

PLANNING APPLICATION COVER SHEET**PROJECT TYPE: Rezoning****NO. VAR25-000005****APPLICATION DATE: 10/23/2025****PROPERTY OWNER: VAULT STORAGE LLC****APPLICANT: Lee Casebolt****WORK DESCRIPTION: install new wall sign****SITE ADDRESS:****PARCEL NUMBER: 0304303001****PROPOSED USE OF STRUCTURE:****APPLICATION INFORMATION****Planning, Development and Sustainability****913 S. Dubuque St. Iowa City, IA 52240****planning@johnsoncountyiowa.gov. 319-356-6083****<https://www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/pds>**



Signage Variance Request – Justification Statement

We are requesting a variance from the current signage limitations applied to this property, Parcel # 0304303001, due to unique site conditions and zoning inconsistencies that create an undue hardship and reduce the property's ability to safely and effectively communicate with motorists traveling at highway speeds.

1. Commercial Use Despite Agricultural Zoning

Although the parcel is zoned agricultural, it is fully developed and operating as a commercial property. The existing signage restrictions tied to the agricultural zoning classification do not reflect the property's actual use or the surrounding development pattern. The business functions as part of a commercial corridor, and appropriate commercial signage is necessary to achieve equitable visibility and fair representation among neighboring properties.

2. High Traffic Speeds and Driver Visibility Considerations

The adjacent roadway carries traffic traveling at approximately 70 mph or higher. At these speeds, drivers have significantly reduced time to identify a business and make safe, informed turning or lane-change decisions. Smaller signage is not effective under these conditions. Larger, more visible signage allows drivers to recognize the site earlier, reducing sudden braking or last-minute turns, which in turn supports smoother traffic flow and safer roadway behavior. The requested variance is therefore not only a matter of visibility but also promotes a safer and more predictable driving environment.

3. Surrounding Commercial Properties with Greater Signage Rights

All adjacent and nearby parcels are zoned commercial and have been granted substantially larger signage allowances. This creates a competitive imbalance and visually crowds out this site's signage, further limiting its effectiveness. Aligning this property's signage with those of its neighbors ensures parity and maintains the intended fairness of the city's sign code as applied to commercial uses.

4. Consistency and Visual Harmony Within the Development

The proposed signage is designed to match the quality, scale, and aesthetic of other signage within the development. This approach maintains a cohesive visual identity and reinforces the professional appearance of the corridor. Consistent signage standards contribute to the overall attractiveness and organization of the commercial area.

Conclusion

The current signage limitations, based solely on the property's agricultural zoning, create a hardship inconsistent with its commercial use and context. The requested variance will:

- Provide appropriate visibility for motorists traveling at highway speeds,
- Support safe and predictable traffic behavior,
- Maintain consistency with surrounding commercial signage, and
- Enhance the overall appearance and coherence of the development.

For these reasons, granting this variance is both reasonable and in the public interest.

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