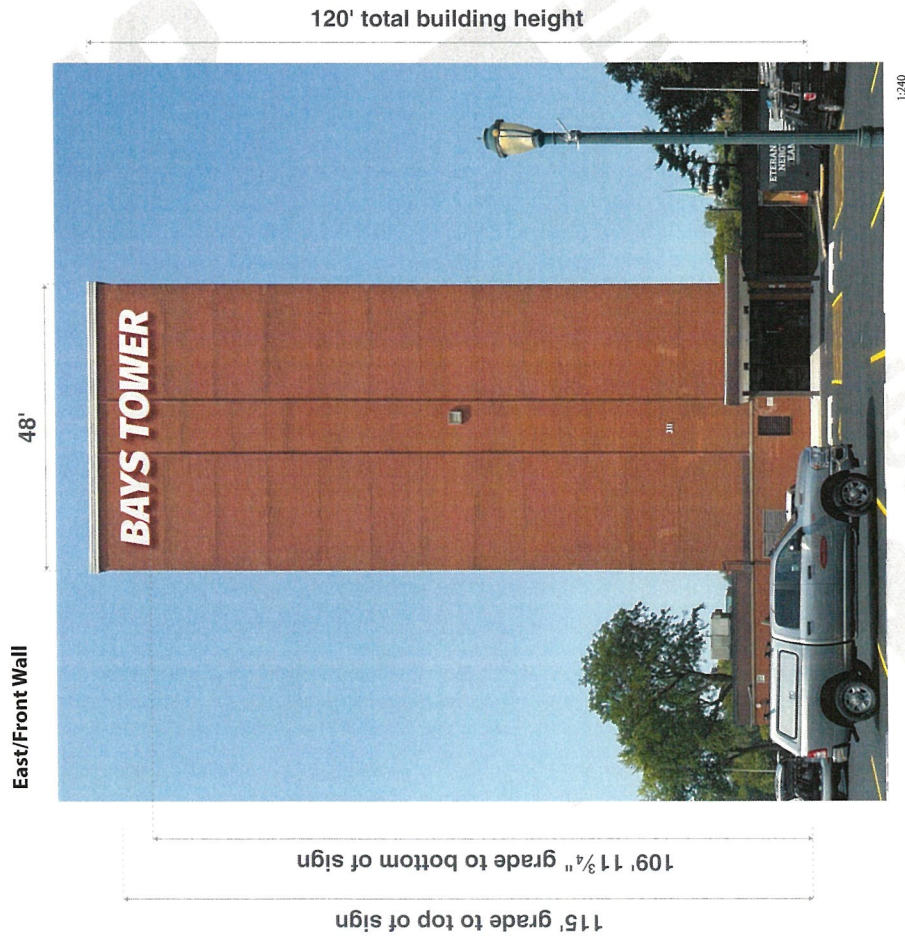
2024-55



= Property in Question  
= 600' Public Notification Boundary

Legend		
B-1	I-TA	R-2
B-2	I-TB	R-2A
B-3	I-TC	R-3
I-1	R-1	R-4
I-2	R-1A	R-5
I-T	R-1B	R-B

<b><big>EXPRESS</big></b> <b>SIGNS &amp; LIGHTING MAINTENANCE</b>	PHONE: 815 725 5080 FAX: 815 725 7543 EMAIL: SIGNAL@EXPSSIGNS.COM 212 ANNDODGE SHOREWOOD, IL 60404	CUSTOMER: BAYVIEW RIVERVIEW Towers PROJECT ADDRESS: 311 N. Ottawa, Joliet IL PROJECT: REPAIR AND REPLACE Letters PROOF NO. 024-135 DESIGNER: SS	DATE: 09 /17/24 BY: 114 = REVISION: 09 /19/24 updated design 09 /20/24 changed sign position 09 /24/24 changed to charmes/cab 10 /02/24 updated to all channels 10 /03/24 added east side to proof 10 /24/24 changed to "Days Tower"	NOTES: THIS DRAWING IS THE PROPERTY OF EXPRESS SIGNS AND IS TO ONLY BE USED FOR THIS WORK PERFORMED BY EXPRESS SIGNS. THIS DRAWING IS NOT TO BE REPRODUCED COPIED OR ALTERED IN ANY MANNER WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT FROM EXPRESS SIGNS. CHARGES UP TO \$2,000 WILL BE ADDED TO ORDER FOR OUR MISUSE.	SIGN TYPE: <b>A2.10</b>	APPROVED BY:	DATE APPROVED:	2024 EXPRESS SIGNS



(1) Power Needs T.B.D.  
U.L. ELECTRICAL #E154882

EXPRESS

SIGNS

4 LIGHTING MAINTENANCE

PHONE:  
815.725.9080

FAX:  
815.725.7543

EMAIL:  
SIGNS@EXPRESSIGNS.COM

ADDRESS:  
212 AMENDODGE  
SHOREWOOD, IL  
60404

CUSTOMER:  
Bays Riverview Towers

PROJECT ADDRESS:  
311 N. Ottawa, Joliet IL

PROJECT NAME:  
Channel Letters

PROOF NO:  
024-195

DESIGNER:  
SS

DATE:  
09/17/24

SCALE:  
1/4" = 1'

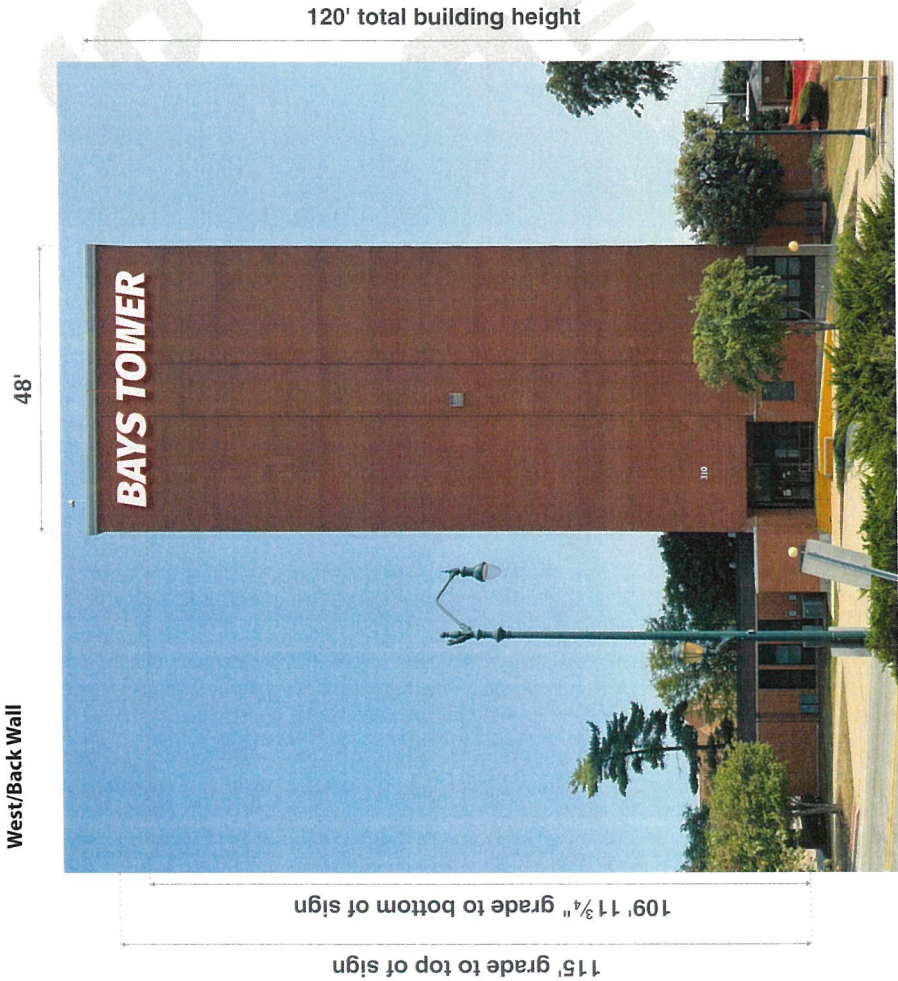
REVISION:  
08/19/24 updated design  
09/19/24 increased size  
09/20/24 changed sign position  
09/30/24 changed to channelscab  
10/17/24 updated to all drawings  
10/23/24 changed to "Bays Tower"  
10/23/24 changed to "Bays Tower"

NOTES:  
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(1) Power Needs T.B.D.  
U.L. ELECTRICAL #E154882

PHOTO RENDER IS FOR LAYOUT AND LOCATION ONLY. ARTWORK IS NOT TO SCALE.

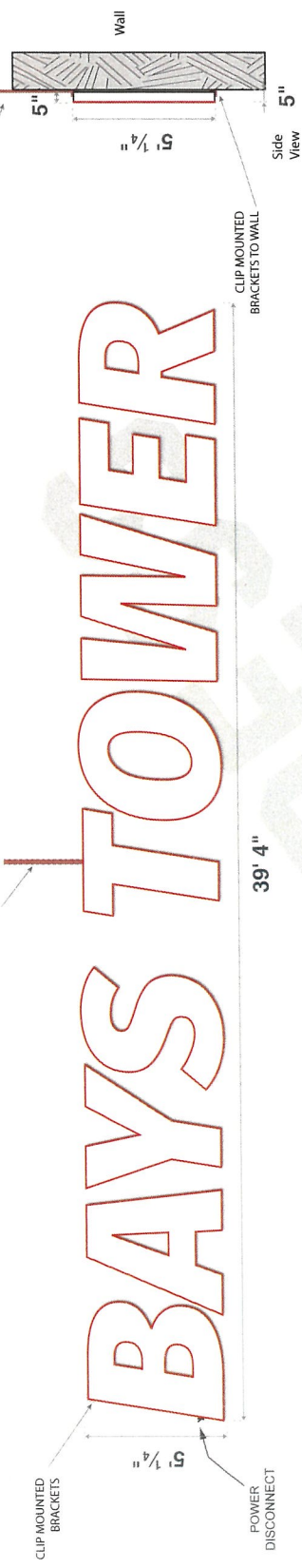
THIS SIGN IS INTENDED TO BE INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE 600 OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE AND/OR OTHER APPLICABLE LOCAL CODES. THIS INCLUDES PROPER GROUNDING AND BONDING OF THE SIGN



**SURVEY REQUIRED**

SEALTIGHT POWER  
CONDUIT TO ROOF  
PAINTED: BOLD BRICK (SW 6327)

SEALTIGHT POWER  
CONDUIT TO ROOF  
PAINTED: BOLD BRICK (SW 6327)



**(2) S/F SETS OF CHANNEL LETTERS**

- WHITE Acrylic faces
- 1" RED Trimcaps, 5" WHITE Returns
- Sealtight Power conduit to roof painted BOLD BRICK (SW 6327)
- Mounted with CLIP MOUNTED BRACKETS to wall
- Signs internally illuminated w/COLOR CHANGING (RGB) LEDS
- Sq. Ft. 198

(1) Power Needs T.B.D.  
U.L. ELECTRICAL #E154882

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THIS SIGN IS INTENDED TO BE INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE 600 OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE AND/OR OTHER APPLICABLE LOCAL CODES. THIS INCLUDES PROPER GROUNDING AND BONDING OF THE SIGN

**EXPRESS  
SIGNS**  
LIGHTING MAINTENANCE

PHONE:  
815.725.9080  
FAX:  
815.725.7543  
EMAIL:  
SIGNS@EXPRESSIGNS.COM  
ADDRESS:  
212 AMENDODGE  
SHOREWOOD, IL  
60404

CUSTOMER:  
Bays Riverview Towers  
PROJECT ADDRESS:  
311 N. Ottawa, Joliet, IL  
Channel Letters  
PROOF NO:  
024-195  
DESIGNER:  
SS  
DATE:  
09/17/24  
SCALE:  
1/4" = 1'  
REVISION:  
08/19/24 updated design  
08/19/24 increased size  
09/20/24 changed sign position  
09/30/24 changed to channelcab  
10/02/24 updated to channelcab  
10/08/24 added seal tape to proof  
10/23/24 changed to "Bays Tower"

NOTES:  
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OF EXPRESS SIGNS. ALL  
CHANGES UP TO \$2,000 WILL  
BE ASSESSED  
FOR ANY MIS-USE

SIGN TYPE:  
**A2.10**

APPROVED BY:

DATE APPROVED:  
© 2024 EXPRESS SIGNS



FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

\*\*\*Verified by Planner (please initial): \_\_\_\_\_\*\*\*

Payment received from: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Petition #: 2024-55

Common Address: 311 N. OTTAWA

Date filed: 10/10/24

Meeting date assigned: 11/21

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

JOLIET, ILLINOIS

**PETITION FOR VARIATION/APPEAL**

City of Joliet Planning Division, 150 W. Jefferson St., Joliet, IL 60432  
Ph (815)724-4050 Fax (815)724-4056

ADDRESS FOR WHICH VARIATION IS REQUESTED: 311 N. Ottawa St

PETITIONER'S NAME: John Bays

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS ADDRESS: 3077 W. Jefferson St. Suite 100 ZIP CODE: 60435

PHONE: (Primary) 815-741-2700 (Secondary) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: office@baysinvestmentcorp.com FAX: 815-741-2823

PROPERTY INTEREST OF PETITIONER: 311 N. Ottawa St

OWNER OF PROPERTY: 311 Ottawa Building LLC

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

**Any use requiring a business license shall concurrently apply for a business license and submit a copy with this petition.** Additionally, if this request is for operation of a business, please provide the following information:

BUSINESS REFERENCES (name, address, phone or email):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER PROJECTS AND/OR DEVELOPMENTS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PERMANENT INDEX NUMBER (TAX NO. OR P. I. N.): 30-07-09-424-009-0000;  
\_\_\_\_\_;

*\*\*Property Index Number/P.I.N. can be found on tax bill or Will County Supervisor of Assessments website\*\**

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (an attached copy preferred):

CONS PER PET 95-352 NDA: LOTS 1,2,3,4,7 & 8 ALL INCL IN BLK 4,  
OF OLD TOWN OF JOLIET A SUB OF PRT OF THE E1/2 OF THE SE1/4 IN SEC 9,  
T35N-R10E & ALL PORTIONS OF VAC ALLEY THROF DES PPRTY PER DOC 990101

LOT SIZE: WIDTH: \_\_\_\_\_ DEPTH: \_\_\_\_\_ AREA: \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT USE(S) OF PROPERTY: \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT ZONING OF PROPERTY: \_\_\_\_\_

VARIATION/APPEAL REQUESTED: HEIGHT AND SIZE OF WALL SIGNS.  
EAST AND WEST ELEVATIONS

### **RESPONSE TO VARIATION CRITERIA**

The Zoning Board of Appeals is authorized to grant or recommend relief only when it has received adequate evidence to establish a practical difficulty or hardship. The evidence must support each of the following three conditions:

- (a) The property in question cannot yield a reasonable return by use permitted and subject to the conditions allowed by the regulations in the particular district or zone.
- (b) The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances.
- (c) The variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

**Please describe how this request meets the criteria by responding to the following questions in your own words.**

*1. How do the applicable zoning regulations prevent the property in question from yielding a reasonable return?*

THE SIGNS NEED TO BE LARGE ENOUGH TO  
BE READ FROM A DISTANCE.

2. What unique circumstances exist which mandate a variance?

THE SIGNAGE NEEDS TO BE LARGE BECAUSE  
OF THE SIZE OF THE BUILDING  
THE SIGNS ARE ONLY 12% OF THE  
SIZE OF THE WALL.

3. What impact would the granting of this variance have upon the essential character of the general area? Please include both positive and negative impacts.

THE SIGNAGE GOES ALONG WITH THE  
BUILDINGS COMPLETE REMODEL.

**REQUIRED SUPPORTING ATTACHMENTS**

- ☐ Site plan / concept plan / floor plan / building elevation plan
- ☐ Joliet Ownership Disclosure form
- ☐ Business license application (if applicable)

**NOTARIZATION OF PETITION**

STATE OF ILLINOIS) ss  
COUNTY OF WILL)

I, JOHN BAYS, depose and say that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to be present in person or by representation when this petition is heard before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

John Bays  
Petitioner's Signature

John Bays  
Owner's Signature  
(If other than petitioner)

Subscribed and sworn to before me  
this 10<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2024

Jessica Bays





## CITY OF JOLIET OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE FORM

The City of Joliet requires that applicants for zoning relief, subdivision approval, building permits and business licenses disclose the identity of all persons having an ownership interest in the business and the real property associated with the application. A copy of this form must be completed and submitted with other application materials. Failure to properly complete and submit this form may result in the denial of the application.

### I. INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPLICATION

This form is submitted as part of an application for the following (check all that apply):

- ☐ Rezoning, Special Use Permit, Variation, or Other Zoning Relief (Complete Sections II and III)
- ☐ Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, or Record Plat of Subdivision (Complete Sections II and III)
- ☐ Building Permit (Complete Sections II and III)
- ☐ Business License (Complete All Sections)

### II. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPERTY

The address and PIN(s) of the real property associated with this application are:

311 N. OHAWA ST., JOLIET, IL 60432

PIN(s): 30-07-09-424-009-0000

### III. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Select the type of owner of the real property associated with this application and fill in the appropriate contact information below:

- ☐ **Individual:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the individual owner(s)
- ☐ **Corporation:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons holding 3% or more of the stock of the corporation and the percentage of shares held by such stockholders
- ☐ **Limited Liability Company:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all members of the company along with the percentage of ownership held by each member
- ☐ **Land Trust:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the trustee(s) and all beneficiaries
- ☐ **Partnership:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all partners
- ☐ **Other type of organization:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons having a legal or equitable ownership interest in the organization or the right to direct the affairs of the organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. **BUSINESS OWNERSHIP**

If the owner of the business is different than the owner of the real property associated with the application, then the following information must be provided:

Select the type of business owner associated with this application and fill in the contact information below:

- ☐ **Individual:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of the individual owner(s)
- ☐ **Corporation:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons holding 3% or more of the stock of the corporation and the percentage of shares held by such stockholders
- ☒ **Limited Liability Company:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all members of the company along with the percentage of ownership held by each member
- ☐ **Partnership:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all partners
- ☐ **Other type of organization:** State the names, addresses, and phone #'s of all persons having a legal or equitable ownership interest in the organization

311 Ottawa Building LLC  
John Bays 100% owner  
3077 W. Jefferson St. Suite 100  
Joliet IL 60435  
E-MAIL: jbays@baysinvestmentcorp.com FAX: 815-741-2823

#### **NOTE:**

If a stockholder, member, beneficiary or partner disclosed in Section III or Section IV is not an individual, then the individuals holding the legal or equitable title to the real property or business associated with the application must also be disclosed. For example, if the real property associated with an application is owned by a land trust, and the beneficiary of the land trust is a limited liability company, then the members of the limited liability company must be disclosed. If one of the members of the limited liability company is a partnership, then the identity of the partners must be disclosed. If one of the partners is a corporation, then all persons owning 3% or more of the issued stock must be disclosed.

**SIGNED:** John Bays

**DATE:** 10-10-2024

**Name, Title, and Telephone Numbers of Person Completing and Submitting This Form:**

Jessica Bays 815-741-2700

**PRINT**