

ZONING STAFF REPORT

January 27, 2021



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 7401-7417 Old Sauk Road
Project Name: The Highlands
Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage
Legistar File ID # [63428](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector
Reviewed By: Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting approval for a Sign Variance. This property is an existing residential building complex located in the Suburban Residential – Consistent 1 (SR-C1) district, surrounded by other residential building complexes. There is an existing ground sign that was installed without a permit that the property owners wish to replace. This property fronts Old Sauk Road, which has four lanes of traffic and is 35 mph within a 100' wide right-of-way. The paved road is about 53' wide, which also includes bicycle lanes.

Pursuant to Section 31.043(2), MGO, the UDC may approve a sign with up to fifty percent (50%) greater net area or fifty percent (50%) higher than the maximum height otherwise allowed, or reduce the required yard or setback if such approval:

- (a) Is necessary for a sign located on the site of an establishment to be identifiable and legible from the nearest roadway at prevailing speeds; and
- (b) Will result in a sign more in scale with the building and site and in a superior overall design.

Ground Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance: One wall and one ground signs per street frontage may be displayed; identifying the entity, with a maximum of two ground signs and two wall signs per zoning lot. Signs, whether displayed on a wall or the ground, shall not exceed 12 sq. ft. in net area, nor be closer than ten feet to any lot line, except such signs may be increased in net area by one square foot for each additional foot that the sign is set back more than 12 feet from the street lot line. **No sign under this section shall exceed 32 square feet in net area.** No sign shall project higher than one story, or 12 feet above the curb level, whichever is lower.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting for a 5.33' tall, double sided monument ground sign that would have a total net area of 24 sq. ft., set back 5' from the property line.

Staff Comments: There are two parts to this request. The first part is to reduce the required setback for the sign from the property line. What is unique about this property is the front lot line ranges from 20' to 9' behind the sidewalk, whereas the front property lines for the parcels to the north and west abut the sidewalk. The applicant is requesting that the sign be placed 16' away from the sidewalk, which would be 5' behind the front property line. The proposed location would not appear to be out of ordinary when compared to any other ground sign found on a residentially zoned property.

The other part of the request is to increase the net are of the sign by 50%. If the sidewalk were to act as the property line, a sign 16 away would be permitted a total net area of 16 sq. ft. (8 sq. ft. per side), while the applicant is proposing a sign with a total net area of 24 sq. ft. (12 sq. ft. per side).

The applicant provides views of the proposed sign, as well as a code complaint sign, from both directions on Old Sauk Road. The requested sign appears appropriately sized for a residential area, whereas the code compliant sign

(12 sq. ft. in net area, 21' away from the sidewalk) appears small and lost on the property. **Staff has no objection to the Variance request and recommends the UDC find the standards for Variance review have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Notes:

- The height of the boxed net area needs to be corrected so that it is no more than 1' 9".