

# ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

April 29, 2020



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 2713 West Beltline Highway  
**Project Name:** Verlo Mattress / Fred Astaire Dance Studio  
**Application Type:** Comprehensive Design Review Initial/Final Approval  
**Legistar File ID #** [60057](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector  
**Reviewed By:** Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review INITIAL/FINAL Approval. The property is located in the Commercial Corridor – Transitional (CC-T) district and is part of a larger zoning lot which has over 50,000 sq. ft. of floor area, with more than 25,000 sq. ft. dedicated to retail use. However, this CDR request will only for the Verlo Mattress and Fred Astaire Dance Studio signs. This zoning lot fronts West Beltline Highway, which is six lanes of vehicle traffic and 55 mph.

Pursuant to Section 31.043(4)(b), MGO, the UDC shall apply the following criteria upon review of an application for a Comprehensive Sign Plan:

1. *The Sign Plan shall create visual harmony between the signs, building(s), and building site through unique and exceptional use of materials, design, color, any lighting, and other design elements; and shall result in signs of appropriate scale and character to the uses and building(s) on the zoning lot as well as adjacent buildings, structures and uses.*
2. *Each element of the Sign Plan shall be found to be necessary due to unique or unusual design aspects in the architecture or limitations in the building site or surrounding environment; except that when a request for an Additional Sign Code Approval under Sec. 31.043(3) is included in the Comprehensive Design Review, the sign(s) eligible for approval under Sec. 31.043(3) shall meet the applicable criteria of Sec. 31.043(3), except that sign approvals that come to Comprehensive Design Review from MXC and EC districts pursuant to 31.13(3) and (7) need not meet the criteria of this paragraph.*
3. *The Sign Plan shall not violate any of the stated purposes described in Sec. 31.02(1) and 33.24(2).*
4. *All signs must meet minimum construction requirements under Sec. 31.04(5).*
5. *The Sign Plan shall not approve Advertising beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.11 or Off-Premise Directional Signs beyond the restrictions in Sec. 31.115.*
6. *The Sign Plan shall not be approved if any element of the plan:*
  - a. *presents a hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic on public or private property,*
  - b. *obstructs views at points of ingress and egress of adjoining properties,*
  - c. *obstructs or impedes the visibility of existing lawful signs on adjacent property, or*
  - d. *negatively impacts the visual quality of public or private open space.*
7. *The Sign Plan may only encompass signs on private property of the zoning lot or building site in question, and shall not approve any signs in the right of way or on public property.*

Wall Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing Section 31.07, there shall be one signable area for each façade facing a street or parking lot 33 feet in width or greater. For buildings with more than one tenant, each tenant is allowed a signable area as reasonably close to its tenant space as possible. Standard net area allows for 40% of the signable area, or two square feet of signage for each lineal foot of building frontage not to exceed 100% of the signable area. In no case shall the sign exceed 80 sq. ft. in net area. The signable area for a wall sign is determined by the area of the facade of the building that is free of doors, windows, or other major architectural detail, and no more than four (4) vertical feet of the parapet wall may be included in the measurement of the signable area.

Furthermore, Section 31.07(3) states, “An above-roof sign is a sign, any portion of which is displayed above the roofline. Above-roof signs may be displayed in the IL and IG employment districts” and as allowed in Sec. 31.043(3)(b) and (c) (this section allows the UDC to approve an above-roof sign in the zoning that applies to this property). The signable area for an above-roof sign is calculated on the corresponding wall facade and can be transferred above the roofline. An above-roof sign may extend to a maximum height of ten (10) feet above the roofline.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting for one wall sign on the east-facing wall to sit higher than 4’ above the roofline, and for two signs to be mounted to the mechanical screening above the roof, one for each tenant space, which would be considered “above roof” signs.

Staff Comments: This building was built in 2007, with design considerations for a taller-appearing building at the request of the City, and to also effectively place signs for tenants which would be viewable from the beltline highway grade-separated overpass. NOTE: the sign ordinance at the time the building was constructed and initially occupied did not limit the height of wall signs above the roofline. However, this building has limited qualifying signable areas facing the beltline and the property is also lower than the beltline, limiting the visibility of those qualifying signable areas (which can be seen in some of the photos provided by the applicant). There is an existing ground sign for this parcel, however it is not tall enough to be visible from the beltline. It is primarily for identifying the driveway entrance for vehicles on the frontage road, while the signs placed higher on the building provide visibility to drivers on the beltline.

It also appears that the above roof signs were misrepresented as wall signs on previous sign permit applications, which resulted in permits being issued erroneously by zoning staff.

The proposed locations work well with the building and it looks appropriate to have signage on the mechanical screening. The signs are of higher quality design, being primarily internally illuminated individual channel letters. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

Other signage shown in application: The application notes the face replacement on an existing ground sign for Verlo. As it is a change of copy, no special approval from UDC is required. However, it should be noted that this zoning lot has three existing ground signs. The ordinance currently zoning lot is allowed up to two ground signs with a combined net area of 288 sq. ft., and a maximum height of 13’ for monument style signs and 22’ for pole style signs, based off of the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes. Additional ground signs would be allowed by CDR. Any new proposed ground sign will need an amendment to the CDR.