

September 14, 2018

George Babineaux II
Assistant Building Official
Inspections and Permitting
City of Lewisville
151 W. Church Street
Lewisville, TX 75057
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Re: Signage Variance Request
2512 S Stemmons Freeway
Lewisville, TX 75067
CA #18036

Application Purpose:

The purpose of this variance application is to request:

- 1) An increase in the height of the existing freestanding sign, from the allowed 60 feet above finished grade to 75 feet. The height of the existing sign is 40 feet above finished grade.
- 2) The current sign area is 300 SF, which is allowed, however the sign panel will be replaced with the more current branding.

Hardship:

The Highway Ramps and Elevated Highway System blocks access and visibility to the store and signage, which is critical to Retail Viability.

Lewisville, TX Sign Ordinance:

Chapter 11 – SIGNS

Sec 11-1. – Definitions

I-35 Corridor. The Land situated within 130 feet from the Interstate 35 East rights-of-way that is adjacent and contiguous to the rights-of-way within the city.

(vii) All signs in the I-35 Corridor shall have a height not to exceed 60 feet.

2. The following sign regulations shall apply in the LC, **GB**, AO, LI, HI, WH and PUD zoning districts:

(iii) For platted lots or tracts of land greater than five acres, one freestanding sign not to exceed 300 square feet, or three freestanding signs not to exceed an aggregate total of 450 square feet.

Background

At Home has been operating the subject store in Lewisville, TX for over 5 years. The I-35E Expansion, which began construction in 2014, has created a significant hardship for the existing At Home store. The limitations created by the highway construction has negatively impacted store performance during construction and continues almost a year after these improvements have been completed.

In the time during construction and up to this day the customer traffic and sales have suffered and have not returned to the pre-construction levels of 2014. This is supported by company statements at the end of this request. The reasons for the loss of sales and customer traffic are:

- 1) Traffic through the multi-level interchange has increased in both the number of vehicles and the speed that these vehicles travel through the interchange. This was the purpose of the improvements to be sure, but it also limited the pre-construction access to most of the retailers in this area.
- 2) At Home suffers from the most disadvantaged position it holds in relation to the interchange. Being located in the most Easterly parcel on S Stemmons Hiway (and I-35E) the interchange is at its most elevated position, which has reduced visibility significantly. The store basically “sits” in a hole for passing traffic on the elevated interchange and is blocked from view from “at grade” traffic by bridge pylons and ramps. Additionally, access to the store is circuitous at best. Therefore, signage is even more important to define that “even though it is difficult to get to us we are located here” and open for business.



Existing Pylon Sign



No Visibility to store Northbound on I-35 @ 121 (Sam Rayburn)

I-35 ACCESS TO STORE

There is no access to the store from the Westbound traffic on I-35, as it is elevated from the interchange with the Sam Rayburn Parkway, until well past the store. The clearest access is gained through a maneuver that requires the customer to exit at E Corporate Drive turn south and cross over I-35 and follow S Stemmons to the store.

The elevation of the roadways combined with the protective concrete barrier further restrict visibility to passing vehicles. There is also the added clutter of power lines and exterior lighting as viewed from the highway system. The following pictures show a flag test at 60' and 75' from the South on I-35, the Northbound ramp of Sam Rayburn Parkway to I-35 and the underpass on the Northbound Frontage Road from the South on I-35.



Northbound on I-35 View through Ramp and Pylons - 60' Sign not visible



N. Bound Ramp from SR 121 to I-35 Early Visibility of 75' sign.
No Visibility of 60' sign



Ramp from Sam Rayburn on to I-35 North



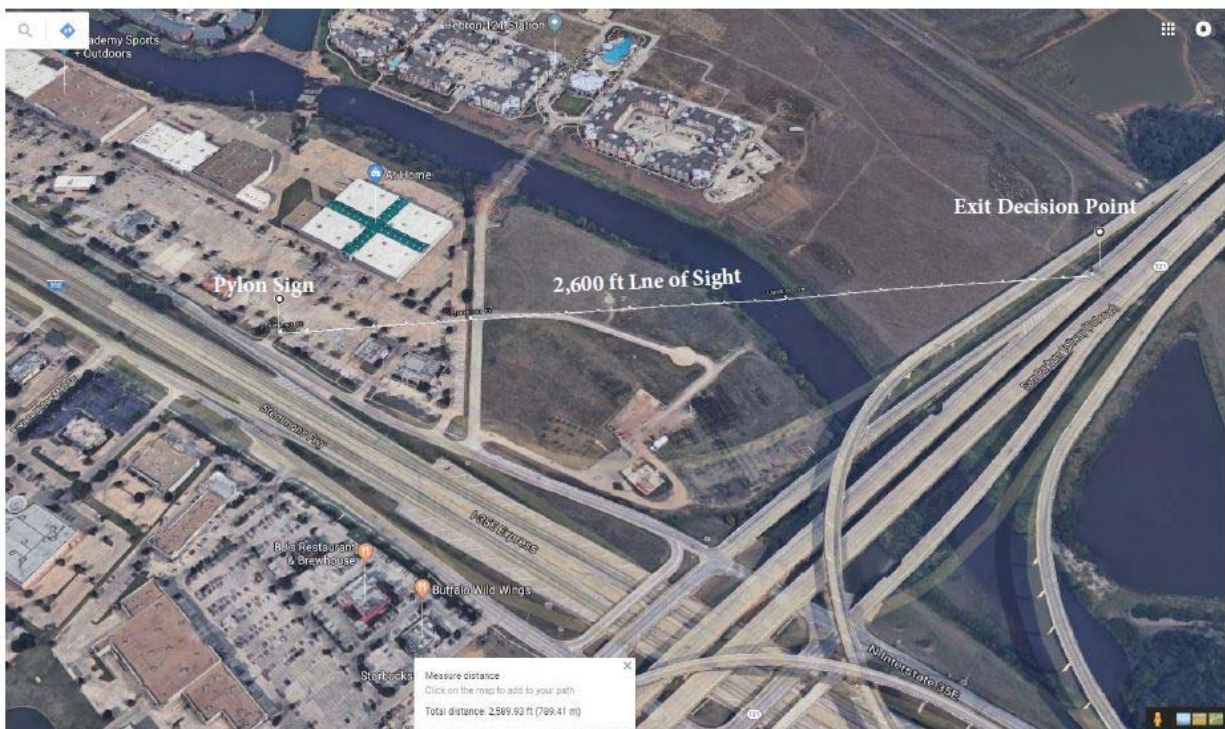
Ramp from Sam Rayburn on to Northbound I-35

FLAG TEST CONCLUSION

It is clear from this “flag test” that the 75’ height proposed in the Variance Request will offer the store significantly greater visibility and, equally important, earlier and a more impactful recognition of the At Home presence. The more significant sign height identifies At Home as an active business even though the store itself has been visually impacted by the highway overpass.

The 75’ height of the sign would offer traffic on I-35 an identifiable guide to any customer that has to traverse the West then South then East loop that is the awkward access created by the new highway configuration.

SIGN SIGHT LINE DISTANCE FROM SAM RAYBURN PARKWAY



SAM RAYBURN PARKWAY ACCESS TO STORE (Larger image follows as an Exhibit)

In order to exit Westbound from Sam Rayburn Parkway to S Stemmons Road (the only way to access the store from SRP) the line of site distance from that exit point on SRP to the existing sign location is over 2,500 feet. Additionally the elevated interchange begins even before that point; all of which makes freestanding sign visibility dependent on height.

General Variance Justification:

The sign package proposed here and for which the Variance Request is made is company prototypical signage. At Home would like to ensure that the company's brand is visible enough to attract consumers seeking home décor products.

At Home has invested significantly in this market and has suffered a significant hardship due to the reconfiguration of the transportation corridor at this location. We request the height variance as something needed to support the greatest opportunity for success and avoid another empty retail space that will not be leased for years to come.

Loss of Customer Traffic

The Company Statement below is an accurate and verifiable history of the Customer Traffic at the Lewisville store:

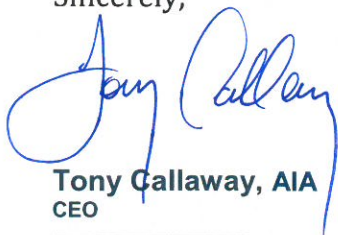
"Customer traffic data shows that once the construction began in 2014 there was a precipitous drop of customer count over the next two years, down 15% and 9% respectively year after year. Customer traffic slowly "ticked up" in 2017 by approx. 2%, which is when the construction was completed but the traffic counts are far below pre-construction numbers. The traffic in this store should have increased over these years, as do most "same store sales" for any successful retailer; so the -22%+ loss of customer traffic is even more acute to the retail success of the unit."

To support a comparable loss in sales the company published the following:

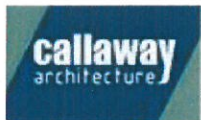
"It was determined the highway construction hurt store 23's sales by 11.7% in 2015 followed by another 12.5% hit in 2016 when the front entrance closure occurred."

I respectfully request on behalf of the applicant your favorable consideration of this Variance Request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Callaway".

Tony Callaway, AIA
CEO



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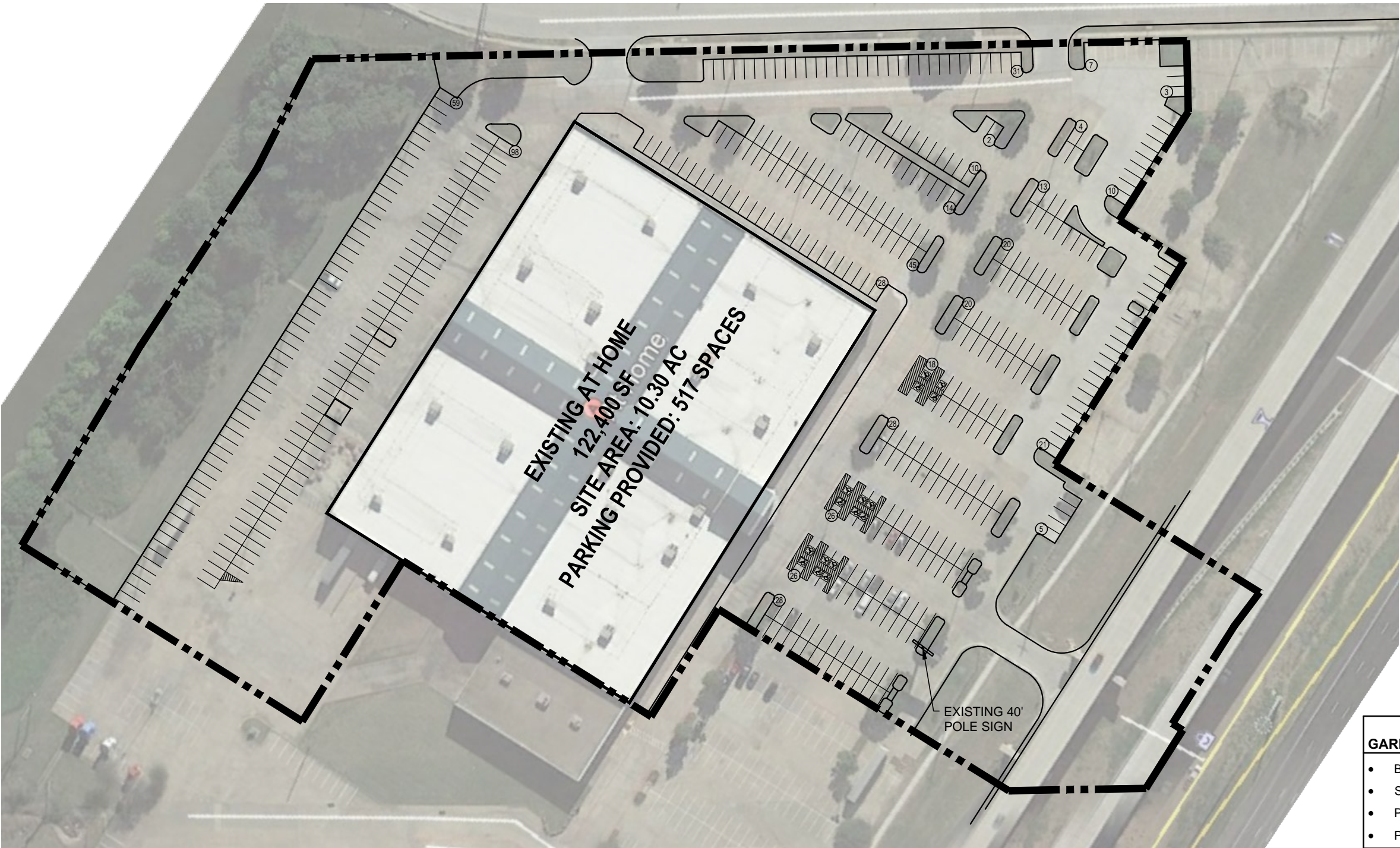
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Wayfinding from local access such as S Stemmons Hiway and Hebron Station Drive is a challenge given the new circulation patterns and conflicts of utilities and trees. A 75' pole sign would greatly help to mitigate that situation.





GARDEN RIDGE: TABULATION	
• BUILDING AREA	122,400 S.F.
• SITE AREA	10.30 ACRES
• PARKING REQUIRED (5.5/1000)	673
• PARKING PROVIDED	517

NOTES: ALL DIMENSIONS & AREAS TO BE VERIFIED BY SURVEY.



AT HOME - SITE PLAN
LEWISVILLE, TX

