

Jeff Levine, AICP, Director Planning & Urban Development Department

Ann Machado Zoning Administrator

CITY OF PORTLAND ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Interpretation Appeal Application

Applicant Information: ConvenientMD LLC	Subject Property Information:			
NAME	191 Marginal Way PROPERTY ADDRESS			
c/o Natalie L. Burns, Esq.	024 C021001			
BUSINESS NAME	CHART/BLOCK/LOT (CBL)			
10 Free Street, Portland, ME 04101	Earl W. Noyes & Sons			
BUSINESS ADDRESS	PROPERTY OWNER (If Different) P.O. Box 938, Portland, ME 04104			
207-775-7271;				
BUSINESS TELEPHONE & E-MAIL	ADDRESS (If Different)			
Lease	N/A			
APPLICANT'S RIGHT/TITLE/INTEREST	PHONE # AND E-MAIL			
3-7				
CURRENT ZONING DESIGNATION	DISPUTED PROVISIONS FROM SEC 14-369.5			
EXISTING USE OF THE PROPERTY: Mixed Use Comr	mercial			
interpretation of the above provision.				
YPE OF RELIEF REQUESTED Reversal of Zoning A	administrator's interpretation.			
OTE: If site plan approval is required, attach preliminary o	or final site plan. Enclosed.			
The undersigned hereby makes application for a condition herein is true and correct to the best of his OR her knowled				
ralabe X. Burno	July 31, 2017			
IGNATURE OF APPLICANT	DATE			
389 Congress Street * Portland Maine 0410. http://www.portlandmaine.gov/planning/build	1-3509 * Phone: (207) 874-8703 * Fax: (207) 874-8716 linsp.asp * E-Mail: <u>buildinginspections@portlandmaine.gov</u>			



Attorneys at Law

DAVID J. JONES RICHARD H. SPENCER, JR. LAWRENCE R. CLOUGH RONALD A. EPSTEIN WILLIAM H. DALE F. BRIJCE SLEEPER DEBORAH M. MANN LESLIE E. LOWRY III PATRICIA M. DUNN MICHAEL J. QUINLAN R. LEE IVY

ROY T. PIERCE BRENDAN P. RIELLY NICHOLAS J. MORRILL MARK A. BOWER CHARLES M. KATZ-LEAVY ALYSSA C. TIBBETTS J. CASEY MCCORMACK TUDOR N. COLDSMITH

NATALIE L. BURNS

SALLY L DAGGETT

TEN FREE STREET P.O. BOX 4510 PORTLAND, MAINE 04112-4510 (207) 775-7271 (Phone) (207) 775-7935 (Fax)

www.jbgh.com

KENNETH M. COLE III NICHOLAS S. NADZO FRANK H. FRYE MICHAEL A. NELSON OF COUNSEL

YORK COUNTY

OFFICE

11 MAIN STREET, SUITE 4

Kennebunk, Maine 04043

(207) 985-4676 (Phone)

(207) 985-4932 (Fax)

MERTON G. HENRY

RAYMOND E. JENSEN (1908-2002) KENNETH BAIRD (1914-1987) M. DONALD GARDNER (1918-2003)

July 31, 2017

HAND DELIVERED

Zoning Board of Appeals City of Portland 389 Congress St. Portland, ME 04101

RE: 191 MARGINAL WAY; INTERPRETATION APPEAL

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing on behalf of my client, ConvenientMD LLC, which does business as ConvenientMD Urgent Care (hereinafter, "ConvenientMD"). Enclosed please find eleven (11) copies of an interpretation appeal application with respect to property located at 191 Marginal Way, which is designated by the City Assessor as Map 24, Block C, Lot 1 and Map 25, Block B, Lot 9 (the "Property"). This is an interpretation appeal of the Zoning Administrator's July 21, 2017 interpretation of the City of Portland Land Use Ordinance ("Ordinance") as it relates to building identification signs. The Property is located in the B-7 Mixed Use Urban Zone.

Factual Background

This application relates to a construction project at the Property, which is owned by Earl W. Noyes & Sons (the "Owner"), the developer for Convenient MD LLC (d/b/a ConvenientMD Urgent Care). The building, which the Owner will name "ConvenientMD Urgent Care," will house several commercial tenants. ConvenientMD will be the anchor tenant in the building, operating an urgent medical care facility.

On August 16, 2016, ConvenientMD had its first meeting with planning staff about this project. At that meeting, ConvenientMD's representatives presented a proposed building identification signage plan. Although planning staff did not have authority to approve the plan, they agreed they did not see anything in the Ordinance that would prevent the building from being named "ConvenientMD Urgent Care" or otherwise prohibit the proposed signage. Based on that advice, ConvenientMD signed a lease with the Owner and proceeded with the project.

Jensen Baird Gardner Henry

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On January 17, 2017, the Owner received site plan approval from the Planning Board, which included an approved master signage plan that includes building identification signs on two sides of the building—on the east-facing wall and the north-facing wall.¹ The site plan approval contained the following condition of approval: "13. Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the applicant shall provide specifications for proposed signs, meeting the standards of the B-7 zone and the City of Portland Design Manual, for review and approval by the Zoning Administrator." On May 19, 2017, the City issued a building permit to the Owner for construction of a new building and renovation of the existing shell. The permit required separate permitting for "any new signage."

On February 24, 2017, ConvenientMD submitted an application for a sign permit for three wall-type signs on the building—the two building identification signs and an additional wall sign for the south-facing wall. From March through July of 2017, the Applicant (through its representatives) has corresponded by e-mail with various members of the City's zoning staff with regard to its sign permit application. This correspondence culminated in an e-mail from Ann Machado (Zoning Administrator) to the applicant's attorney, Natalie Burns, dated July 21, 2017 (see <u>Attachment A</u>). In the e-mail, the Zoning Administrator provided the following interpretation of the Ordinance:

"I understand that the name of the tenant is ConvenientMD Urgent Care. It is my interpretation that a building identification sign identifies the name of the tenant in basic letters. What is being proposed represents the [] company's branding and logo. It is a commercial message and not a building identification sign."

ConvenientMD appeals from this interpretation of the ordinance and respectfully requests the Board to reverse the Zoning Administrator's interpretation.

Argument

1. The Zoning Administrator's interpretation related to building identification signage is not supported by any Ordinance provisions.

Despite having received Planning Board approval for the building identification signage as part of the master sign plan, the Zoning Administrator is now attempting to regulate the content of the proposed signage through her interpretation of the Ordinance. However, there is no basis in the Ordinance for an interpretation that a building identification sign must identify the name of the tenant in "basic letters" and not with the company's logo, nor that a building identification sign in the B-7 zone cannot contain a "commercial message." In fact, the Ordinance does not even provide a definition for a building identification sign.

¹ Interestingly, if the ConvenientMD building identification sign on the east façade of the building were changed to a tenant sign, it could be 208 square feet in size (104 lineal feet x 2 square feet). That would be considerably larger that the allowable sign area for a building identification sign for that façade (165 square feet, or 5% of the wall area). In addition, it is notable that the prior tenant of the building (AAA Car Care Center), had 144-square-foot signs on both the eastern and northern façades of the building.

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Table 1 in Sec. 14-369.5 identifies the permitted sign types by zone. For the B-7 zone, Table 1 indicates that a building identification sign is allowed without a permit, subject to note (e), which provides: "Only address and name of occupant allowed on sign." In addition, Sec. 14-368(a) provides: "If the notation 'A' appears for a sign type in a column, such sign is allowed without prior approval as provided in this division in the zoning district(s) represented by that column." That section goes on to provide:

Although permitted under the previous paragraph, a sign designated by an "A" or "B" in Table 1 of section 14-369.5 shall be allowed only if:

1. The sum of the area of all building and freestanding signs on the lot conforms with the maximum permitted sign areas for such as determined by the formula for the zoning district in which the lot is located as specified in Table 2 of section 14-369.5; and

2. The size, location and number of signs on the lot conform to the requirements of Table 2 of section 14-369.5, which establish permitted sign dimensions by sign type, and to any additional limitations listed therein.

Portland Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 14-368(a).

The Zoning Administrator also infers, without basis, that a "commercial message" is not allowed on any building identification sign in the B-7 zone. The Ordinance defines "commercial message" as follows: "Any sign wording, logo or other representation that, directly or indirectly, names, advertises or calls attention to a business, product, service or other commercial activity." Portland Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 14-367. Notes (c) and (d) to Table 1 do contain restrictions as to commercial messages, but those notes are not applicable to building identification signs in the B-7 zone; only note (e) applies as a restriction.

Table 2.8 contains the regulations for building signs in the B-7 Mixed Use Urban zone. According to that table, there are two limitations on building identification signs for multi-tenant buildings: (i) the provision allows only one building sign per façade and one sign per tenant; and (ii) the total signage cannot cover more than 5% of the total wall area. In addition, Table 2.8 allows one sign per ground-floor tenant, limited to 2 square feet per foot of the tenant's building frontage.

Contrary to the Zoning Administrator's interpretation, there is nothing in the Ordinance, including Tables 1 and 2.8 of Section 14-369.5, to suggest that building identification signs must be in "basic letters." As shown in the plans included with this application, the proposed signage meets the applicable Ordinance requirements, as follows:

• Per Table 1, note (e), only the address and name of the occupant will be on the building identification signs on the east and north façades. The name of the occupant is

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ConvenientMD Urgent Care, and the sign will also display the address of the building, 191 Marginal Way.

• The proposed sign on the south façade is a tenant sign and therefore not implicated by the Zoning Administrator's interpretation.

Each of the three proposed signs meets the dimensional requirements (area) set forth in Table 2.8, which was not at issue in the Zoning Administrator's interpretation.

2. Any ambiguity in the Ordinance must be construed in favor of ConvenientMD.

Under Maine law, any ambiguity in an ordinance provision is to be construed in favor of the applicant, as ordinances are to be strictly construed. *See Town of Windham v. LaPointe*, 308 A.2d 286 (Me. 1973); *see also Home Builders Ass'n v. Town of Eliot*, 2000 ME 82, \P 9, 750 A. 2d 566 (ordinance interpretation should defer to the plain meaning of the provision). ConvenientMD does not perceive any ambiguity with regard to building identification signs; there simply is no regulation on lettering or commercial message for such signs in the B-7 zone. However, in accordance with the above rule, to the extent that the Board discerns any ambiguity in the provisions of the Ordinance at issue in this application, those provisions must be construed in favor of the Applicant's request for a sign permit.

The correspondence between ConvenientMD and the zoning staff included a March 23, 2017 e-mail from Zoning Specialist Christina Stacey (see <u>Attachment B</u>). In that e-mail, Ms. Stacey acknowledged that the Ordinance provisions in question are vague: "*I've talked with my supervisor and one of the planners who have expertise in the sign ordinance, and they both felt that the proposed signs stretch the intent of an 'identification' sign, <u>despite the vagueness of the ordinance language.</u>" To the extent the Board agrees with the Zoning Specialist that the ordinance language regarding building identification signs is vague, any uncertainty in those provisions should be construed in favor of the applicant.*

Conclusion

For the reasons set forth above, ConvenientMD respectfully requests that the Board reverse the Zoning Administrator's July 21, 2017 interpretation of the Ordinance as it relates to building identification signs.

Sincerely,

natalie Z. Burns

Natalie L. Burns

NLB/gw Enclosures

Attachment A

From: Ann Machado [mailto:amachado@portlandmaine.gov] Sent: Friday, July 21, 2017 2:08 PM To: Natalie L. Burns Cc: Christina Stacey; Ben Walter; Max Puyanic Subject: Re: Sign permit - Convenient MD Urgent Care; 191 Marginal Way

Natalie -

I understand that the name of the tenant is ConvenientMD Urgent Care. It is my interpretation that a building identification sign identifies the name of the tenant in basic letters. What is being proposed represents the the company's branding and logo. It is a commercial message and not a building identification sign.

Ann

Ann Machado Zoning Administrator Permitting and Inspections Department City of Portland, Maine (207) 874-8709

Attachment B

From: Christina Stacey [mailto:cstacey@portlandmaine.gov] Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2017 1:57 PM To: Ben Walter <<u>bwalter@cwsarch.com</u>> Subject: Re: Sign permit - Convenient MD

Ben,

I've talked with my supervisor and one of the planners who have expertise in the sign ordinance, and they both felt that the proposed signs stretch the intent of an "identification" sign, despite the vagueness of the ordinance language. I would recommend you simply apply for a waiver on the number of tenant signs, the square footage of the signs, and the style of the signs (individually-lit letters). The other option is to appeal our interpretation of this ordinance language to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

For the waiver, you just need to submit a letter requesting a waiver and addressing the waiver criteria that I attached in my first e-mail. There is no specific format required. The planner who is assigned to the waiver review will contact you if they have additional questions. The letter can be e-mailed to me directly.

Best,

Chris

SHORT FORM LEASE

STATUTORY MEMORANDUM OF LEASE

Pursuant to the provisions of 33 M.R.S. § 201, the following information is provided relative to a certain Lease dated $\int e_{Cemper} 12$, 2016 (the "Effective Date")

1. **<u>PARTIES.</u>** The names of all of the parties to the Lease and their addresses are as follows:

LANDLORD:	Earle W. Noyes & Son <u>127</u> Qford Street <u>for Box 935</u> Portland, ME 04104
TENANT:	Convenient MD, LLC 111 New Hampshire Avenue Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801

2. **LEASED PREMISES.** The Leased Premises consists of approximately 5,044 square feet of rentable space in the building located at 191 Marginal Way, Portland, Maine. The Leased Premises are part of the premises conveyed to Landlord by deed dated ______ and recorded in the _____ County Registry of Deeds at Book ____, Page ____.

3. <u>**TERM.</u>** The Term of the Lease is ten (10) years, commencing on the Rent Commencement Date, as that term is defined in the Lease. Tenant has the right to extend the Lease for up to three (3) additional ten (10) year terms, subject to the terms of the Lease.</u>

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties to the said Lease have executed this instrument as of the /3 day of /20/4.

[signature pages follow]

LANDLORD:

P Rando

EARLE W. NOYES & SON

(Print Name) Its Duly Authorized

TENANT:

By:

By:

Witness

CONVENIENT MD, LLC 1h Als Un: Max Puyanic Its <u>Co</u>t \mathcal{O} Duly Authorized

STATE/COMMONWEALTH OF <u>MAINE</u> COUNTY OF <u>CUMBERLAND</u>

20 <u>16</u> , by	PETER L. NOYES	, as PRESIDENT	of
EALLE W.	NOYES & SONS INC.	, on behalf of said <u>COMPORATION</u> .	
	,	for fulle	
		Notary Public	
		My Commission Expires:	
		(SEAL)	

STEVEN L. MICKIEWICZ Notary Public My Commission Expires March 30, 2020

Earle W. Noyes & Sons

Moving Specialists, Inc.

P.O. Box 938 127 Oxford Street Portland, ME 04104 Phone: (207) 775-5876 Toll Free: (800) 341-7576 FAX: (207) 775-5715

July 31, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I hereby confirm that Earle W. Noyes and Son, d/b/a Earle W. Noyes & Sons Moving Specialists, Inc., is the owner of record of a parcel of land located at 191 Marginal Way (Parcel ID 025 C021001). I also confirm that a lease has been executed between Noyes and ConvenientMD, LLC, granting ConvenientMD permission to represent us as Landlord in their application for an interpretation appeal concerning proposed building signage.

Sincerely,

Brent 1. Cayo

Brent E. Noyes, Esq. Vice President of Operations/General Counsel Earle W. Noyes & Sons Moving Specialists, Inc. Agent for United Van Lines 127 Oxford Street Portland, ME 04101 (800) 341-7576 x 216 (207) 347-5031 direct (207) 775-5715 fax bnoyes@noyesmoving.com www.noyesmoving.com

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United

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August 2, 2017

Ann Machado Zoning Administrator Permitting and Inspections Department City of Portland, Maine

Dear Ann,

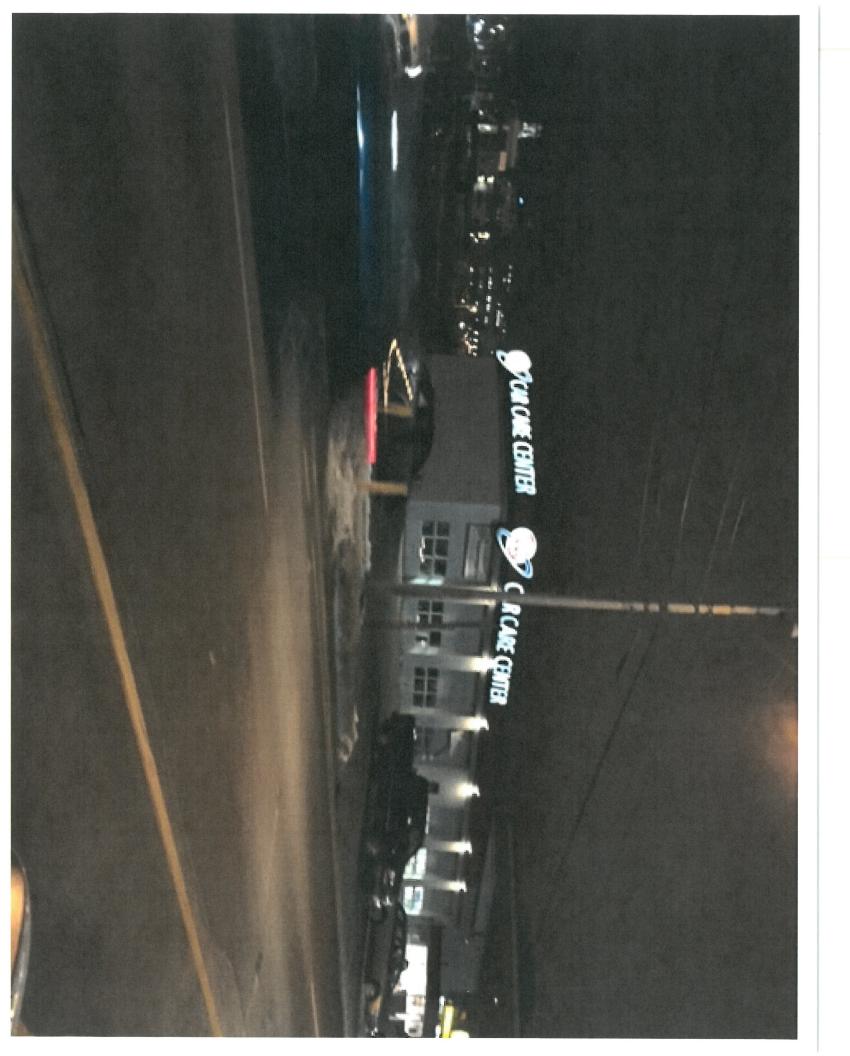
Natalie Burns of the firm Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry is representing ConvenientMD in our application for an interpretation appeal concerning proposed building signage at our new building located at 191 Marginal Way. Natalie is authorized to act as our legal counsel before the Board.

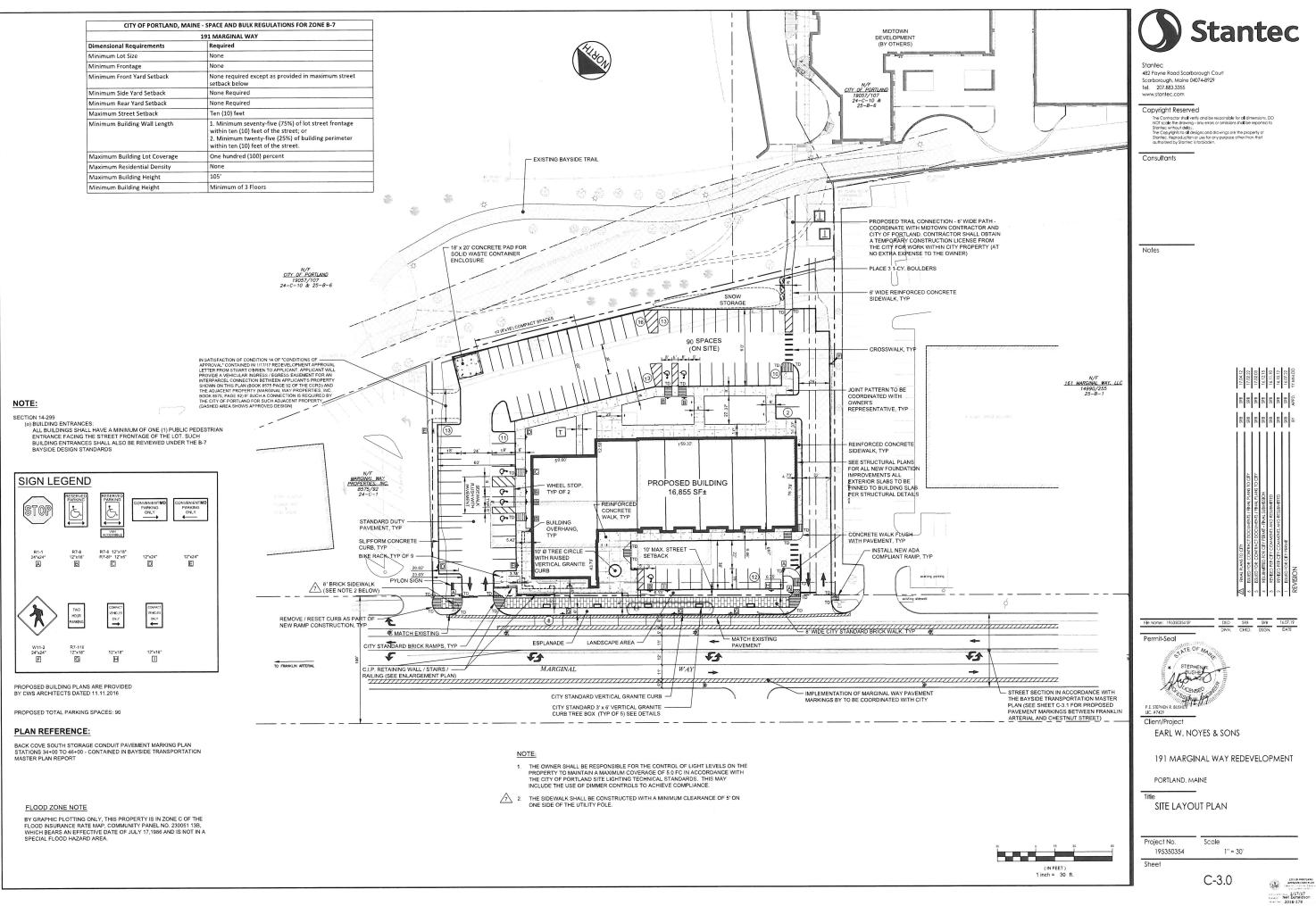
Should you have any questions regarding this letter please do not hesitate to contact me at 603-339-9234.

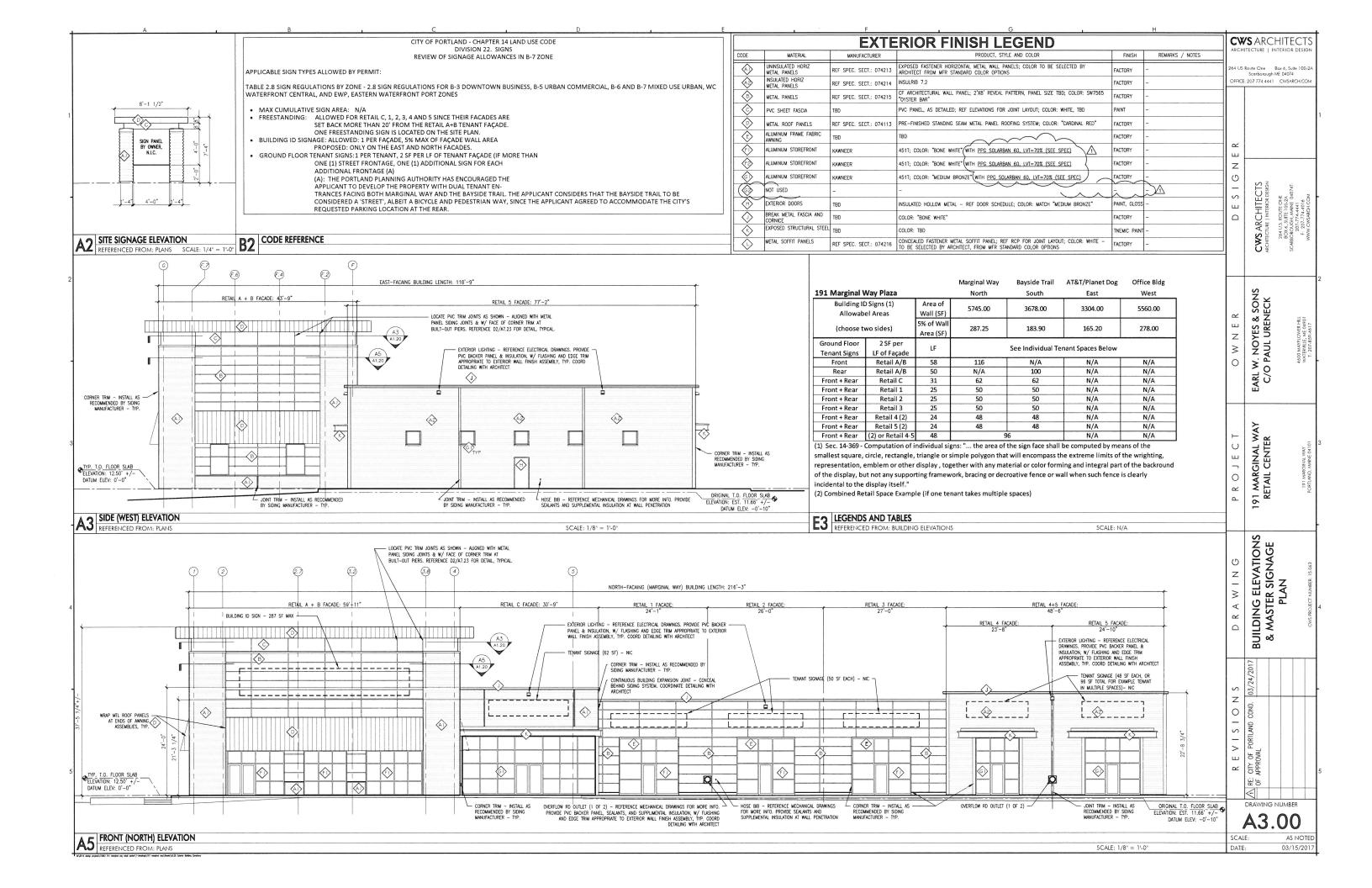
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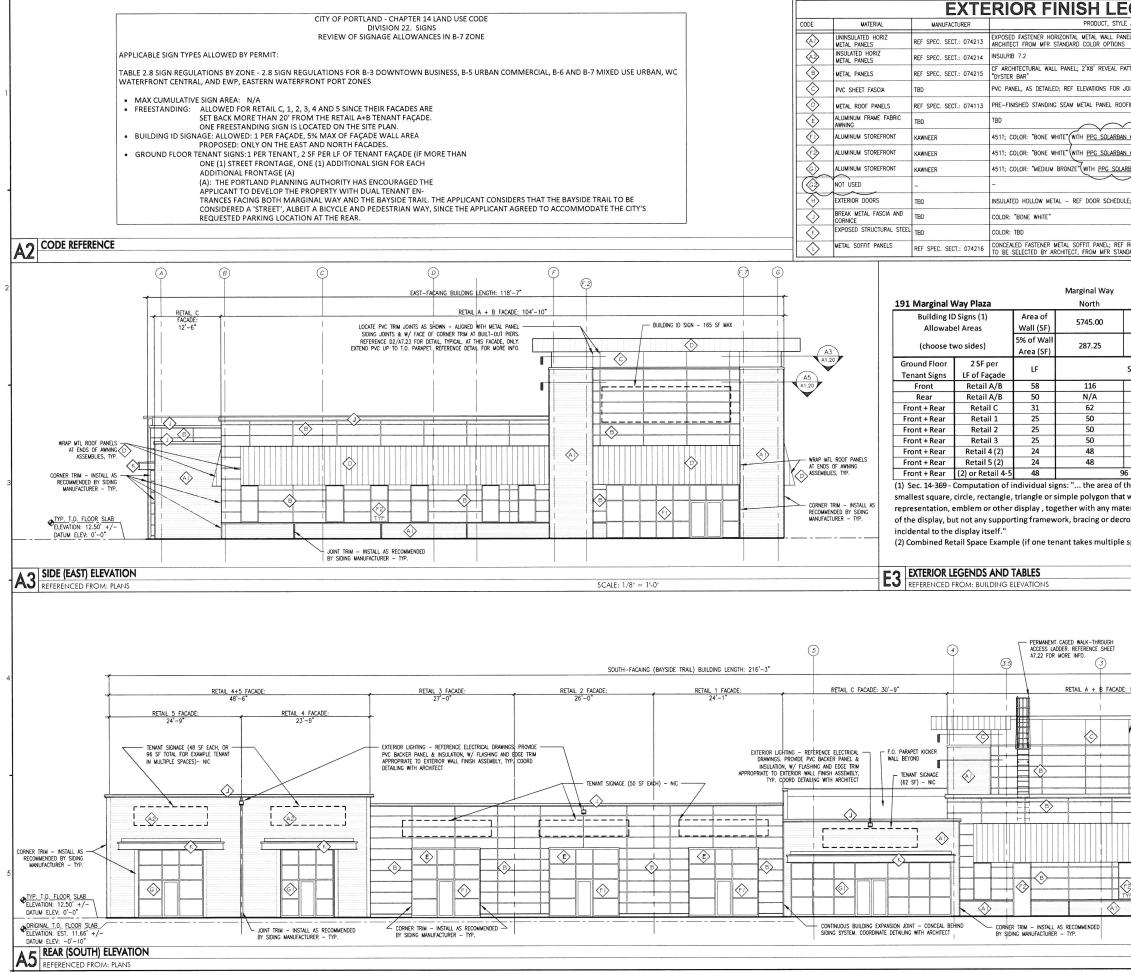
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Max Puyanic Co-CEO ConvenientMD Urgent Care









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