



# BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS STAFF REPORT

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**To:** Board of Zoning Appeals Members

**From:** Elizabeth Fields, AICP, Planner  
Keeghan Stitt-White, AICP, Planner

**Meeting Date:** February 9, 2026

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**BZA 26-02**                      **3601 Commerce Center Drive – Variance Request to Exceed the Maximum Allowable Sign Area for a Pole Sign**

**Property Information:**    Location: 3601 Commerce Center Drive

Zoning: I-1 Light Industrial District

Property Use: Interstate Utility Trailer

Pole Sign Height: 40 feet

Pole Sign Signage Area: 257 square feet

**Variance Request:**        The applicant, Cincinnati Commercial Contracting c/o Christian Stone, is requesting variances from the following section of the City’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):

**Section 1109.07(e)(4)(G):** The total area of the sign, including any electronic changeable copy area, shall not exceed two hundred square feet (200 sq. ft.) per side; provided, however, that pole signs in excess of seventy feet (70’) in height may have a larger sign area, as approved by the Zoning Official or the Planning Commission, as set forth in Section 1109.07(c)(3).

*Comments: The proposed size of the pole sign is 257 square feet.*

**Project Overview:**

The applicant, Cincinnati Commercial Contracting c/o Christian Stone is requesting a variance to exceed the maximum allowable sign area for a pole sign for the property located at 3601 Commerce Center Drive in the I-1 Light Industrial District.

The property which is being developed as an Interstate Utility Trailer facility is located within the Highway Sign Overlay District which allows for increased signage and the placement of signage that would not normally be permitted for properties that border Interstate 75. Properties which contain a building over 10,000 square feet or more which are located within the Overlay District are permitted a pole sign subject to the regulations of Section 1109.07(e)(4) which dictate the dimensional requirements for said signs. While the proposed pole sign meets the majority of the requirements, the proposed sign exceeds the maximum allowable signage area which requires variance approval.

The applicant has noted that due to the location of a berm, the facility will be partially obscured from Interstate 75 and as such, a larger sign is needed to ensure visibility.

**Comments:**

Variance General Standards for Approval:

Standards for Approval: Unless other standards are provided in this UDO for variances from a particular set of design/development standards or regulations, the following Standards for Approval shall apply. Approval of a variances shall only be granted if the Appeals Board finds that all of the following standards are met:

1. Special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land or structure involved and which are not applicable generally to other lands or structures within the same zoning district. (Examples of such special conditions or circumstances are: exceptional irregularity, narrowness, shallowness, or steepness of the lot, etc.).

**The property is heavily wooded compared to other nearby properties in the I-1 District and is located in the Highway Sign Overlay District which is uncommon for properties in the I-1 District.**

2. The special conditions or circumstances that exist did not result from the actions of the applicant.

**The special conditions did not result from the actions of the applicant.**

3. There cannot be any beneficial use of the property without the variance.

**Without the variance, the applicant maintains the ability to install a pole sign with a 200 square foot sign.**

4. The variance is not substantial and is the minimum relief necessary to make possible the reasonable use of the land or structures.  
**The variance is substantial as the property is within the Highway Sign Overlay District which allows for additional signage above and beyond what is normally permitted in the I-1 Zoning District.**
5. The difficulty or reason why the applicant is seeking a variance cannot be resolved through any method other than a variance.  
**A variance is the minimum relief necessary to allow for a 257 square foot pole sign.**
6. The essential character of the neighborhood will not be substantially altered nor will adjoining properties would suffer substantial detriment as a result of the variance.  
**The essential character of the neighborhood will not be substantially impacted. Pole signs are common along Interstate 75 in the Highway Sign Overlay District.**
7. The variance will not adversely affect the delivery of governmental services such as water, sewer, and trash pickup.  
**Governmental services will not be impacted.**
8. Granting the variance will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning requirement the applicant seeks a variance from and will not otherwise be detrimental to the public's health, safety, or welfare.  
**Granting the variance would not be in harmony with the intent of the Highway Sign Overlay District, which is to reasonably regulate the size, location, and design of signs along Interstate 75. The proposed sign exceeds the maximum sign area permitted by the UDO and is therefore contrary to the District's stated objectives.**
9. Granting of the variance requested will not confer upon the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this UDO to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district.  
**Granting the variance would confer a special privilege that is denied by the UDO to other properties within the I-1 Zoning District. While the Highway Sign Overlay District permits pole signs that are otherwise prohibited within the City of Franklin, the proposed sign exceeds the maximum sign area established by the UDO. Approval of the variance would therefore result in a special privilege not available to similarly situated properties.**