

### **Naper Ridge Plaza, Request for Sign Variance**

Naper Ridge LLC is requesting a sign variance to replace the existing monument sign serving Naper Ridge Plaza, at 1303-1363 Ridgeland Avenue, Naperville, IL (the "Development").

The Development is currently occupied by Office Depot and a Fifth Third Bank at the north-east corner of Naper Boulevard and Ridgeland Avenue. The existing sign, which was conforming when erected in approximately 1993, is located on the outlot portion of the development adjacent to Ogden Avenue on the 5/3<sup>rd</sup> Bank's lot. Because of changes to the signage code since the sign was erected, the existing monument sign is now considered non-conforming. The sign contains two panels (one for 5/3<sup>rd</sup> Bank and one for Office Depot), and the sign is located on 5/3<sup>rd</sup> Bank's lot within the development. As a result, current signage codes consider the Office Depot panel on the sign as "off site" advertising for Office Depot.

Naper Ridge LLC is requesting a variance to replace the sign with a modern, masonry sign. The old sign is repairable, but we would prefer to replace it with the more attractive proposed masonry sign. The request will allow us to continue to provide signage for Office Depot along Naper Boulevard on the replacement sign, while significantly improving the overall aesthetics of the development.

The new sign also requires a variance for height and size.

Situated at the Northern end of Naperville, the Petitioner considers this site to be one of the "gateways" to Naperville and would like to improve the curb appeal of the project, while at the same time improving visibility to help both Office Depot and 5/3<sup>rd</sup> operations in a difficult retail environment.

## **NAPER RIDGE LLC: Petition for Sign Variance, Height Variance**

1. The variance is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Title and the adopted comprehensive master plan.

The Petitioner believes the proposed sign is in harmony with the general intent of title 6-16-1 of the Municipal Code.

The proposed sign design allows for sign panels of similar prominence and size to the existing sign, but also has a two foot architectural “base” constructed of masonry. We feel the addition of this base makes the sign more attractive and helps keep with the stated goals of the Ogden Avenue Corridor Enhancement Initiative. Conforming to the height requirements of the sign code would require us to diminish the size of our tenants’ panels and or impact the aesthetics and scale of the proposed sign base and masonry features.

2. Strict enforcement of the Title would result in practical difficulties or impose exceptional hardships due to special and unusual conditions which are not generally found on other properties in the same zoning district.

It would be detrimental to our tenants to replace the existing sign panels with a significantly smaller sign in an already challenging retail environment. At the same time, we wish to improve the property and the visual appeal of the sign. If the new sign were to conform with the code requirements, we would be eliminating some or all of the masonry base and diminishing the aesthetics of the sign. Realistically, if the variance is not granted, we will be forced to continue to maintain the existing sign.

3. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood and will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent property.

The Petitioner’s proposed sign includes a masonry base and surround. This is significantly more attractive than signs for several surrounding uses and the existing sign on site. The proposed monument sign is in keeping with the intent to aesthetically improve the Ogden Avenue Corridor. The petitioner’s proposed sign is significantly lower than the signage on several neighboring properties to the west and is more attractive than the “pole” signs currently in the area. The proposed sign is one foot taller than the existing sign, which as previously stated allows for the attractive masonry base and surround to be part of the sign.

## **NAPER RIDGE LLC: Petition for Sign Variance, Sign Area Variance**

1. The variance is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Title and the adopted comprehensive master plan.

The Petitioner believes the proposed sign is in harmony with the general intent of title 6-16-1 of the Municipal Code.

Existing signage is grandfathered and is larger than would be currently allowed under the sign code. Sign code allows for a total of 45 square feet on Naper Boulevard due to the posted speed limit of 40 mph. Because we are obligated to provide signage to both of our tenants on the pylon sign, we need to provide panels of similar size and stature on any new sign. Our new design will allow us to replace the dated sign with a new more attractive masonry sign while still providing prominent signage for our Tenant's along Naper Boulevard. If we had to reduce the sign to conforming size, we would be significantly diminishing the size and prominence of our tenants' signage along Naper Boulevard.

The proposed sign is significantly more attractive than the existing non-conforming sign, granting the variance will allow us to install a more attractive sign for the development in keeping with the goals of the Ogden Avenue Corridor Enhancement Initiative.

The new sign will be located in the space occupied by the existing sign, traffic and pedestrian site lines will not be impacted by installation of the new sign, thereby fulfilling the Title's intent to enhance and protect the general public.

The proposed sign is also in keeping with the stated goal of advancing the City's economy, by allowing continued identification for Office Depot and Fifth Third along Naper Boulevard on a prominent and attractive monument sign.

2. Strict enforcement of the Title would result in practical difficulties or impose exceptional hardships due to special and unusual conditions which are not generally found on other properties in the same zoning district.

It would be detrimental to our tenants to replace the existing sign panels with a significantly smaller sign in an already challenging retail environment. At the same time, we wish to improve the property and the visual appeal of the sign. If the new sign were to conform with the code requirements, we would be materially reducing signage and visibility for Office Depot along Naper Boulevard. Realistically, if the variance is not granted, we will be forced to continue to maintain the existing sign.

3. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood and will not be a substantial detriment to adjacent property.

The Petitioner's proposed sign includes a masonry base and surround. This is significantly more attractive than signs for several surrounding uses and the existing sign on site. The proposed monument sign is in keeping with the intent to aesthetically improve the Ogden Avenue Corridor. The petitioner's sign will not be noticeably larger than the existing sign from adjacent properties (in fact it is significantly smaller than several in the area) and will be more aesthetically pleasing.