

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division****Variance Request  
BZZ-3111****Date:** August 3, 2006**Applicant:** Lawrence Sign**Address of Property:** 500 Stinson Boulevard Northeast**Contact Person and Phone:** Jennifer Johnson, (651) 488-6711**Planning Staff and Phone:** Brian Schaffer, (612) 673-2670**Date Application Deemed Complete:** July 12, 2006**Public Hearing:** August 3, 2006**Appeal Period Expiration:** August 14, 2006**End of 60 Day Decision Period:** September 10, 2006**Ward:** 1      **Neighborhood Organization:** Northeast Park Neighborhood Association  
Southeast Como Improvement Association**Existing Zoning:** I2, Medium Industrial District**Proposed Use:** Installation of a new sign with the following copy “U Care Minnesota”**Proposed Variance:** A variance to increase the maximum height of a sign from 24 feet to 35 feet on a property located at 500 Stinson Boulevard Northeast in the I2, Medium Industrial District.**Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance:** 525.520 (21)

**Background:** The subject property is the Stinson Technology Center, which holds offices and warehouse space and the property is approximately 2 acres (82,537 square feet). The applicant is proposing to install a wall sign that is 35 feet from the ground on the east elevation of the northern end of the building for space leased by U Care Minnesota. The proposed sign will be the U Care Minnesota logo and be illuminated. The location of the proposed sign is between the second and third floors. The sign measures 11 feet 2 inches in length by 3 feet 10 inches and is nearly 43 square feet in size. There is a sign, similar in size, located between the second and third floors on the south side of the east elevation for Fairview Health Services, which received a variance (BZZ-2270) for height from the ground in April 2005. The proposed U Care Minnesota sign will match the height of the existing Fairview Health Services sign.

**Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:**

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed by the official controls and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

Strict adherence to the zoning code requires that a wall sign be no more than 25 ft. from the ground. The applicant states that the area between the first and second floor is a typical location for a sign; however, there is an awing that will block the view of the sign. The applicant also states the sign is more than 35 ft. from the ground because of the excessive height of the floors in the warehouse. According to City records, the warehouse structure was built in 1919. Without the requested variance, a sign could only be located at 24 ft. off the ground.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land and have not been created by the applicant. Because of the height of the stories and an obstructing awning, a sign can not be located between the second and third stories without a variance. The construction of the structure and elevated floors is not a situation created by the applicant.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

The granting of the variance will be keeping with the sprit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the character of the surrounding area. There is currently a Fairview Health Services sign, similar in size and height from the ground, located at the south end of this building.

- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

Granting the variance would likely have no impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the proposed structure be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.

**Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for a sign adjustment:**

- 1. The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.**

Staff believes that the proposed wall sign is in scale with the building and the area. The sign will be consistent with other requirements of the I2 zoning district. The sign will be located 10 ft. higher than the permitted height. The increased height is appropriate for the Stinson Parkway and the scale of the building it is proposed on. The applicant states that a sign had been located here previously.

- 2. The sign adjustment will allow a sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or that is more consistent with the architecture and design of the site.**

Staff believes that the proposed wall sign is in scale with the building. The sign will be of a comparable design of another sign on the building and is consistent with the design of the building. The proposed sign will be the U Care Minnesota logo and made of aluminum and illuminated.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the Board of Adjustment adopt the findings above and **approve** the variance to increase the maximum height from the ground of a for a wall sign from 24 feet to 35 feet on a property located at 500 Stinson Boulevard Northeast in the I2, Medium Industrial District.