



CITY OF LABELLE, FLORIDA

**Planning Staff Report
1860 Hickpochee Ave
Variance**

TYPE OF CASE: Variance

STAFF REVIEWER: Patty Kulak

DATE: July 9, 2026

APPLICANT: RaceTrac

AGENT: Gina Penney

REQUEST: Variance from Section 4-87.6(1)(A) and (B) of the City of LaBelle Land Development Regulations to permit a 20-foot-tall pole sign within the State Road 80 Overlay District for the proposed RaceTrac development located at 1860 W. Hickpochee Avenue.

LOCATION: 1860 W. Hickpochee Avenue

PROPERTY SIZE: 6.78+/-acres

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION, CURRENT ZONING AND LAND USE:

Existing Future Land Use Designation: Commercial
Existing Zoning: PUD – Race Trac
Land Use: Convenient Store with Fuel Pumps

SURROUNDING LAND USE:

North: FLU – Residential, Medium Density (*Hendry County*)
Zoning – A-2 (Agricultural) (*Hendry County*)
Land Use – Vacant / Agricultural

South: FLU – Employment Village
Zoning – PUD (Planned Unit Development)
Land Use – Walmart Shopping Center

East: FLU – Employment Village
Zoning – Penny Johnson PUD

Land Use – Tractor Supply Store

West: FLU – Employment Village
Zoning – B-3 (Business Heavy)
Land Use – Vacant / Agricultural

STAFF NARRATIVE:

RaceTrac, Inc. is requesting a variance from Section 4-87.6(1)(A) and (B) of the City of LaBelle Land Development Regulations to permit a 20-foot-tall pole sign within the State Road 80 Overlay District.

The subject property consists of approximately 6.78 acres located along the south side of West Hickpochee Avenue (State Road 80) at the western gateway into the City of LaBelle. The property is under construction for a RaceTrac convenience store and fueling station and is located within the State Road 80 Overlay District.

Section 4-87.6(1)(A) and (B) of the Land Development Regulations prohibits pole signs within the State Road 80 Overlay District and limits sign height to 10 feet. The applicant is requesting approval of a 20-foot-tall pole sign to provide site identification and fuel pricing information associated with the proposed development.

The proposed pole sign was initially reviewed and approved in error as part of the sign permit process before it was determined that the subject property falls within the boundaries of the State Road 80 Overlay District. The applicant states that the subject property functions as a highway-oriented commercial site serving regional traffic and that the requested sign height is necessary to provide visibility and identification for motorists traveling along State Road 80.

The proposed sign is intended solely for business identification and display of fuel pricing information, which are customary components of convenience store and fueling station developments. The surrounding corridor is characterized by commercial development and highway-oriented uses. The variance request seeks relief from the pole sign prohibition and height limitation established by the overlay district with the justification that this specific location is different from other sites along State Road 80 because of the rural character of being south of Helms Road.

The variance petition was reviewed by applicable City departments as part of the review process. If approved, the applicant will be required to obtain all applicable sign permits and comply with all remaining requirements of the City of LaBelle Land Development Regulations prior to installation of the proposed sign.

VARIANCE REVIEW CRITERIA:

The following is Staff's analysis of the Applicant's request in relation to LDC Section 3-22, which sets forth the review criteria for special exceptions.

- a. Unique or peculiar conditions or circumstances exist, which relate to the location, size, and characteristics of the land or structure involved, and are not generally applicable to other lands or structures in the same district.

The unique condition of the subject property is that, although it is located within the State Road 80 Overlay District, it is outside the traditional downtown environment that the

overlay regulations were intended to protect. Additionally, the original approval and issuance of the sign permit in 2025 occurred in error, creating a site-specific circumstance due to the applicant's reliance on that approval and the passage of time since its issuance. Staff finds these circumstances are unique to the subject property and are not generally applicable to other properties within the overlay district.

- b. The strict and literal enforcement of the zoning section of the land development regulations would create an undue hardship as distinguished from a mere inconvenience on the property owners. Physical handicaps or disability of the applicant and other considerations may be considered where relevant to the request.

Strict application of the overlay district regulations would create undue hardship by requiring the redesign of a previously reviewed, approved, and permitted sign by the City in error. The applicant reasonably relied upon the approved permit during project planning and development. Staff finds that the hardship extends beyond a mere inconvenience and results from the prior approval and unique circumstances associated with this property.

- c. The granting of a variance would not be injurious to or incompatible with contiguous uses, the surrounding neighborhood, or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

The proposed pole sign is intended solely for business identification and fuel pricing information customary for convenience store and fueling station developments. The surrounding corridor is characterized by commercial and highway-oriented uses, and the proposed sign is appropriately scaled for the roadway environment. Staff finds that granting the variance would not be injurious to surrounding properties, incompatible with the surrounding area, or detrimental to the public welfare.

- d. The condition giving rise to the requested variance has not been created by any person presently having an interest in the property and the conditions cannot reasonably be corrected or avoided by the applicant.

The conditions giving rise to the variance request were not created by the applicant. The subject property's location within the State Road 80 Overlay District and the approval and issuance of the sign permit in error were circumstances beyond the applicant's control.

- e. The requested variance is the minimum modification of the regulation at issue that will afford relief.

The requested variance represents the minimum relief necessary to allow the previously approved 20-foot pole sign to remain in place. No additional relief from the overlay district regulations is being requested. Staff finds that the request is limited in scope and represents the minimum modification necessary to afford relief.

- f. The variance granted will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by these regulations to other lands, structures, or required improvements under similar conditions.

Granting the requested variance would not confer a special privilege upon the applicant. Rather, it would provide reasonable relief for a property with unique circumstances, including its location outside the traditional downtown environment and the prior approval and issuance of the sign permit in error. Staff finds that the request is site-specific and does not establish a privilege unavailable to similarly situated properties.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

1. The variance approval applies only to the subject property located at 1860 W. Hickpochee Avenue, LaBelle, Florida.
2. The variance approval authorizes one (1) 20-foot-tall pole sign within the State Road 80 Overlay District, substantially consistent with the plans and exhibits submitted with the variance petition.
3. This approval authorizes relief only from Section 4-87.6(1)(A) and (B) of the City of LaBelle Land Development Regulations. All other applicable provisions of the Land Development Regulations shall remain in full force and effect.
4. Any modification to the approved sign location, height, dimensions, or design that substantially differs from the approved plans shall require further review and approval by the City.
5. The applicant shall obtain all applicable sign permits and approvals from the City of LaBelle prior to installation, replacement, or modification of the approved sign.

SUGGESTED MOTION(S):

APPROVAL:

I make a motion to approve the 1860 W. Hickpochee Avenue Variance.

APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS:

I make a motion to approve the 1860 W. Hickpochee Avenue Variance, with the following condition(s):

- 1) as outlined in the staff report;
- OR**
- 2) as outlined in the staff report and amended as follows;
- OR**
- 3) with the following conditions:

DENIAL:

I make a motion to deny 1860 W. Hickpochee Avenue Variance. The request does not meet the Variance criteria:

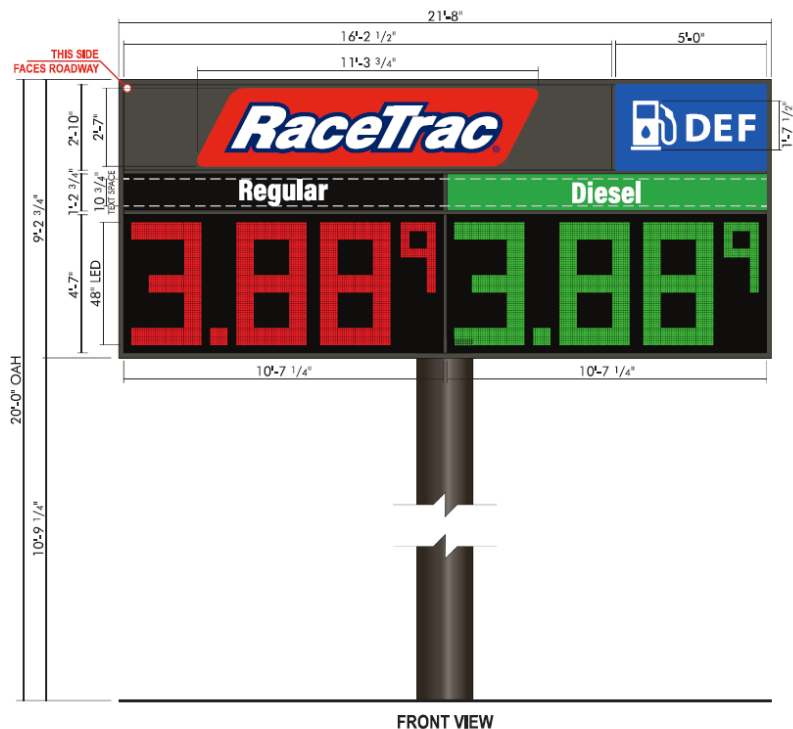
EXHIBIT A SIGN RENDERING

200 SqFt Price Sign- 48" LED- N

Page 39

*All sign components to be UL listed, All wiring to conform to UL specifications. Installations to be per NEC requirements. All signs to bear UL labels.
STAMPED, SEALED ENGINEERING REQUIRED
 FOUNDATION INFORMATION PROVIDED BY RACETRAC. MANUFACTURER RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING A LICENSED ENGINEER VALIDATE FOUNDATION DESIGN PRIOR TO INSTALL.
 DOUBLE FACED
 QUANTITY 1
 ALL FUEL GRADE PANELS TO BE ACCESSIBLE FROM TOP OF SIGN

PRICER SPECIFIC COLORS			
C1	LOGO RED	C7	PRICER GREEN
C23	SW 7045 URBANE BRONZE	C8	PRICER RED
C6	PRICER BLACK		



SPECIFICATIONS:

SIGN FACES:

- **LOGO PANEL:** Aluminum panel painted *EFC Standard C23* with parallelogram mounted to the surface. Parallelogram to be channel letter-type construction with .177" thick Polycarbonate face panels with 1st surface applied translucent vinyl graphics. Parallelogram copy to be digital print provided by Miratec. Systems with red background and with blue area of logo graphic also printed. Cabinet and trim cap to be painted Red C1.
- **REGULAR UNLEADED PRODUCT PANEL:** Solar Grade Polycarbonate; Background to be 1st surface applied opaque vinyl Black C6; "Regular" to be show-through white.
- **DIESEL PRODUCT PANEL:** Solar Grade Polycarbonate; Background to be 1st surface applied translucent vinyl Green C7; "Diesel" to be show-through white.

INTERIOR ILLUMINATION: Sloan Sign Box 3 LED
 Interior illumination powered by low voltage power supplies.

THIS IS BEHIND THE LOGO PANEL, FUEL GRADE PANELS & DEF/CAT/DRIVE THRU (IF APPLICABLE) PANELS.

SIGN FRAME: 2" x 2" x .25" steel tube with .063" aluminum cladding painted *EFC Standard C23*. Extruded aluminum 1-1/2" wide Divider Bars installed to retain sign panels. Face dividers and retainer to be painted *EFC Standard C23*.



SLOAN SIGN BOX 3
LED Interior Illumination

FUEL GRADE FONT:

ACUMIN PRO
CONDENSED BLACK

COLOR SCHEDULE on Page 3

GENERAL NOTE: ALL WORK SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH RECOMMENDED INDUSTRY STANDARDS. MANUFACTURER'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND ALL APPLICABLE STATE AND LOCAL CODES. NO SUBSTITUTIONS ALLOWED.

Huggetts Road & SR 80
 LaBelle, FL 33935



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PROJECT
RACETRAC PETROLEUM, INC.
(EPN #1668 - STORE #XXXX)

OVERALL SITE PLAN

DATE: 10/1/2010
DRAWN BY: J. HARRIS
CHECKED BY: J. HARRIS
SCALE: AS SHOWN

PRODUCT DATUM
NAVD

The site plan shows a large rectangular property bounded by 'EX. HUGGITT'S ROAD' to the north and 'EX. STATE ROAD B' to the east. The property is divided into 'LOT 2 (DEVELOPMENT)' and 'LOT 3 (FUTURE DEVELOPMENT)'. Lot 2 contains a building labeled 'RACETRAC PETROLEUM' with 'FFS - 1522 NAVD' and a parking lot. Lot 3 is a large open area. The plan includes various annotations for property boundaries, existing and proposed roads, and other site features. A north arrow and a scale bar (0 to 100 feet) are located in the bottom left corner.