



City of
Lawrence
Indiana

Address: 4700 Post Rd
Parcel #: 4002431
Docket #: 26-LSV-05
Hearing Date: April 21, 2026
Council District: 2 ~ Rick Wells

Petitioner: AutoZone
4700 Post Rd
Lawrence, IN 46226

Agent: Jones Sign Co. Inc.
speters@jonessign.com
1711 Scheuring Rd
De Pere, WI 54115

Application:

Variance of Development Standards for the from the City of Indianapolis Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances that AutoZone have own freestanding sign on their parcel.

744-906-1. Primary Freestanding Signs in Commercial and Industrial Districts

C. Number of Signs permitted - Maximum one pole per street frontage; if frontage to which the sign is oriented is greater than 500ft. an additional freestanding sign is permitted (minimum 300ft. separation between freestanding signs on site).

Proposed Pole sign is in an integrated center with existing Freestanding signage. Proposed signage would exceed number of signs permitted and be located less than 300 ft from an existing sign. Proposed sign will be 154 feet from existing sign.

Analysis:

The petitioner, AutoZone, is requesting a Variance of Development Standards to allow an additional freestanding (pole) sign on a parcel located within an integrated commercial center at 4700 Post Road in Lawrence, Indiana.

Pursuant to Section 744-906-1 of the Consolidated Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance, only one freestanding sign is permitted per street frontage unless the frontage exceeds 500 feet, with a required minimum separation of 300 feet between signs.

The subject site currently functions as part of a larger integrated commercial development that already contains existing freestanding signage. The proposed sign would:

- Exceed the maximum number of permitted freestanding signs for the development, and
- It is located approximately 154 feet from an existing sign, which does not meet the required 300-foot separation standard.



Site Context and Zoning Considerations

The property is zoned C4 (Community-Regional Commercial District) and is surrounded by a mix of commercial and special use zoning districts.

The site is also located within a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay and designated as Metro within the Comprehensive Plan, which encourages coordinated, integrated site design and reduced visual clutter.

Freestanding signage regulations are intended to:

- Limit visual clutter along commercial corridors
- Promote coordinated signage within multi-tenant or integrated developments
- Maintain traffic safety and visibility

Evaluation of Variance Criteria

1. Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

While the proposed sign may not create a direct safety hazard (e.g., obstruction of visibility triangles), the cumulative impact of additional freestanding signage contributes to corridor clutter, which the ordinance specifically seeks to minimize.

2. Adjacent Property Impacts

The addition of another freestanding sign near an existing sign may contribute to visual congestion along North Post Road. While not necessarily injurious in isolation, it is inconsistent with the intent of coordinated signage within integrated commercial centers.

3. Practical Difficulties

The petitioner asserts that additional signage is necessary for visibility. However:

- The site has already received multiple zoning approvals and variances to accommodate the AutoZone development.
- The property is part of a larger commercial center where shared signage is anticipated and encouraged.
- Alternative signage options (e.g., wall signage or monument-style signage integrated with existing signage plans) may provide adequate visibility without requiring deviation from ordinance standards.

As such, the hardship appears to be self-imposed and not unique to the property.

Staff Recommendation: DENIAL

Staff recommends denial based on the following findings:

1. The request does not meet the intent of Section 744-906-1, which limits the number and spacing of freestanding signs to reduce visual clutter and promote coordinated development.
2. The property is part of an integrated commercial center where shared signage is expected, and an additional freestanding sign undermines that planning approach.
3. The petitioner has not demonstrated a unique hardship sufficient to justify the variance, as reasonable alternative signage options exist.
4. Approval would set an undesirable precedent for additional freestanding signage within similar commercial developments along the corridor.



Alternative (If BZA is Inclined to Approve)

If the Council chooses to approve the request, staff recommend the following conditions:

1. The sign shall be reduced to a **monument-style sign** rather than a pole sign.
2. The sign height and area shall be minimized to the greatest extent practicable.
3. The sign shall be integrated into a unified signage plan for the overall development.
4. Illumination shall be downward-directed and not create glare onto adjacent properties or the public right-of-way.
5. Final location and design shall be subject to review and approval by the Department of Public Works or Planning.

Summary of the Subject Property Zoning Standards

Current Zoning Designation:	C4
Surrounding Property Zoning	
North:	C5
South:	SU1
East:	CS
West:	C3, C4, & D7
Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation:	
Current Land Use:	Commercial
Compact Context Area:	Metro
Transit-Oriented Development Overlay	Yes
Relevant Code Sections:	744-906-1

**Table 744-906-1.
Primary Freestanding Signs in Commercial and Industrial Districts**

	Commercial	Industrial	Mixed-Use
C. Number of Signs permitted			
Choices referenced in columns to right, but in no case more than 2 signs per frontage	Pole	Maximum one pole per street frontage; if frontage to which the sign is oriented is greater than 500ft. an additional freestanding sign is permitted (minimum 300ft. separation between freestanding signs on site)	Maximum one pole per street frontage; if frontage to which the sign is oriented is greater than 500ft. an additional freestanding sign is permitted (minimum 300ft. separation between freestanding signs on site)
			Not Permitted



Previous Petitions:

2012 LUV 011 ~ Approved Variance of Use to provide for the indoor and outdoor recreational uses shown on the site plan submitted to the file, including an outdoor mobile zip line.

2015 LUV 007 ~ Approved Variance of Use to provide for a 920 square foot accessory building for a temporary mechanics shop to be used for gocart storage long term. And, the reconstruction of an approximately 1,616 square foot mechanics building, related to the existing indoor and outdoor recreational uses.

2020 ZON 025 ~ Approved ReZone of 6.42 acres from DA to C4 to include but not limited to a reception/banquet hall facility

2024 LSE 006 ~ Approved of Special Exception to provide for the redevelopment of an existing developed property that would allow for construction and operation of an Extra-Large Retail Sales/Service Facility. AutoZone Development, LLC, proposes to construct a 32,500 square foot facility for the sale of automotive parts.

1. Special Exception to allow 32,500 square feet. Chapter 742, Section 07, Table 742-207-1 "Commercial and Industrial Use Limitations" (retail greater than 20,000 square foot not permitted).

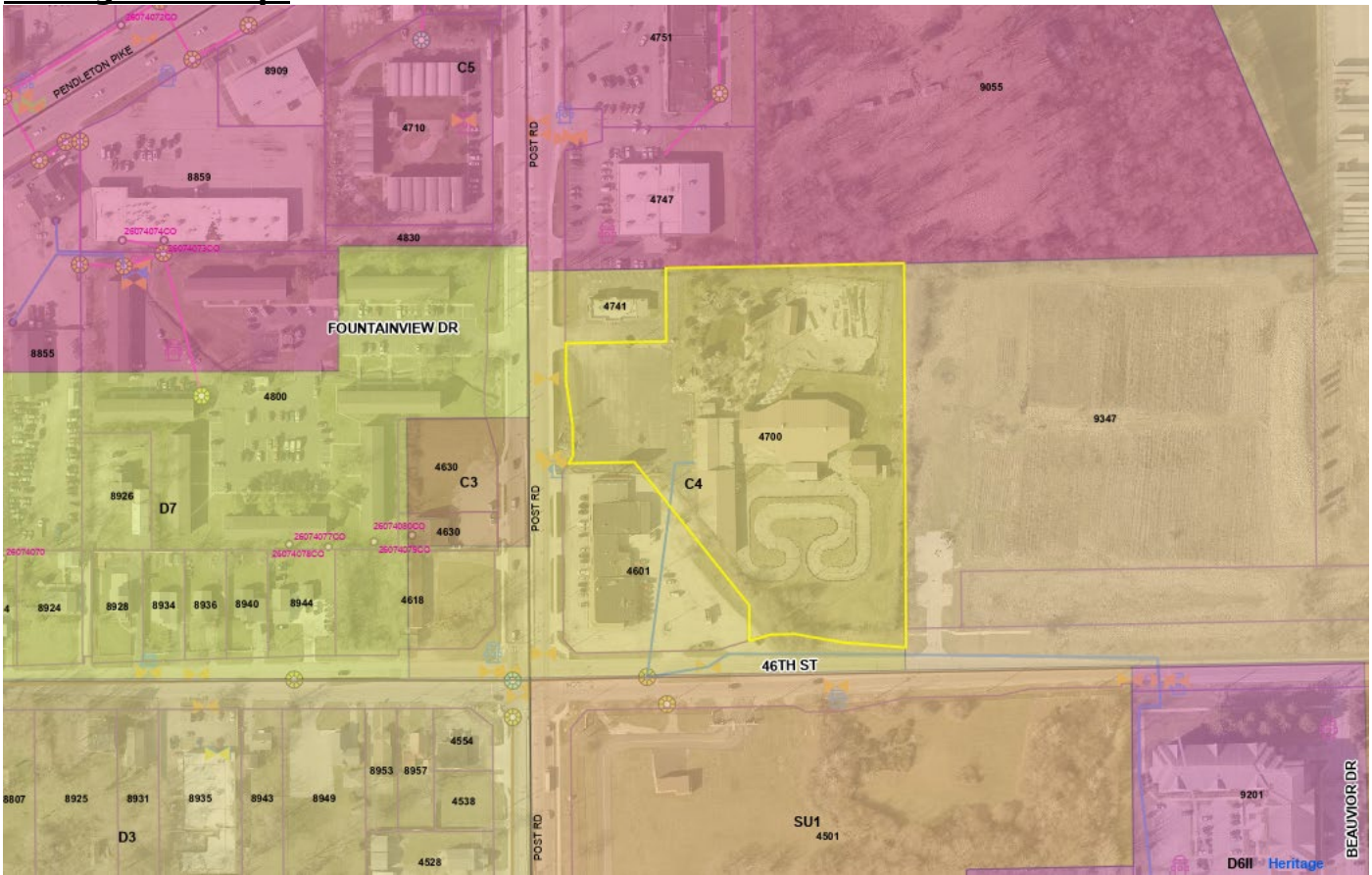
2. Variance of Development Standards of Table 744-702-2 "Private Frontage Design Standards", for which relief is being sought:

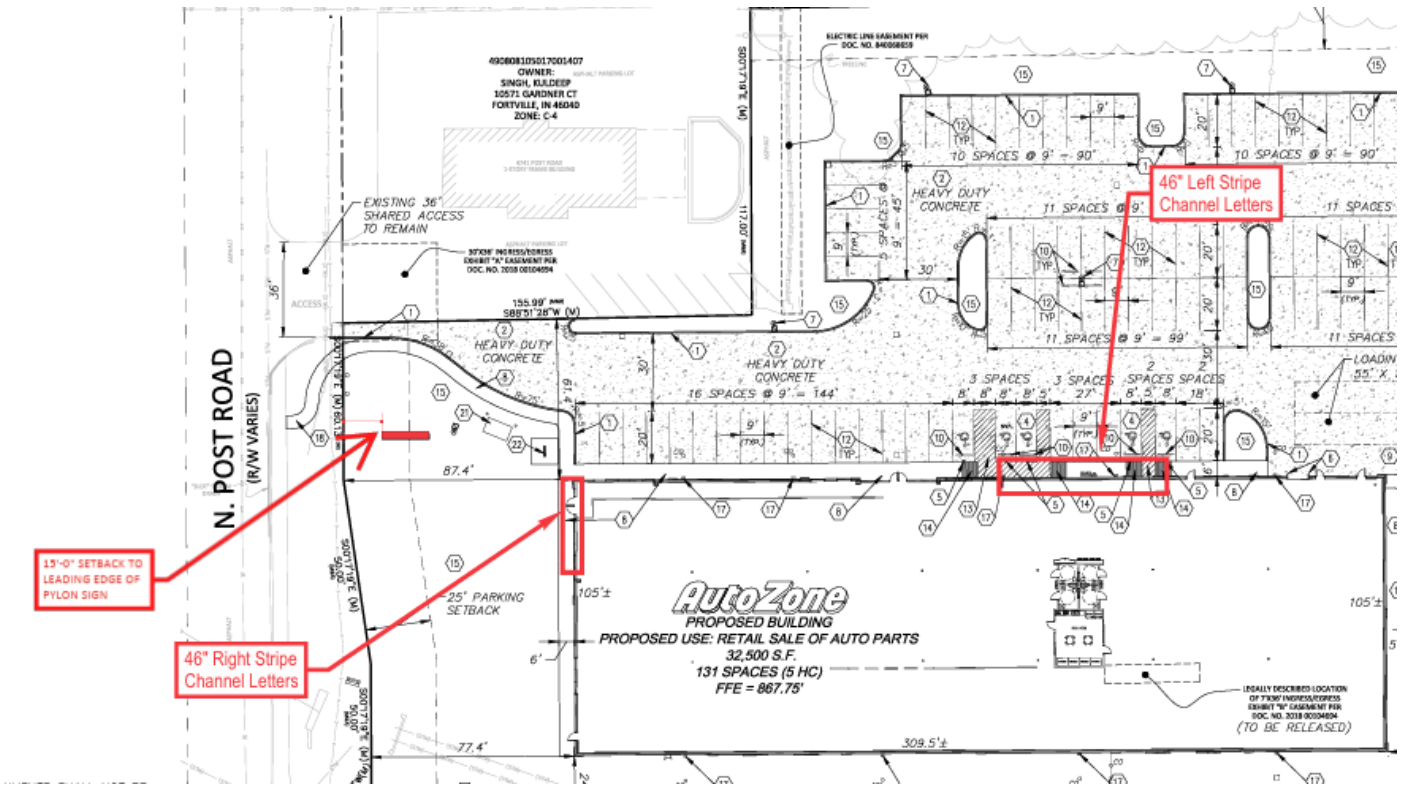
- a. Driveway Width ~ 24 feet allowed. Request to allow shared driveway measuring 36 feet to remain. No modifications to the existing driveway are proposed. No new driveway(s) are being proposed.
- b. Surface Parking Limits ~ The required parking frontage limit of 40% along the front building line will be exceeded. The proposed parking frontage width is 70%.
- c. Front Building Line ~ 0 feet to 25 feet setbacks are allowed with 60% front building line coverage. The proposed building setback is 95.5 feet at the southwestern building corner and 105.4 feet at the northwestern building corner from the front property line.
 - i. In addition, relief from the requirement of 60% front building line coverage is requested.

2025 LSV 010 ~ Approved Variance of Development Standards to allow for an AutoZone retail store on an existing parcel which is 5.5 acres in size, which is classified as "Automobile, Motorcycle, and Light Vehicle Service or Repair" (such use limited to lots no larger than 0.5 acres)



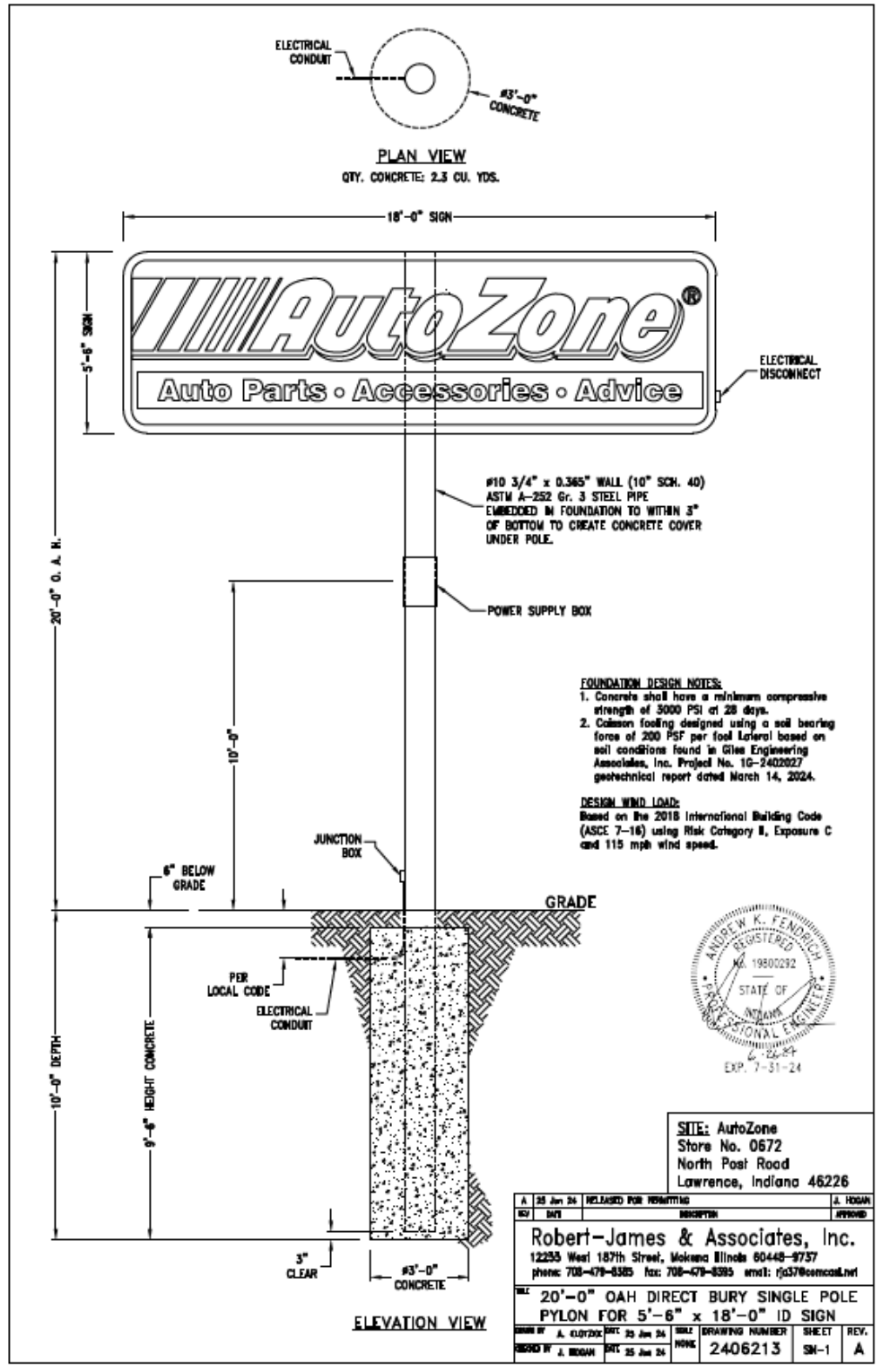
Zoning Base Map:







Elevation:





Findings of Fact (as provided by applicant):

1. THE GRANT WILL NOT BE INJURIOUS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, MORALS AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE:

The proposed freestanding sign will be installed outside all visibility triangles, rights-of-way, and easements, ensuring it does not obstruct traffic sight lines or create hazards. The sign is consistent with commercial signage found throughout similar business corridors, maintaining the character of the area.

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:

Freestanding signage is common along N Post Rd and similar commercial sites in the vicinity. The proposed sign is professionally designed, appropriately scaled, and will complement the surrounding commercial uses. It will not cast light onto neighboring properties or create noise or traffic impacts, thereby preserving adjacent property values.

3. THE STRICT APPLICATION OF THE TERMS OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE WILL RESULT IN PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE USE OF THE PROPERTY BECAUSE:

Without a permitted freestanding sign, AutoZone would lack adequate visibility to passing motorists on N Post Rd, a primary corridor requiring roadside identification for safe and efficient customer access. Building-mounted signage alone is insufficient due to site orientation, setback, and traffic speed. The restriction creates practical difficulty in operating a retail business on this commercially zoned site.