



**Criteria:**

1. Exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions *are/are not* applicable to the development of the site that do not apply generally to sites in the same zoning district.
2. Granting the application *is/is not* necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant, and to prevent unreasonable property loss or unnecessary hardship.
3. Granting the application *will/will not* be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity of the development site, or to the public health, safety, or general welfare.

**PICTURES**



**Proposed location of Sign #S9**



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**Recommended Action:**

**Approval with stipulations.** The applicant, Scott Boldt with Crossfields, Inc. and representing Life University, is requesting variances to construct two monument style signs with full color, LED changeable message boards on the Life University campus. The Life University campus is approximately 26 acres in size and is zoned OI (Office Institutional). The school is currently making improvements to the campus, including a new dormitory, parking deck, and an extensive hardscape project for an existing surface parking lot. The applicant has stated that the purpose of the signs is to provide quick information to students.

The two proposed signs would be located along driveways located inside the Life University campus. The first sign, marked S-9, is located near the security station near the main entrance to the University from Barclay Circle. Although the sign may not be oriented and customized for drivers along Barclay, the sign will be partially viewable from the public road. This proposed sign is to be less than 10 feet tall, contain a 38"x85" (23 s.f.) LED readerboard, and a 4 s.f. Life University logo. The second and smaller sign, marked as S10a and located along the driveway on the eastern portion of the campus, is proposed to be less than 10 feet tall with a 27"x67" (13 s.f.) LED readerboard and a 3 s.f. Life University logo.

The City's Sign Ordinance, Section 714, does not have a specific category to address signage located within large developments or campuses, but does require that all signs be permitted, unless specifically exempted. In addition, the size criteria for freestanding signs are determined by the road classification by which the sign is placed. The code does not consider that property owners may wish to construct a sign some distance away from the roadway.

These two signs, if located along a public local road, would not be permitted for the following reasons: the LED changeable readerboard is not allowed; the area of the changeable message is too large; and the sign exceeds the maximum height limit. Signs located along local roads, which are typically smaller roadways with lower speed limits and no through traffic, are limited to 8 feet tall and 30 s.f. of copy area, of which 15 s.f. may contain a changeable message. The proposed sizes and areas are scaled to match a sign located on a collector road, such as Barclay Circle, Polk Street, and Fairground Street, which is for medium sized, moderately traveled roads. Since the sign is aimed at students traveling on foot or driving slowly through a parking lot, the size and area requirements for a collector road are not appropriate.

At this time the City does not allow electronic or LED changeable readerboards. If located along roadways, these types of signs can be very distracting if not regulated appropriately because of the multitude of effects, such as flashing, blinking, video and transitional animation. City Council has held discussions in the past regarding allowing these types of signs with certain restrictions, but has not yet come to a consensus. Cobb County currently allows electronic readerboards and is working on tightening their regulations to eliminate some of the potential safety hazards caused by distracting signs. However, since the proposed signs will not be viewable by drivers along the public right of way, these signs should pose no threat to public safety.



Department of Development Services  
205 Lawrence Street  
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Brian Binzer, Director

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At the October 2008 Board of Zoning Appeals hearing, the applicant presented a request for multiple signs along Barclay Circle. The following variances were granted:

1. To allow 9 detached signs along the same road frontage with the stipulation that the design and size of the detached signs, excluding sign labeled S1b, remain consistent with those proposed in the variance package
2. To allow a sign to be attached to a fence or wall, as a detached sign at this location could create possible site distance problem
3. To reduce the required 5 foot setback for signs to 2 feet for sign labeled S7c only

The variance to allow an LED readerboard on the monument sign along Barclay Circle was denied.

**Since the signs are not aimed to inform drivers along the public road, granting the variances will not be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity of the development site, or to the public health, safety, or general welfare. Staff does recommend that the area and height of the signs be reduced to conform with regulations for signs along local roadways, which would be:**

- **Maximum height limited to 8 feet,**
- **Maximum area of 30 s.f. (of which 15 s.f may be LED changeable readerboard)**