

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS DIVISION I

May 6, 2025

Case Number: 2025DV1010
Property Address: 6901 & 6951 Michigan Road (approximate address)
Location: Pike Township, Council District #6
Petitioner: DPM Michigan Road Self Storage LLC, by J. Murray Clark
Current Zoning: C-4 / C-S
Request: Variance of Development Standards of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to provide for the location of a third freestanding sign along Michigan Road (two permitted).
Current Land Use: Commercial
Staff Recommendations: Staff recommends **approval** of the request.
Staff Reviewer: Michael Weigel, Senior Planner

PETITION HISTORY

4/1: Due to an unexpected publication error impacting the printing of this petition's information within newspapers as required by statute, this petition cannot be heard on the April 1st hearing date. Staff will request a continuance to the May 6th date of Division I.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of the request.

PETITION OVERVIEW

- 6901 and 6951 Michigan Road are two (2) contiguous parcels located on the eastern side of Michigan Road that contain both a commercial multitenant center (containing uses such as a hair salon, fitness center, offices, and restaurants) on the western (6951) parcel and a vacant commercial structure on the eastern (6901) parcel. The 6901 parcel was recently rezoned to the C-S zoning designation via the petition 2023-ZON-047 to allow for indoor self-storage uses both within the existing structure as well as a new structure currently under construction within the existing parking area. Adjacent land uses include multifamily apartments to the north and east of the commercial complex, a health center to the west, and additional commercial uses to the south.
- These parcels comprise a portion of an integrated center with shared frontage that would also incorporate 6905 and 6895 Michigan Road. These parcels each contain a freestanding sign: the former contains an automobile parts store that has a pole sign approved via the permit SGN07-

01037, and the latter contains an abandoned gas station with a pole sign approved by the variance petition 2012-DV3-039.

- Approval of this petition would allow for placement of a third sign along the shared Michigan Road frontage on the 6951 Michigan parcel, which is currently zoned C-4. The proposed pylon sign would advertise the self-storage use allowed by the 2023 rezoning and include five (5) additional tenant panels for other businesses to utilize. The sign as proposed (see Exhibits below). would meet all dimensional standards associated with C-4 zoning except for the regulation on the number of signs placed along a shared frontage: this would constitute the third primary freestanding sign and would therefore require a variance.
- The portion of the property where the proposed sign would be placed is zoned C-4 to allow for the development of major business grouping and regional-size shopping centers to serve a population ranging from a community or neighborhoods to a major segment of the total metropolitan area. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan recommends it to the Community Commercial typology to allow for low-intensity commercial and office uses that serve nearby neighborhoods.
- Staff would note that the gas station sign located approximately 650 feet from the proposed pylon sign at the address 6895 Michigan Road has been abandoned for well over one year, and that Ordinance requires removal of abandoned on-premises signage that advertises uses that are no longer active at the subject site. The violation case VIO23-005765 indicates that the pole sign with missing sign copy area would need to be “removed or brought into compliance”, and it appears that the wrecking permit WRK24-00460 was recently obtained to allow for demolition of the gas station (and which should include removal of the cited and abandoned sign). As of March 6th, 2025, the gas station structure had been removed while the sign and fuel canopy remain, although demolition work appeared to be ongoing at the site.
- Since the abandoned gas station sign is required to be removed in conjunction with the violation and wrecking permit referenced above, the variance request made to allow for this pylon sign would be supportable. The pylon sign would only constitute the second *legally placed* sign along this shared frontage, and since the applicant would not have the ability to remove the abandoned sign on their own, staff believes that they should not suffer negative consequence for any lack of compliance at the neighboring site. Given that all other zoning standards (sign separation, height, setbacks, etc.) are met and the variance is only required because of the neighboring abandoned sign, staff feels the deviation from ordinance standards would be justified and recommends approval.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Existing Zoning	C-4 / C-S	
Existing Land Use	Commercial	
Comprehensive Plan	Community Commercial	
Surrounding Context	Zoning	Surrounding Context
North:	D-6II / C-4	North: Multifamily / Commercial
South:	C-4	South: Commercial
East:	D-6II	East: Multifamily
West:	C-S / D-A	West: Commercial
Thoroughfare Plan		
Michigan Road	Primary Arterial	100-foot existing right-of-way and 102-foot proposed right-of-way
Context Area	Metro	
Floodway / Floodway Fringe	No	
Overlay	No	
Wellfield Protection Area	No	
Site Plan	01/28/2025	
Site Plan (Amended)	N/A	
Elevations	01/28/2025	
Elevations (Amended)	N/A	
Landscape Plan	N/A	
Findings of Fact	01/28/2025	
Findings of Fact (Amended)	N/A	

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Comprehensive Plan

- Marion County Land Use Plan Pattern Book

Pattern Book / Land Use Plan

- The Marion County Land Use Plan Pattern Book recommends this property to the Community Commercial working typology to allow for low-intensity commercial and office uses that serve nearby neighborhoods; examples of contemplated uses include small-scale shops, personal and professional services, grocery stores, drug stores, restaurants, and public gathering spaces.

Red Line / Blue Line / Purple Line TOD Strategic Plan

- Not Applicable to the Site.

Neighborhood / Area Specific Plan

- Not Applicable to the Site.

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

2023ZON047, Rezoning of 11.737 acres from the C-4 district to the C-S district to provide for self-storage uses, **approved**.

ZONING HISTORY – VICINITY

2014DV3044 ; 6940 Michigan Road (southwest of site), Variance of development standards of the Sign Regulations to provide for a 20-foot tall, 78-square foot freestanding sign, within approximately 110 feet of an existing freestanding sign to the south (300 feet of separation required) and to provide for a nine-foot tall, 20.6-square foot freestanding sign, being the second and third signs along an approximately 590-foot frontage (one sign permitted for every 300 feet of frontage), **approved**.

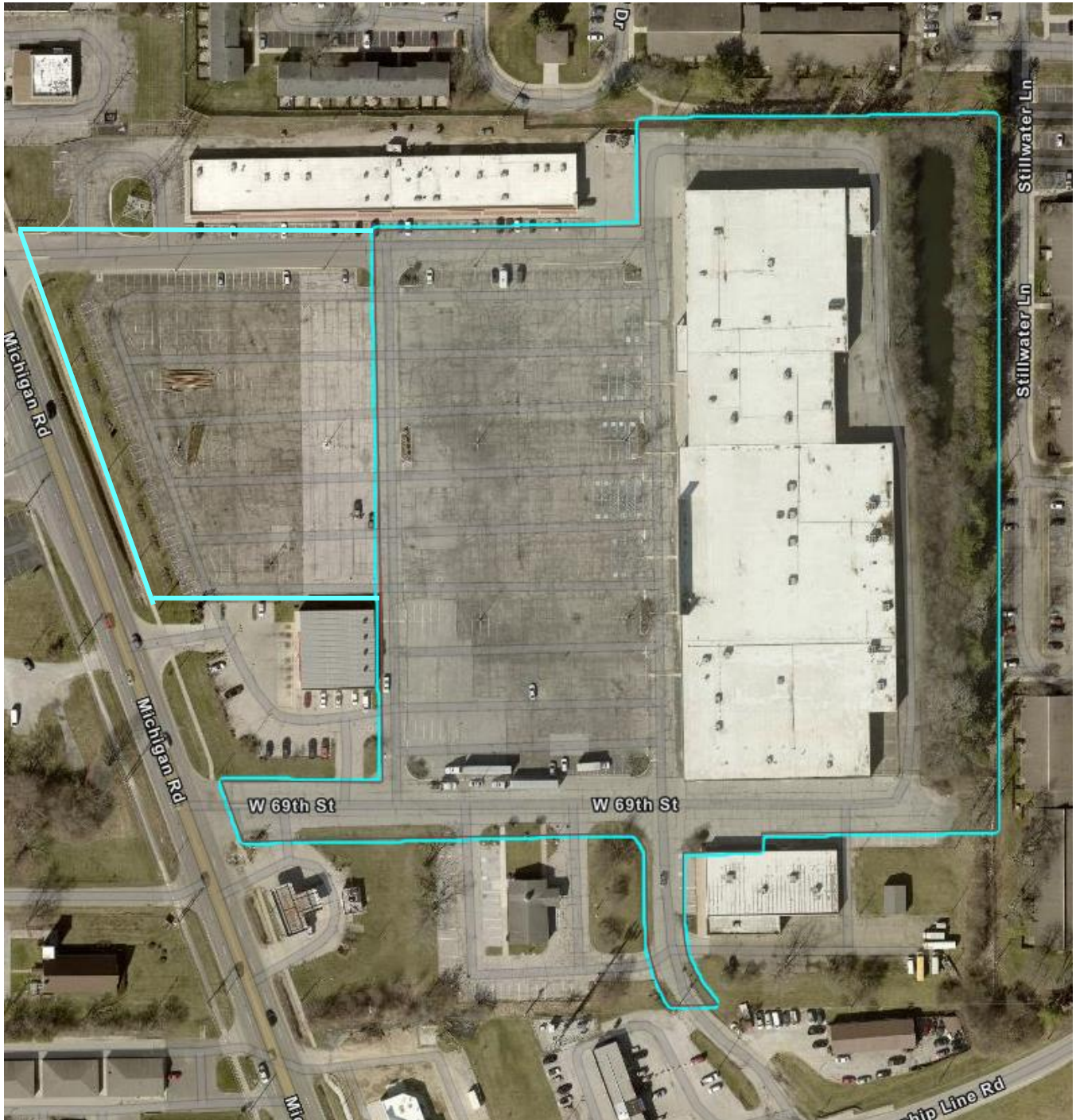
2012DV3039 ; 6895 Michigan Road (south of site), Variance of development standards of the Commercial Zoning Ordinance to provide for the construction of a 2,400-square foot convenience store and **(a)** to legally establish a canopy, with a 57.6-foot setback from the centerline of Michigan Road and pump islands with a 68.8-foot setback from the centerline of Michigan Road (10 foot setback required from the proposed 70-foot half right-of-way); **(b)** to legally establish a freestanding sign, with a 4.3-foot setback from Michigan Road and 4.1-foot front setback from 69th Street (15-foot front setback required), within the clear sight triangle of Michigan Road and 69th Street (not permitted); and **(c)** to provide for a 1.5-foot front setback for a 10-foot wide access lane (10-foot front setback required, 12-foot width required for one-way drive), **approved**.

2009CVR819 ; 7002 Michigan Road (southwest of site), Variance of Development Standards of the Sign Regulation to provide for installation of a twelve-foot tall, 87.3-square foot pylon sign within 120 feet of an existing freestanding identification sign (minimum 300-foot separation required), being the third freestanding identification sign within an integrated center having 594 feet of frontage along Michigan Road (minimum 300 feet of street frontage per freestanding identification sign required), **approved**.

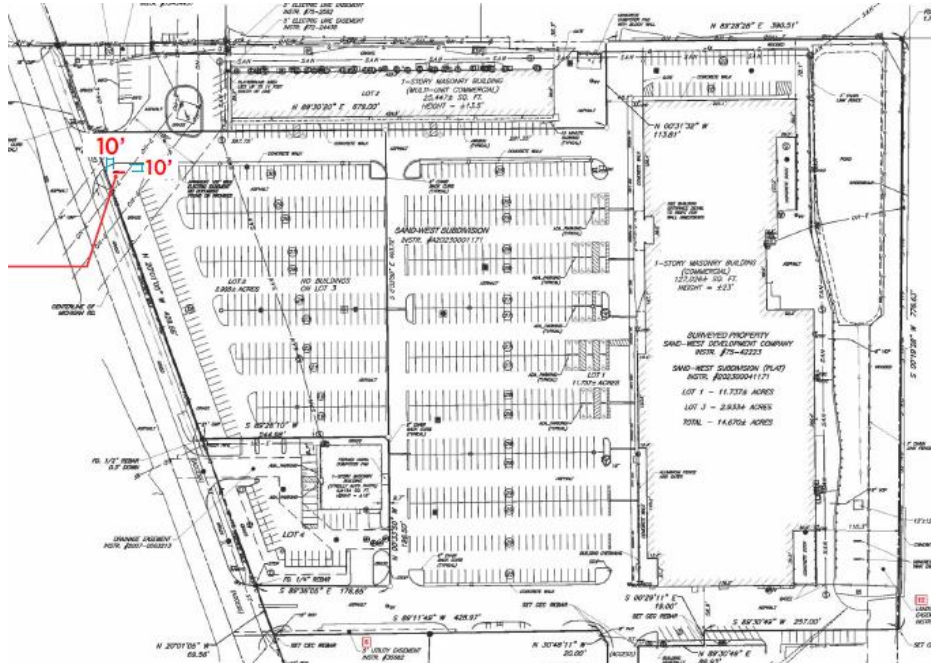
93-HOV-32 ; 6840 N Michigan Road (south of site), variance of development standards of the Sign Regulations of the Marion County to provide for the placement of a pole sign with less than the required 15 foot setback from the right-of-way and to allow the placement of gasoline panels (not permitted), **approved**.

EXHIBITS

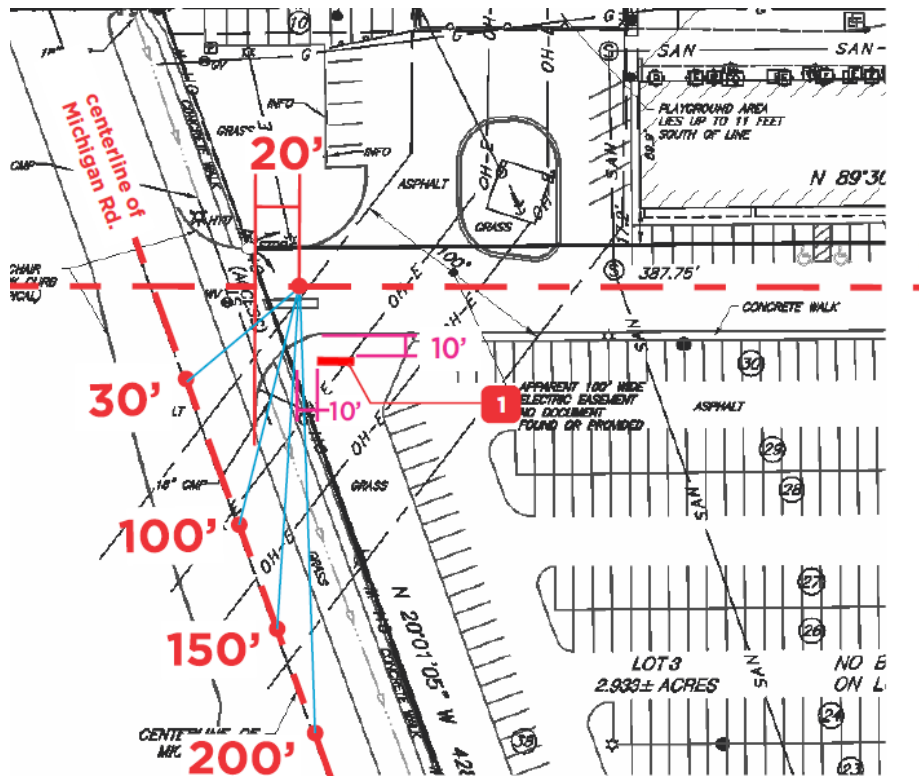
2025DV1010 ; Aerial Map



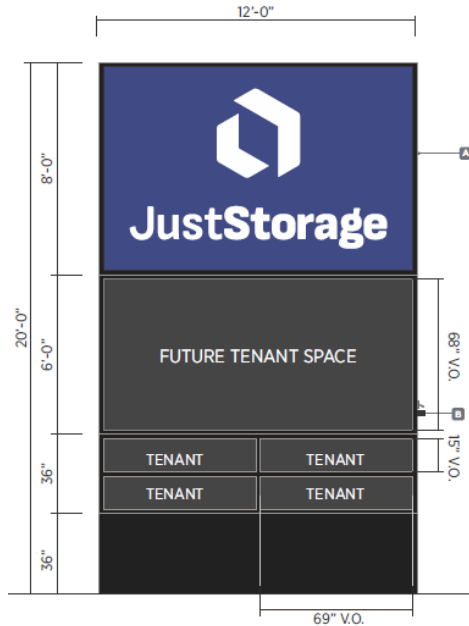
2025DV1010 ; Site Plan (Full, not showing self-storage expansion)



2025DV1010 ; Site Plan (Zoomed)



2025DV1010 ; Sign Elevation



2025DV1010 ; Findings of Fact

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

The variance grant will provide for a high-quality freestanding sign for a community amenity that is located approximately 700 feet back from the public road right of way. The closest other freestanding sign within the same integrated center is approximately 370 feet further south from the proposed sign location. All other freestanding sign development standards are proposed to be met, including the required setback away from the public road right of way, and the sign will be outside of the clear site triangular area so as not to cause any safety concerns.

2. The use or value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner because:

Surrounding neighbors adjacent to the property will not be negatively affected because the spacing and location of the proposed sign is in an ideal location for everyone. The sign will not block any sight lines and will facilitate wayfinding of the general public in a way that will lead to the best possible traffic circulation. The sign will be attractive and of a high-quality and will not have any negative visual effects. Additionally, the sign provides space for a future tenant space so an additional freestanding sign will not be needed in the future for the future tenant.

3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property because:

The zoning ordinance would not allow for this freestanding sign because technically a second freestanding sign for an abandoned automobile fueling station is already located within the same integrated center as this proposed freestanding sign. In reality, the abandoned automobile fueling station is not really a part of the same integrated center, besides the fact that it has a small connection to the private drive that appears to serve as a common site facility. Without the grant of the variance, the general public will not be able to find the businesses on the property as easily as they would be able to with the proposed freestanding sign in place, which will lead to worsened traffic circulation patterns.

2025DV1010 ; Photographs



Photo 1: Proposed Sign Location Viewed from South



Photo 2: Proposed Sign Location and Adjacent Property to West

2025DV1010 ; Photographs (continued)



Photo 3: Michigan Road Shared Frontage Viewed from South



Photo 4: Michigan Road Shared Frontage Viewed from North

2025DV1010 ; Photographs (continued)



Photo 5: Adjacent Pole Sign to South



Photo 6: Adjacent Abandoned Sign to South

2025DV1010 ; Photographs (continued)



Photo 7: Adjacent Commercial Center to Northeast



Photo 8: Existing Structure and Construction Area for Self-Storage Use