



CITY OF RACINE DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: 8/3/2022

To: Mayor and Planning, Heritage and Design Commission Members

From: City Development Department, Division of Planning and Redevelopment

Division Manager: Jeff Hintz – (262) 636-9151 jeff.hintz@cityofracine.org

Case Manager: Jeff Hintz

Location: 3225 Rapids Drive

Applicant: Michael's Signs

Property Owner: Emilio Infusino

Request: Consideration of a conditional use permit to operate an electronic message sign at 3225 Rapids Drive, located in a B-2 Community Shopping Zone District as allowed in Section [114-1033](#) of the Municipal Code.

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY: The existing pylon sign on the property would have the manually changeable message portion removed; an electronic message sign measuring 4x8 feet (32 square feet) would then be installed in the same location. The proposed electronic signage does not face any residential property.

The Zoning Ordinance classifies electronic message signage as conditional use permits in the B-2 Community Shopping Zone District if the location and operation meet the criteria specified in the ordinance (114-1033).



Birdseye view of the property, indicated in red, (north is down) (image from City Pictometry)



Rendering of proposed signage (top is to the left), submitted by applicant.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parcel Number: 17782005

Property Size: 19,500 square feet

Comprehensive Plan Map Designation: High Density Residential

Consistency with Adopted Plans:

The [Racine Comprehensive Plan](#) states that:

- Maintain and develop a land use pattern that strengthens the character and livability of the City's downtown core, commercial and industrial areas, and neighborhoods.
- Encourage development patterns that promote efficient and sustainable use of land, that can be readily linked by transportation systems and that utilize existing public utilities and services.
- Promote redevelopment and infill in areas with existing infrastructure and services, enhancing existing residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Corridor or Special Design District?: N/A

Historic?: N/A

Current Zoning District: B-2 Community Shopping

Purpose of Zone District: The B2 community shopping district is intended to accommodate the needs of a much larger consumer population than is served by the neighborhood convenience district, thus a wider range of uses and structure sizes is permitted for both daily and occasional shopping.

Proposed Zoning: No change proposed

Existing Land Use: Restaurant and accessory parking areas.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North	R-2 Single Family Residence	Single unit dwellings
East	B-2 Community Shopping	Banquet hall and parking areas
South	R-2 Single Family Residence	Single unit dwellings
West	B-3 General Commercial	Offices and retail space

ANALYSIS:

Development Standards:

Density ([114-Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 5 [Bulk Regulations](#) & 8 [Lots](#)): There are no changes planned to the building floor area or exterior as a result of this proposal.

Standard	Required	Provided
Lot Area	No minimum	19,500 square feet
Lot Frontage	30 feet	200 feet
Floor Area Ratio	4.0 maximum	.29

Setbacks (114-[Article V](#): Article VII, Div. 6 [Development Standards](#)): Nonresidential uses are not required to provided yards, except as required in 114-570.

Yard	Required	Provided
Front (North)	0 feet	5 feet
Side (West)	0 feet	130 feet
Side (East)	0 feet	0 feet
Rear (South)	20 feet	2 feet*

*The existing building is non-conforming in this regard

Building design standards (114-Secs. [735.5](#) & [736](#)): The composition of the building is existing and no changes are planned. The building does comply with zoning ordinance requirements related to design.

Sign Regulations (114-[Article X](#)): Signage would need to follow the sizing and other requirements outlined below:

Sign Type	Allowable Sq. Ft.	Provided Sq. Ft.	Maximum Height	Proposed Height
Projecting/Wall/Freestanding	225	96	15 feet	22 feet*
Electronic	75	32	15 feet	10 feet
Total	300	128		

*the existing sign structure exceeds the current allowable maximum height. The proposed modifications comply with all current requirements. If the sign structure is ever removed, new signage would need to comply with all requirements.

Exceptions to ordinance: No exceptions are required for the electronic signage to be installed where the existing changeable copy sign is installed.

Additional Planning and Zoning Comments: N/A

REQUIRED FINDINGS OF FACT:

CONDITIONAL USE FINDINGS (Sec. 114-154. – Standards.)

No Conditional Use shall be recommended by the Plan Commission unless it is found that that:

- 1) The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to, or endanger, the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare.**

Staff Comments: The proposed electronic message center complies with all requirements set forth in the zoning ordinance. The operation of it, with recommended conditions at the end of this report, is not expected to be detrimental to the public safety, general health or welfare. The portion of Rapids Drive this property is on is home to commercial development, but there are dwelling units dating back to the 1950's interspersed within this stretch of the street and, an established neighborhood of dwellings to the south. Based on the placement chosen by the applicant, the signage is not expected to be contrary to the required finding in this aspect.

- 2) The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.**

Staff Comments: With the recommended conditions pertaining to sign operation, the installation of the electronic message center is not anticipated to be injurious or impact the enjoyment of other properties in the area. The message portion of the signage will not be readily visible from the residential dwellings in the area. The remainder of the property would remain unchanged and functionally and operationally, no changes are planned as a result of the proposed installation of this electronic message center.

- 3) The establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.**

Staff Comments: The area is mostly developed. Any future development is not anticipated to be impeded by having an electronic message center in operation at this property. The recommended conditions at the end of this report ensure the signage is operated similar to other electronic signs in commercial zones in the City.

- 4) Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided.**

Staff Comments: All utilities, access and drainage are existing and the new use should be similar to those that have existed at the property in the past and are expected to remain unchanged as a result of this signage being installed. The signage will not interfere with any traffic control devices.

5) Adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designated as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.

Staff Comments: No changes are proposed to the ingress and egress from the site, the electronic message center is not expected to have any impact nor create any congestion in this area.

6) The proposed conditional use is not contrary to the objectives of the current land use plan for the city.

Staff Comments: The Comprehensive Plan calls for a land use pattern which strengthens the character and livability of the City's downtown core, commercial and industrial areas. This proposed use will help a property that has historically been commercial continue to operate and be maintained, while giving a bit more of a modern appearance to the existing signage.

7) The conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may, in each instance, be modified pursuant to the recommendations of the plan commission.

Staff Comments: The applicable sections of the zoning ordinance as they relate to this development are being met as required.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS FOR THE PLANNING HERITAGE AND DESIGN COMMISSION

1. Approve the request as submitted; or
2. Approve the request with conditions deemed necessary to mitigate any adverse impacts that could arise from the project; or
3. Deny the request; or
4. Defer the request to obtain more specific information about the request.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF FACT IN THIS REPORT, THAT THE REQUEST FROM MICHAEL'S SIGNS, AUTHORIZED AGENT FOR INFUSINO'S RESTAURANT SEEKING A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO OPERATE AN ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGN AT 3225 RAPIDS DRIVE BE APPROVED, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- a) That the plans presented to the Planning Heritage and Design Commission on August 3, 2022 be approved subject to the conditions contained herein.
- b) That all codes and ordinances are complied with and required permits acquired.
- c) That the sign operate in accordance with the following provisions:

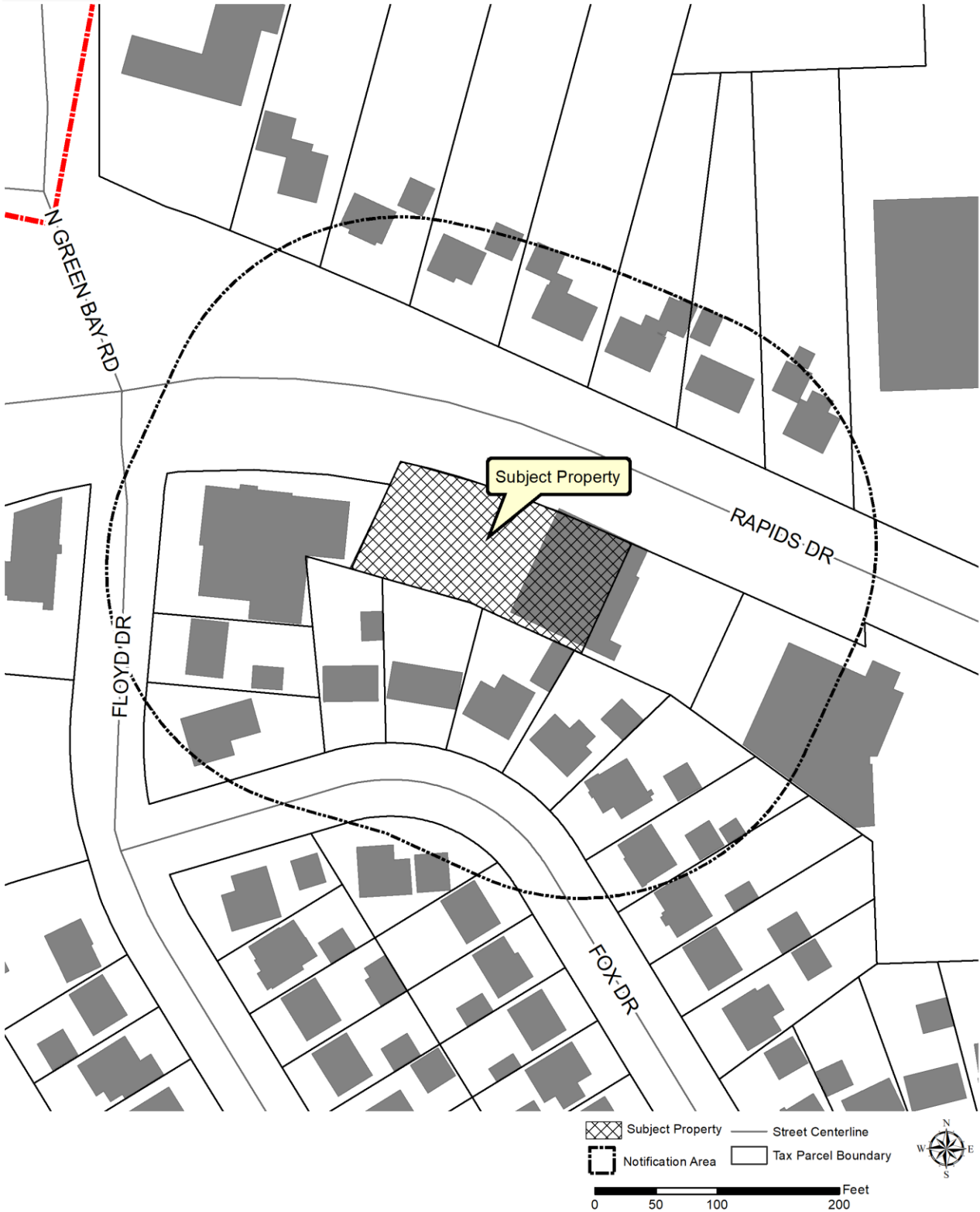
- a. Maximum brightness levels for electronic or digital display signs shall not exceed 5000 nits when measured from the sign's face at its maximum brightness, between sunrise and sunset, as determined by the National Weather Service.
- b. Maximum brightness levels for electronic, digital display signs shall not exceed 350 nits when measured from the sign's face at its maximum brightness, between sunset and sunrise, as determined by the National Weather Service.
- c. Each message change shall be accomplished in one second or less, and each message shall remain in a fixed position for a minimum of eight seconds.
- d. The use of scrolling, flashing, blinking, chasing, or traveling lights, videos, or similar animation is prohibited except during message changes.
- d) That no minor changes be made from the conditions of this permit without approval of the Planning Heritage and Design Commission, and no major changes be made from the conditions of this permit without the approval of the Common Council.
- e) That this conditional use permit is subject to Planning Heritage and Design Commission review for compliance with the listed conditions.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Property owner notification map indicating the subject property;
- 2) Aerial Photo indicating the subject property;
- 3) Zoning Map indicating the subject property;
- 4) Land Use Map from Comprehensive Plan, indicating the subject property;
- 5) Site photos of the property and general area; and
- 6) Submittal documents (view in legistar).



Conditional Use Request - 3225 Rapids Drive

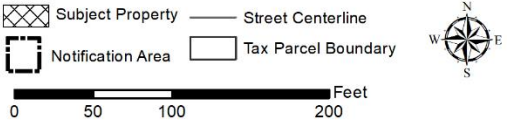




Conditional Use Request - 3225 Rapids Drive

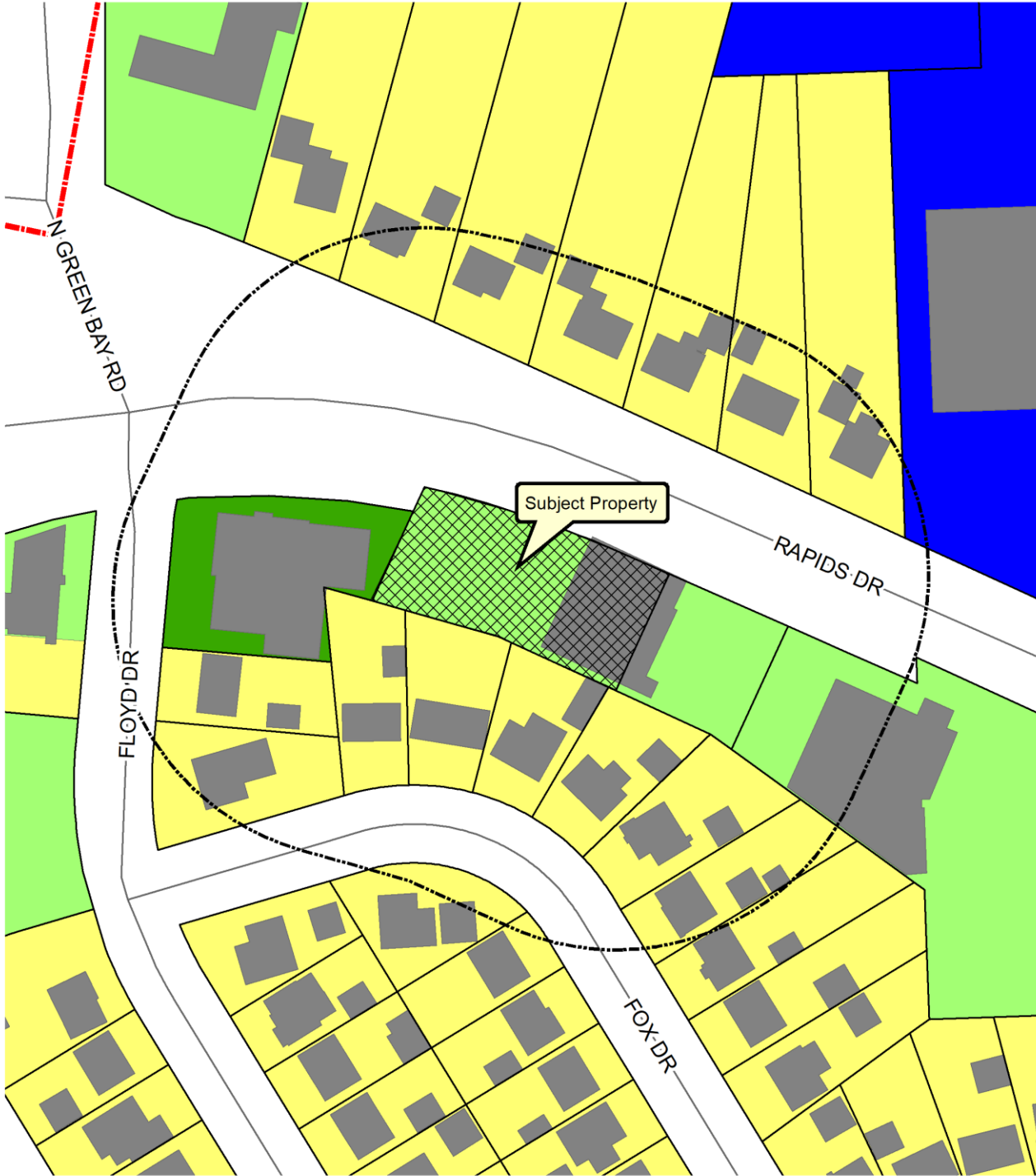


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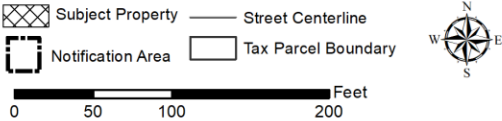


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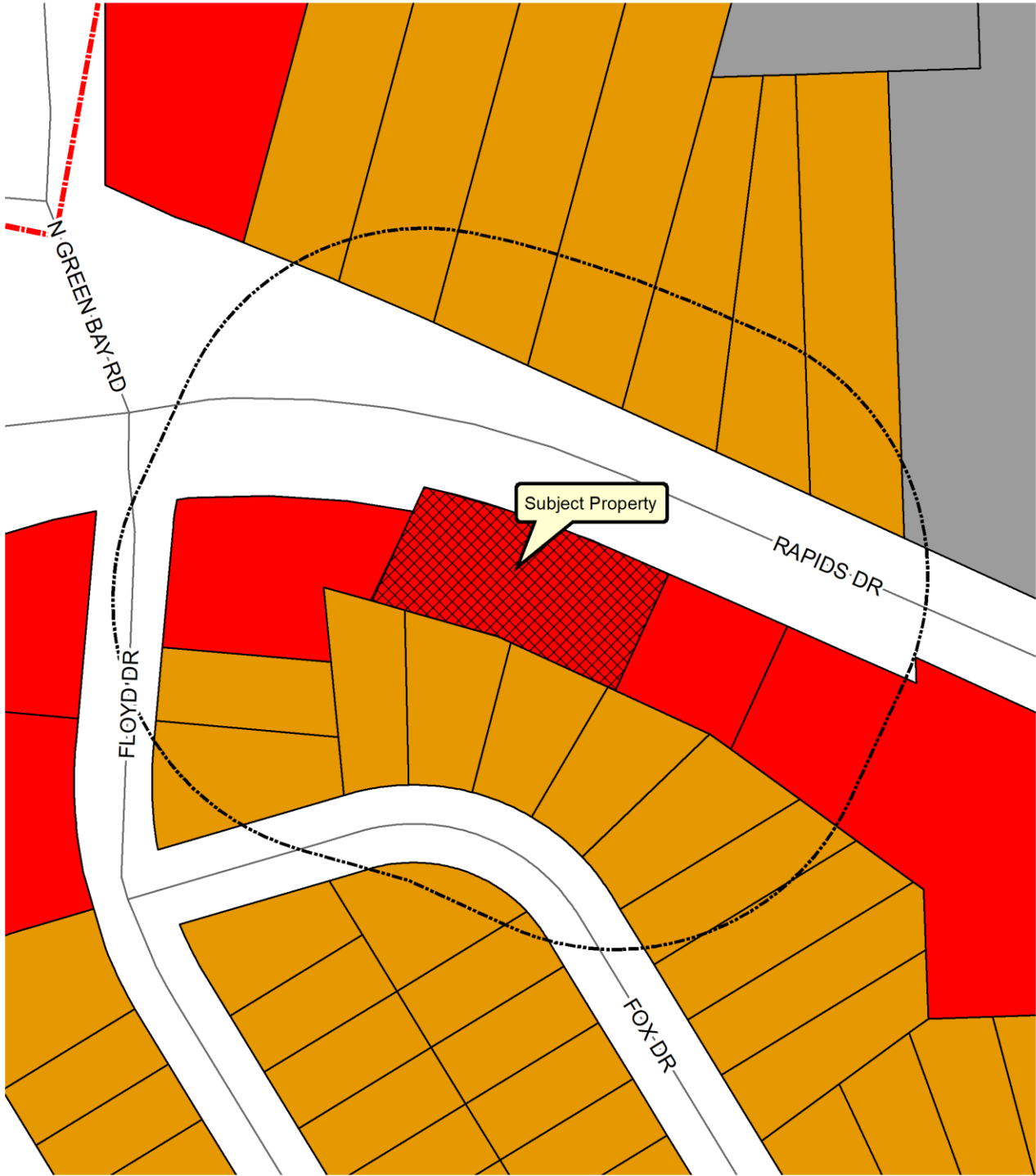
Zoning Designation

Yellow R-2 Light Green B-2 Dark Green B-3 Blue I-2



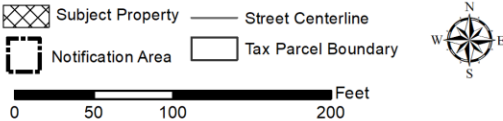


Conditional Use Request - 3225 Rapids Drive



Land Use Designation

- Industrial
- Commercial
- Medium Density Residential



Site Photos



Looking east down Rapids Drive, proposed sign in foreground



Looking east across subject property at 3225 Rapids Drive



Looking west down Rapids Drive from subject property



Looking south across the rear of the property



Looking north from the subject property



Looking west across the subject property along Rapids Drive