

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS DIVISION II

August 11, 2026

Case Number: 2026-DV2-023
Property Address: 355 Indiana Avenue (approximate address)
Location: Center Township, Council District #12
Petitioner: Grace Residential LLC / Powers and Sons Construction, by Faith Haberlin
Current Zoning: CBD-2, RC, TOD
Request: A Variance of Development Standards of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to permit a Skyline sign in a CBD-2, RC, and TOD zoning district on a 34.6' structure (only permitted on a building over 50 ft in height).
Current Land Use: Commercial
Staff Recommendations: Staff recommends **approval**
Staff Reviewer: Adrienne Baker, Principal Planner I

PETITION HISTORY

This is the first public hearing for this petition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff are recommending **approval** of the variance

PETITION OVERVIEW

- The petitioner seeks a variance to allow installation of a Skyline sign on a structure measuring 34.6 feet in height, which is below the 50-foot minimum typically required for this type of signage. The site is located within the CBD-2 district and is subject to the Regional Center. These designations support dense, mixed-use, pedestrian-focused development and anticipate a high level of architectural visibility, including the use of prominent building-mounted signage as part of an active urban environment.
- The subject property, along with several surrounding buildings within the immediate block, has a documented history of approvals for prominent and illuminated signage, including upper-level wall signs, multiple Skyline signs, tenant identification signs, and other façade-mounted elements. This broader pattern of approvals within the area demonstrates longstanding support for highly visible signage as part of the established urban character. The proposed Skyline sign is consistent with these precedents, and staff therefore finds the requested variance appropriate and in alignment with prior decisions affecting both the site and its surroundings.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Existing Zoning	CBD-2, RC	
Existing Land Use	Commercial	
Comprehensive Plan	Urban Mixed-Use	
Surrounding Context	Zoning	Surrounding Context
North:	D-5, C-3, and D-8	North: Planned Development
South:	D-8 and I-2	South: Planned Development
East:	C-3 and D-5	East: Planned Development
West:	D-8	West: Planned Development
Thoroughfare Plan		
Indiana Ave	Primary Collector	56-foot existing right-of-way and 56-foot proposed right-of-way
N Capital Ave W Vermont St)	Primary Collector	56-foot existing right-of-way and 56-foot proposed right-of-way
Context Area	Compact	
Floodway / Floodway Fringe	No	
Overlay	Regional Center, TOD	
Wellfield Protection Area	No	
Site Plan	June 30, 2026	
Site Plan (Amended)	NA	
Elevations	June 30, 2026	
Elevations (Amended)	NA	
Landscape Plan	NA	
Findings of Fact	June 30, 2026	
Findings of Fact (Amended)	NA	

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ANALYSIS

Comprehensive Plan

- The CBD-2 district is for the general downtown area of Indianapolis, surrounding the CBD-1 and CBD-3 districts. The district represents the typical urban core of Indianapolis to be developed at very high density. It is a pedestrian-oriented environment that is also the focus of the City's transit system providing excellent accessibility. The grid pattern of streets are mostly high-volume arterials which function efficiently due to the service areas being accessed by a thorough network of alleys. The CBD-2 district accommodates a diverse mixture of uses including residential, retail, restaurants, entertainment, major public facilities, major convention facilities, sports venues, hotels, and memorials.

- Sky Exposure Plane One shall be applied to all lots within the CBD-2 District abutting the west side of Capitol Avenue between New York Street and Maryland Street.
 - No part of any building or other structure on any lot shall penetrate the applicable sky exposure plane, except the following: A building or other structure may penetrate the Sky Exposure Plane One or Two provided that the area of all architectural elevation facing the street, of all buildings and other structures on the lot (including those portions thereof violating the sky exposure plane), when projected back to the base of the sky exposure plane establishes an area at the lot line not in excess of the total area of the lot frontage plane (an imaginary vertical plane, having a base coextensive with the front lot line and extending vertically to its termination at the intersection of the applicable sky exposure plane).
 - Sky Exposure Plane One must have a base that coincides with the centerline of the street. The elevation of that base is the average elevation of the street centerline from one street intersection to the next. The plane is inclined at an angle of 78 degrees measured from the horizontal and extends from the base to a height of 300 feet above the base. Beyond that height, it continues vertically upward at an angle of 90 degrees from the horizontal to infinity.
 - One Skyline sign per elevation with a maximum of 4 per building. Maximum sign width permitted 80% of the width of the building elevation. Projection from the wall to the outer edge of the sign 18 inches maximum.

Pattern Book / Land Use Plan

- The Urban Mixed-Use typology provides dense, pedestrian-oriented development with a wide range of businesses, services, and institutions that serve both adjacent neighborhoods and the broader Indianapolis community. Buildings are four to eight stories in height with entrances and large windows facing the street. Where possible, sidewalks and other pedestrian spaces should be activated as places to gather or otherwise spend time, such as sidewalk cafes and plazas. Public spaces may also be programmable for community events. Off-street parking should be behind buildings or in garages. Where block lengths are longer than 500 feet, public pedestrian paths should be provided as cut throughs. This typology has a residential density of at least 25 to 75 units per acre.
- The Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) overlay is intended for areas within walking distance of a rapid transit station. The purpose of this overlay is to promote pedestrian connectivity and a higher density than the surrounding area.

Red Line / Blue Line / Purple Line TOD Strategic Plan

- Not Applicable to the Site

Neighborhood / Area Specific Plan

- According to the Regional Center Guidelines, the city's highest-density development is located in the Urban Core. This area is pedestrian-oriented and serves as a central focus of the city's transit system. Most Urban Core streets function as high-volume arterials. The Urban Core contains a concentration of employment and a mix of uses, including major convention facilities, sports venues, hotels, and memorials, with offices as the predominant land use. Its visibility and central location make it a frequent setting for festivals and other public events. The Urban Core plays a key role in shaping Indianapolis's identity. The Mile Square in downtown Indianapolis is a primary example of Urban Core development.
- Buildings shall be designed so that building and business signs are integrated into the overall façade design. Signs must be compatible with the building's architectural pattern, style, and fenestration. Signs should use "architectural-type" lettering, which may be illuminated, backlit, or constructed as neon letters. Backlit panel or "box-type" signs are generally discouraged. If such signs are used, the background must be nonreflective, opaque, and dark in color, with light-colored lettering. All signs shall maintain an 80-percent contrast ratio to support legibility for individuals with visual impairments.

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

2026REG036; ; 355 Indiana Ave; Regional Center Approval to provide for the installation of two skyline signs: one on the east elevation, and one facing Indiana Avenue on the southwest elevation; **approved** subject to the following condition: the subject site shall be developed in accordance with the site plan and development statement, stamped approved June 3, 2026.

2023REG082; 355 Indiana Ave; Regional Center Approval to provide for building tenant signage, **approved** subject to the following condition: the subject site shall be developed in accordance with the site plans, details, and sign elevations, stamped approved on October 17, 2023.

2015REG095; 355 Indiana Ave; Regional Center Approval to provide for an individually lettered illuminated upper-level wall sign on the north elevation of an existing building. the installation of two skyline signs: one on the east elevation, and one facing Indiana Avenue on the southwest elevation; **approved** subject to the following condition: the subject site shall be developed in accordance with the site plan and elevations, file-dated August 26, 2015, and stamped approved September 9, 2015.

2013REG093; 355 Indiana Ave; to provide for a lower-level wall sign on the southwest elevation of an existing building; **approved** subject to the following condition: the subject site shall be developed in accordance with the site plans and sign elevations plans.

2011REG015; 355 Indiana Ave; to provide for a two-story mixed-use building with commercial retail and/or office use on the first floor and office use on the second floor; **approved**.

ZONING HISTORY – VICINITY

2018REG091; 361 Indiana Ave; to provide for seven signs, including four window signs and three wall signs; **approved** subject to the following condition: the site shall be developed in accordance with the site plan and elevations.

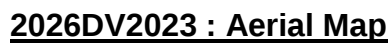
2011APP150; 320 N Senate Ave; to provide for a hotel restaurant with liquor sales; **approved**.

2011REG101; 334 N Senate Ave; to provide for additional rooftop Wireless Communication antennas and related equipment; **approved**.

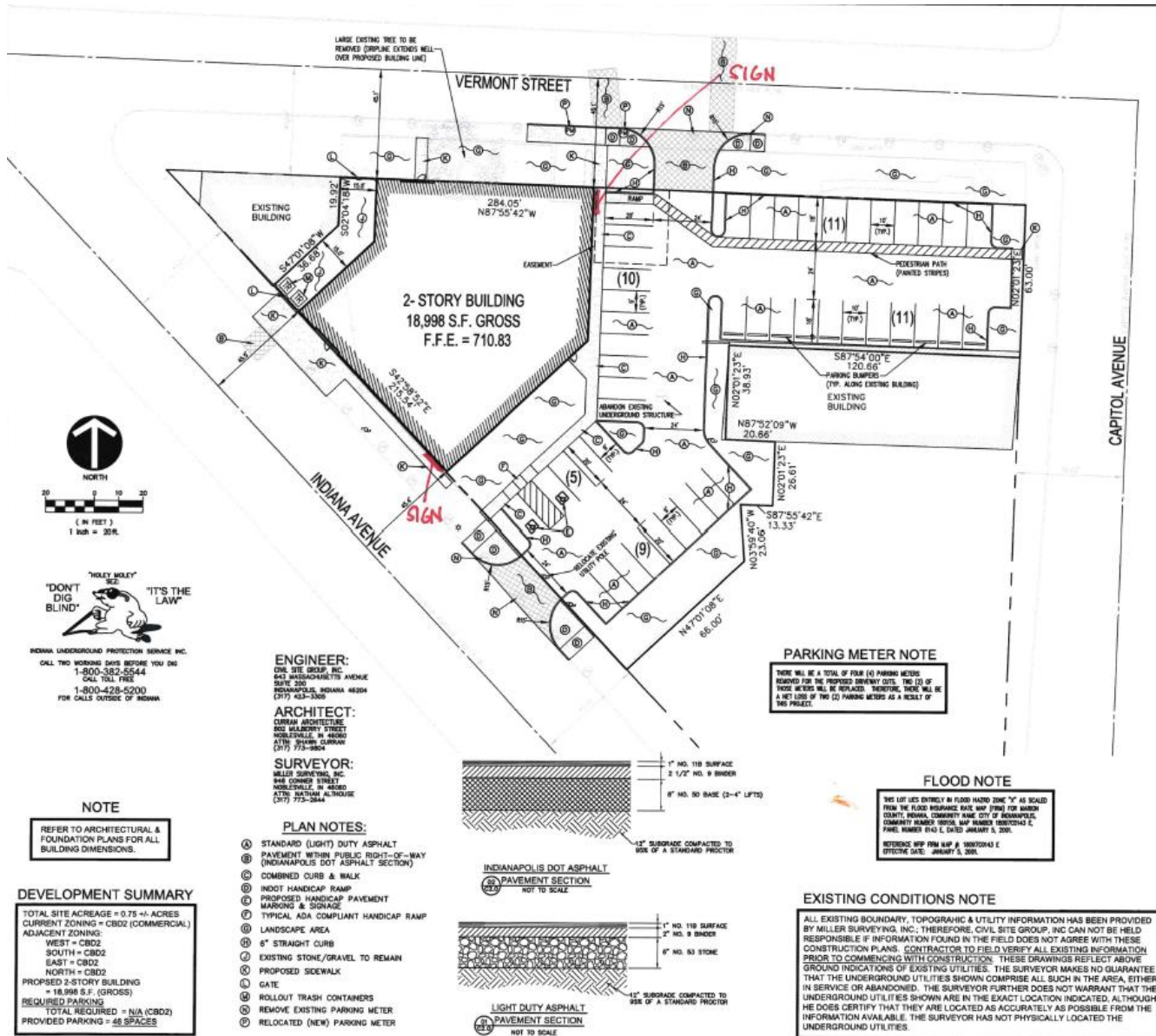
2011REG127; 332 N Capitol Ave; to provide for one new mural on the south façade of an existing building; **approved**.

2007APP195; 340 N Capital Ave; to provide for a new structure for use as a 3,800 square foot bank on the first floor (with drive-through service within the structure) and five condominiums units on the second floor; **approved** subject to conditions.

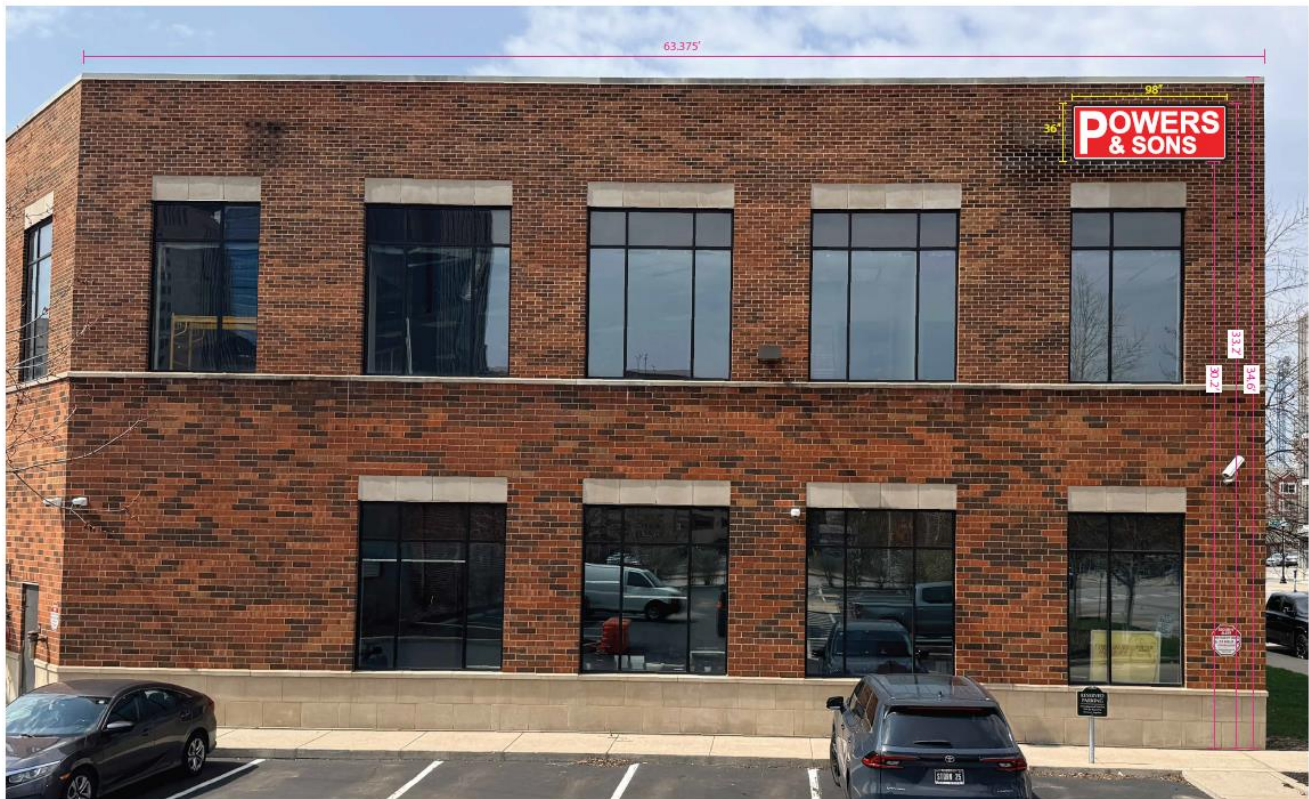
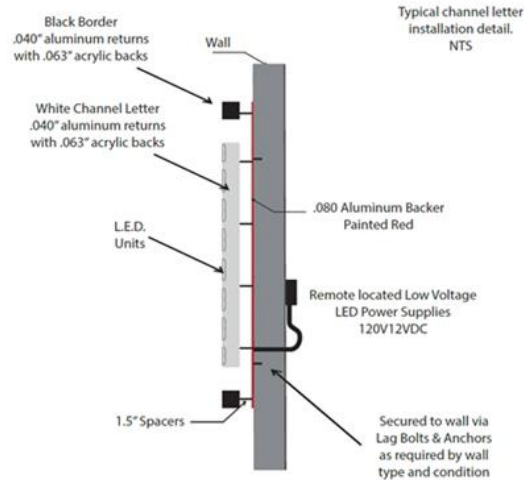
2026DV2023 : Zoning Map



2026DV1029 : Site Plans



2026DV2023 : Elevations

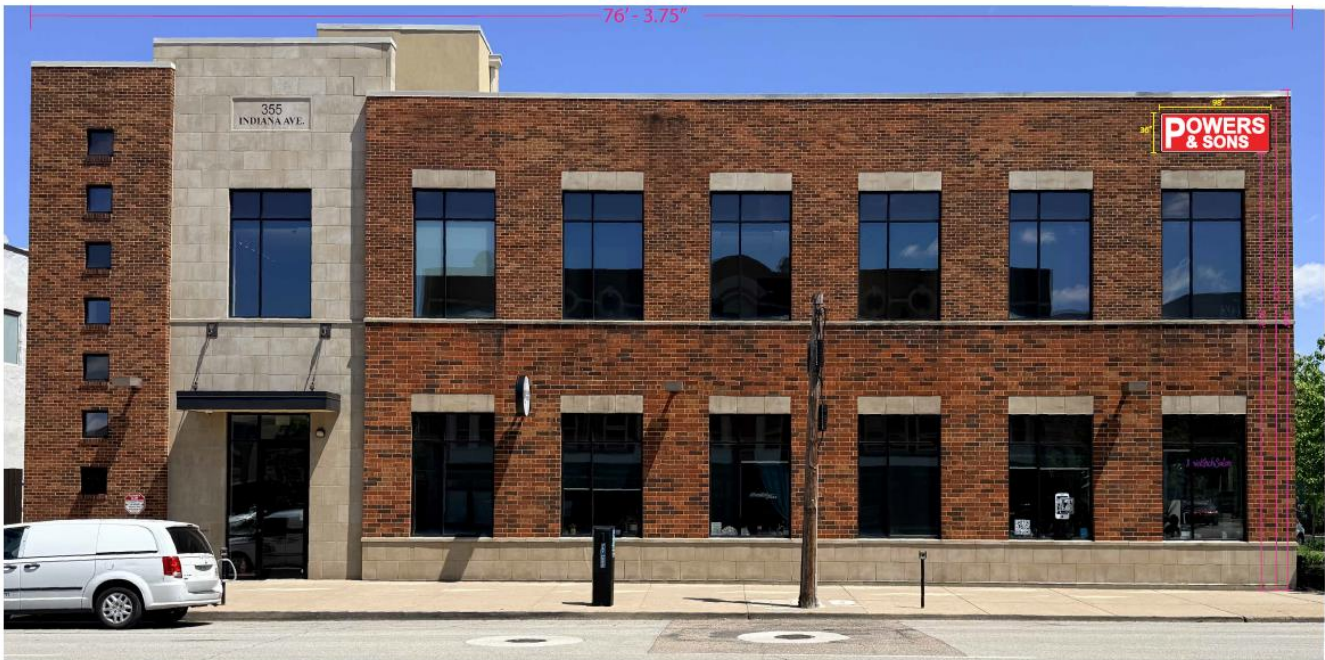


Description: "POWERS & SONS" with black raised border - 2" deep halo lit channel letters, with white and red LEDs
 stud mounted (with 1.5" spacers) to a 36" x 98" x 3" fabricated backer/raceway painted white and red, with self contained power supplies
Colors: Red, White, Black
Typestyle: Custom
Mounting: Stud Mounted with Spacers
Quantity: 1

Scale: 1/8" = 10"
SIGNSOLUTIONS
 800-705-8258

Client: Powers and Sons Construction Company
 Contact: Faith Haberlin
 Drawing Date: 3/31/2026

This design belongs to SIGNSOLUTIONS, INC. and becomes
 property of the customer upon completion of an order,
 and is otherwise not to be used without written
 permission of SIGNSOLUTIONS, INC.
 805 Commerce Plaza West Dr.
 Greenwood, IN 46143-1317 800-705-8258



Description: "POWERS & SONS" with black raised border - 2" deep halo lit channel letters, with white and red LEDs
stud mounted (with 1.5" spacers) to a 36" x 98" x 3" fabricated backer/raceway painted white and red, with self contained power supplies

Colors: Red, White, Black

Typestyle: Custom

Mounting: Stud Mounted with Spacers

Quantity: 1

Scale: 1/8" = 14"

SIGN SOLUTIONS
800-705-8258

Client: Powers and Sons Construction Company

Contact: Faith Haberlin

Drawing Date: 3/31/2026

This design belongs to SIGN SOLUTIONS INC. and becomes property of the customer upon completion of an order, and is otherwise not to be used without written permission of SIGN SOLUTIONS INC.
605 Commerce Plaza West Dr.
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2026DV1029 : 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 sign is professionally designed and engineered, utilizes modern LED halo illumination, and will be securely mounted to the existing building facade. The sign is intended solely for business identification and does not create a traffic hazard or obstruct visibility for motorists or pedestrians. The scale, lighting, and placement are compatible with the surrounding commercial development and will enhance the appearance of the property while maintaining the character of the downtown environment

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:

The proposed sign is consistent with the commercial nature of the surrounding Central Business District and is designed to complement the architecture of the building. The sign does not encroach onto neighboring properties, interfere with adjacent businesses, or negatively impact nearby property values. Rather, it provides appropriate identification for the tenant while contributing to an attractive streetscape.

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

Strict application of the Skyline Ordinance would prevent the applicant from utilizing an existing sign location that already has electrical infrastructure in place. One of the proposed sign locations already contains an existing sign with electrical infrastructure. Relocating the sign to a code-compliant location would require costly rerouting of electrical service and unnecessary modifications to the building. Additionally, the applicant seeks to maintain consistent sign placement on both the west and south elevations to preserve a cohesive architectural appearance. The requested variance allows for reasonable business identification while maintaining the the intent of the ordinance and without adversely affecting the surrounding area.

2026DV1029 : Site Photos





