

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS DIVISION II

October 13, 2026

Case Number:	2026-DV2-033
Property Address:	1973 Ralston Ave (approximate address)
Location:	Center Township, Council District #8
Petitioner:	City of Indianapolis, Department of Metropolitan Development, by Chris Barnett
Current Zoning:	D8
Request:	Variance of Development Standards of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to allow for an open front porch to encroach into the required clear-sight triangular area from the intersection of 20th and Ralston (not permitted).
Current Land Use:	Residential
Staff Recommendations:	Staff recommends approval for this petition
Staff Reviewer:	David Arrom Garza, Senior Planner

PETITION HISTORY

This is the first public hearing for this petition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval** for this petition.

PETITION OVERVIEW

City of Indianapolis, c/o Vacant to Vibrant (V2V), as the owner of a vacant parcel address 1973 Ralston Avenue (Local Parcel No. 1053818) has authorized Greater Indy Habitat for Humanity to file land development petitions for the aforesaid site.

The petitioner seeks Variance of Development Standards of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to allow for the intrusion of an open front porch to encroach into the required clear-sight triangular area from the intersection of 20th and Ralston (not permitted) to enable for the construction of a proposed single-family residence.

SITE PLAN

The site plan, file-dated August 19, 2026, depicts an approximately 1,288 square foot single-family two-story dwelling with a detached parking pad of approximately 360 square feet with access provided by a rear alleyway.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The subject site, zoned D8, is located on a corner lot bounded by two local streets: Ralston Avenue to the west and E 20th Street to the north. The intersection is two-way stop-controlled (TWSC) for east-west approaches along E 20th Street; an intersection control type commonly implemented for low-volume intersections.

Within the local street network and neighborhood context, Ralston Avenue and E 20th Street are oriented towards greater residential access rather than for regional mobility with East 20th Street dead-ending two blocks to the west of Ralston Avenue at Hovey Street and N Ralston Avenue providing connectivity only between 19th and 21st Streets.

CLEAR SIGHT DISTANCE

For a corner lot bounded by public right-of-way a clear sight triangular area is formed by the intersecting centerlines of each right-of-way and the line connecting the two end points of each extended centerline.

Chapter 740 Article III Section 04 C. Table 740-304-C, Clear Sight distances at intersections of ROW require 75' feet distance along centerline right-of-way for each street according to the 'local' street classification identified for Ralston and 20th Street to be outside of the clear sight distance triangular area.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The site plan seeks to reduce the Clear Sight Triangle requirement from 75 feet to 70 feet along each street centerline to allow for the intrusion of a transparent front porch 5 feet into the code-required triangle. A single porch column post near E 20th Street is illustrated as intruding into the Clear Sight Triangle with a column post width of 7.5 inches diagramed in the side/north site plan elevations.

Practical site difficulties occur with the construction of a single-family residence due to location of the proposed use on a corner lot to meet all D8 front and side yard setback standards.

Neighborhood context and Zoning Code Frontage Standards require a home to be set back between 10 and 19.9 feet from the front property line. The Clear Sight Triangle would require a home with a 5' deep front porch setback (as depicted in the site plan), be set back a minimum of 21.9' which would necessitate a front yard setback variance for a front yard depth greater than 19.9' for a Terrace Frontage. Current site plans depict a 16.9' front setback to the front building line (FBL). While two parcels remain vacant to the south of the site, the proposed 16.9' front setback is within the front "setback range" between the shortest and longest distances between the sidewalk and FBL of existing dwellings contained on the same block face adhering to front setback practices promoted in the Infill Housing Guidelines.

Moreover, moving the home 5' to the south on the side yard, outside of the Clear Sight Triangle, would place the home directly on the south property line providing no side yard setback separation between lots in 1973 and 1971 Ralston Avenue (currently vacant).



**Department of Metropolitan Development
Division of Planning
Current Planning**

For these reasons, staff recommends **approval** for this petition, finding that practical difficulties imposed by the corner lot location in the D8 dwelling district impact the ability of the property to be used for a permitted residential purpose. Staff would also note that the traffic characteristics of this intersection at N Ralston Avenue and E 20th Street do not warrant immediate traffic safety concerns given lower travel volume and speed for local streets providing neighborhood residential access.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Existing Zoning	D8	
Existing Land Use	Exempt	
Comprehensive Plan	Traditional Neighborhood	
Surrounding Context	<u>Zoning</u>	Surrounding Context
North:	D8	North: Single-family dwelling
South:	D8	South: Vacant
East:	D8	East: Vacant
West:	D8	West: Single-family dwelling
Thoroughfare Plan		
Ralston Ave	Local Street	24' R/W existing (curb)
E 20 th Street	Local Street	20' R/W existing (no curb)
Context Area	Compact	
Floodway / Floodway Fringe	No	
Overlay	No	
Wellfield Protection Area	No	
Site Plan	August 19, 2026	
Elevations	August 19, 2026	
Findings of Fact	August 19, 2026	

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 the Traditional Neighborhood living typology for this site. Traditional Neighborhood typology includes a full spectrum of housing types, ranging from single family homes to large-scale multifamily housing. The development pattern of this typology should be compact and well-connected, with access to individual parcels by an alley when practical. Building form should promote the social connectivity of the neighborhood, with clearly defined public, semi-public, and private spaces. Infill development should continue the existing visual pattern, rhythm, or orientation of surrounding buildings when possible. A wide range of neighborhood serving businesses, institutions, and amenities should be present. Ideally, most daily needs are within walking distance. This typology usually has a residential density of 5 to 15 dwelling units per acre,

but a higher density is recommended if the development is within a quarter mile of a frequent transit line, greenway, or park.

Red Line / Blue Line / Purple Line TOD Strategic Plan

- Not Applicable to the Site

Neighborhood / Area Specific Plan

- Greater Martindale-Brightwood Certified Plan (2025)
 - Goal 2. Housing Development: Residents have more access to affordable, quality housing options.

Infill Housing Guidelines

- The Infill Housing Guidelines apply to infill development in residential areas within the Compact Context Area.
- For building setbacks and open space standards, the Infill Housing Guidelines recommend new construction:
 - Use the surrounding block context to help guide where appropriate setbacks should be
 - Build within the front “setback range” between the shortest and longest distances from the right-of-way (i.e. streets or sidewalks) to houses
 - Reflect and reinforce the character of spacing found on the block
 - For undersize lots, evaluation of the surrounding context for appropriate housing sizes

Indy Moves

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

- The site address is located within one-mile walking distance to the Monon-Pogues Connector, a proposed greenway connection between the Monon Trail and the Pogue’s Run Greenway on an abandoned rail corridor that parallels 21st Street. (Indy Greenways For All).

ZONING HISTORY

ZONING HISTORY – VICINITY

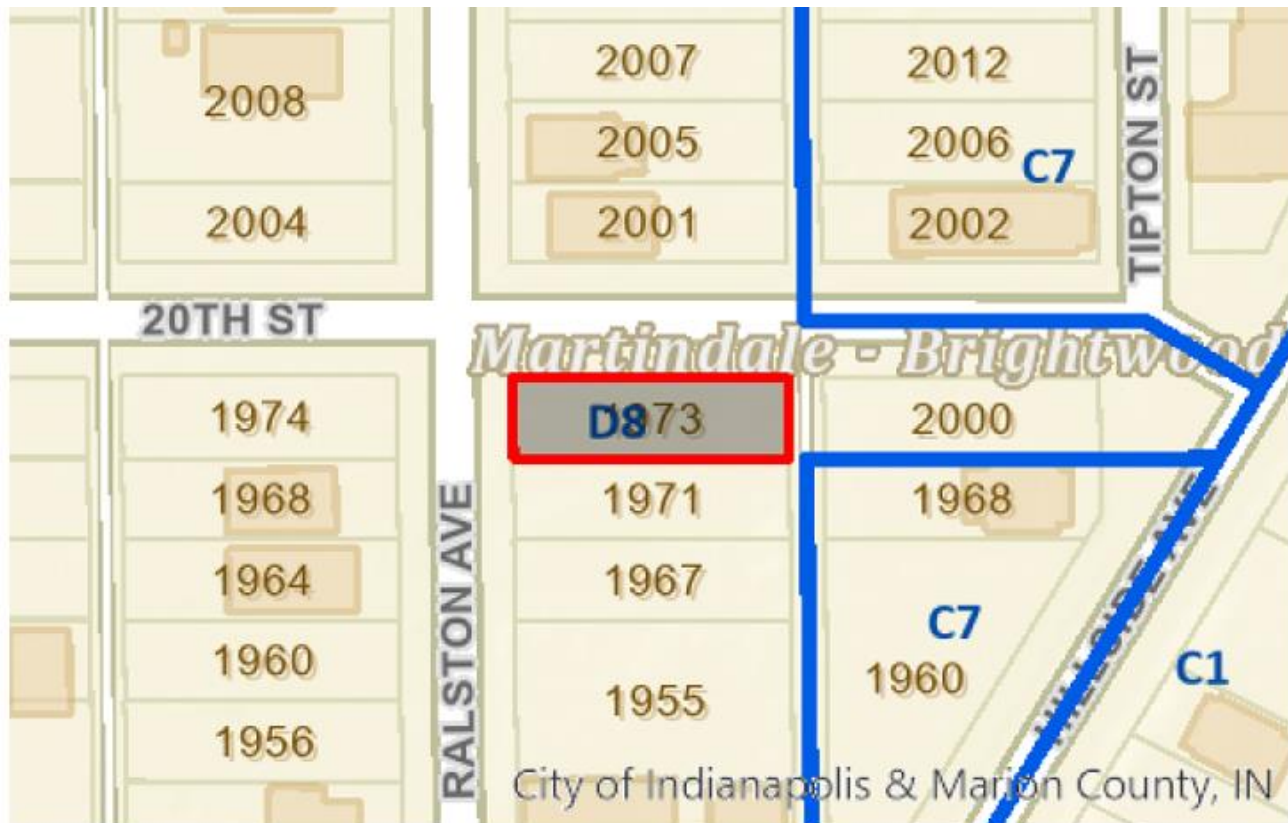
2024DV2012; 1613 E 20th St: Variance of Development Standards of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to provide for the construction of a single-family dwelling with a 4.5-foot corner side yard setback and a 27.4-foot front yard setback (eight-foot corner side required, maximum 19.9-foot front setback permitted) within the D-8 district, **approved**.

2018ZON112; 2000 Tipton St: rezoning of 0.1 acre from C-7 district to D-8 classification, **approved**.

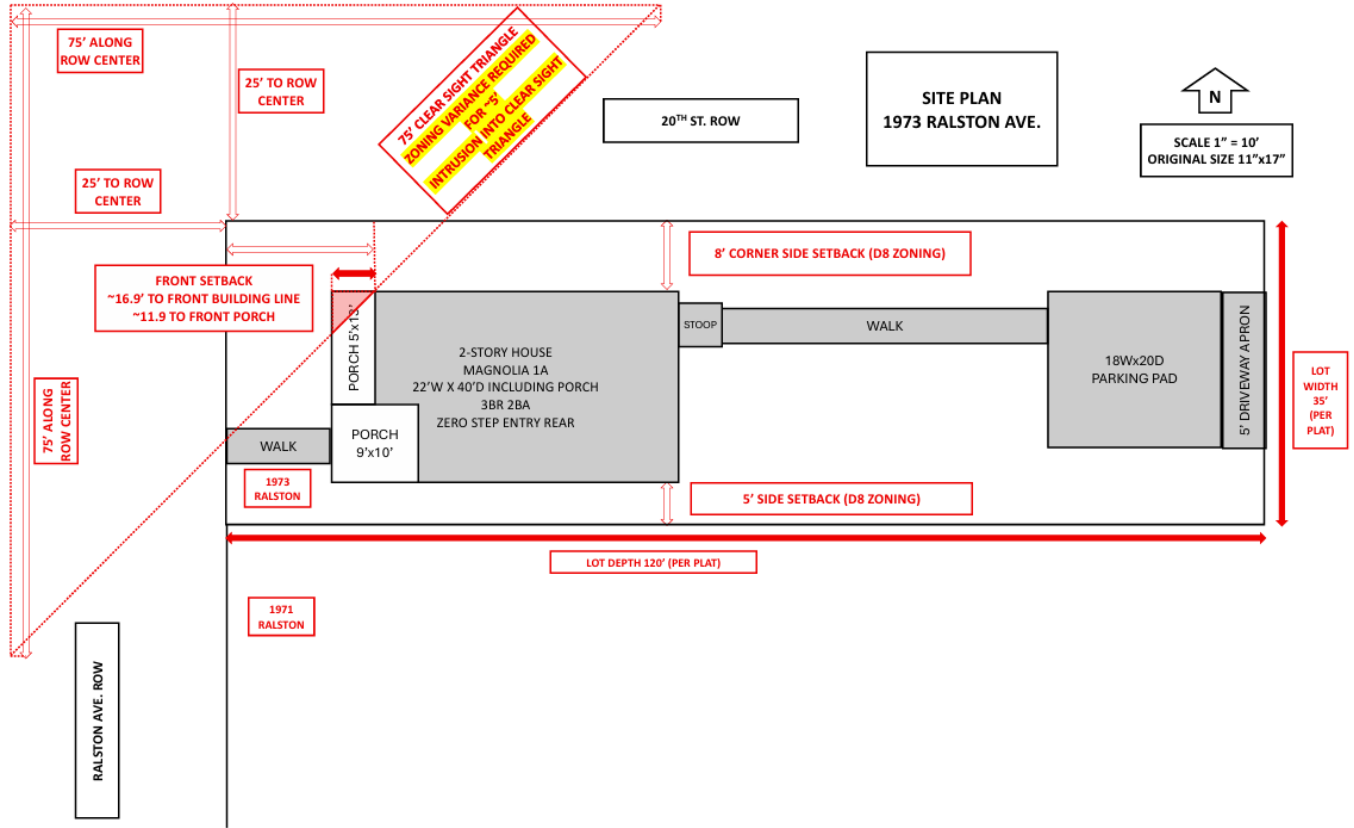
2011ADM173; 1610 E 19th St: Administrative approval to provide overnight stays for troubled male youth, with counseling services, life skills, etc. to assist them into being successful and returning to their family; **approved**.

EXHIBITS

Location Map



Site Plan





Findings of Fact

**METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HEARING EXAMINER
METROPOLITAN BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS, Division _____
OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA**

PETITION FOR VARIANCE OF DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

The proposed intrusion is of an open front porch where only the corner porch post intrudes into the clear sight triangle of Ralston Ave. and E. 20th St. 20th Street is a lightly traveled narrow street with a stop sign at the corner of Ralston; Drivers on 20th will easily see oncoming traffic from both directions on Ralston even after the Clear Sight Triangle intrusion and will be able to proceed safely through the intersection.

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:

An affordable new home constructed on the site(s) that is harmonious with its neighbors and sensitive to urban design requirements of code will enhance the neighborhood.

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

Neighborhood context and the Zoning Code Frontage Standards require a home between 10 and 19.9 feet from the front property line. The Clear Sight Triangle would require a home with a 5' deep front porch (as per proposed plan) to be set back at least 21.9 feet. The standards conflict and variance to one standard or the other is required.

2026DV2033 Site Photographs



Development site frontage at 1973 Ralston Ave



Looking west from East 20th Street and Ralston Ave intersection



Looking east from East 20th Street and Ralston Ave intersection



Looking north onto Ralston Avenue and East 20th Street intersection