

## NARRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

### VARIANCE

A. General Property Information:				
1.	Property Address or Parcel Identification Number (PIN):	5200 Oneida St., Commerce City, CO 80216		
2.	Applicant's Name:	FRED ORR		
3.	Property Owner's Name:	ONEIDA, LLC		
4.	Current Zoning of the Subject Property:	I-1 (Industrial)		
5.	Future Land Use Plan Designation:	Industrial/Heavy Industrial		

B. Background Information:		Yes	No	
1.	Is this request an amendment to an existing variance?		✓	If yes, what was the previous case number? Case # _____
2.	Is this application an attempt to correct a violation of some kind?		✓	If yes, please provide a copy of the violation.
3.	Do you anticipate having employees at this location?	✓		If yes, how many employees do you anticipate? <b>TBD</b> _____ employees

The following pages contain specific questions about the nature of your request. Therefore, it is in your best interest to answer them in as much detail as possible to help limit the number of questions and review cycles.

**DO NOT ANSWER WITH A 'YES' OR 'NO' OR 'N/A' - BE SPECIFIC!**

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### C. Specific Requests for Information

1. What is your hardship? Describe in **detail** what makes your property or circumstance so unique that it is unfeasible for you to meet the applicable standard? *(A hardship **does not** include: (1) it would increase the value of the property; (2) it would cost too much; or (3) the land could produce more profit, supply jobs, or increase the tax base.)*

The I-270 centerline sits 8'-6" higher than our sign location, and a CDOT-installed Jersey barrier further obscures visibility. A sign at code-permitted height is screened from view. At a lateral offset of 163', drivers on I-270 (posted 55 mph) need a higher mounting point to safely detect and read the sign. This elevation difference and freeway infrastructure are unique constraints not faced by comparable parcels.

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2.	Describe in <b>detail</b> how the hardship, stated in Question #1, is not been self-imposed.

The sub-grade and barrier conditions are legacy infrastructure installed and maintained by CDOT. The applicant did not request the grade differential nor the median barrier; rather, both pre-date this development. The property’s industrial zoning, lot configuration, and building placement were driven by site constraints and logistical needs, not by a desire to exceed sign limits.

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3a.	What uses are located adjacent to the subject property?
North:	Residential
South:	Industrial/Heavy Industrial
East:	Industrial/Heavy Industrial
West:	Interstate-270 and CDOT right-of-way

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3b. Will the variance cause a real or perceived loss in surrounding property values?

No impact. The sign faces the freeway, not adjacent residential areas, and its visibility from homes is minimal. Lighting is dimmed, color-static, and off overnight to prevent nuisance.

3c. Will the variance substantially or permanently injure the legal use of any adjacent conforming property?

No. The sign does not intrude into neighboring parcels or obstruct views. It improves navigation and reduces last-minute lane changes, indirectly benefiting corridor function.

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4. Will the requested variance alter the character of the neighborhood?

No. The sign uses high-quality materials and matches the project's architectural character. Its scale is consistent with corridor signage norms, especially for highway-facing parcels.

5. Will the requested variance block solar access, create glare, or produce air pollution impacting the surrounding area?

No. The sign is static, LED-lit with internal shielding, and off at night. It does not affect solar access, emit glare, or produce pollution.

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6. Will the requested variance create or increase traffic and/or parking problems in the area?

No. The sign helps reduce confusion at freeway speeds, which improves safety. It will not increase site traffic.

7. Will the construction or operation for which the variance is needed create a police, fire, or building safety hazard?

None. The sign will meet all structural and electrical code requirements and improves on-site safety through better legibility.

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8.	Why is the requested variance the minimum needed?
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Yes. No area increase is requested. The sign is 35' tall, but if measured from I-270 CL grade, it has an effective height of 26'-6". This request is solely to restore visibility, not to expand scale.

## **AV25-0006 (11.7.25)**

### **Sign Height Variance for freestanding sign along I-270**

#### **1. Can the proposed 35-foot sign be reduced in height? (City Request Comment)**

We have evaluated whether a shorter sign could serve the project's needs and, after thorough analysis, we do not believe a reduced height would provide the necessary visibility, legibility, or public safety benefit.

Due to a combination of factors, including the ~8'-6" vertical grade separation between I-270 and the sign base, the presence of a Jersey barrier/median, and the 163-foot setback from the freeway centerline—lowering the sign would cause significant portions of the address to be partially or fully obstructed from the view of eastbound motorists, especially those in low-profile vehicles or during congested, stop-and-go traffic.

Additionally, the lack of a nearby exit and indirect access to the site requires drivers to make wayfinding decisions well in advance. Without full visibility, this risks missed turns or abrupt lane changes.

#### **2. Why is the 35-foot height needed? (City Request Comment)**

The 35-foot height is not arbitrary or excessive, it is the minimum necessary height to restore safe visibility that has been compromised by conditions beyond our control.

This sign is intended to function as a long-range address confirmation tool for traffic traveling at 55 mph. The 24-inch letterforms included in the design were selected specifically to ensure legibility at that speed, factoring in driver recognition time, lateral offset, and viewing angle. At 35', these letters fully clear the Jersey barrier and are visible from eastbound I-270.

The additional height also helps offset other existing obstructions such as the Jersey barrier and roadway elevation transitions that disproportionately affect sightlines for low-profile passenger vehicles.

#### **3. Can the sign be reduced and still be legible to motorists? (City Request Comment)**

No. A reduction in height would meaningfully impact the sign's effectiveness. Based on both our internal visibility testing and real-world crane flagging exercises performed on site, we have confirmed that a reduced-height sign would result in the bottom portion of the address ("Oneida") being blocked, particularly during times of slowed traffic or in conditions involving truck traffic, median viewing interference, or low vehicle profiles.

In essence, a lower sign would sacrifice readability when drivers need it most and compromise the sign's primary role as a safety and navigation asset.

In conclusion, we respectfully assert that the 35' height represents the minimum necessary relief to overcome unique topographic and infrastructural constraints.

- Justified by a non-self-imposed hardship (grade separation and Jersey barrier)
- Essential to restore legibility at freeway speeds
- Compliant with area, setback, and lighting standards
- Supportive of Commerce City's goals for economic vitality, corridor identity, and public safety



# 5200 ONEIDA STREET

## SIGNAGE VARIANCE 1 - FREEWAY SIGN

5200 ONEIDA STREET COMMERCE CITY, CO 80022

**Approve measuring the freeway sign's height from the I-270 centerline (CL) grade, yielding an effective paper height of 26'-6"**

## WHAT WE'RE REQUESTING (AT A GLANCE)

- **Freeway ID sign (I-270 frontage):** Allow height to be measured from the I-270 centerline (CL) grade. Effective “on-paper” height = 26'-6" (with 8'-6" of grade below CL ignored).
- **Area:** 90 sq ft ( $\leq$  93.75 sq ft allowed).
- **Setbacks, materials:** compliant.

# Hardship: Site Conditions Limit Reasonable Use

- **Topography & highway relationship:** The freeway CL sits ~8'-6" higher than our sign location; code-height placement is screened by k-rail and grades, confirmed by crane flagging.
- **Sight/offset realities:** Sign is ~163' from I-270 CL; at 55 mph, drivers have only seconds to detect and read.
- **Access pattern:** I-270 exits are ~½ mile away and don't feed directly to Oneida/52nd freeway-oriented ID is essential to locate the site.
- **Meets the Board's hardship test:** extraordinary topography/situation deprives common privileges without relief.



# Hardship: Site Conditions Limit Reasonable Use

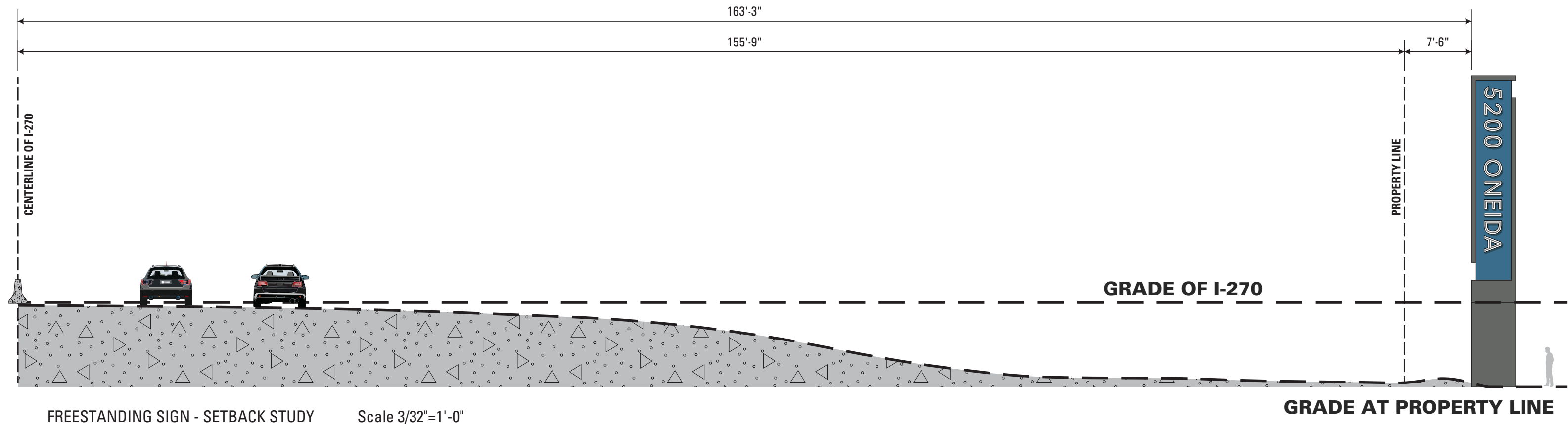


## • TOPOGRAPHY & HIGHWAY RELATIONSHIP:

The freeway CL sits ~8'-6" higher than our sign location; code-height placement is screened by k-rail and grades, confirmed by crane flagging.



# Hardship: Site Conditions Limit Reasonable Use



- **SIGHT/OFFSET REALITIES:**

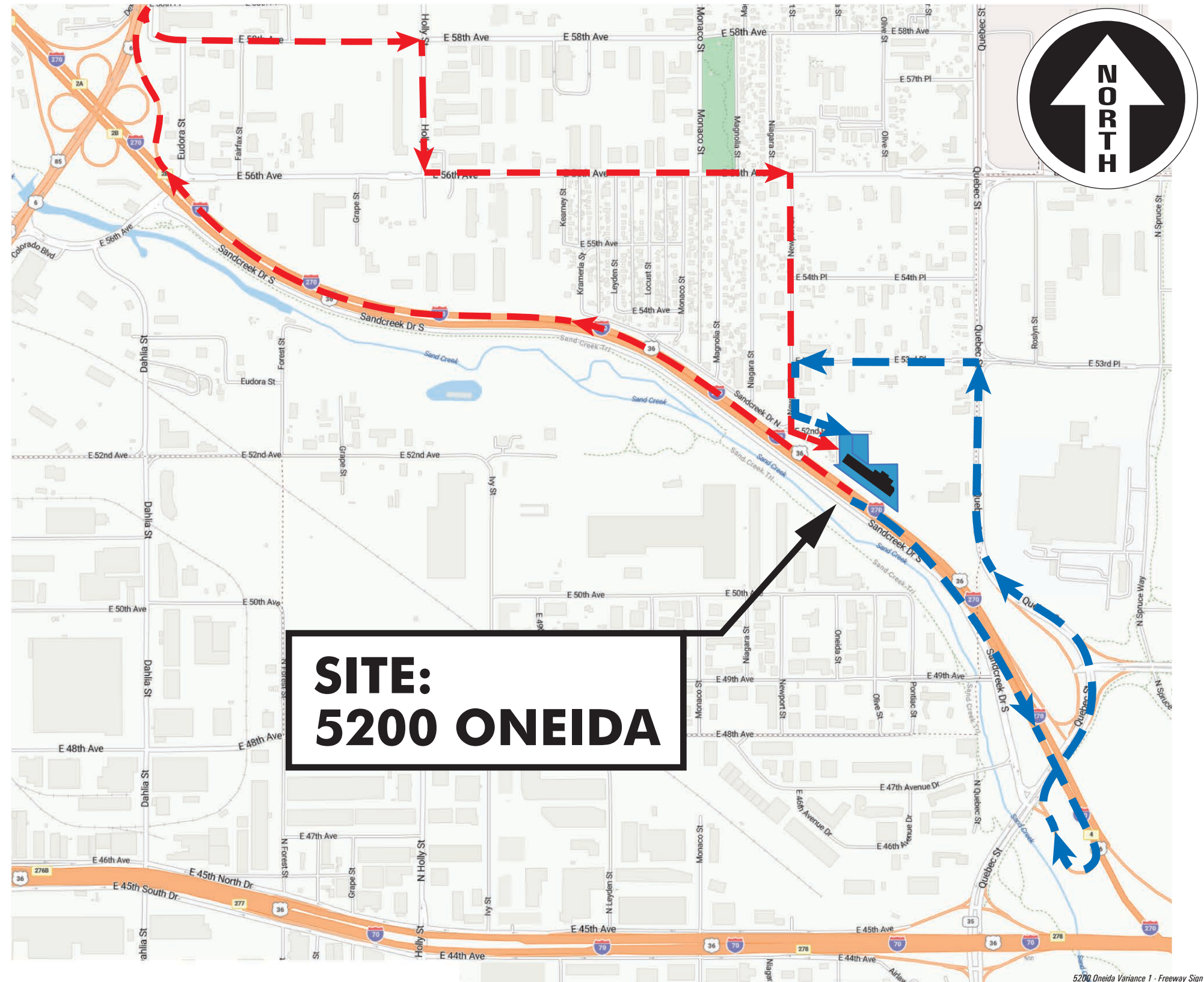
Sign is ~163' from I-270 CL; at 55 mph, drivers have only seconds to detect and read.

# Hardship: Site Conditions Limit Reasonable Use

- **ACCESS PATTERN:**  
I-270 exits are ~½ mile away and don't feed directly to Oneida/52nd freeway-oriented ID is essential to locate the site.

← NORTHBOUND

→ SOUTHBOUND



# Hardship Is Not Self-Imposed

- **Existing conditions drive the need: CDOT/I-270 elevation, detention pond geometry, and utilities/easements fix feasible sign zones and heights.**
- **Building orientation follows I-270; façades are reserved for tenant signs (not a developer preference to over-sign).**
- **Flagging demonstrated code-height failure due to k-rail and grade necessity, not preference.**
- **Satisfies criterion: “The hardship is not self-imposed.”**

# **No Substantial Detriment to Adjacent Property**

- **Nearest residences are west of Oneida; freeway sign faces east toward I-270.**
- **Lighting commitments (volunteered):**
  - **100% brightness sunrise / sunset 30% / sunset—11 p.m. / OFF 11 p.m.—5 a.m.**



# Minimum Relief / District Character Maintained

- Freeway ID height method (measure from I-270 CL grade) yields the least adjustment to clear barriers and restore safe legibility—effective height 26'-6" while respecting area, setbacks, and materials.
- Design cohesion: Materials, scale, and palette match the building and corridor; no change to district character.
- Satisfies approval path: minimum needed or no change in character

# Regional Practice (Context, not precedent)

Figure 12-6-201B

Measurement of Sign Height, Sign Base Lower than Street Centerline

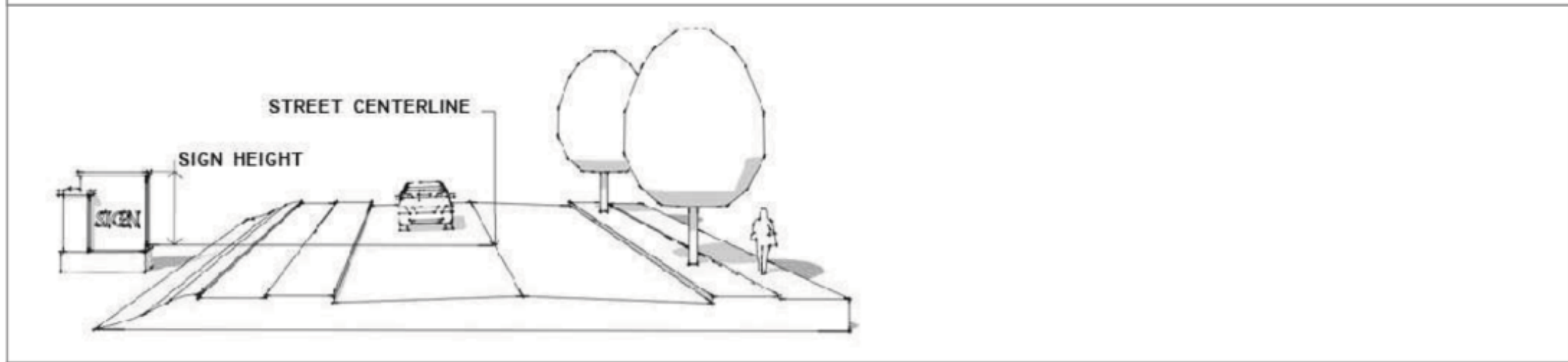


Figure: City of Centennial example—"Measurement of Sign Height, Sign Base Lower than Street Centerline."

- Many CO jurisdictions measure detached sign height from the adjacent street centerline grade when the sign base sits lower than the roadway.
- This method equalizes visibility across uneven sites without increasing sign area, mass, or setback impacts.
- Our request mirrors that principle: measure the I-270 sign from freeway CL grade, keeping the sign  $\leq 90$  sq ft and otherwise compliant.

# Corridor Context & Visual Scale (Appendix — for reference only)



Existing corridor includes a 45' illuminated truck stop sign.

Proposed freeway sign is 35' tall and ≤90 sq ft (no area variance).