



BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS STAFF REPORT

To: Board of Zoning Appeals

From: Sergio Mendoza, Planning Director

Meeting Date: July 23, 2025 (Rescheduled Meeting)

Agenda Item: BZA 25-004

Hearing: Preliminary Hearing

Application Type: Use Variance

Summary: Applicant is requesting a Use Variances from Table 26-6.405. A -6 DISTRICT STANDARDS, PRINCIPAL USE, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL USE CATEGORY, to allow an existing 29,754 SF Office/Showroom/Warehouse building to be used as a Building Systems / Construction Business.

Applicant: Andrew Syrios with Precision Controls System for Munster Properties LLC

Property Address: 10350 Calumet Avenue

Current Zoning: CD-4.A General Urban Character District

Adjacent Zoning: North: CD-4.B General Urban Character District
South: CD-4.A General Urban Character District
East: CD-4.A General Urban Character District
West: CD-4.A General Urban Character District

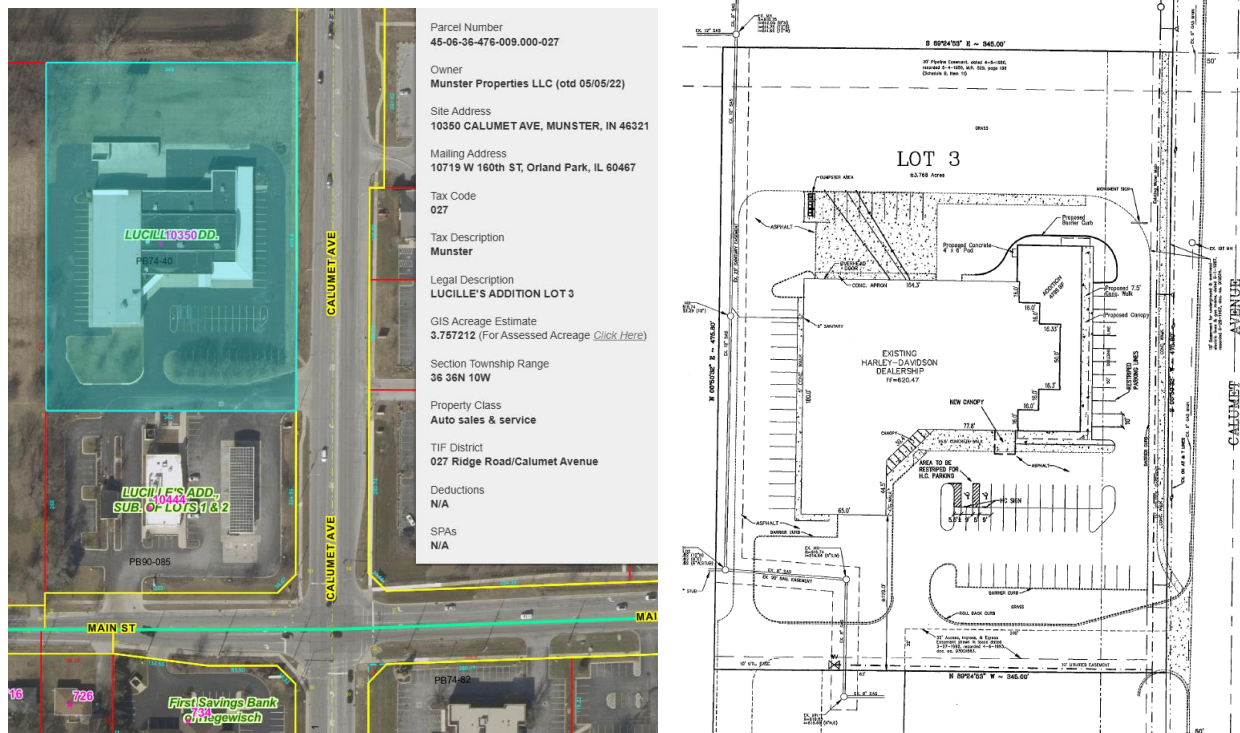
Applicant Requesting: Public Hearing

Additional Actions Required: Review Conditions of Approval Form
Review of Zoning Code Criteria
Schedule Public Hearing

Staff Recommendation: Schedule Public Hearing for August 12, 2025

EXHIBIT A: Application with narrative
EXHIBIT B: Narrative
EXHIBIT C: Use Variance Conditions of Approval Questions
EXHIBIT D: Site Plans and existing Building Images
EXHIBIT E: Conceptual Interior Space and Use

The subject property is located at 10350 Calumet Avenue, approximately 250 linear feet north of the northwest corner of Calumet Avenue and Main Street and immediately north of the current BP Fueling Station/Graham's Convenience Store. The property is a Lot of Record: LUCILLE'S ADDITION, LOT 3, signed by the Plan Commission on May 25, 1993, and recorded with Lake County, Indiana on June 9, 1993, Doc. No. 93037374. (PB 74, P 40). The subject lot is approximately 3.75 acres with an approximate 30,000 SF single-story warehouse, office, and showroom space building. The site also has approximately 65 striped parking stalls and 2 handicap parking spaces. Access to the property is from Calumet Avenue, which identifies a 32' Access, Ingress, and Egress Easement per DOC NO. 93021563, dated 3/27/1992 and recorded with Lake County, Indiana on 4/6/1993. A Site Plan created by Torrenga Engineering (Job No 2013-5069) dated 10/18/2016 has been provided with the proposed Use Variance.



**PROJECT BRIEFING:**

The existing building was home to the former Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Showroom and Repair Use from 2002 to 2020. In 2022 the site was presented to the Plan Commission (PC 22-025) for a medical office use which included: an expansion of the parking lot and light fixtures; landscape and access upgrades; and partial façade recladding, door/window replacements and painting. In addition, a variance for parking requirements was presented to the BZA (BZA 22- 016). Both the PC and BZA Findings of Fact were presented on March 14, 2023.

The proposed use is from Precision Control Systems, a self-described 45-year-old family-owned Commercial Temperature Controls and Mechanical Service Company based in Griffith, Indiana with satellite offices throughout Northwest Indiana and Southeast Illinois with:

- 60 office employees (engineers, project managers, programmers, sales, and accounting)
- 60 field employees (union pipefitter, mechanics and electricians)
- 30-40 parking stalls used daily (employee and customer)
- 2-4 service vans and overnight pick-up parking
- 1 to 2 daily deliveries (UPS, FedEx, box trucks, limited semi-trailer deliveries)

There are no plans for exterior building or site expansion/reconfiguration, including no changes to existing parking, materials, lighting, or landscape.

Interior renovations to the building include remodeling the existing showroom, offices and training spaces into office space for Precision Control Systems staff and the existing warehouse space will be used for receiving equipment and parts to be sorted, stored, and staged for field employees to pick up and installed at jobs site.

Other proposed changes include new business signage and replacing the clear façade garage door with Storefront Shop Display Windows of similar framing. All to comply with local sign and material codes

ZONING CODE REVIEW

(MCBZC pages 110, 118, 247, 417)

The Munster Zoning Code states that the BZA may hear and make recommendations upon petitions for use variances after holding a public hearing. The BZA may then recommend one of the following actions: approve the requested variances; approve the requested variances with conditions; or deny the requested variances. The final decision to grant a use variance lies with the Town Council

CD-4.A

**TABLE 26-6.405.A-6 DISTRICT STANDARDS:
GENERAL URBAN – A CHARACTER DISTRICT**

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL USE CATEGORY

Brewery without tap room, bar or tasting room	NP
Building Systems / Construction Business	NP
Catering Service or Catering Events Establishment	CU

Building Systems Business: a Use or an establishment that installs, services, maintains, and/or repairs Building systems, such as heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electrical, and plumbing contractors.

Building Materials

Building Materials	Primary: brick or natural stone, cast stone, wood or metal Shopfront, terra cotta, ceramic tile, similar materials approved by the Plan Commission
	Accent: glass, metal, wood, any primary building material, similar materials approved by the Plan Commission
	Prohibited: aluminum sidings, metal industrial type siding, vinyl siding, asphalt siding, and E.I.F.S (synthetic stucco), cedar shakes, concrete masonry units, or plywood siding.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL USE CATEGORY

Brewery	Parking equivalent to the total ground coverage of the use, with a minimum of 1 improved space per 2 employees on premises at one time, but no fewer than 2 spaces
Building Systems / Construction Business	3.5 space per 1,000 square feet of customer floor area
Catering Service or Catering Events Establishment	1 per 3 permanent seats, or 1 per each 40 square feet of seating area where fixed seating is not provided

Variance Standards, the Use Variance process is established to provide relief to a property owner when, due to unique circumstances, compliance with the zoning code imposes a hardship on a property owner. The BZA is under no obligation to recommend a variance. It is the petitioner's responsibility to prove a hardship. The BZA should ask the petition to address the criteria listed below.

ZONING CODE REVIEW, Cont.

Sec. 26-6.804.I of the Munster Zoning Code states that the basis for a variance is as follows:

g. General Standards.

(MCBZC page 392)

A Variance may be granted only if the Decision-Making Authority has made the following determinations for such Variance:

- i. the practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships that would be incurred by strict application of the Use or Development standard, as applicable, are unique and not shared by all properties in the vicinity and are not self-imposed;
- ii. such Variance is the minimum Variance that will relieve such practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, as applicable;
- iii. such Variance is in the spirit of the general purposes and intent of this Article as stated in Division 1; and
- iv. such Variance is so designed as to provide reasonable consideration to, among other things, the character of the neighborhood, District, or Civic Zone, the conservation of property values in the vicinity, and the guidance of Development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

i. Specific to Use Variances:

(MCBZC page 393)

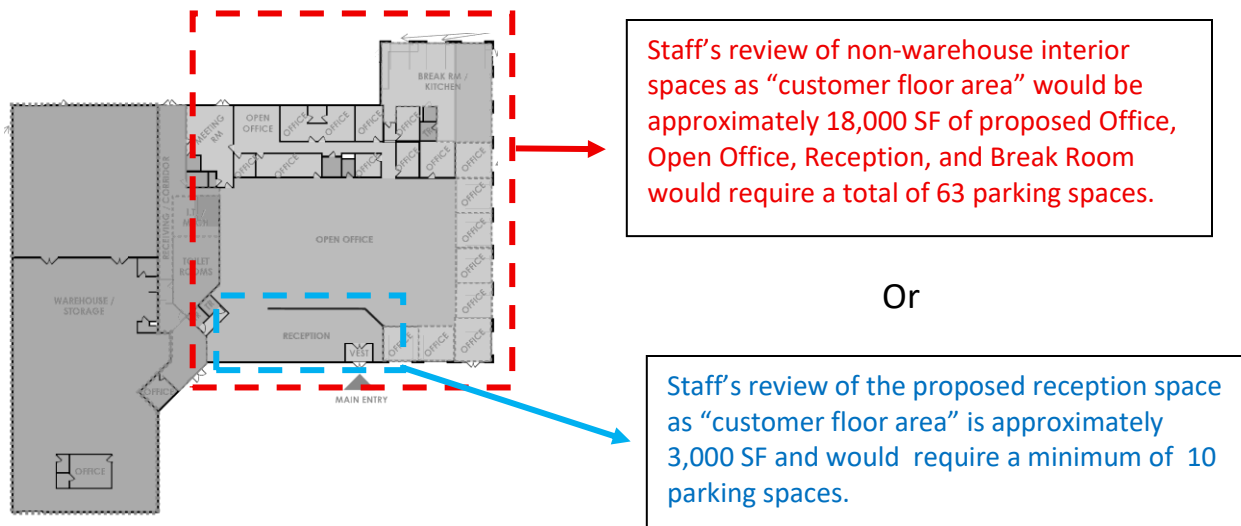
- i. The Decision-Making Authority may impose reasonable conditions as a part of its approval of a Use Variance.
- ii. A Use Variance may be approved or approved with conditions only upon a determination by the Decision-Maker in writing that:
 - I. it will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community;
 - II. the use and value of the area Adjacent to the property included in the Variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner;
 - III. the need for the Variance arises from some condition peculiar to the property involved;
 - IV. the strict application of the terms of this Article will constitute an unnecessary hardship if applied to the property for which the Variance is sought; and
 - V. it will not interfere substantially with the Comprehensive Plan.

ZONING CODE REVIEW, Cont.**Use Variance Conditions of Approval Questions***(Exhibit B)*

1. The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. Explain why this statement is true in this case:
2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner. Explain why this statement is true in this case:
3. The need for variance arises from some condition peculiar to the property involved. Explain why this statement is true in this case:
4. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will constitute an unnecessary hardship if applied to the property for which the variance is sought. Explain why this statement is true in this case:
5. The approval does not interfere substantially with the adopted comprehensive plan. Explain why this statement is true in this case:

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff needs clarification regarding the total square feet of “customer floor area” dedicated to determine minimum parking requirements. Staff finds two possible interpretations for minimum parking requirements. See image and notes below:



Finally, staff recommends scheduling the applicant for Public Hearing.

MOTION

The Board of Zoning Appeals may consider the following motion:

Motion to schedule a public hearing for August 12, 2025 for BZA25-004, a Use Variances request for a Building Systems / Construction Business in a CD-4.A. Zone, including all discussion and findings.