



STAFF REPORT

CITY OF COLUMBUS PLAN COMMISSION (April 9, 2014 Meeting)

Docket No. / Project Title: DP-14-05 (Franciscan Alliance)
Staff: Melissa Begley
Applicant: Franciscan Alliance
Property Size: 33,976 square feet
Current Zoning: CD (Commercial: Downtown)
Location: 123 Second Street, in the City of Columbus

Background Summary:

The applicant has indicated that the proposed site development plan major modification is for the purpose of requesting a new freestanding sign to be located on the corner of Lindsey and 2nd Street.

The applicant is proposing the following waiver(s) and/or modification(s) from the zoning ordinance development standards that would typically apply to this development: The petitioner proposes to install a 50 square foot freestanding sign with an overall height of 5 ft.–1 in. Zoning Ordinance Section 10(Table 10.1) prohibits freestanding signs in the CD (Commercial: Downtown Center) zoning district unless the lot exceeds 2 acres in area and includes a primary structure that has a minimum front setback of 20 feet. The area of the subject property is 0.78 acres.

Key Issue Summary:

The following key issue(s) should be resolved through the consideration of this application:

1. Does the requested modification meet the criteria established by the Zoning Ordinance?
2. Is a freestanding signage appropriate at this location in addition to the 2 approved wall signs?

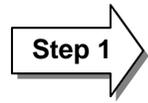
Plan Commission Decision Criteria:

The Columbus Zoning Ordinance requires that the Plan Commission consider (1) compliance with the applicable development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance and (2) the general standards listed below in the review of site development plans (Section 12.8(E)).

1. The proposed development will be consistent with the comprehensive plan.
2. The proposed development will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, convenience, or general welfare.
3. The proposed development will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of the surrounding property.
4. The proposed development will not impede the efficient, orderly, and normal development of the surrounding property.
5. The proposed development provides adequate access, utilities, landscaping, buffering, and other improvements.
6. The proposed development provides pedestrian and vehicle ingress, egress, and circulation in a manner that maintains adequate public safety and efficient movement.

The Plan Commission may waive or modify development requirements of the Zoning Ordinance based on findings by the Commission that the altered requirements will better serve (a) the intent of that development requirement, (b) the intent of the zoning district, and/or (c) the general standards listed above.

Plan Commission Process, Options & Preliminary Staff Recommendation:



Development Standards Waivers & Modifications:

The initial step in the approval process is for the Plan Commission to determine if any requested development standards waivers and/or modifications can be supported based on the decision criteria provided by the Zoning Ordinance. The waiver or modification may be approved if one or more of the criteria have been met. A separate motion with specific findings is recommended for each requested waiver and/or modification.

1. **Waiver / Modification:** The petitioner proposes to install a 50 square foot freestanding sign with an overall height of 5 ft.–1 in. Zoning Ordinance Section 10(Table 10.1) prohibits freestanding signs in the CD (Commercial: Downtown Center) zoning district unless the lot exceeds 2 acres in area and includes a primary structure that has a minimum front setback of 20 feet. The area of the subject property is 0.78 acres.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation: Approval, all criteria have been met.

Criteria #1: The requested waiver or modification will better serve the intent of that development requirement. The Zoning Ordinance indicates the intent of the signage standards as follows: The intent of the sign regulations is to avoid proliferation of signs; encourage design and placement of signs that are legible and effective for communication in the context of their location and surroundings; promote principles of quality design in community development; and enhance the city’s and county’s economic development and growth.

Preliminary Staff Findings: Freestanding signs are permitted in more suburban contexts to help orient drivers to individual properties. In these settings, buildings typically have separate driveway entrances with large parking lots between the road and the buildings unlike urban settings where buildings are set close to the road and parking is either along the street or behind the buildings. The Franciscan Alliance building sits on the edge of downtown, but is more suburban in context. The freestanding sign sits towards the “back” of the site where the parking lot is located and is intended to assist in orienting drivers to the entrance of the site which is off of Lindsey Street. *This criterion has been met.*

User Notes: _____

Criteria #2: The requested waiver or modification will better serve the intent of the zoning district in which the property is located. The Zoning Ordinance indicates the intent of the CD (Commercial: Downtown Center) zoning district as follows: This district is intended to serve as the primary commercial and activity center, where a complete range of goods, services, and entertainment is located. This district is intended to serve as a focal point and to be the most intensely developed area in the community. This district is further intended to support the continued use of historic structures, to ensure a pedestrian-focused character, and to enable continued investment.

Preliminary Staff Findings: The Franciscan Alliance is utilizing an existing building that is more suburban in context and is less pedestrian oriented than other buildings in the CD (Commercial:

Downtown Center) zoning district. Due to its location and the traffic patterns in the area, it will be more difficult to direct drivers to the entrance of the property. *This criterion has been met.*

User Notes: _____

Criteria #3: The requested waiver or modification will better serve the general standards listed by Zoning Ordinance Section 12.8(E)(2) and above.

Preliminary Staff Findings: The sign will help provide better vehicle ingress and egress and improve efficient movement by helping to orient drivers to the entrance of the site. It will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of the surrounding property. The sign will be an appropriate size for the property and will be in context with the surrounding properties. *This criterion has been met.*

User Notes: _____



Conditions:

The Plan Commission should determine through discussion if any conditions of approval are appropriate for this request. Conditions are situations that need to be resolved through the action of the applicant prior to, or as part of, the proposed development. Any conditions should be clearly based on the Plan Commission Decision Criteria listed above.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation: The staff is preliminarily recommending the following conditions of approval: None

User Notes: _____



Commitments:

The Plan Commission should determine through discussion if any commitments of the applicant are appropriate and/or needed for this request. Commitments are long-term agreements that, together with the Zoning Ordinance, govern the use of the property. Any commitments should be clearly based on the Plan Commission Decision Criteria listed above.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation: The staff is preliminarily recommending the following commitments: None

User Notes: _____



Approval, Denial or Continuance:

In reviewing a request for site development plan approval the Plan Commission may (1) approve the application, (2) deny the application, or (3) continue the review to a future Plan Commission meeting. The Plan Commission should make, second, and vote on a motion for the approval, denial, or continuance of the request. Any motion should include reasons supporting that motion that directly reference the Plan Commission Decision Criteria listed above. Any motion for approval should (1) note any approved waivers and/or modifications and (2) specifically list any conditions and/or commitments being made as part of the approval and the reasons for those conditions or commitments based on the Plan Commission Decision Criteria listed above.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation: Approval, all criteria have been met.

User Notes: _____

| Current Property Information: | |
|---|--|
| Land Use: | Medical Offices (under construction) |
| Site Features: | Commercial building, parking lot, landscaping |
| Flood Hazards: | There are no flood hazards on this site. |
| Special Circumstances: (Airport Hazard Area, Wellfield Protection Area, etc.) | No special circumstance areas are present on the subject property. |
| Vehicle Access: | Lindsey Street (local, commercial, urban) |

| Surrounding Zoning and Land Use: | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Zoning: | Land Use: |
| North: | CD (Commercial: Downtown Center) | First Financial Bank |
| South: | P (Public/Semi-Public Facilities) CD (Commercial: Downtown Center) | Railroad / East Fork of White River Vacant City Pump House |
| East: | CD (Commercial: Downtown Center) | Park – Veterans Plaza |
| West: | P (Public/Semi-Public Facilities) CD (Commercial: Downtown Center) | Railroad Vacant City Pump House |

Interdepartmental Review:

City Engineering:

The proposed variance to allow a free standing sign will not significantly impact access or drainage on the site.

History of this Location:

The relevant history of this property includes the following:

1. The structure on the subject property was constructed in 1972. The property was used as an auto service center but was vacant for several years.
2. A site development plan for the Franciscan Alliance was approved by the Plan Commission on May 8, 2013 (DP-13-07) for new medical offices. A freestanding sign was proposed at that time, in a different location, but was withdrawn.

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The Future Land Use Map indicates the future use of this property as Mixed Use and Floodway/Sensitive Area.

The following Comprehensive Plan goal(s) and/or policy(ies) apply to this application: **POLICY E-1-4:** Encourage signs and landscaping which enhance the attractiveness of downtown and which contribute to the economic vitality of downtown businesses. *Appropriate signs and landscaping contribute to the attractiveness and character of downtown. For example, trees add to the beauty of downtown, but they should not hide buildings or create hazards for pedestrians. Similarly, signs which complement the downtown architecture should be encouraged, along with signs which are pedestrian-oriented.*

This property is located in the Downtown Columbus character area. The following Planning Principle(s) apply to this application:

1. Maintain good traffic flow by retaining the downtown streets and alleys.
2. As uses change or expand, the city should ensure that smooth traffic flow will be maintained and that convenient parking is available.

This property is located within the Civic and Entertainment District established by the Downtown Columbus Strategic Development Plan. The Strategic Plan encourages a mix of uses in this area, and where parking is necessary, encourages the provision of structured parking above the ground floor with the first floor dedicated to retail and dining purposes.

Planning Consideration(s):

The following general site considerations, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

1. The applicants are requesting to install a freestanding sign at the corner of Lindsey and 2nd Street adjacent to their driveway entrance to the site. The proposed sign is 5 feet tall and 50 square feet in area. With their original sign plan approval in May of 2013, the applicants were approved for 2 wall signs. One sign will be located on the Brown Street frontage and will be 43.1 square feet in size. The second sign will be located on the S. R. 46 frontage and will be 44.5 square feet in size.
2. Per Zoning Ordinance Section 10(Table 10.1), a freestanding sign is not permitted in the CD zoning district unless the subject property exceeds 2 acres in size and with at least a 20 foot setback; in this particular case, a freestanding sign is not permitted. If a freestanding sign were permitted, the maximum allowed height is 6 feet and the maximum allowed area is 50 square feet.
3. The Zoning Ordinance does not permit properties in the CD (Commercial Downtown Center) zoning district to have freestanding signs because such signs are typically featured in suburban environments where buildings are set back from the street behind large parking lots and signs are primarily viewed by people in vehicles. The downtown zoning district is an urban environment that features buildings close to the street and many sidewalks for pedestrians. In order to respond and enhance the pedestrian-oriented environment, signage is reduced in size and in number. The

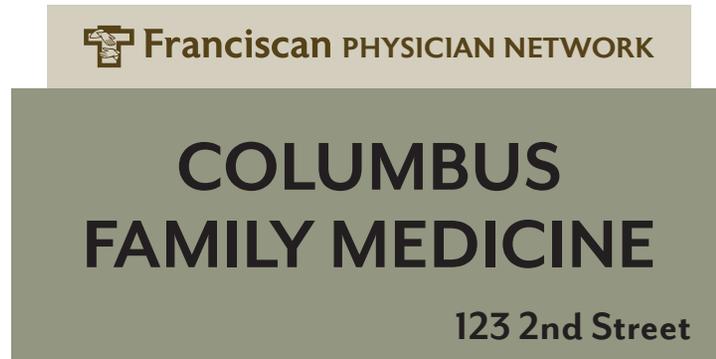
reduction in signage creates a comfortable and attractive atmosphere for pedestrians and other users of the downtown. The downtown zoning district encourages the use of more human scaled signage including wall, window, or pedestrian-oriented signs. Properties that are more suburban oriented and less pedestrian friendly (on sites larger than 2 acres & with at least a 20 foot setback) in the downtown zoning district are permitted freestanding signage as a result of their unique features.

4. The entrance to the Franciscan Alliance site is off of Lindsey Street. Lindsey Street is not a thru street and dead ends at the southern point of the subject property.
5. Traffic entering into town on S.R. 46 and exiting onto Brown Street will drive past the Franciscan Alliance building. Drivers will need to turn left onto 2nd Street and then left onto Lindsey Street to enter the parking lot. Drivers coming from the east side of town will most likely be traveling along 3rd street and would then turn left onto Lindsey Street to enter the parking lot.

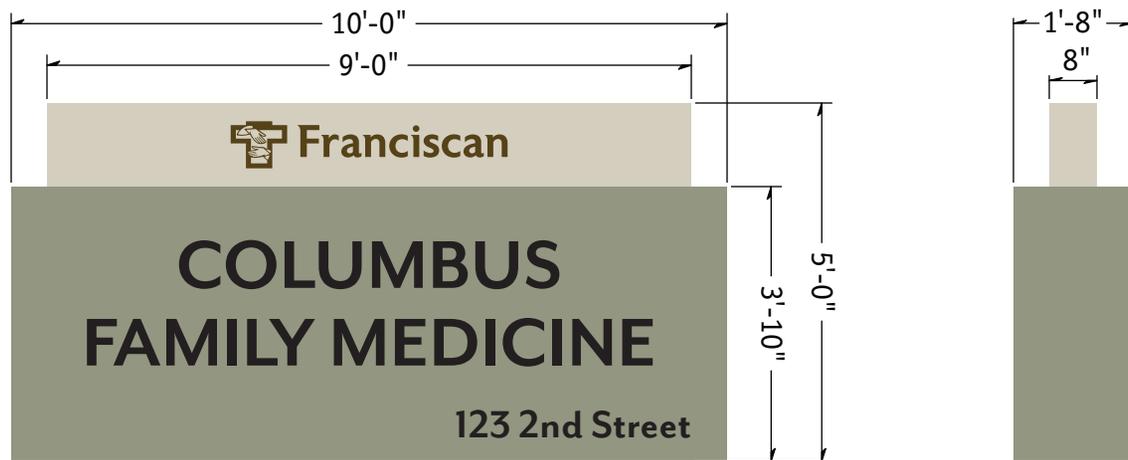
Columbus

Horizontal Monument Sign

Updated Sign Dimensions



Option 1



Option 2

Description: Internally Illuminated Aluminum Cabinet

Typestyle: Mr Eaves Sans

Colors: Black Copy on Allibaster Metallic

Mounting: TBD

Quantity: 1 Double Faced

Designer: John Bunce

Client: Franciscan Physician Network

SIGNSOLUTIONS

Contact: T. M. Hopkins

800-705-8258

Drawing Date: 3/28/14

This drawing was created to assist you in visualizing our proposal.
The original idea herein is property of Sign Solutions, Inc.
Permission to copy or revise this drawing can only be obtained through written
agreement with Sign Solutions, Inc.
COPYRIGHT 2014® ALL RIGHT RESERVED



= Problematic Intersections
Supporting the need for clarity

123 2nd St, Columbus, IN 47201, USA

→ Brown St.

2nd St.

Google earth



123 2nd St, Columbus, IN 47201, USA

→ Brown St.

2nd . St.

Google earth



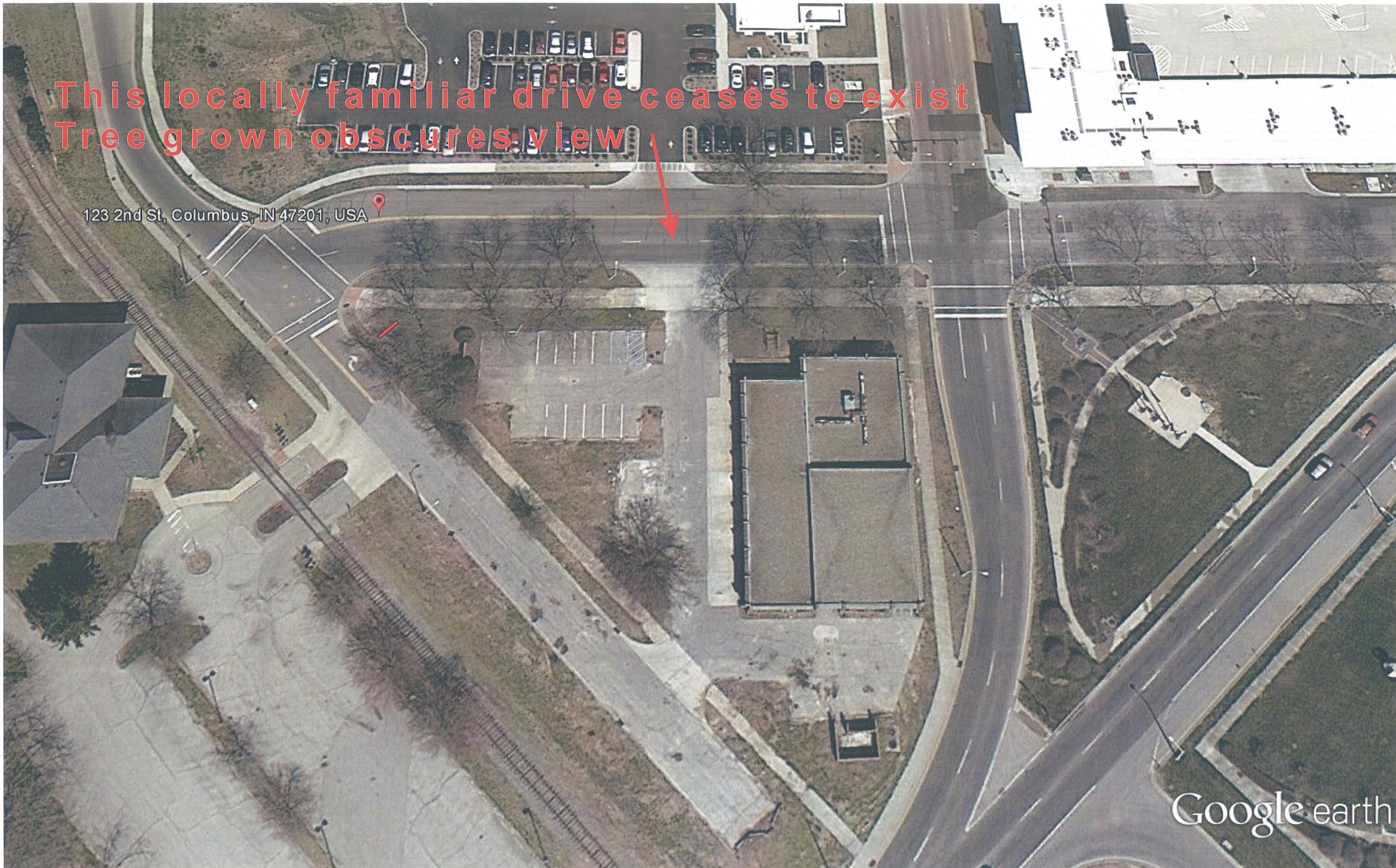
Dead End Sign
(Discouraging Entry)



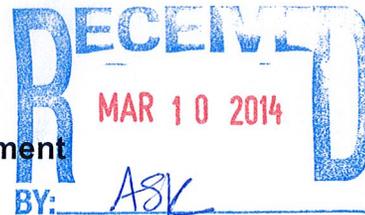
This locally familiar drive ceases to exist
Tree grown obscures view

123 2nd St, Columbus, IN 47201, USA

Google earth



Columbus – Bartholomew County Planning Department
Site Development Plan Application



Planning Department Use Only:

Jurisdiction: Columbus Bartholomew County Joint District

Docket No.: DP-14-05

Site Development Plan Application:

Application Type Initial Site Development Plan Minor Modification Site Development Plan Revision

Project Title / Facility Name: Franciscan Physician Network - Columbus Primary & Specialty Care

Type of Activity:

New Structure Change of Use Expansion of an Existing Structure and/or Use
 Mineral Extraction Site Feature Modification (Landscaping, Parking, Etc.)
 New Telecommunications Facility Temporary Use: from _____ to _____
(start date) (end date)

Total Number of Signs Requested 1 (please attach a separate worksheet for each sign)

Applicant Information (the person or entity that will own and/or execute what is proposed):

Name Franciscan Alliance, Inc.

Address P.O. Box 310, Mishawaka, Indiana 46546
(number) (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Phone No.: _____ Fax No.: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Property Owner Information (the "owner" does not include tenants or contract buyers):

Name: Tipton Park Offices, Inc.

Address 1930 Lafayette Avenue, Columbus, Indiana 47201
(number) (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Phone No.: 812-372-1143 Fax No.: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Tenant / Lessee Information (if applicable and different from the "applicant"):

Name: Franciscan Alliance, Inc.

Address P.O. Box 310, Mishawaka, Indiana 46546
(number) (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Phone No.: _____ Fax No.: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Notification Information (list the person to whom all correspondence regarding this application should be directed):

Name: Jeffrey C. Rocker, Beck Rocker, PC

Address 320 Franklin Street, Columbus, Indiana 47201
(number) (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Phone No.: 812-372-8858 Fax No.: 812-378-4732 E-mail Address: irocker@beckrocker.com

How would you prefer to receive information (please check one): Email Phone Fax Mail

Property Information:

Zoning: CD

Address 123 Second Street, Columbus, Indiana 47201
(number) (street) (city) (state) (zip)

or General Location (if no address has been assigned provide a street corner, subdivision lot number, etc):

Use & Structure Information (if applicable):

Proposed Building Area: 9199 square feet

Current Use: vacant Proposed Use (if different): medical office

For multiple buildings, please indicate the square footage of each use (attach an additional sheet if necessary):

Use: _____ square feet: _____

Supporting Information (please note the following which must be provided with the application):

- 5 initial copies of a site development plan (required based on the type of ZCC requested – see attached checklist). The site development plan must also show the location of any types of freestanding signs proposed (including the sign location, the proposed sign setback from all rights-of-way, the landscaping at the base of the proposed sign, and all sight visibility triangles).
- A completed worksheet for any proposed waiver or modification of the development standards mandated by the Zoning Ordinance (see attached form).
- A completed sign worksheet for each sign proposed (see attached form).
- A dimensional drawing showing the size of each face and indicating each sign's proposed location (either on the face of a structure, or elsewhere on the property).

Applicant's Signature / Acknowledgement:

The information included in and with this application is completely true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I understand that 20 copies of a revised Site Development Plan will be required for distribution to the Plan Commission.

(Applicant's Signature)

*Jeffrey C. Rigler, Attorney
for Applicant*

(Date)

3/10/14

Owner's Signature (the "owner" does not include tenants or contract buyers):

I authorize the filing of this application and will allow the Planning Department staff to enter this property for the purpose of analyzing this request. Further, I will allow a public notice sign to be placed and remain on the property until the processing of the request is complete.

(Owner's Signature)

William T. Behe

(Date)

3-10-14

(Owner's Signature)

(Date)

Columbus – Bartholomew County Planning Department
Site Development Plan
Development Standards Waiver / Modification Worksheet
(Attach a separate worksheet for each requested waiver and/or modification.)

Waiver or Modification Requested:

I am requesting a waiver or modification from Section 10 (Table 10.1 ref (4)) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow the following:

To allow for a freestanding sign on a site of less than 2 acres.

Waiver or Modification Request Justification:

The Columbus & Bartholomew County Zoning Ordinance [Section 12.8(E)] establishes specific criteria that must be met in order for a waiver or modification to be approved with a site development plan. The requested waiver or modification must meet one of the following criteria. Please describe how the waiver or modification request meets each of the following criteria.

The requested waiver or modification will better serve the intent of the development requirement.

See attached

The requested waiver or modification will better serve the intent of the zoning district in which the property is located.

See attached

The requested waiver or modification will better serve the general standards listed by Zoning Ordinance Section 12.8(E)(2) and repeated as follows: The proposed development (1) will be consistent with the comprehensive plan; (2) will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, convenience, or general welfare; (3) will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of the surrounding property; (4) will not impede the efficient, orderly, and normal development of the surrounding property; (5) provides adequate access, utilities, landscaping, buffering, and other improvements; (6) provides pedestrian and vehicle ingress, egress, and circulation in a manner that maintains adequate public safety and efficient movement.

See attached.

Waiver or Modification Requested:

I am requesting a waiver or modification from Section 10, Table 10.1 (Permitted sign User Reference (4) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow the following:

To allow for a freestanding sign on a site of less than 2 acres.

Waiver or Modification Request Justification:

The requested waiver or modification will better serve the intent of the development requirement.

The Zoning Ordinance indicates the intent of the signage standards as follows: The intent of the sign regulations is to avoid proliferation of signs; encourage design and placement of signs that are legible and effective for communication in the context of their location and surroundings; promote principles of quality design in community development; and enhance the city's and county's economic development and growth.

Initially, it should be noted that this site is more typical of a suburban context, much the same as First Financial Bank, Hotel Indigo, and other properties on the far western boundary of the downtown district. Those properties all associate more closely with a suburban context in terms of design. Those properties exist in an area of downtown which, both in terms of form and function, operate as a transition between the suburban west side of Columbus and the downtown district. As such, the signage for this property is appropriate in the context of that location.

The proposed signage is truly directional in nature and is intended to mitigate the confusion cause by the multiple street frontages which will allow for safe vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation. In addition, the proposed signage allows vehicular traffic to navigate the somewhat complicated route needed to access the site, as more clearly shown in the attached exhibits.

The proposed signage is sited such that it is not obtrusive to the downtown. It is sited where it can effectively distinguish this site without creating a visual impact on the quality of the downtown landscape, while effectively communicating the location of the business.

The building's wall signage is obscured by significant mature landscaping which is proposed to be maintained and supplemented by this plan. The additional trees added to the site will effectively obscure the wall signage completely. As such, building signage is not effective to communicate to drivers the location of the building.

Finally, the site currently has two (2) freestanding signs which the applicant intends to eliminate if approved.

The requested waiver or modification will better serve the intent of the zoning district in which the property is located.

This district is intended to serve as the primary commercial and activity center, where a complete range of goods, services, and entertainment is located. This district is intended to serve as a focal point and to be the most intensely developed area in the community. This district is further intended to support the continued use of historic structures, to ensure a pedestrian-focused character, and to enable continued investment.

This site has three separate frontages, one of which is a dead-end street. The redesign of the bridges has made access to this site somewhat confusing. In order to accommodate vehicular traffic clear directional signage is necessary to promote safe circulation. Signage at the proposed location truly serves travelers seeking this destination while posing no visual impediment to other property owners or pedestrians.

The building is obscured by significant mature landscaping which is proposed to be maintained and supplemented by this plan, effectively obscuring the proposed and approved wall signage. As such, building wall signage alone is not effective to communicate the proposed use to drivers.

The proposed sign is located at the north end of Lindsey and 2nd Street, where it will be visible to direct traffic to the applicant's site, but also in an area which will not be obtrusive or visually distracting to either drivers or pedestrian traffic. As such, a monument sign will not be appropriate or out of place. Finally, the two (2) existing freestanding signs are to be removed as a part of this development.

The requested waiver or modification will better serve the general standards listed by Zoning Ordinance Section 12.8(E)(2) and repeated as follows: The proposed development (1) will be consistent with the comprehensive plan; (2) will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, convenience, or general welfare; (3) will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of the surrounding property; (4) will not impede the efficient, orderly and normal development of the surrounding property; (5) provides adequate access, utilities, landscaping, buffering and other improvements; (6) provides pedestrian and vehicle ingress, egress, and circulation in a manner that maintains adequate public safety and efficient movement.

- (1) The signage will be consistent with the comprehensive plan's goals of contributing to the attractiveness and character of downtown, and will be complimentary of the downtown architecture. It further acknowledges the reality that the western boundary of downtown is characterized by structures that share certain traits more characteristic of suburban development (off-site parking, freestanding signage, drive through service, etc.) Further, economic success of this business will contribute to the economic vitality of downtown. The signage will be outside the main corridor to the downtown, thereby not impacting the attractiveness of the main thoroughfare. Furthermore, if approved, the applicant will remove the two (2) existing freestanding signs, thereby reducing the overall number and size of freestanding signs on site.

- (2) The signage proposed will improve safety beyond what would be provided by the wall signage alone as it would provide much needed guidance for vehicular traffic and will function as directional access to the site. Particularly as travelers approach the site from the west, they are faced with options to continue west on 3rd Street, leaving the downtown. In addition, once headed south, they are faced with a "Dead End" street sign, which dissuades them from continuing down Lindsey. As there is no access to the site from the south, east, or north, it is critical for public safety that vehicular traffic has some visible cue that indicates the location of the site access. The building is located at the extreme eastern portion of the site, which limits westbound traffic from seeing wall signage. Furthermore, the wall signage is at the same height as the canopy of the tree line (which is being supplemented along the northern boundary by the addition of more honey locust trees. As such, signage located towards the western side of the site, and located at a height which is below the canopy is critical for allowing vehicular traffic to make safe and informed decisions. The alternative to this sign would be that the existing landscaping would have to be pruned up significantly to expose the wall signage so that vehicular and pedestrian traffic could effectively locate the business.
- (3) The proposed signage will have no dilatory effect on the neighboring properties. Some, like First Financial Bank and Hotel Indigo, already have freestanding signage. It is a reality that this site operates as somewhat of an island. Very few properties adjoin it. As the proposed signage will decrease the confusion of applicant's customers, it will avoid confusion which is beneficial to the neighbors. Furthermore, the location of the sign is such that it does not visually impact the neighbors.
- (4) The signage will support, and not interfere, with pedestrian safety by providing clear directional guidance to vehicular traffic, which will be furthered by Applicant's proposed closure of the 2nd Street drive. The surrounding areas are developed and will not be negatively impacted by the proposed signage.
- (5) This proposal provides adequate access, utilities, landscaping, buffering and other improvements which have previously been approved.
- (6) The safety and efficiency of circulation of vehicular traffic will be greatly improved by this proposed sign. The applicant's site adjoins streets where bi-directional traffic becomes one way streets; dead end streets, and is the only existing operational location presently. This site is truly unique in its access challenges. Furthermore, the local citizens are unfamiliar with access to this site given the years of disuse, as well as the longtime vacancy of the former pumphouse site. Provision of reasonable freestanding signage will avoid unnecessary and potentially dangerous vehicular confusions.