



February 26, 2016

Sycamore Township  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
8540 Kenwood Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45236

Re: Outback Steakhouse

Outback Steakhouse, located at 8240 Montgomery Road at the corner of Montgomery Road and East Galbraith Road, would respectfully request the Board of Zoning Appeals consider and grant a variance for additional sign square-footage and number of signs for this location in order to properly identify this unique location. Per the Sign Ordinance (Section 13-11.3), sites within an Office Zoned District are allowed only two (2) signs on the building, not to exceed 0.5 SF of sign area for each foot of the building frontage, up to a maximum of 100 SF. The application represents a request for a total of (4) wall signs at a total square-footage of 111.57 sq ft. The requested signage is necessary to properly notify motorists which will ensure safe traffic flow and maneuvering. The primary responsibility for a driver is to navigate their vehicle, without adequate signage drivers are in jeopardy of making improper traffic decisions which may result in unnecessary harm. The proposed signage is within the intent of the ordinance and will not provide a competitive advantage to this restaurant.

Restaurants are typically impulse locations that need to be readily identifiable to those not from the immediate area in order to prevent taxable dollars from leaving the community. Studies show that 10% of the population is in transition, which means they are either moving in, moving out, or through the area. This is why signage is not only important to this location, but also provides the necessary means to properly guide traffic to and from desired destinations.

Sincerely,

Jodi Stout  
Site Enhancement Services  
(574) 232-4646

## Statement of Hardships

### 1. Is a unique physical condition:

- The Outback Steakhouse is located in a unique location that has several different ingress/egress points where people can arrive at this restaurant. Due to the business's location set-off the hard-corner near the intersection, the Outback Steakhouse building is not truly visible in advance to turning points onto the property. While there is a freestanding sign along Montgomery Road near the ingress point in front of the building, this sign only works to identify the entrance onto the property. The signage requested will be the identification for the building itself and the assurance to the motorists that they have located their desired destination.

In addition, there is an ingress/egress point off of East Galbraith Road directly to the East of the Red Lobster building that also allows for access to the portion of the property where Outback Steakhouse is located. Without the signage requested in this application the South elevation of the building would have no visible identification tools to motorists utilizing this entrance.

The signage that is requested as part of this application has been designed and placed in a manner that will allow for proper identification of this business within this unique property configuration.

### 2. Is not self-created:

- The variance request for this location is spurred by the need to properly identify this commercial business to the public traveling in and through this unique section of the Township. This section of the Township is unique because it is just to the North of a heavily traveled commercial corridor where people actually expect to see and utilize commercial signage as a form of wayfinding to their destination. The Outback Steakhouse is actually on a property that is zoned "O" (Office) even though it is a commercial business. This unique condition makes the need for proper commercial signage that much more important as this use is unexpected to those unfamiliar with the area.

### 3. Would deny substantial rights:

The Outback Steakhouse is a commercial business and needs to be able to function in that capacity. The signage that is requested in this application will assist in the performance of this business and will support the overall brand renovation that is taking place at this specific location. This location and application are unique and considerations to accommodate this type of use need to be made to ensure the longevity of this business within the community and at this location.

4. Is not merely a special privilege:

- The signage requested would not merely be a "special privilege" for Outback Steakhouse. All aspects of this application center around the need for this business to be able to function properly as a commercial business on this unique property. This business has two functioning facades that have visibility to motorists traveling on two different roadways from which motorists can arrive at this site. Both elevations are key to business identification and key to providing motorists traveling to this site, and through this corridor, wayfinding assistance in locating their desired destination.

The additional number and area of signs requested are not done so arbitrarily. Outback Steakhouse is undergoing a significant renovation to this building and are demonstrating a reinvestment into this property within the Township. The signs requested will support that renovation and reinvestment and be valuable tools to ensure that the motoring public is able to find and visit this location.

5. Must be in harmony with the Township Resolution:

- This application is in harmony with the Township Resolution. The "Purpose" of Chapter 13 "SIGNS" states: ...regulate and encourage the orderly development of signs so as to protect the public health, safety, welfare, and morals of the Township while recognizing the need for adequate business identification, informational and advertising communication and the value of visual attractiveness.

The signs that are proposed as part of this application will enhance the public health, safety, welfare of the community because these elements will ensure that motorists are able to locate their desired destination in a manner that is consistent with that of a typical commercial business. The signs in this application will allow motorists to view, comprehend, and react to the displayed message in a manner that will allow for safe vehicular travel of those wishing to locate this business.

In addition, the variance requested WILL allow for the adequate business identification of this building as outlined in the purpose of the Township Resolution as well as contribute to the visual attractiveness of this business within this development. As previously stated, this is a commercial business within an Office Zone that is undergoing a dramatic visual renovation at this site. The signs requested support and enhance this renovation and have been designed and placed in a thoughtful and purposeful manner.

6. Would not result in a use or development on the subject property that:
- a. Would be materially detrimental to the public welfare or materially injurious to the enjoyment, use, development value of property or improvements permitted in the vicinity:
    - This application will only enhance the property and the community as a whole. This application represents the plea of a commercial business to be able to properly identify itself to the motoring public and ensure that those wishing to visit this location are able to do so.
  - b. Would materially impair an adequate supply of light due to adverse location of shadow to the properties and improvements in the vicinity:
    - This application would not impact supply of light or add shadows within this development
  - c. Would substantially increase hazardous conditions in the public streets due to traffic or parking:
    - This application will only decrease negative impacts on the public streets. By allowing wayfinding tools that are visible at the points of ingress/egress on both streets, those scanning the business environment seeking Outback Steakhouse will have the assistance needed and be able to devote their focus on their primary task which is control of their vehicle.
  - d. Would unduly increase the danger of floor or fire:
    - N/A – No impact
  - e. Would unduly tax public utilities and facilities in the areas:
    - N/A – No impact
  - f. Would endanger the public health or safety:
    - As previously stated, the signs that are referenced in this application will only be a benefit to those within the community. By allowing Outback Steakhouse the opportunity to place signage on both roadway exposed elevations, you will be allowing those wishing to visit the business the opportunity to do so in the safest manner possible. This application eliminates the unnecessary searching and scanning of this complex visual environment by providing motorists with clear and concise wayfinding tools.