

**BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS DIVISION III**

**May 28, 2024**

**Case Number:** 2024-DV3-010  
**Property Address:** 1635 West Michigan Street  
**Location:** Center Township, Council District #18  
**Petitioner:** INDPL Goodwill Industries, Inc., by Alan S. Townsend  
**Current Zoning:** SU-7 / CBD-S (RC)

**Request:** Variance of development standards of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to provide for the location of an 18.33-foot-tall freestanding pylon sign (eight-foot-tall sign permitted) with a sign area of 106.66 square feet (36 square feet permitted), with a five-foot front yard setback from West Michigan Street (10 feet required) and located within 300 feet of a protected district (600 feet of separation required)

**Current Land Use:** Not-for-profit organization

**Staff Recommendations:** Denial

**Staff Reviewer:** Jeffrey York, Principal Planner I

**PETITION HISTORY**

This petition was originally scheduled for hearing on April 16, 2024. It was continued to the May 28, 2024, hearing, by request of staff, with notice, due to the original Legal Notice not including specific information regarding permitted sign height and size permitted within the Regional Center. As of this writing, no new information has been submitted to the file.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends **denial**.

**PETITION OVERVIEW**

**HISTORY**

- This request would replace an existing pylon sign for a multi-use not-for-profit organization. In 2005, a variance of development standards petition was granted for the existing 18.25-foot-tall, 64-square-foot pylon sign, being within close proximity of a protected district and with a five-foot front yard setback.
- This site is within the Regional Center, which is a downtown design overall zone and the most urbanized portion of the city. At the time of this variance grant, pylon signs were permitted at a

height of 25 feet, with generous limits on size (3% of the building façade to which the sign is oriented, or 240 square feet, whichever is less). In 2008, the Ordinance was amended to place further restrictions on signage type, height, and size, depending on the location within the Regional Center. There are three areas of the Regional Center: The Mile Square, North Meridian Street Corridor, and all other areas outside of the Mile Square and North Meridian Street Corridor. This site is within all other areas outside of the Mile Square and North Meridian Street Corridor of the Regional Center.

## REQUEST

- The Zoning Ordinance revision for signage within the Regional Center became effective in 2008. The revision includes pylon signs limited to eight feet in height and 36 square feet in size. This petition seeks to replace the existing 18.25-foot-tall, 64-square-foot-tall pylon sign, with an 18.33-foot-tall, 106.66-square-foot pylon sign, in the same location as the existing pylon sign. The other variances include a five-foot front yard setback and being within 300 feet of a protected district.
- The site is located just west of White River and White River Parkway, West Drive. Michigan Street is the north border of this site, and the sign would be located at the northeast corner of the site. To the east are multi-family dwellings, to the north, across Michigan Street is a large industrial use, to the west is a railroad and surface parking and to the south is a low-density residential neighborhood.
- The purpose of the more restrictive revision of the Ordinance in 2008 was to promote and to protect the more urban fabric of the downtown. Smaller signs promote urban sites by reducing sign clutter and less reliance on vehicles.
- The City of Indianapolis has recently invested heavily into street calming of Michigan Street. The Department of Public Works is nearly complete in the reconstruction of Michigan Street, directly in front of this site. This reconstruction included reducing the travel lanes from five, including a turn lane, to two travel lanes, with a large landscape buffer zone and a wide bike and pedestrian zone. Additionally, the bus stop that was located along Michigan Street in front of this site was moved further into the right-of-way of Michigan Street, abutting the east-bound travel lane (see photos).
- An overly large freestanding sign is in direct opposition of promoting an urban, walkable neighborhood. Such signs are intended for outer areas of the city, which are more vehicle oriented. There is no practical difficulty in the use of the property as an eight-foot-tall, 36-square-foot monument or pylon sign would be sufficient to promote the uses of the site, in addition to the multiple opportunities for other types of the signage that could be placed on the building, such as wall signs and projecting signs. Finally, while this sign is essentially the same height of the existing sign, it would have significantly more signage placed on it, with a proposed 106.66 square feet of signage, which would be 60% more than the existing 64 square feet of signage, and nearly 300% more the permitted signage size of 36 square feet. Therefore, staff **recommends denial** of this request.

**REGIONAL CENTER**

- The site is within the Regional Center. A Regional Center Approval petition was previously filed in 2023, through 2023-REG-022, for a 25-foot-tall pylon sign. The review for a freestanding sign would be subject to the grant or denial of this variance petition.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>Existing Zoning</b>	SU-7 / CBD-S (RC)	
<b>Existing Land Use</b>	Not-for-profit organization	
<b>Comprehensive Plan</b>	Special Use	
<b>Surrounding Context</b>	<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Surrounding Context</b>
North:	I-4 / MU-2 (RC)	Office / industrial
South:	D-8 / I-4 (RC)	Residential / surface parking
East:	CBD-S / C-3 (RC)	Residential / surface parking
West:	I-4 (RC)	Railroad / surface parking
<b>Thoroughfare Plan</b>		
Michigan Street	Primary arterial	78-foot right-of-way existing and proposed
<b>Context Area</b>	Compact	
<b>Floodway / Floodway Fringe</b>	No	
<b>Overlay</b>	Yes, Regional Center. Design of new construction would require the submittal and approval of a Regional Center Approval petition	
<b>Wellfield Protection Area</b>	No	
<b>Site Plan</b>	March 7, 2024	
<b>Site Plan (Amended)</b>	March 26, 2024	
<b>Elevations</b>	March 21, 2024	
<b>Elevations (Amended)</b>	N/A	
<b>Landscape Plan</b>	N/A	
<b>Findings of Fact</b>	March 7, 2024	
<b>Findings of Fact (Amended)</b>	N/A	

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS**

**Comprehensive Plan**

- Center Township Land Use Plan
- Regional Center Urban Design Guidelines

#### Pattern Book / Land Use Plan

- The Center Township Land Use Plan recommends Special Use development for this site, recognizing the existing not-for-profit organization.

#### Red Line / Blue Line / Purple Line TOD Strategic Plan

- Not applicable to the Site.

#### Neighborhood / Area Specific Plan

- The site is within the Neighborhood Residential typology of the Regional Center Urban Design Guidelines.

#### Infill Housing Guidelines

- Not Applicable to the Site.

#### Indy Moves

(Thoroughfare Plan, Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Master Plan, Greenways Master Plan)

- Not Applicable to the Site.



## ZONING HISTORY

### ZONING HISTORY – SITE

**2023-REG-022;** requests Regional Center for a 25-foot-tall pylon sign to replace an existing 18.25-foot-tall pylon sign, **pending**.

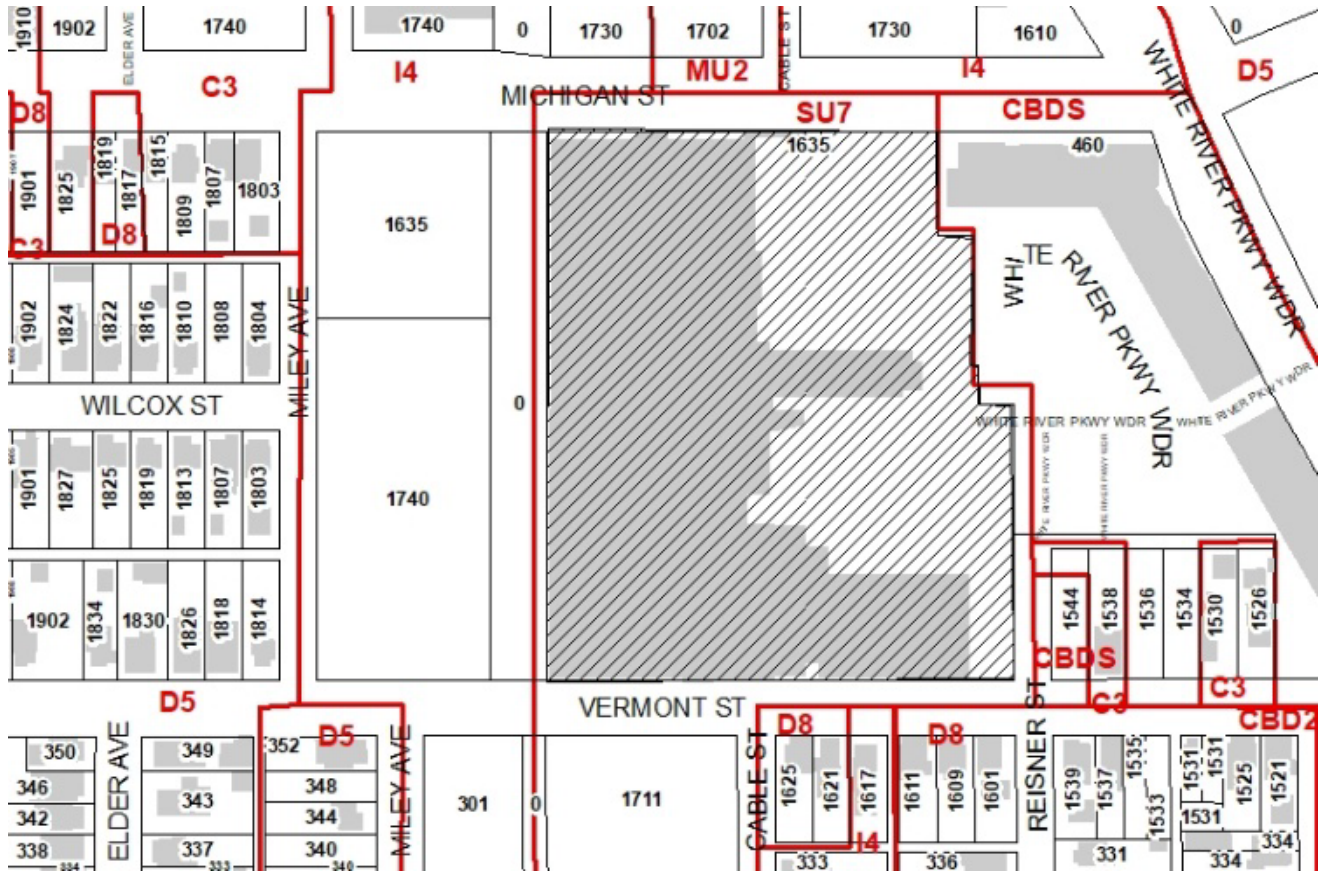
2005-DV1-052; requested a variance of development standards variance for an 18.25-foot-tall, 64-square-foot pylon sign located 365 feet from a protected district, with a five-foot front yard setback, **granted**.

### ZONING HISTORY – VICINITY

None

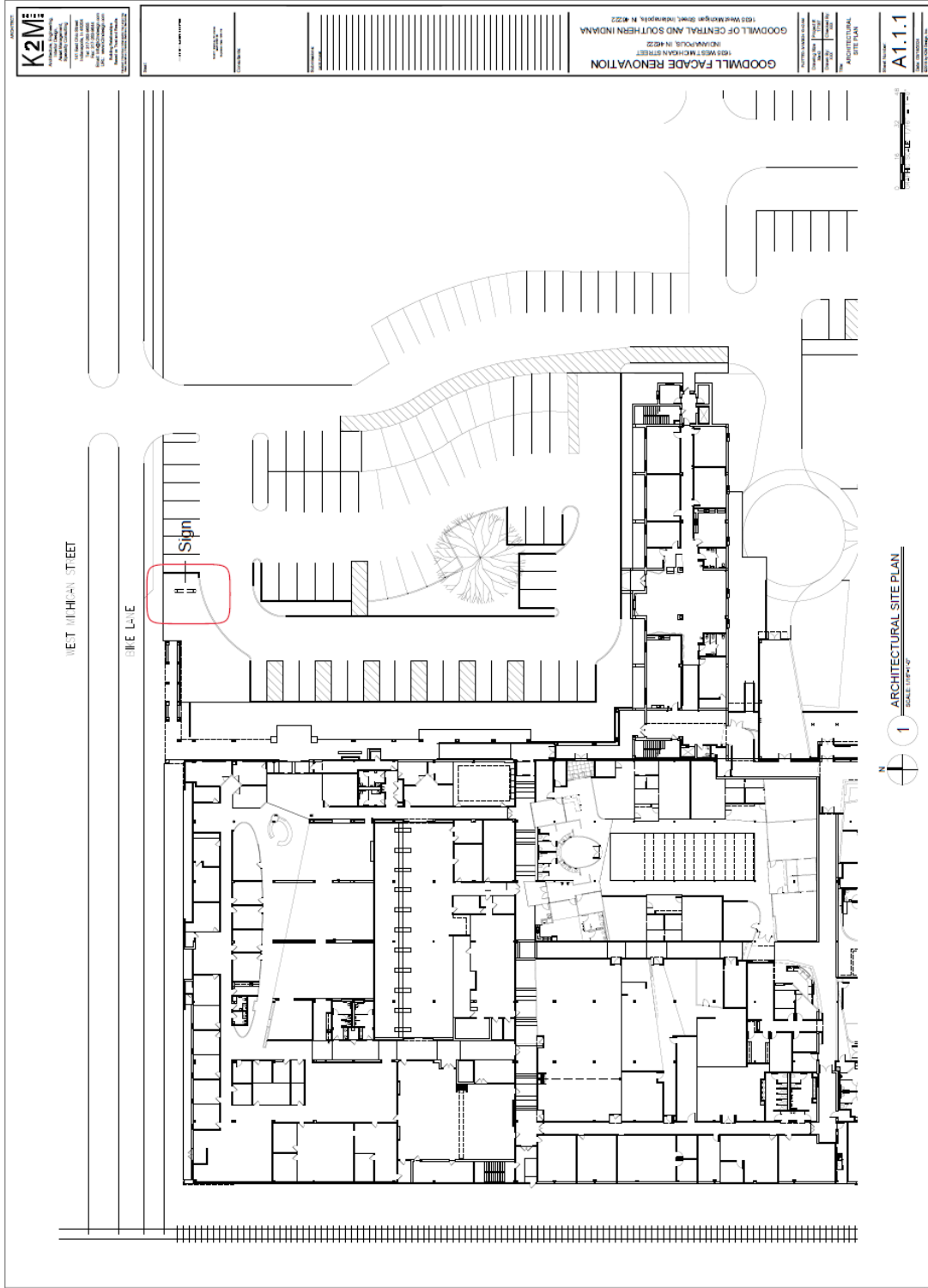
**EXHIBITS**

**2024-DV3-010: Maps**





2024-DV3-010; Site plan





2023-DV3-010; Elevations

GOODWILL • CORPORATE

RENDERING #: 1122-0105G

**66-66-50 FT**  
FABRICATE AND INSTALL QTY 1 PYLON SIGN WITH DVF INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED CABINETS

**"GOODWILL OF CENTRAL...INDIANA" CABINET**  
BODY - 2" ALUMINUM ANGLE SKINNED IN .090 ALUMINUM PAINTED TO MATCH SPECS  
SIGN COMP - 2" RETRO FRAME WITH RETRO FRAME COVER PAINT #2112/2115  
FACES - FLEX FACE MATERIAL TO MATCH SPECS  
RETAINERS - 2 3/8" TO MATCH SPECS  
DIVIDER BARS - 1 1/2" TO MATCH SPECS  
LEDS - WHITE

**"EXCEL CENTER" & "INDIANA POLIS...SCHOOL" CABINETS**  
BODY - 2" ALUMINUM ANGLE SKINNED IN .090 ALUMINUM PAINTED TO MATCH SPECS  
POLE COVERS - 2" ALUMINUM ANGLE SKINNED IN .090 ALUMINUM PAINTED TO MATCH SPECS  
FACES - 3/16" WHITE POLYCARBONATE  
RETAINERS - 2" TO MATCH SPECS  
LEDS - WHITE

**INSTALLATION -** POLES BURIED IN GRADE, CABINETS & BASE MOUNTED TO POLES SET

**SignCraft INDUSTRIES**

**COLOR SPECIFICATIONS**

- ① JIG PRINT IN PMS 3546 BLUE
- ② JIG PRINT IN PMS 3507 BLUE
- ③ JIG PRINT IN PMS 3508 GREEN
- ④ JIG PRINT IN PMS 3509 ORANGE
- ⑤ JIG PRINT IN PMS 3506 MID. BLUE

**UL** **W-11** **SGA** **TSS**

**DESIGNER:**  
NK

**REVISION DATE:**  
08/11/2023 PB

**SC REP:**  
SVC

**DATE:**  
12/01/2022

**PERMIT INFORMATION:**  
25 MAY 2023 03 FOODS MAX

**FINAL DATE & BY:**  
1/1

**SHEET #:**  
1/1

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ART SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

**2023-DV3-010; Findings of Facts**

FINDINGS OF FACT  
PETITION FOR VARIANCE  
OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

**1. The grant will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the community because:**

the existing on-premise sign that is being improved pursuant to this grant of variance has been in place for many years without causing any injury to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. The existing on-premise sign is being improved because it is both deteriorating and outdated. Once improved, it will accurately identify four of the groups operating from 1635 W. Michigan Street (Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana, The Excel Center®, Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, and Per Scholas).

There is no evidence that the existing on-premise sign has caused any injury, in any manner, to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. The improved on-premise sign will conform to industry standards with regard to construction and safety.

**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 because:**

the existing on-premise sign that is being updated pursuant to this grant of variance has been in place since approximately 2005 without affecting the neighboring properties in a substantially adverse manner. The location of the already existing on-premise sign is in an area of the City of Indianapolis appropriate for on-premise signs.

**3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property for which the variance is sought because:**

the existing on-premise sign that is being improved pursuant to this grant of variance has been in place for many years without generating any adverse impact. And the location of the existing on-premise sign is in an area of the City of Indianapolis (oriented to Michigan Street) appropriate for signage. Without this variance, the strict application of the ordinance would prohibit Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana from effectively identifying four of the groups operating from 1635 W. Michigan Street (Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana, The Excel Center®, Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, and Per Scholas).

2024-DV3-010; Photos



View of Michigan Street bike lane and landscape buffer zone (newly installed) and multi-family dwellings east of subject site, looking east



View of bike lane, landscape buffer zone and the two travel lanes of Michigan Street



View of the existing pylon sign, bus stop, bike lane, landscape buffer zone and the two travel lanes of Michigan Street, looking west



View of the existing pylon sign and the building on the subject site.



Close-up view of bus stop, bike lane, landscape buffer zone and the two travel lanes of Michigan Street, looking west



View of the existing pylon sign looking east