



21 January 21, 2026

Attention:
Anne Arundel County Planning and Zoning
2664 Riva Rd #3
Annapolis, MD 21401

Safford Honda of Glen Burnie
7160 Ritchie Highway
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

Letter of Explanation

For the above referenced property located at 7160 Ritchie Highway, we are requesting a variance from the required setbacks in order to renovate the existing facility. This site is the location of the Safford Honda sales/showroom facility. The Owner has been informed by Honda that the current facility image is no longer in compliance and thus must be updated to the current brand standard. Updating the facility will involve the removal of existing blue cylindrical entry element, wave canopy, the glass curtainwall system and exterior finishes, as well as the construction/installation of a new canopy/louver system, new curtainwall/glazing, and new exterior finishes. Given the site conditions and the fact that the existing building is non-conforming to the required setback from the Gov. Ritchie Highway right of way line, any new construction would also be non-conforming and thus necessitate a variance.

Our site is a 35,000 square foot parcel that is situated between Crain Highway to the West, and Governor Ritchie Highway to the East; the parcel is zoned C4-Highway Commercial District. The site is extremely small for a car dealership; only the sales/showroom function of the dealership could be accommodated on this site, with the service function taking place at the nearby facility on Crain Hwy. The site is also relatively narrow, requiring the original building to be positioned along the northern property line to accommodate parking and drive aisle on the south side. The site is somewhat unique in that it has 2 fronts: the Gov. Ritchie Hwy to the east and Crain Hwy to the west. The drive aisle extends to the full depth of the site and connects both highways; there is only a slight elevation change between the two highways. There is no setback required from the side property lines, and the building is setback 58.9 feet from Crain Hwy, which is a minor Arterial Road requiring a 20-foot setback. However, the 23.7-foot setback at the front encroaches on the required 60-foot setback from Gov. Ritchie Hwy, which is considered a Principal Arterial Road. It is likely that the non-conformance happened over time as the right of way increased. It should be noted that many other buildings on adjacent and nearby parcels along Gov. Ritchie Hwy, appear to have the same or similar setback to our building.

The existing building is 2 stories tall and was originally constructed in 1992; the footprint is basically a rectangle measuring 130 feet by 70 feet with a carved away area of about 160 s.f. at the front right corner. The total existing building area, including the second floor, is 11,075 s.f. The building currently has an outdated Honda image with the blue rotunda/entry feature and wave canopy on the south façade that was introduced about 25 years ago. The south wall plane is about 25 feet tall and becomes a projected/wing wall that extends beyond the front/east wall plane. There is a storefront/bay window feature at the front wall that sits back slightly and abuts the projected south/wing wall. The bay window projects approximately 5 feet from the main front wall plane. The end of the south/wing wall is the furthest projection into the front setback; this is the +/- 23.7-foot dimension noted above. The main front wall plane sets back about 5.66 feet from the end of the south wall or 29 feet from the right of way line.

The new Honda image consists of a projected/solid canopy that is 2.5 feet tall and located at the top of the showroom wall (+/- 22 feet above grade); the canopy is to wrap the building corner and extend along the side wall (in our case the south side) to frame the showroom glazing on both facades. The canopy turns down to grade at each end and becomes at a wing wall/support leg. The brand standard is for the canopy to project 8 feet from the wall plane, with the typical minimum being 6 feet. Our intent is to remove the existing south/wing wall projection as well as the projected bay window feature to increase the front wall setback and accommodate the new canopy. We have confirmed with Honda that the canopy can be customized and reduced to project only 5'-8", so that it will match the current maximum projection of the south/wing wall. The canopy will require other minor supports/columns; these will be spaced at approximately 20 feet and will project only 2 feet from the curtainwall system. The brand standard also includes an open louver system that projects from the horizontal plane of the canopy on the front side only. Typically, there are 5 louvers that project about 8 feet beyond the canopy, but we have confirmed with Honda that the minimum is 3 louvers with a projection of about 5 feet. The louver system is necessary, since the Honda and dealer name signage has to be pendant mounted/suspended from the louver system.

As part of the variance, we are requesting to provide an addition to infill the existing/carved out corner at the front wall plane; we feel this is necessary in order to increase the frontage along Gov. Ritchie Hwy which is already limited due to the narrow site/constraints. The intent would be to bring the wall plane out to align with the existing front wall plane that is to remain; the area to be infilled is approximately 160 s.f. (10.5 feet wide x 15.5 feet deep). This will allow the canopy and showroom glazing to extend across the full width of the building.

We feel that the proposed variance meets the requirements of Article 18-16-305c as follows:

- Per section 1, the variance will be the minimum to accommodate the required new Honda image. The existing wing wall and bay window feature are to be removed back to the existing/main front wall plane. The proposed canopy will be reduced from the standard minimum projection (6'-0"), to 5'-8" so that it does not project any further than the existing maximum projection. The required open louver system will be +/- 22 feet above grade, and only projects 5 feet beyond the new canopy system.
- Per section 2i, the proposed updated facility image for the Honda showroom and sales facility will not alter the district's character since it is in a Highway Commercial District that consists of other automobile dealerships and services.
- Per section 2ii, the proposed variance and renovation will not impair the use and development of the adjacent properties. The proposed infill construction along the property line at the front right corner will have the necessary fire rated construction due to the fire separation distance. This will not preclude any development on the adjacent property, nor limit access, or sight lines from Gov. Ritchie Hwy.
- Sections 2iii and 2iv do not apply since we are not in a critical area which is thousands of feet to the North of our site.

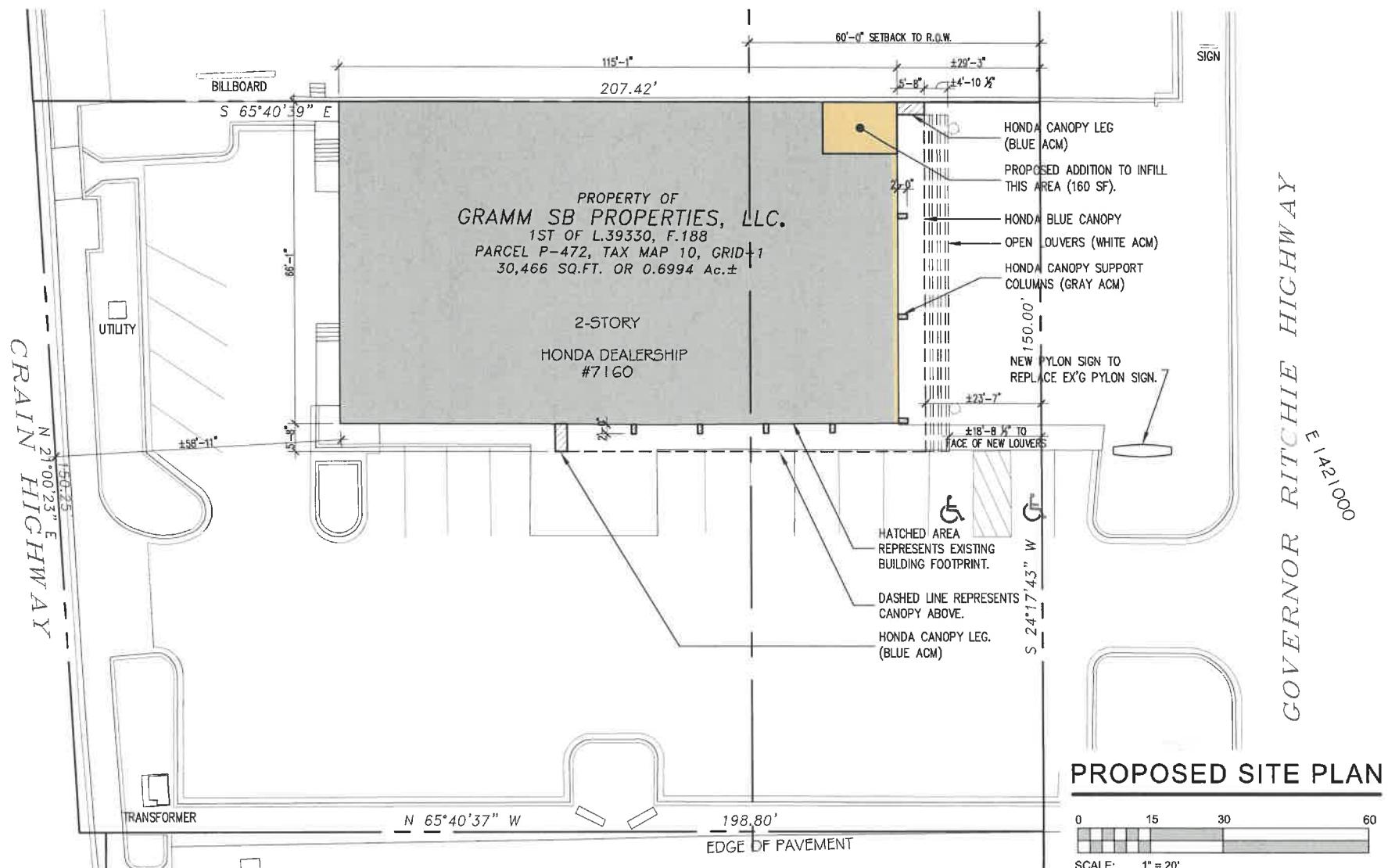
- Section 2v, the variance will not be detrimental to public welfare. The renovation that the variance allows will have a positive impact by attracting customers to the fully updated sales facility and potentially spur other economic growth and development in the area.

For the reasons stated above, we feel the requested variance meets the requirements for approval. Without the variance, almost 40 feet of the existing building would have to be demolished in order to comply with the 60 foot setback; this would not be workable given the size of the building and other limitations of the site. This would also seem to be an unfair hardship on this site given the existing setback of adjacent buildings and the established plane they create. Furthermore, we feel that the variance and the renovation it makes possible will be beneficial to the community and strengthen the quality and character of the existing development.

We thank you for reviewing our case and look forward to hearing from your office. Feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Christopher McKneely, AIA
Flanagan Architects, AIA, P.C.



PREPARED BY:

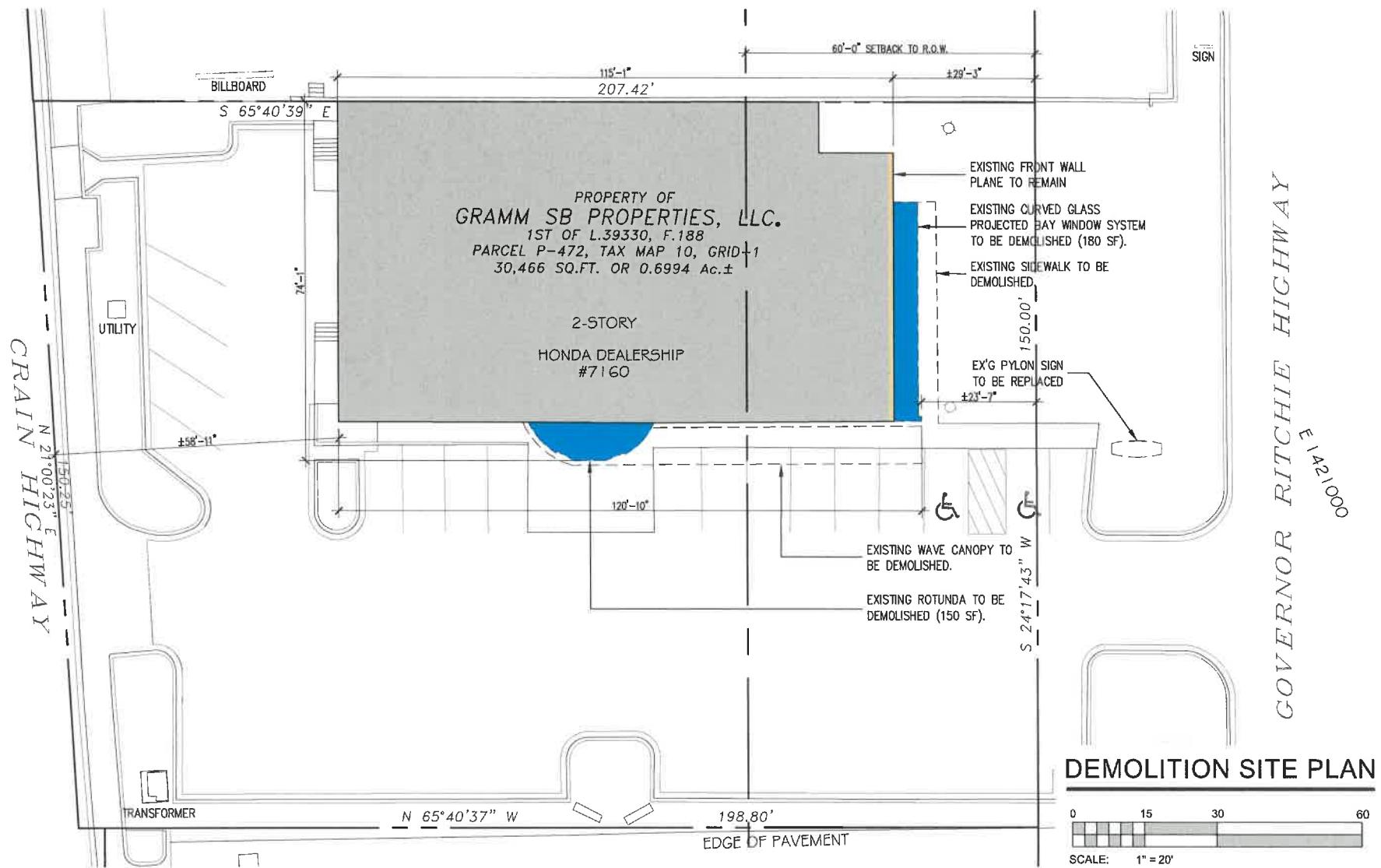


Flanagan
Architects, AIA

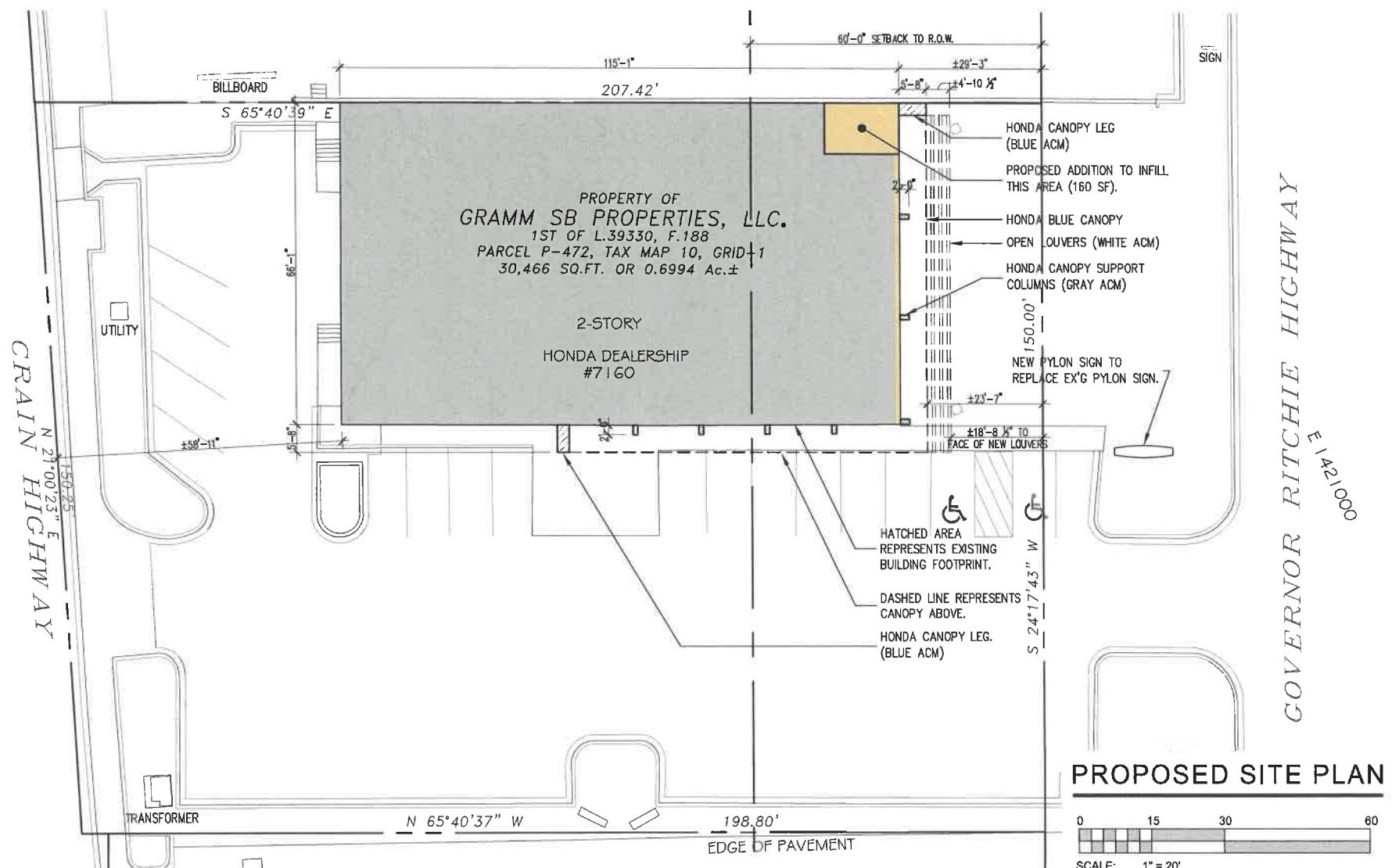
SAFFORD HONDA OF GLEN BURNIE
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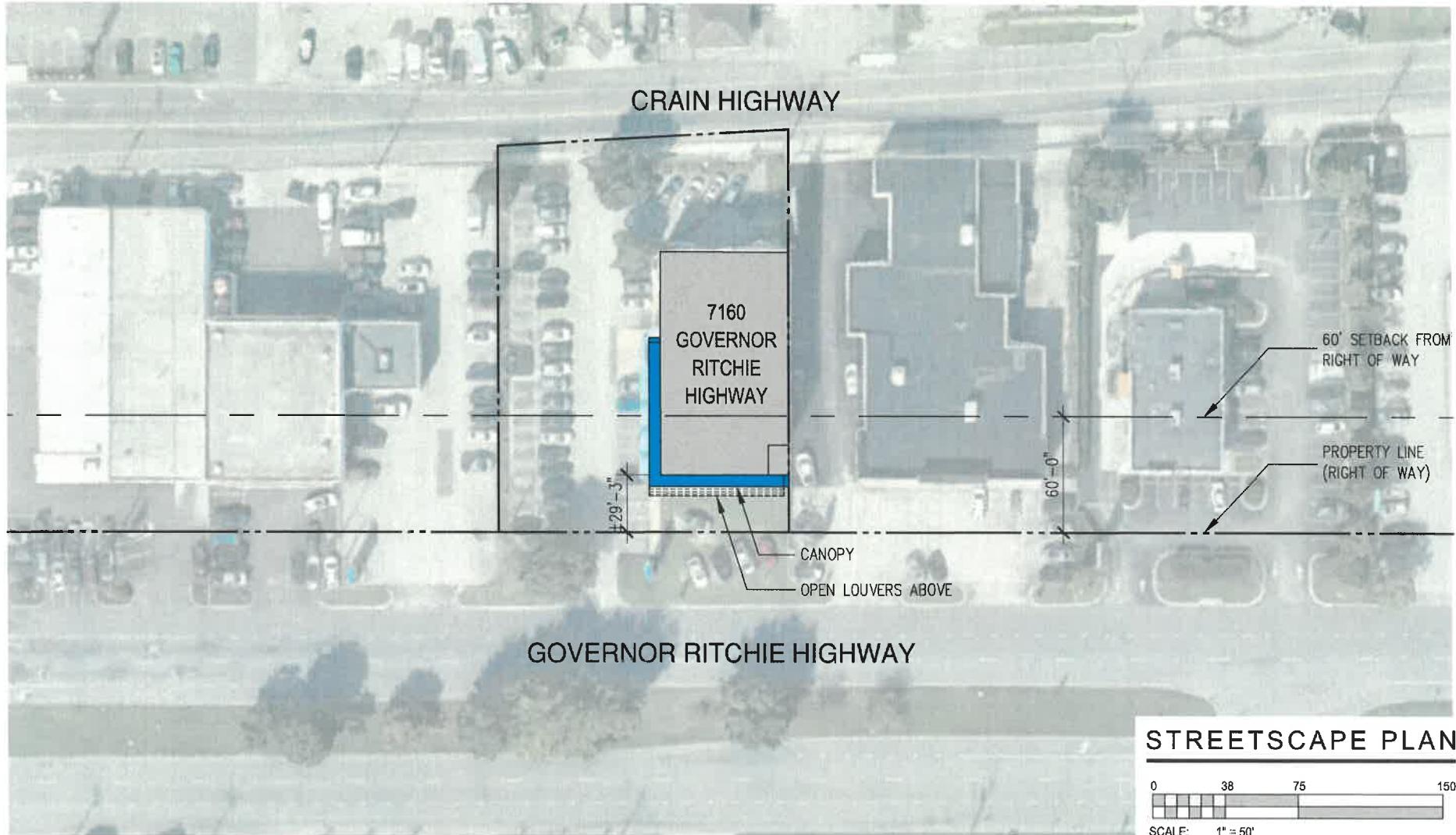
OLE

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EXISTING PHOTOS

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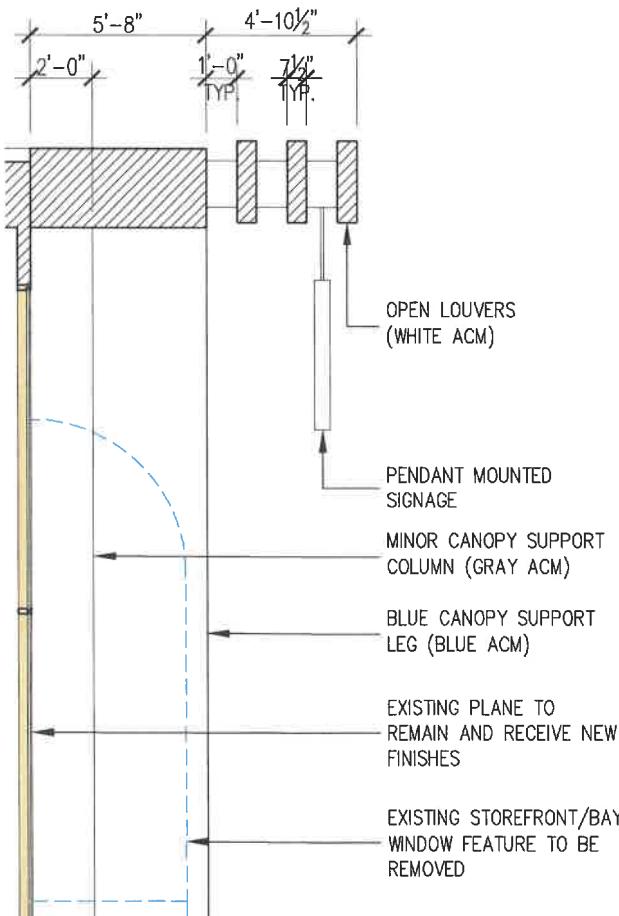
TYPICAL HONDA PROTOTYPE IMAGE

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DIAGRAMATIC SECTION

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FRONT RENDERING

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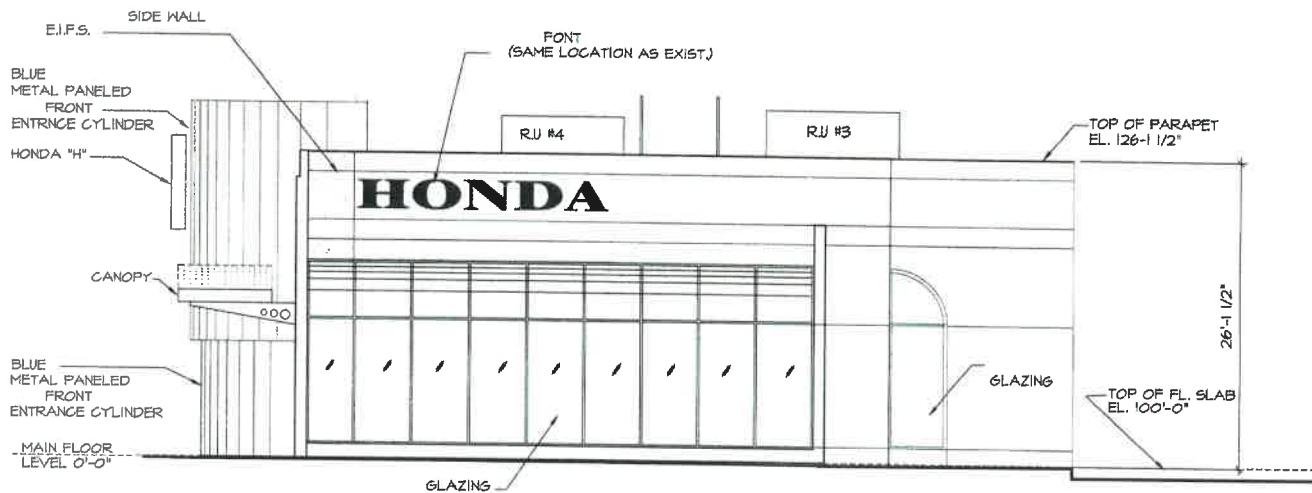
- EXISTING ROTUNDA TO BE DEMOLISHED
- OPEN LOUVERS (WHITE ACM)
- NEW CANOPY (BLUE ACM)
- ACM FASCIA (WHITE ACM)
- COLUMN SUPPORT (GRAY ACM)
- NEW CURTAIN WALL SYSTEM AT EXISTING BUILDING PLANE

SIDE RENDERING

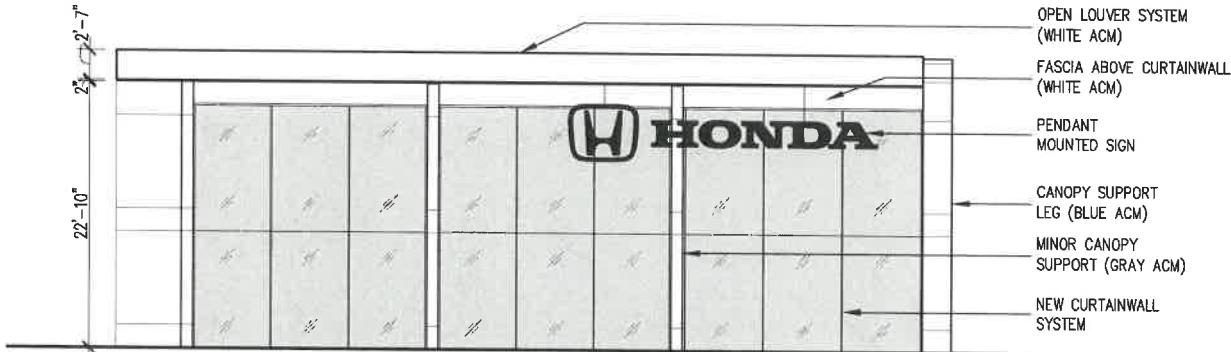
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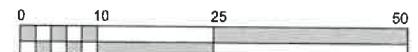


EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

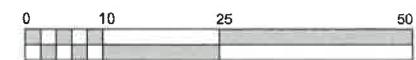
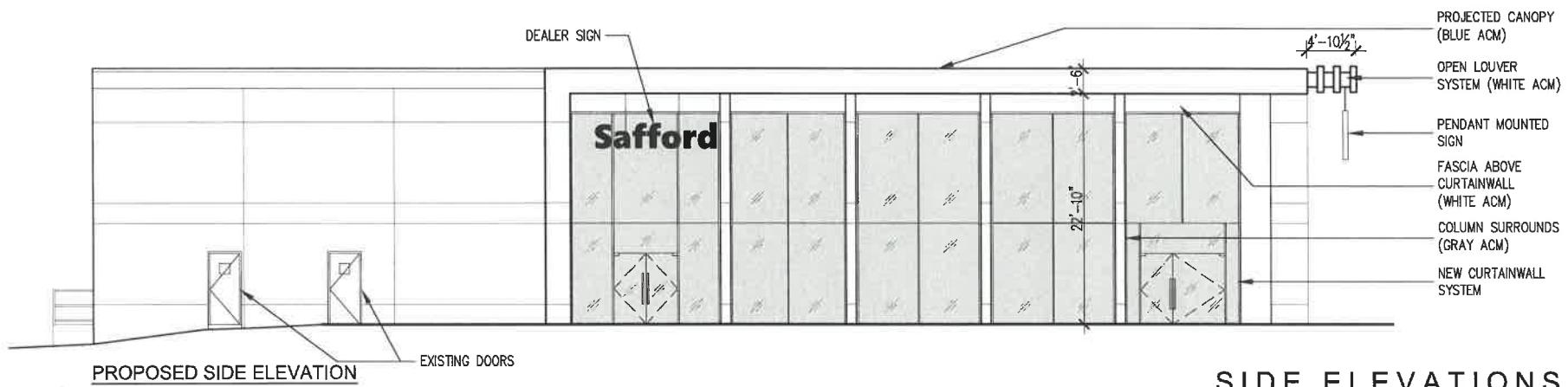
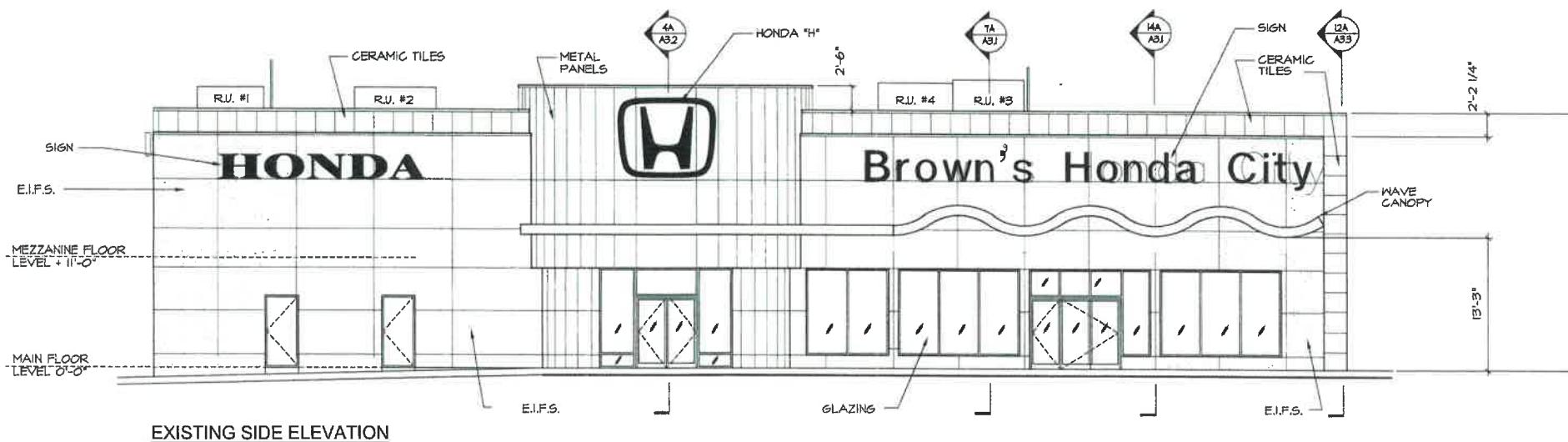
FRONT ELEVATIONS



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