

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

October 21, 2015

Agenda Item No: 5

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2015-419  
**ADDRESS:** 303 E GRAYSON ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 975 BLK 19 LOT 1 (MOLAK SUBD)  
**ZONING:** C3 RIO-2  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**APPLICANT:** Jill Giles/Giles Parscale  
**OWNER:** Patrick S Molak Cooperation  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Signage  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install signage for Down on Grayson consisting of the following:

1. A 14'-7" by 5'-9" painted sign on the east façade of the new construction. The applicant has not specified final colors at this time.
2. 3. A double faced blade sign mounted on the Avenue A façade to measure 6'-6" in width and 2'-10" in height. The cabinet is to have exposed neon channel letters approximately 11.5" in height, either exposed 2" neon or internally lit acrylic letters and exposed neon detailing.
3. A double faced pole mounted sign at the intersection of E Grayson and Avenue A to measure 9'-10" in height with a cabinet to measure 4'-7" by 2'-0". The bottom of the cabinet will be 7'-10" above grade. The sign will feature a cabinet with exposed neon channel letters approximately 8" in height, either exposed 2" neon or internally lit acrylic letters and exposed neon detailing.

### APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*UDC Section 35-678. – Signs and Billboards in the RIO.*

#### (a) General Provisions.

(1) This section governs all exterior signs and all interior signs hung within ten (10) feet of an exterior fenestration, or those signs intended to be read by exterior patrons.

A. All signage within an RIO district shall conform to all city codes and must have approval of the historic preservation officer prior to installation.

B. Permits must be obtained following approval of a certificate of appropriateness.

C. No sign shall be painted, constructed, erected, remodeled, refaced, relocated, expanded or otherwise altered until it has been approved and a permit has been obtained from the development services department in accordance with the provisions of this section and applicable city code.

D. Signs, visual displays or graphics shall advertise only the business on the premises unless otherwise allowed in this section.

(2) When reviewing applications for signage the historic preservation officer and the historic and design review commission shall consider the visual impact on nearby historic resources.

A. Signs should respect and respond to the environment and landmark or district character in which constructed.

B. Signs should respect and respond to the river improvement overlay districts character and the historic Riverwalk.

C. The content or advertising message carried by permitted signs shall pertain to the business located on the same premises as the sign or to any otherwise lawful noncommercial message that does not direct attention to a business operated for profit, or to a commodity or service for sale, provided that signs erected on buildings with multiple businesses within shall pertain to any such business within.

(3) For signs with changeable message panels, the changeable message area of the sign shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the total sign area, except for gasoline price signs which shall not exceed seventy-five (75) percent of

the total sign area. Electronic changeable message boards shall be prohibited.

(6) Special consideration should be given to the character of the sign itself proposed in the application, and whether the proposed sign has inherently historic characteristics which may fall outside of the guidelines presented below but which would contribute to the historic district, landmark or area for which it is being proposed. Additionally, when reviewing applications for signage the historic preservation officer and the historic and design review commission shall consider the visual impact on nearby historic resources.

(c) Standards for Sign Design and Placement. In considering whether to recommend approval or disapproval of an application to construct or alter signage on a building, object, site, or structure in a river improvement overlay district, review shall be guided by the following standards in addition to any specific design guidelines approved by city council.

(1) Primary sign design considerations shall be identification and legibility. Size, scale, height, color and location of signs shall be harmonious with, and properly related to, the overall character of the district and structure. Sign materials shall be compatible with that of the building facade. Highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read are not permitted.

(3) All graphic elements shall reinforce the architectural integrity of any building. Signs shall not disfigure, damage, mar, alter, or conceal architectural features or details and shall be limited to sizes that are in scale with the architecture and the streetscape. Emblems and symbols of identification used as principal structural or architectural design elements on a facade shall not be included in the total allowable signage per facade per structure when approved. Review shall be guided by the building's proportion and scale when such elements are incorporated.

(4) Graphics and signage may be illuminated by indirect, internal, or bare-bulb sources, providing that glare is not produced; by indirect light sources concealed by a hood or diffuser; by internal illumination with standard opal glass or other translucent material or with an equal or smaller light transmission factor. All illumination shall be steady and stationary. Neon lighting shall be permitted when used as an integral architectural element or artwork appropriate to the site. For purposes of this subsection, "Glare" shall mean an illumination level of six (6) Lux or greater at the property boundary. If internal illumination is used, it shall be designed to be subordinate to the overall building composition. Light fixtures should reflect the design period of the building on which they are placed. The use of ambient light from storefront or streetlights is encouraged.

(d) Proportion of Signs. For all signage, signage width and height must be in proportion to the facade, respecting the size, scale and mass of the facade, building height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. The building facade shall be considered as part of an overall sign program but the sign shall be subordinate to the overall building composition. Additionally, signs shall respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed.

(e) Number and Size of Signs.

(1) Number and Size. The historic and design review commission shall be guided in its decisions by the total number of businesses or services per building and the percentage of visible storefront occupied by each business or service. Applicants may apply for up to three (3) signs total. Total signage for all applicants shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet unless additional signs and/or additional total footage is approved. Additional square footage may be approved provided that the additional signage is in conformity with, and does not interfere with, the pedestrian experience on the Riverwalk. The additional square footage shall be based upon the size and scope of the site. Signs should reflect the type and speed of traffic they are meant to attract. Signs designed for pedestrians and drivers of slow moving cars should not be the same size as signs designed for highway traffic.

(2) Sign Area. The sign area shall be determined in the following manner:

A. Sign Areas. The area of a sign shall be computed on the actual area of the sign. Sign area shall be calculated as the area within a parallelogram, triangle, circle, semicircle or other regular geometric figure including all letters, figures, graphics or other elements of the sign, together with the framework or background of the sign. The supporting framework of the sign shall not be included in determining sign area unless such supporting framework forms an integral part of the sign display, as determined by the historic preservation officer. If the sign is located on a decorative fence or wall, when such fence or wall otherwise meets these or other ordinances or regulations and is clearly incidental to the display itself, the fence or wall shall not be included in the sign area. In the cases of signs with more than one (1) sign face, including but not restricted to double-faced signs, back-to-back signs, overhanging signs, and projecting signs, each side

of the sign shall be included in total allowable signage area.

(k) Prohibited Signs. The following signs are prohibited:

- (1) Billboards, junior billboards, portable signs, and advertising benches;
- (2) Any sign placed upon a building, object, site, or structure in any manner so as to disfigure, damage, or conceal any window opening, door, or significant architectural feature or detail of any building;
- (3) Any sign or sign spinner which advertises commercial off-premises businesses, products, activities, services, or events unless otherwise allowed in this article;
- (4) Any sign which does not identify a business or service within the river improvement overlay district unless otherwise allowed in this article;
- (5) Any non-contributing sign which is abandoned or damaged beyond fifty (50) percent of its replacement value, including parts of old or unused signs. All remnants such as supports, brackets and braces must also be removed;
- (6) Any attachment to an already affixed sign which does not meet the provisions of the City Code;
- (7) Roof mounted signs, except in the cases of landmark signs or unless approved in accordance with standards set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of this section. Contributing roof mounted signs may be resurfaced with an approved certificate of appropriateness. The square footage of roof mounted signs shall be included in the total allowable signage for the building;
- (8) Pole signs;
- (9) Digital displays, digital and/or LED lighted signs, not to include LED light sources that do not meet the definition of a sign, with or without rotating, flashing lettering, icons or images.

Except as provided below:

A. A public transportation agency may incorporate transit information signage into transit shelters, utilizing LED or digital technology, provided the signage is contained within or under the transit shelter, and is limited to five (5) square feet of signage area, and one (1) sign per thirty (30) linear feet of pedestrian shelter.

B. A public transportation agency may incorporate transit information signage into a monument sign at transit stops, utilizing LED or digital technology, provided it is limited to five (5) square feet of signage area.

C. A public transportation agency may incorporate transit information signage into a monument sign at transit facilities (other than transit stops), utilizing LED or digital technology, provided it is limited to seven (7) square feet of signage area.

D. The historic preservation officer may impose additional restrictions on illumination to ensure that the character of signs are harmonious with the character of the structures on which they are to be placed and designated landmarks or districts in the area, provided that such restrictions are reasonably related to other conforming signs and conforming structures in the area, do not unreasonably restrict the amount of signage allowed by this section, and are in keeping with the intent of this section. Among other things, consideration shall be given to the location and illumination of the sign in relation to the surrounding buildings, the use of appropriate materials, the size and style of lettering and graphics, and the type of lighting proposed.

(10) Revolving signs or signs with a moving component.

(11) Any sandwich board which conflicts with the Americans with Disabilities Act, or which disrupts or interferes with pedestrian or other traffic.

(12) Any sign that obscures a sign display by a public authority for the purpose of giving instructions or directions or other public information.

(13) Any sign which consists of pennants, ribbons, spinners or other similar moving devices.

(14) Any sign, except official notices and advertisements, which is nailed, tacked, posted or in any other manner attached to any utility pole or structure or supporting wire, cable, or pipe; or to any tree on any street or sidewalk or to public property of any description.

(15) Moored balloons, wind jammers or other floating or inflated signs that are tethered to the ground or to a structure.

(16) Any permanent or temporary sign affixed to, painted on, or placed in or upon any parked vehicle, parked trailer or other parked device capable of being towed, which is parked so as to advertise the business to the passing motorist or pedestrian; and whose primary purpose is to provide additional on-site signage or is to serve the function of an outdoor advertising sign. Excluded from this are vehicles or equipment that are

in operating condition, currently registered and licensed to operate on public streets with a valid inspection sticker, and actively used in the daily function of the business to which such signs relate; vehicles/equipment engaged in active construction projects; vehicles or equipment offered for rent to the general public and stored on-premises and otherwise allowed under applicable city ordinance.

Notwithstanding the above, signs designated as a contributing sign or structure by the historic preservation officer shall not be prohibited unless or until such designation is revoked.

## **FINDINGS:**

- a. The applicant has proposed three signage requests for “Down on Grayson”, new construction which is to be bordered to the south by E Grayson, to the west by Avenue A, to the east by surface parking which is below highway 281 and to the north by additional surface parking.
- b. According to the UDC Section 35-678(e)(1), applicants may apply for a total of three signs that shall not exceed more than fifty (50) square feet unless additional signage and/or square footage is approved by the Historic and Design Review Commission. The applicant has proposed three total signs, however, has exceeded the fifty (50) square feet of allowable size. Staff finds that given this structure’s location and facades that face individual streets, additional square footage is appropriate.
- c. Facing the east, the applicant has proposed to paint a wall sign measuring 14’-7” in width by 5’-9” in height. At this time, the applicant has proposed a white background with colors of maroon and orange. Total square footage for this signage is approximately 84 square feet, however, staff finds this proposal appropriate.
- d. On the Avenue A façade, the applicant has proposed to install a double faced blade sign to measure 6’-6” in width by 2’-10” in height. The cabinet is to have exposed neon channel letters approximately 11.5” in height, either exposed neon or internally lit acrylic letters and exposed neon detailing. The applicant has noted that this signage will be constructed of aluminum or a similar material. The total requested square footage of this sign is approximately forty-eight (48) square feet. The applicant has proposed for this sign to have a white background, orange and maroon lettering, yellow and orange neon lighting and a black border. Staff finds this request appropriate at the proposed square footage.
- e. At the corner of E Grayson and Avenue A, the applicant has proposed to install a pole sign to measure 9’-10” in overall height with a cabinet to measure 4’-7” in width by 2’-0” in height. The applicant has proposed for this sign to feature neon channel letters, exposed neon lighting and exposed neon or acrylic push through letters. The applicant has proposed for this sign to have a white background, orange and maroon lettering, yellow and orange neon lighting and a black border. The applicant has noted that the sign will be constructed of aluminum or a similar material. The overall square footage of this sign is approximately eighteen (18) square feet, counting both sides. Per UDC Section 35-678(k), pole signs are prohibited in the River Improvement Overlay, however, staff finds this request appropriate. Staff recommends the applicant seek a variance for the installation of this sign.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of request items #1 through #3 based on findings a through e. The applicant has noted that a variance will be requested.

## **CASE MANAGER:**

Edward Hall



## Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

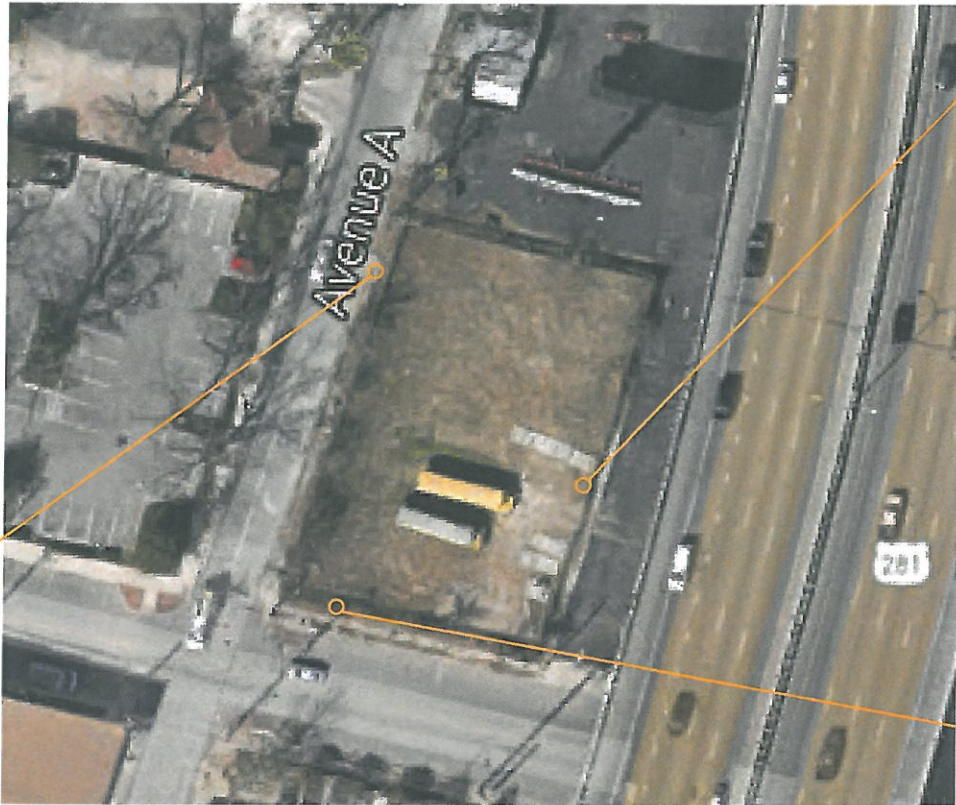
Printed: Oct 13, 2015

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Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Project Location

Down On Grayson Site



View Along Avenue A  
Proposed blade  
sign location



View from under 281  
Proposed painted signage



View Along E Grayson St.  
Proposed pole sign location



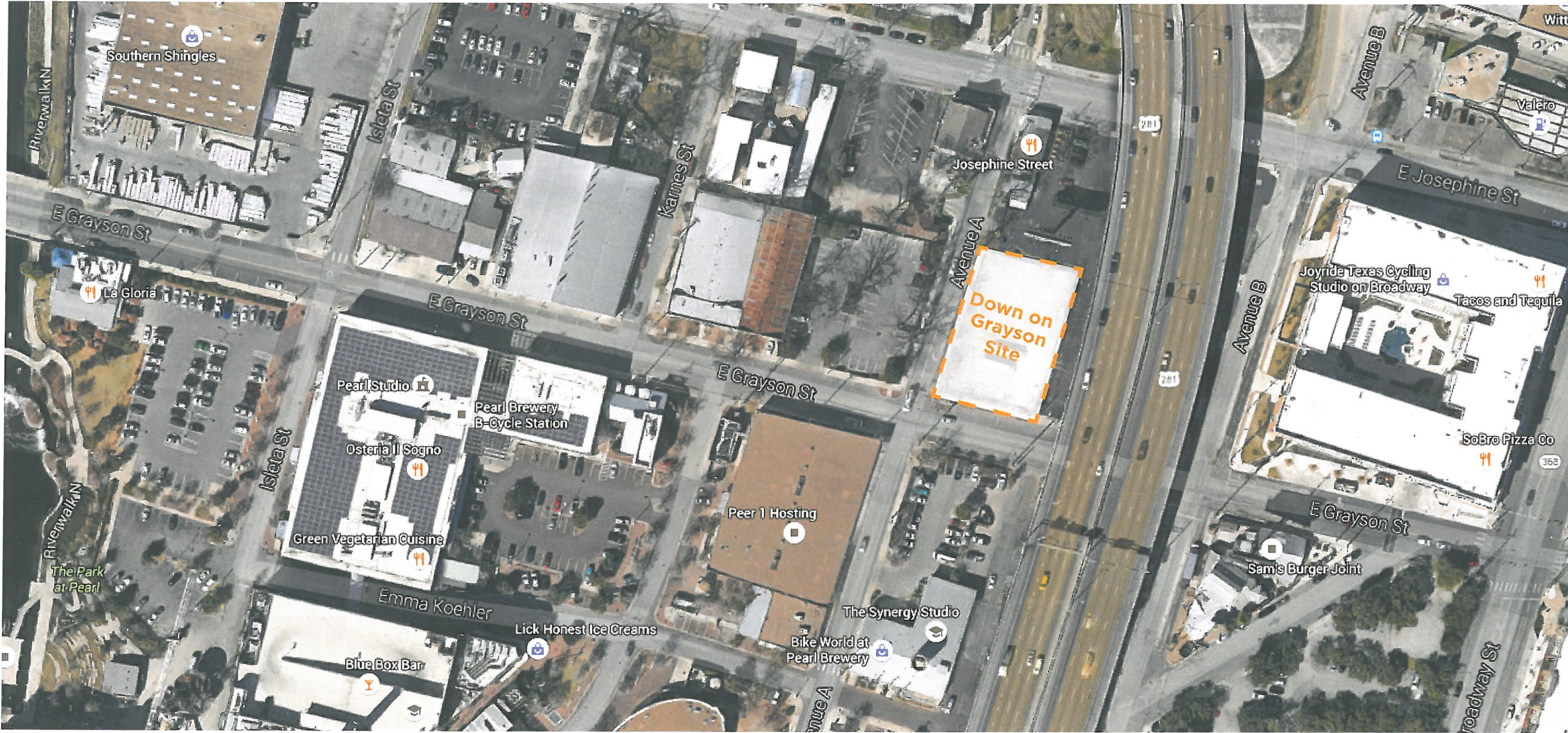
GILES-PARSCALE

date	1 October 2015
project # / title	Down on Grayson Signage
client	Molak Corp - Down on Grayson

T 210.224.8378 321 Sixth Street  
F 210.579.6668 San Antonio, Texas 78215 gilesparscale



Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Project Location



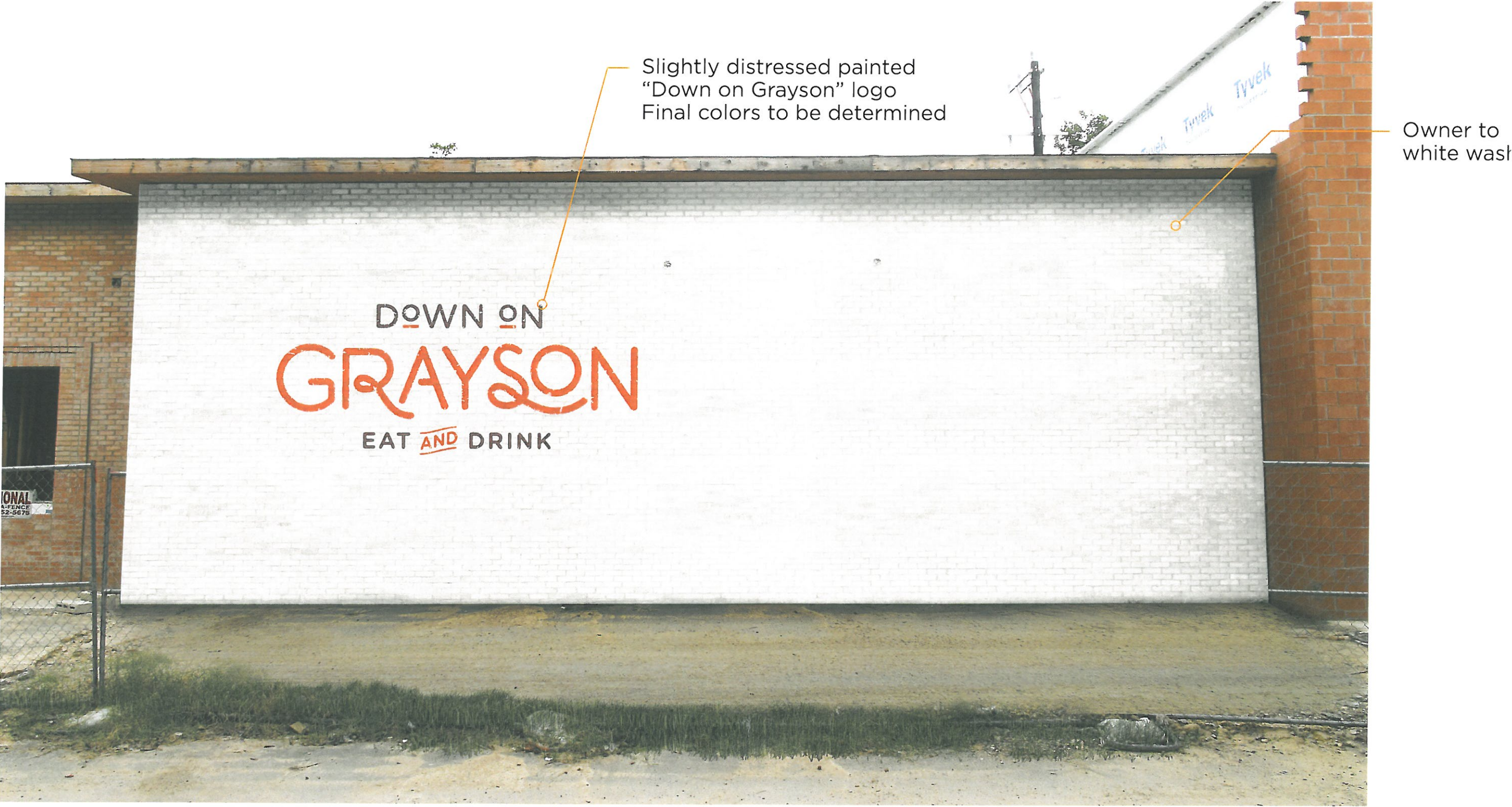
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Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Painted Building Signage



GILES-PARSCALE

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Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Slightly Distressed Painted Building Signage



Note:  
Final color selection to be determined.  
Design and dimension to remain the same

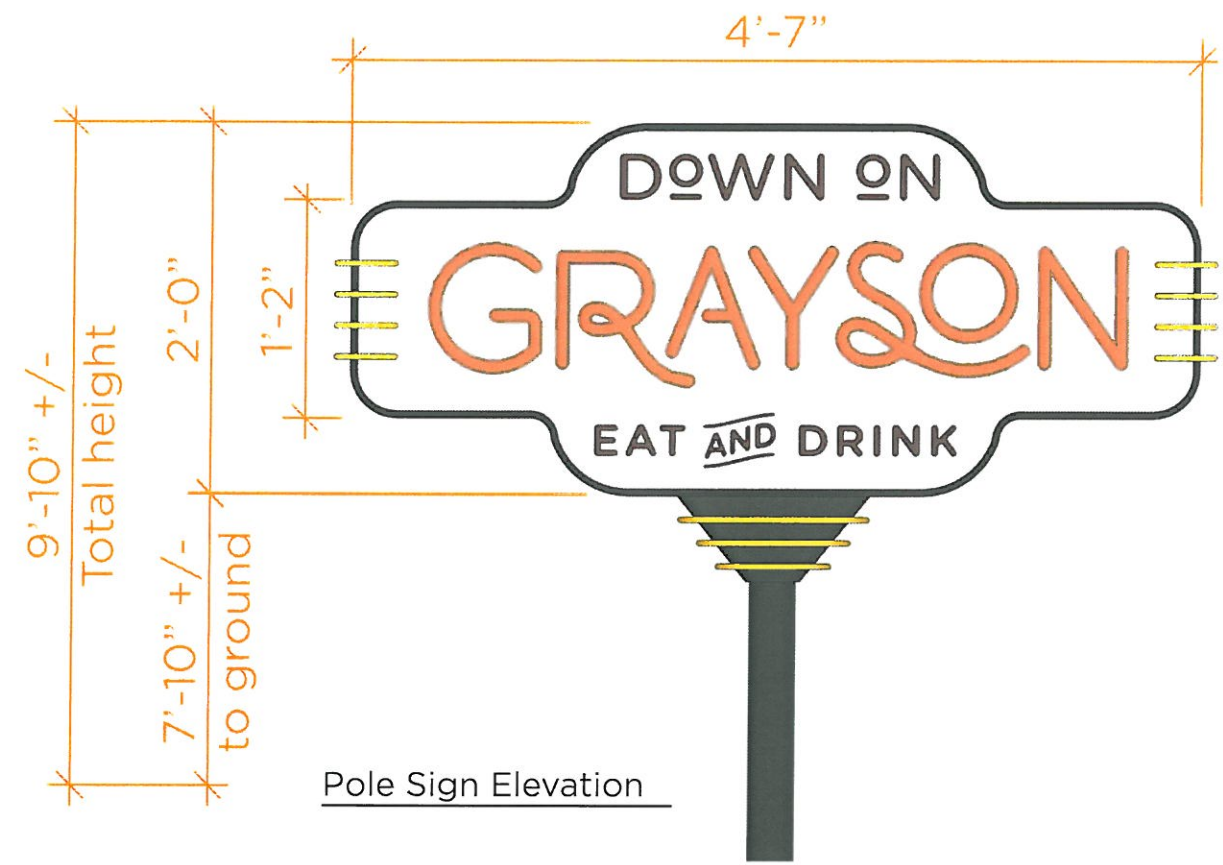


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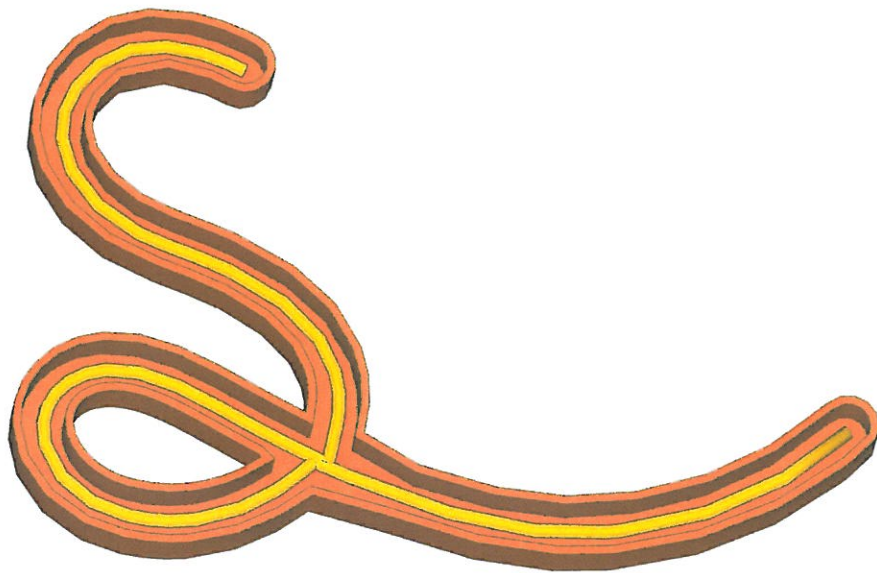
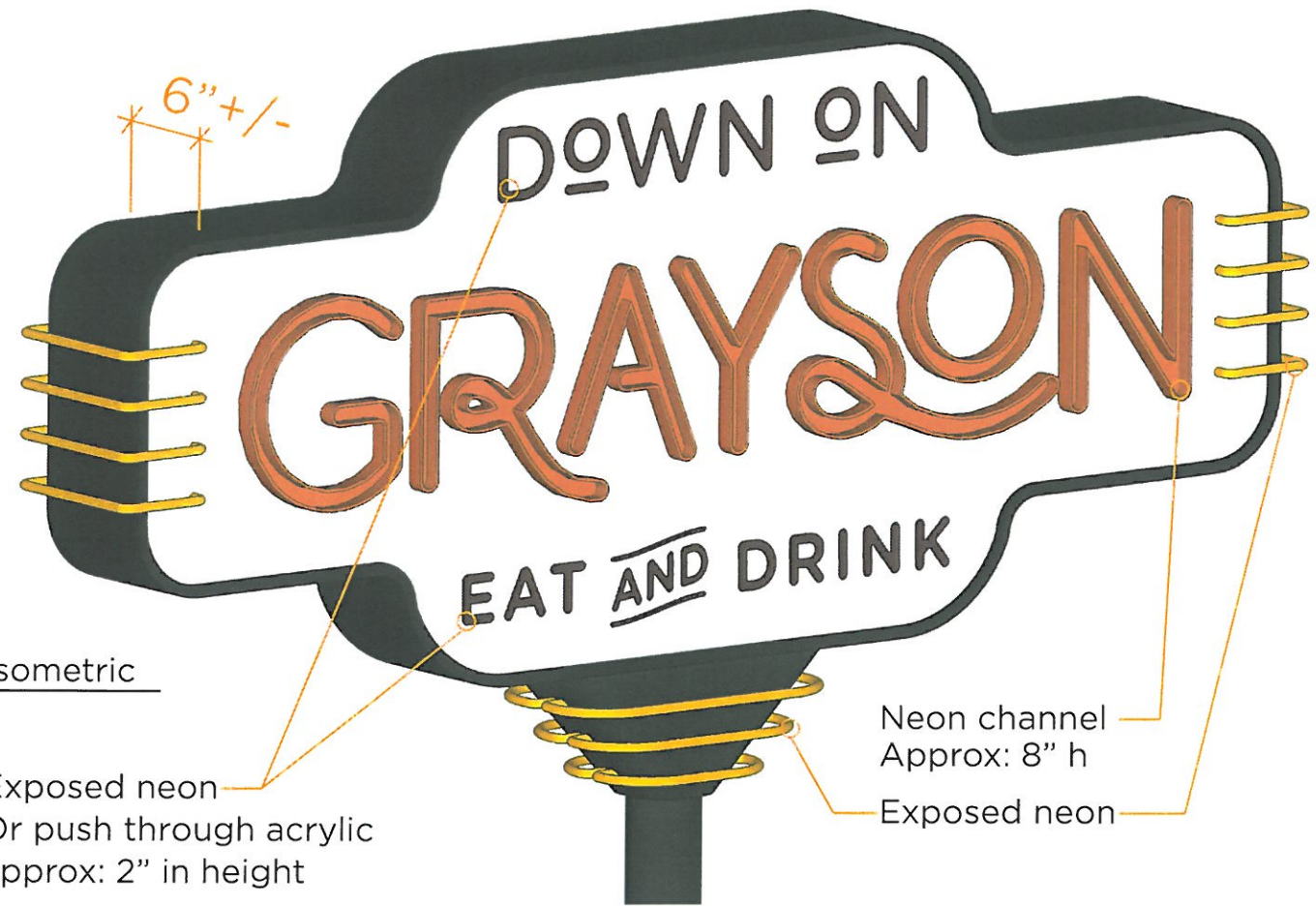
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Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Double Faced Pole Sign



Proposed Approximate Location



Typical Neon Channel Letter



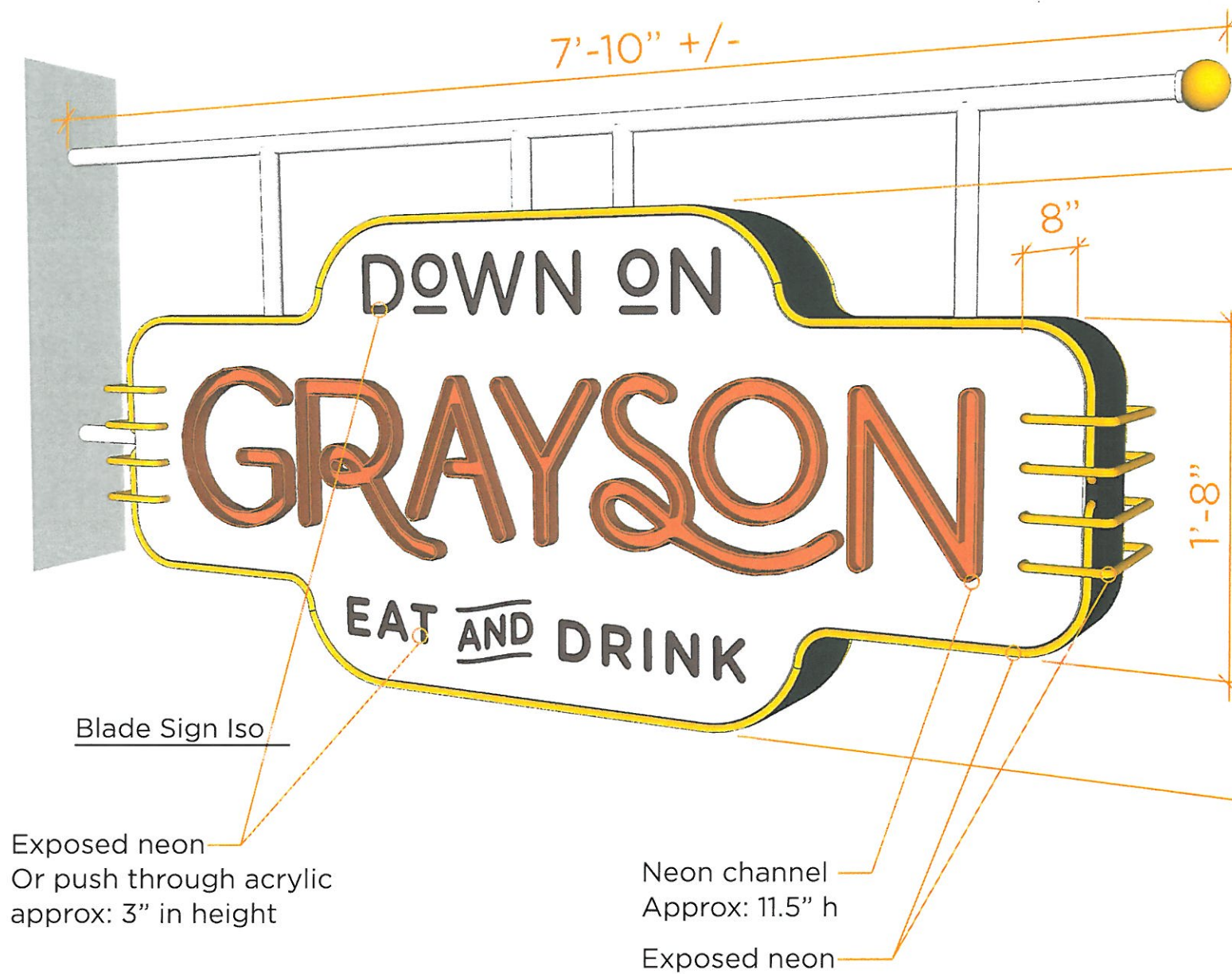
date	1 October 2015		
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Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Double Faced Blade Sign



Blade Sign Location



GILES-PARSCALE

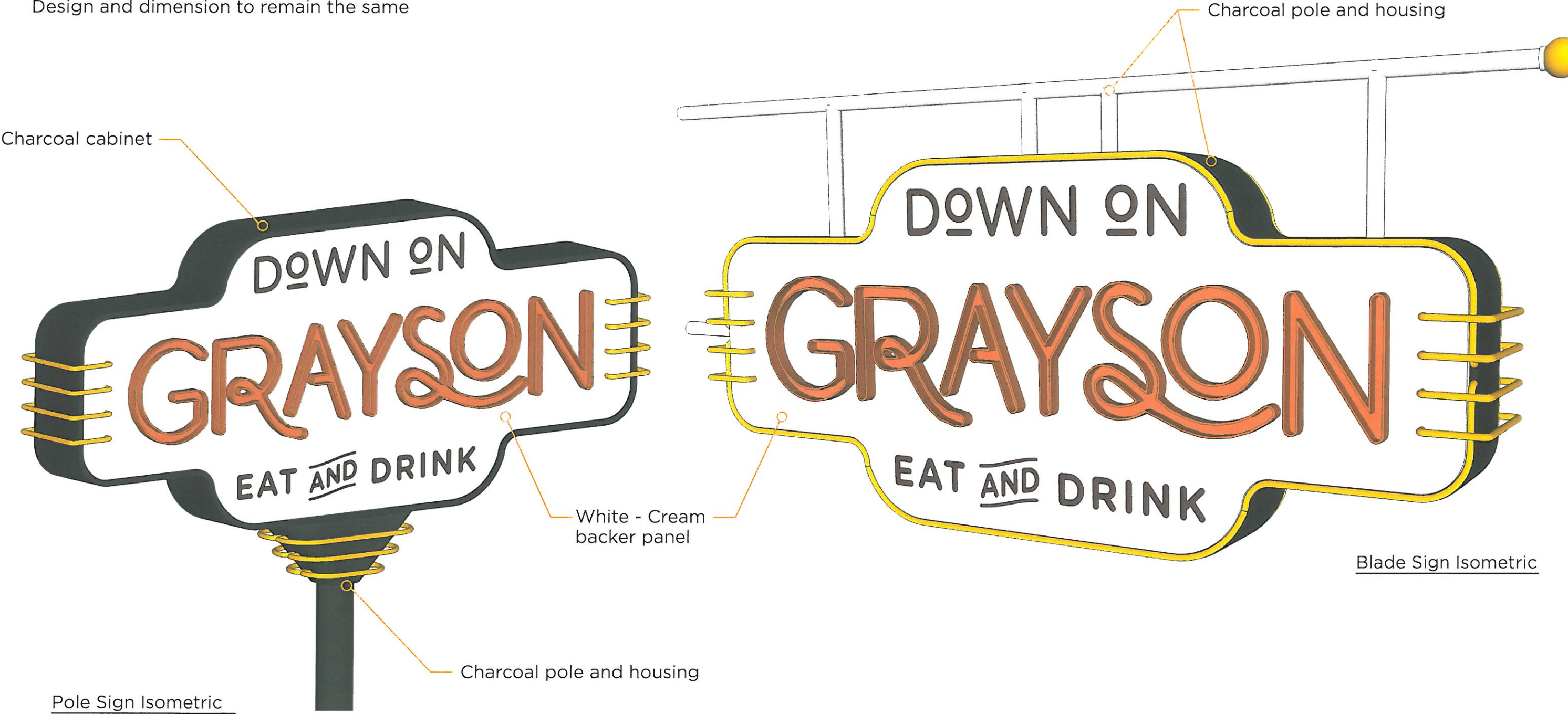
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Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Color Selection

Note:  
Final color selection to be determined.  
Design and dimension to remain the same



GILES-PARSCALE

date	1 October 2015		
project # / title	Down on Grayson Signage		
client	Molak Corp - Down on Grayson		
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Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Neighborhood Precedent Images



Exposed Neon Precedent



Exposed Neon Precedent



Neon Channel Letter Precedent



GILES-PARSCALE

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Molak Corp - Down on Grayson  
Neighborhood Precedent Images



Slightly Distressed Painted Signage Precedent



Slightly Distressed Painted Letters Precedent



GILES-PARSCALE

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