



# BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS STAFF REPORT

**To:** Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals

**From:** Tom Vander Woude, Planning Director

**Meeting Date:** December 13, 2022

**Agenda Item:** BZA Docket No. 22-014

**Hearing:** **PUBLIC HEARING (CONTINUED)**

**Summary:** Legacy Sign Group on behalf of Luke Oil requesting approval of a variance from TABLE 26-6.701.B MONUMENT SIGN SPECIFIC STANDARDS to permit a 21-inch tall logo on a monument sign at 750 Broadmoor Avenue.

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**Applicant:** Legacy Sign Group on behalf of Luke Oil

**Property Address:** 750 Broadmoor Avenue

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

**Adjacent Zoning:** North: CD-4.A  
South: CD-4.A  
East: CD-4.A  
West: CD-3.R2

**Action Requested:** Approval of variance

**Additional Actions Required:** Findings of Fact

**Staff Recommendation:** **Denial of variance**

**Attachments:** BZA 21-009 variance application  
Proposed CITGO sign prepared by Legacy Sign Group dated 08.12.2022  
Compliant CITGO sign prepared by Legacy Sign Group dated 08.16.2022  
Sign location exhibit undated



Figure 1 Subject property highlighted in blue

## BACKGROUND

**This petition was heard at a public hearing on November 15, 2022. A motion to deny the petition failed and it was deferred to the December 13, 2022 meeting.**

The existing GoLo gas station on the southwest corner of Calumet Avenue and Broadmoor Avenue is being rebranded as a CITGO station. Legacy Sign Group of Westville, Indiana submitted a sign permit application to reface the existing monument sign with the CITGO branding.

The existing sign was installed as a replacement of a pole sign in 2015 when the station rebranded from a Shell station to its current GoLo branding. Staff finds no record of a sign permit. The sign is non-conforming with respect to the following:

### Existing Nonconformities

<b>Height</b>	Maximum 6'	Actual: 6'-5.25"
<b>Sign Area</b>	Maximum 18 sf	Actual: 22 sf
<b>Location</b>	10' setback from property line	Actual: approximately 0' setback
<b>Landscaping</b>	Minimum 3' of landscape on all sides	Actual: Less than 3' on north and east sides

<b>Sign face material</b>	Shall be authentic brick, stone, or solid metal or wood	Actual: aluminum cabinet
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The Munster zoning ordinance permits alteration of an existing legal non-conforming sign provided that the change is in conformity with the relevant standards of this article. The granting of a variance for this sign would increase the nonconformities.

The applicant has provided two renderings: A conforming sign that includes 8" CITGO letters and an 11'-7/8" logo and a nonconforming sign that includes approximately 6" CITGO letters and a 21" logo, which exceeds the maximum permitted height of 12". The applicant is seeking a variance to include the 21" tall logo on the sign. All other changes conform to the relevant standards.



Figure 2 **PROPOSED SIGN**



Figure 3 CONFORMING SIGN – NOT PROPOSED

## DISCUSSION

The variances being requested in connection with this project are as follows.

Code Section	Standard	Permitted	Proposed
TABLE 26-6.701.B	MONUMENT SIGN SPECIFIC STANDARDS – Letter Height	12 inches	21 inch tall logo

Staff has worked with other businesses to find solutions to the modification to legal non-conforming signs. As an example, in 2021, the BP gas station at 10444 Calumet Avenue (corner of Calumet Ave. and Main Street) refaced their existing monument signs in a way that compliance with the standards for letter and logo height. A photo of that sign is below.





Figure 4 BP gas station at 10444 Calumet Avenue

## VARIANCE STANDARDS

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

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

g. General Standards.

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.

h. Specific to Development standards Variances:

A Variance from Development Standards may be approved or approved with conditions only if:

- 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; and
- iii. the strict application of the Development standards will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.

**The applicant has addressed these criteria in the attached application.**

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recognizes that the CITGO branding standards do not fit within the constraints imposed by the existing structure and the development standards of the zoning ordinance, at the size desired by the applicant. Staff does not find that this difficulty is unique to the subject property but is shared by many commercial structures within the Town.

Therefore, staff suggests that Variance criterion g.i. is not met: *the practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships that would be incurred by strict application of the Use or Development standard, as applicable, are **NOT** unique and ~~not~~ **ARE** shared by all properties in the vicinity and are not self-imposed;*

**Staff recommends denial of the variance request.**

The Board of Zoning Appeals may wish to consider the following motion:

*Motion to deny BZA Docket No. 22-014.*



- **TWO (2) PAIRS OF ROUTED FACE REPLACEMENTS FOR EXISTING MONUMENT SIGN. TOP SECTION TO HAVE PUSH-THRU LOGO & LETTERS AND BOTTOM SECTION BACK UP PLEX. REPAINT EXISTING SIGN**
- UPPER FACE** = ROUTED FACES WITH 1" PUSH-THRUS. DIGITALLY PRINTED LOGO "CITGO" COPY 3630-157 SULTAN BLUE VINYL
- LOWER FACE** = ROUTED FACES WITH BACK-UP PLEX. BACKGROUND PAINTED MAP TO MATCH 3630-157 SULTAN BLUE VINYL. COPY IS WHITE ACRYLIC
- REPAINT SIGN** = SATIN MAP WHITE



Existing



Proposed

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'





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Existing



Proposed

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'



Parcel: 45-06-24-229-010.000 ▾

◀ 1 of 6 ▶

☆ Parcel: 45-06-24-229-010.000-027

**Owner:**  
*Leigerber, Elizabeth Gale, Ernest Summers III, Edna Sue Moody & Edward Summers (each 25% interest as T/C)*

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