



**CITY OF SNELLVILLE
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF APPEALS**

VARIANCE CASE SUMMARY

June 14, 2022

CASE NUMBER: #BOA 22-04

REQUEST: Variances from the Sign Ordinance to utilize the existing monument and directional ground/wayfinding signage that is nonconforming to the current sign regulations for the rebranding of the existing ground signage.

LOCATION: Piedmont Eastside Hospital (Main Campus)
1700 Medical Way, Georgia

TAX PARCELS: R5041 175 and R5041 372

CURRENT ZONING: CI (Civic Institutional) District

PROJECT: Signage Rebranding for the Hospital Main Campus

PROPERTY OWNER: Eastside Medical Center, LLC
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

APPLICANT/CONTACT: Philip Henry
The Sign Bros.
706-850-6172 or phillip@thesignbros.com

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions



**CITY OF SNELLVILLE
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
BOARD OF APPEALS**

VARIANCE CASE ANALYSIS

June 14, 2022

TO: Snellville Board of Appeals

REGULAR MEETING DATE: June 14, 2022

FROM: Jason Thompson, Director
Department of Planning and Development

CASE NUMBER: **#BOA 22-04**

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The Department of Planning and Development has received a variance application from Phillip Henry, The Sign Bros. representing their client Eastside Medical Center, LLC, requesting variances from the Sign Ordinance to utilize the existing monument and directional/wayfinding ground signage that is nonconforming to the current sign regulations for the rebranding of the Piedmont Eastside Hospital (Main Campus).

Piedmont Healthcare recently acquired both the main campus and south campus of Eastside Medical Center and as part of the acquisition is updating the current signage with the Piedmont standard to rebrand and to improve patient navigation and wayfinding to and from the hospital.

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting variances from Sec. 207-6 (Signs) of Article 7 of Chapter 200 of the Snellville Unified Development Ordinance to allow the rebranding of the existing monument and directional/wayfinding ground signage identified on the Signage Variance Matrix for the Piedmont Eastside Main Campus attached as Exhibit "A" and shown on the sign details attached as Exhibit "B" for:

- A. Primary monument sign number 10;
- B. Secondary monument signs numbered 9, 14, and 15;
- C. Primary directional signs numbered 2-8; 12, 13, and 22;
- D. Secondary directional signs numbered 1-21.

STANDARDS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Pursuant to Sec. 103-7.2.B of Chapter 100 of the UDO, the City of Snellville Zoning Ordinance, the City finds the following standards are relevant in considering all applications for a Variance.

1. That special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not applicable to other land, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district;

Applicant Response: (1) Hospitals have a unique need for a robust wayfinding system, requiring signage above and beyond normal businesses. (2) The campus has multiple buildings and entrances, which require their own entrance signs. (3) The size, height, and setback requirements for interior project directional signage impair visibility for vehicular and pedestrian traffic to navigate the hospital campus. (4) Repeat point number 3 for monument signage.

2. That literal interpretation of the provisions of this UDO would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same district under the terms of this UDO;

Applicant Response: The sign code currently allows other properties to enjoy sufficient wayfinding for their intended audience. Due to the size and complexity of the campus with multiple entrances, these restrictions do not allow for sufficient visibility and/or legibility {or intuitive wayfinding at the hospital.

3. That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant; and

Applicant Response: Our intent is merely to replace the existing signage with improved signage of a similar size and setback. We are not looking to expand upon the existing signage with this request. Our goal is to maintain the same level of visibility while improving the content to improve patient experience and safety.

4. That granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this UDO to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district.

Applicant Response: While the hospital technically falls into the same zoning category as other businesses, it can be argued that it is unique in its services provided and the complexity of navigating the campus. In addition, the intended viewers are often in a state of distress or grief, which further impairs their ability to navigate to the intended location, which makes intuitive, highly visible signage even more crucial.

VARIANCE ANALYSIS:

Since the time that the existing signage was installed, the City's sign ordinance has undergone several amendments, resulting in a more regulatory sign code for the different sign types. As mentioned in the applicant's Letter of Intent, the purpose of the variance request is to allow for the rebranding of all existing ground signage and to improve patient navigation and wayfinding to and from the hospital. The applicant is proposing to reuse as many of the existing stone bases and poles as possible, and retain the existing square footage of the current sign faces, while also not increasing the height of the existing signs.

The City's Sign Ordinance regulates the following sign types:

Monument Sign, defined as a permanent ground sign designed so the base of the sign face is flush with the supporting base and the supporting base is flush with the ground. Sign must include a solid, decorative base and may include a decorative frame. The base must be at least as wide as the sign and/or frame upon it and a minimum of two feet in height. Decorative base and frame materials include stone, brick, EIFS or true hard coat stucco. No support posts may be exposed. Electrical disconnect and/or meter base may not be visible from the public right-of-way.

And, regulated as follows:

- a. Monument sign area is defined as the entire area within a continuous perimeter, enclosing the extreme limits of the sign structure (overall height by overall width), not to include the first 24 inches of the base height of a monument sign.
- b. One monument sign is allowed per road frontage.
- c. The maximum square footage of the sign is based upon 0.50 square feet per 1 foot of road frontage or 64 square feet, whichever is larger.
- d. In lieu of allowing a second monument sign, corner lots with two adjacent road frontages may utilize 30% of the allowable sign area from the second frontage for the sign area calculation of the one monument sign. Sign area variances of Sec. 207-6.6.C are not allowed.
- e. The maximum sign area allowed is 225 square feet.

- f. Signs more than 5 high must be set back at last 10 feet from the right-of-way. Signs more than 10 feet high must be set back at least 15 feet from the public right-of-way.
- g. Monument base must be constructed of natural brick or stone (not painted or stained); or EIFS/true hard coat stucco painted or stained using colors from .I.F.S./true hard coat stucco painted or stained using colors from the official City color palette shown in Figure 208-1.4. Foamcore monument signs are prohibited.
- h. Monument base shall be at least as wide as the sign and/or frame upon it and a minimum of 2 feet in height. No support posts may be exposed.
- i. Electrical disconnect and/or meter base must not be visible from the public right-of-way.
- j. Monument sign must include the numeric street address of the property upon which it is located. The numbers used to identify the address may be no less than 5 inches in height and no more than 9 inches in height.

Freestanding Sign, defined as a permanent sign with no decorative base that is supported by one or more upright poles, columns, or braces placed in or on the ground and not attached to any building or structure.

Wayfinding Sign is a freestanding sign type that is regulated as follows:

- a. Not to exceed twelve (12) feet in height including support post(s) and pier.
- b. Not to exceed four (4) signs per property.
- c. Sign must meet the setback requirements of Sec. 207-6.6.A.
- d. Sign may be internally illuminated.
- e. Sign may be an element of an electronic message board sign, subject to the requirements of Sec. 207-6.8 (Electronic Message Boards).
- f. Electrical service to be provided by underground service only. Solar powered lighting is prohibited.
- g. If located in a parking area, the first 24-inches of support post(s) height must be encapsulated by a concrete pier.

Directional Sign is a freestanding sign type that is regulated as follows:

- a. Not to exceed six (6) square feet in total sign area.
- b. Not to exceed three (3) feet in height including support post(s).
- c. Generally located at or near the entry and exit drives to a public roadway.
- d. The maximum number of signs permitted is two (2) per road frontage or two (2) per curb cut, whichever is greater.
- e. Signs must meet the setback requirements of Sec. 207-6.6.A.

Interior Project Directional Sign is authorized in all developments or planned subdivisions of land within any nonresidential districts, approved special uses in

residential districts and places of worship as an approved special use subject to the following:

- a. May not be located within 100 feet of an entrance to a project.
- b. Maximum sign area of each sign may not exceed 16 square feet.
- c. Maximum sign height shall not exceed 6 feet (OAH).
- d. Only one such sign may be located at each internal intersection of private driveway or public streets within the project.

Sec. 207-6.6.A (Setbacks): Signs may not be located in the right-of-way and must be at least 10 feet from the back of the curb or edge of the pavement of the adjacent street, whichever is greater. Signs on a corner lot within 50 feet of the intersection of rights-of-way must be out of right-of-way or at least 15 feet from the back of the curb or edge of pavement of the adjacent streets, whichever is greater.

The requested variances are to allow for: a) a reduction in the minimum sign setback from the right-of-way or edge of curb line; b) allow for an increase in the allowable sign area for monument and internal directional/wayfinding signs; c) allow for more than one monument and/or internal directional/wayfinding sign per property; and d) allow for directional/wayfinding signs that are less than 100-feet from the hospital entrance.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Planning and Development recommends **Approval** of the variances from the Sign Ordinance for the signs identified on the Signage Variance Matrix for the Piedmont Eastside Main Campus attached as Exhibit “A” and shown on the sign details attached as Exhibit “B” for the following signs:

- A. Primary monument sign number 10;
- B. Secondary monument signs numbered 9, 14, and 15;
- C. Primary directional signs numbered 2-8; 12, 13, and 22;
- D. Secondary directional signs numbered 1-21.

Approval of the variances are subject to the attachment of the following recommended **Conditions:**

1. Applicant shall submit sign and building permit application(s) for review and approval by the Director of Planning and Development.
2. All 2021 City of Snellville real property taxes, storm water utility fees, late, interest and other fees for tax parcel R5041 175 and R5041 372 shall be paid-in-full upon submittal of any sign permits associated with this variance case.