

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS DIVISION I

October 7, 2025

Case Number: 2025-DV1-039 (Amended)

Property Address: 8600 and 8710 North College Avenue (approximate addresses)

Location: Washington Township, Council District #2

Petitioner: First Baptist Church of Indianapolis, by Brent Bennett

Current Zoning: SU-1 (TOD)

Request: Variance of Development Standards of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to provide for the installation of two monument signs and a pylon sign, bringing the total number of freestanding signs to five (maximum of two per frontage), with the pylon sign being located within 400 feet of a protected district (600-foot separation required) and the monument signs possessing heights of 7-foot tall and 5.5-foot tall (maximum height of five feet permitted).

Current Land Use: Special Use - Religious

Staff Recommendations: Staff recommends **approval** of the petition subject to a commitment.

Staff Reviewer: Michael Weigel, Senior Planner

PETITION HISTORY

A timely automatic continuance was filed by a Registered Neighborhood Organization to continue this petition from the September 2, 2025 hearing to the October 7th hearing.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** of the petition subject to a commitment that the unpermitted banner signage placed on the fencing at the southeastern corner of the site be removed.

PETITION OVERVIEW

- The subject parcels known as 8600 and 8710 North College Avenue currently house a religious use within the eastern portion of the site as well as multiple outdoor athletic fields (primarily baseball/softball and soccer) to the west. The property fronts upon College Avenue to the east and 86th Street to the south: the 86th frontage is approximately 1,245 linear feet. Two (2) primary freestanding signs have been in place along the 86th Street frontage prior to this year: the first is a permanent pylon sign advertising the primary church use, and the second is a small area of fence onto which a series of temporary banners are placed. Staff was unable to locate a sign permit associated with the temporary banner sign.

- Approval of this variance petition would allow for the installation of three (3) new, primary freestanding signs that would be associated with the youth athletic league uses on the western portion of the site. The first sign would be placed on an ornamental wall to the southwest of the site with an area of 59.58 square feet and a height of seven (7) feet, and the second sign would be placed near an internal baseball field with an area of 40 square feet and a height of 5.5 feet. The third sign is a pylon sign with an area of 62.63 SF (inclusive of the gateway text as well as the smaller logos) that would be placed at the eastern edge of the game court area approximately 400 feet from a Protected District.
- Variances required would be **(a)** the number of primary freestanding signs fronting along 86th Street (these new signs would bring the overall total to five); **(b)** the proximity of the pylon sign from a Protected District to the south; and **(c)** the height of the two (2) monument signs mounted on walls being seven (7) feet and 5.5 feet from grade (maximum five feet permitted). At staff's requests, plans were amended to reduce the height of the monument signs and remove the need for a variance related to square footage for the sign proposed at the southwest corner of the site.
- Staff would note that the proposed monument sign to the southwest of the site does not appear to fall within the required clear-sight triangular area. Additionally, it appears that the Administrative Approval petition 2024-ADM-226 was granted in January 2025 to allow for placement of the pylon sign shown within plans and site photographs (the sign was installed per that approval). This Administrative Approval appears to have been issued in error, but the grant of this variance would allow for that sign to remain with its current location and dimensions.
- This property is zoned SU-1 to allow for religious uses and for development accessory to the primary religious use (including but not limited to fields for athletic leagues affiliated with the religious use). The property is also within the TOD secondary zoning district given its proximity to a potential future Red Line BRT stop. The Comprehensive Plan Pattern Book recommends it to the Suburban Neighborhood typology (which can accommodate large-scale places of worship) and places it within Critical Area and Environmentally Sensitive overlays.
- Findings of Fact submitted by the applicant indicate that two of the three proposed signs would be internal to the site and not easily viewable from the 86th Street frontage, and that the monument signs would be placed onto freestanding wall structures with heights exceeding five (5) feet in height. Both statements are accurate, and staff would note that the petitioner was open to a modest reduction of the size and height of the monument signs to reduce any negative visual effects and remove/reduce the need for variances related to sign size and height.
- The most visible sign to the southwest would be separated from the legal pylon sign to the east on the 86th frontage by around 1000 feet, and the proposed signage would be in promotion of a separate aspect of the use (athletic leagues vs. religious use for the eastern sign). Additionally, the petitioner was open to staff suggestions on the reduction of sign size and height and has agreed to a commitment to have the banner signage placed along the fence to the southeast of the site removed. For these reasons, staff recommends approval of the petition.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Existing Zoning	SU-1 (TOD)	
Existing Land Use	Special Use - Religious	
Comprehensive Plan	Suburban Neighborhood	
Surrounding Context	<u>Zoning</u>	Surrounding Context
North:	SU-2	North: Educational
South:	D-3 / SU-7	South: Residential
East:	D-2 / C-1	East: Residential / Commercial
West:	D-2	West: Residential
Thoroughfare Plan		
86 th Street	Primary Arterial	106-foot existing right-of-way and 112-foot proposed right-of-way
Central Avenue	Local Street	48-foot existing right-of-way and 50-foot proposed right-of-way
College Avenue	Primary Arterial	90-foot existing right-of-way and 80-foot proposed right-of-way
Context Area	Metro	
Floodway / Floodway Fringe	No	
Overlay	Yes	
Wellfield Protection Area	No	
Site Plan	06/04/2025	
Site Plan (Amended)	N/A	
Elevations	06/04/2025	
Elevations (Amended)	08/20/2025	
Landscape Plan	N/A	
Findings of Fact	06/04/2025	
Findings of Fact (Amended)	N/A	

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Comprehensive Plan

- Marion County Land Use Plan Pattern Book
- Red Line Transit-Oriented Development Strategic Plan

Pattern Book / Land Use Plan

- The Marion County Land Use Plan Pattern Book recommends this site to the Suburban Neighborhood typology to allow for predominantly single-family housing interspersed with attached and multi-family housing where appropriate and supported by a variety of neighborhood-serving

businesses, institutions, and amenities. Large-scale places of worship within this typology should be located along arterial streets and should be in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood.

- The site is also within a Critical Area overlay intended to preserve existing open space and natural resources with private development as well as partially within an Environmentally Sensitive overlay.

Red Line / Blue Line / Purple Line TOD Strategic Plan

- The Red Line TOD Strategic Plan recommends this area to the Walkable Neighborhood typology given its proximity to the proposed College and 91st BRT stop. This typology contemplates walkable areas that are primarily residential but may have a commercial node of one to two city blocks.

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

2005SE1010, special exception of the Wireless Communications Zoning Ordinance to provide for a 137-foot tall monopole tower with related accessory equipment structures.

94-Z-129, rezone 28.53 acres from SU-1 (FF) and D-2 (FF) to SU-1 (FF), **approved**.

ZONING HISTORY – VICINITY

2010DV2031 ; 8716 Central Avenue (west of site), Variance of development standards of the Dwelling Districts Zoning Ordinance to legally establish a deck with a 2.25-foot north side setback (minimum side setback of seven feet), **approved**.

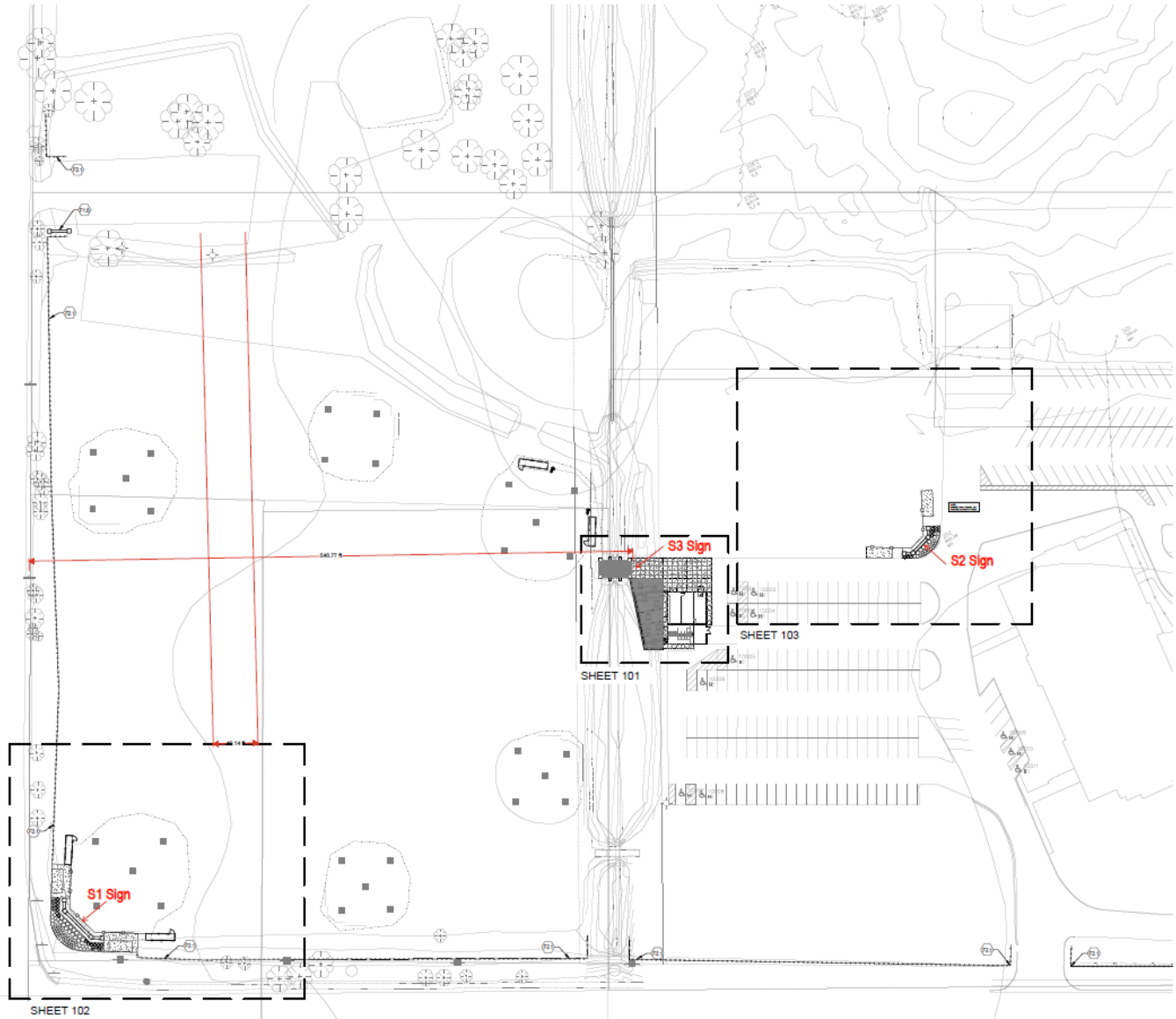
2003HOV048 ; 611 E 86th Street (south of site), variance of development standards of the Dwelling Districts Zoning Ordinance to legally establish a 680 square foot accessory structure with a 5.5 foot south side yard setback (minimum six foot side yard setback required), **approved**.

EXHIBITS

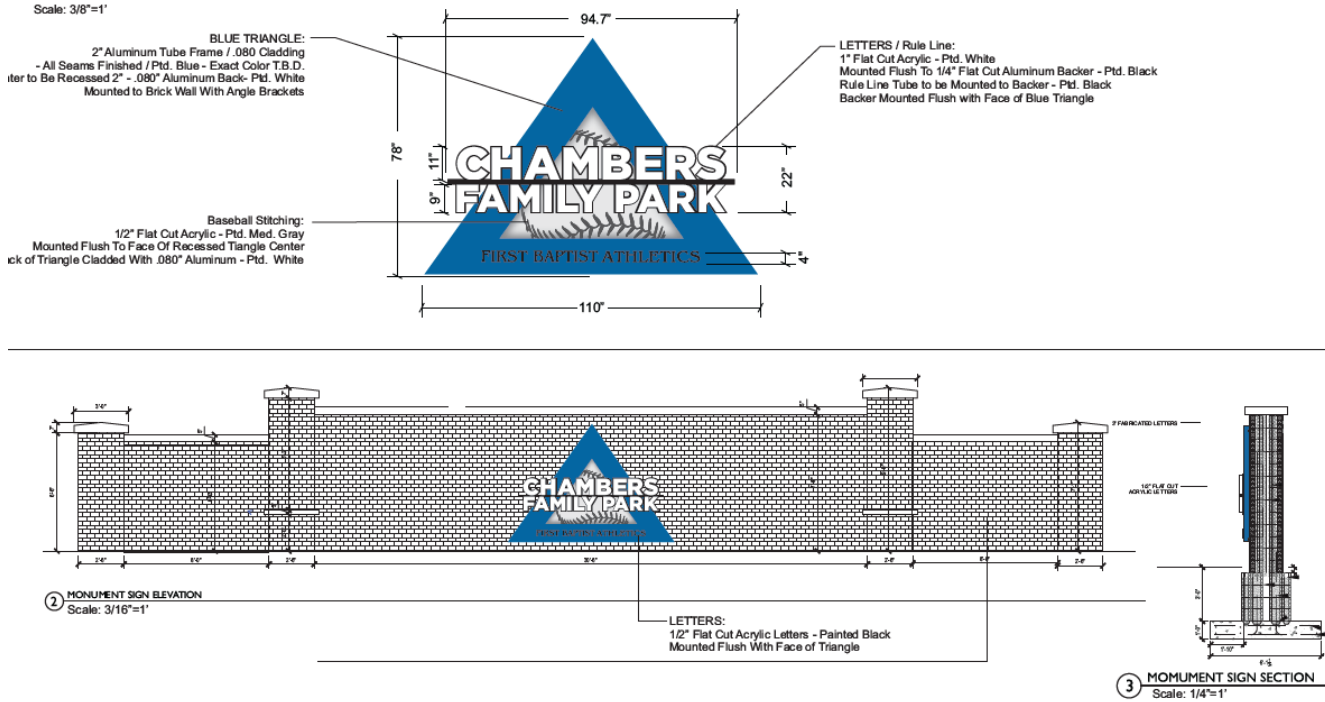
2025DV1039 ; Aerial Map



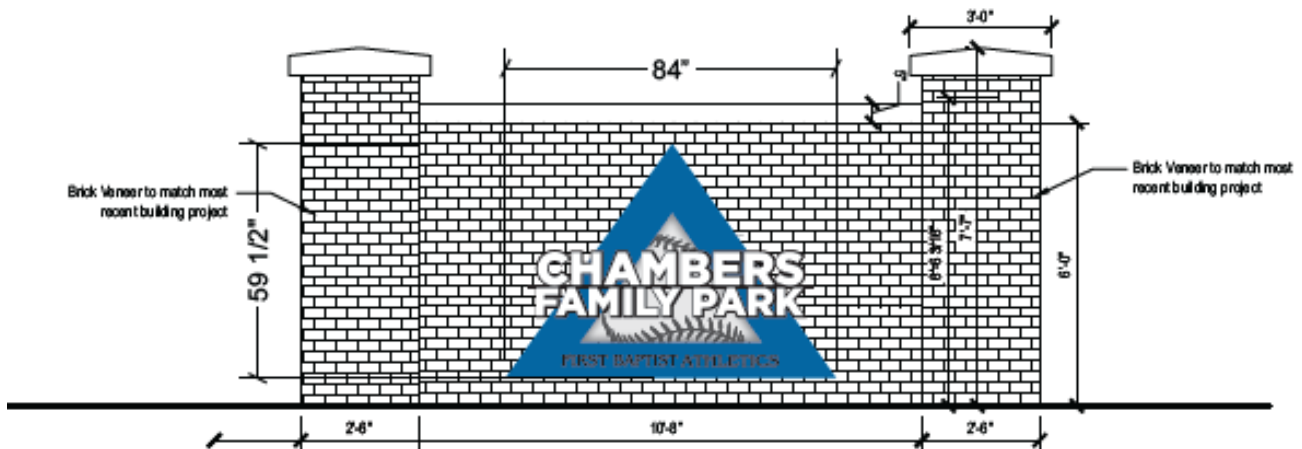
2025DV1039 ; Site Plan



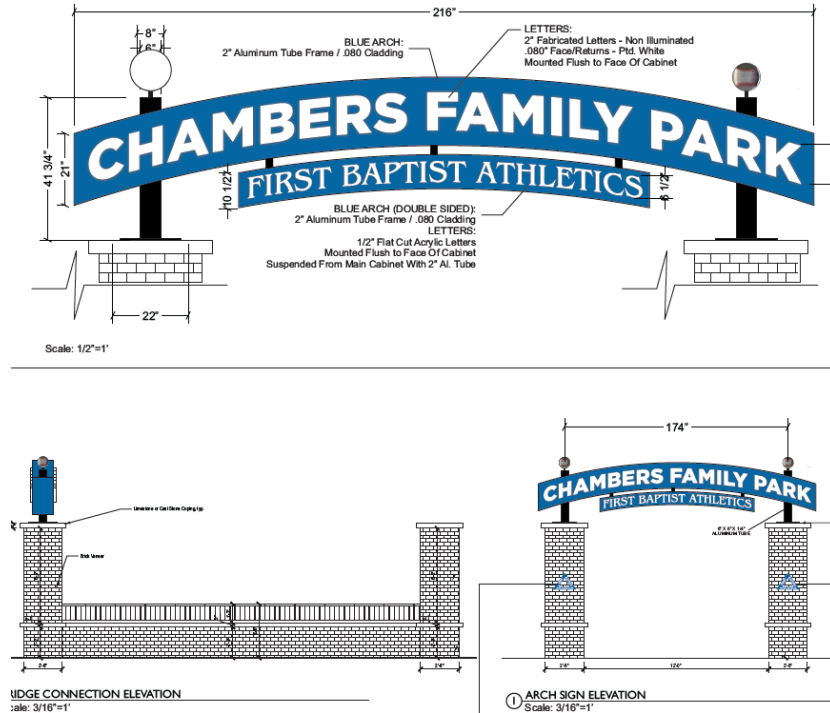
2025DV1039 ; Elevation (Sign 1)



2025DV1039 ; Elevation (Sign 2)



2025DV1039 ; Elevation (Sign 3)



2025DV1039 ; Findings of Fact

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

Granting approval of this petition will not be injurious to the public health or general welfare of the community. We are asking for three signs to be placed in a sport field owned by a church. The Chambers Family Parks signs are to honor the Chambers family for their donation to this sports park facility. The signs will mostly only be seen in the park. these signs are to be placed on walls that are already present at the facility.

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:

There will be no adverse manner to the adjacent property's. This sports park has been around for years. This revamping of the park should most certainly raise the value of the area and its adjacent properties.

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

The monument sign height requirement is 5 feet. The existing walls the signs will be placed on is on are already over 6 feet tall. the proposed signs do project 3 feet above the wall. The signs are on a sports park facility owned by a church, and not directly out in the public; we respectfully ask for your approval.

2025DV1039 ; Photographs



Photo 1: Location of Proposed Sign 1 from Southwest

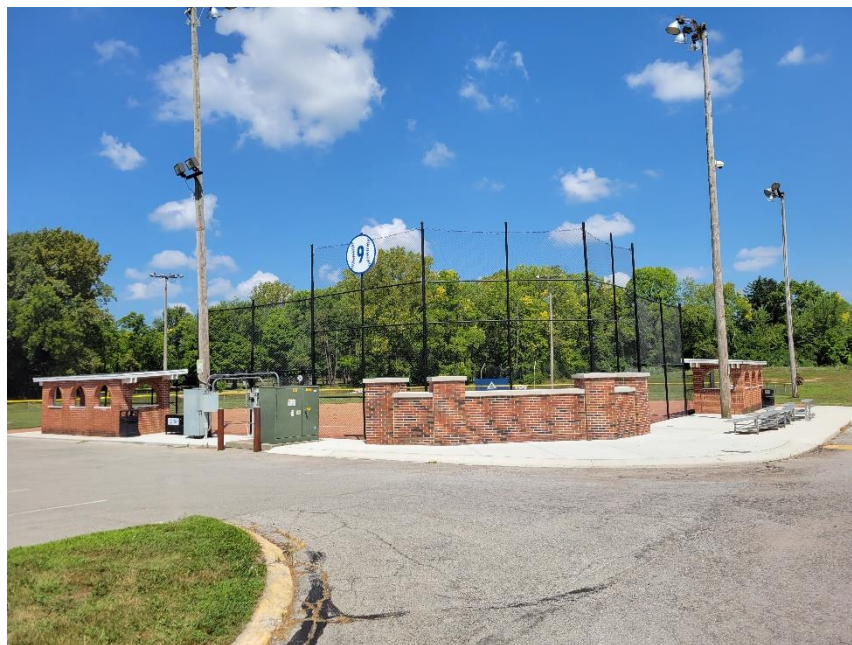


Photo 2: Location of Proposed Sign 2 from Southeast

2025DV1039 ; Photographs (continued)



Photo 3: Location of Sign 3 from West



Photo 4: Signage at Southeastern Corner of Site (viewed from East)

2025DV1039 ; Photographs (continued)



Photo 5: Adjacent Property to West near Proposed Sign 1



Photo 6: Unpermitted Banner Signage Viewed from South