

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

June 11, 2025



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 109 East Wilson Street
Project Name: One09
Application Type: Comprehensive Design Review for Signage
Legistar File ID # [88298](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector; Lisa McNabola, Planner

The applicant is requesting a Comprehensive Design Review for Signage for a new mixed-use building that consists of 16,957 sq. ft. of commercial space on the first floor and 340 dwelling units above the first floor. The parcel is in the Downtown Central (DC) zoning district, which is a zoning district that also required review by the Urban Design Commission, and abuts East Wilson Street (25 mph, 2 lanes). As part of this CDR request, the applicant is requesting:

- Two projecting signs to be located on non-qualifying elevations for signage as they do not face a street,
- A directional sign as a projecting sign, which are required to be either wall or ground signs,
- An above canopy sign, which is Sign Code compliant, and
- A ground sign, which is Sign Code compliant.

Comprehensive Design Review and Approval Criteria

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.*

Projecting Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing MGO Section 31.09, occupants may display a total of one projecting sign on a façade facing a street or on a corner of a building. This zoning lot is allowed a projecting sign 20 sq. ft. per side for the elevation facing E Wilson Street. Projecting signs must vertically clear any pedestrian area by at least ten (10) feet and vehicular ways by at least fourteen (14) feet. Also, if a ground and projecting signs are displayed on the same a zoning lot, only one of such signs where permitted may exceed 12 sq. ft. in net area.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting for two internally illuminated projecting signs facing the promenade, each with a net area of 4.79 sq. ft. and have a 10-foot vertical clearance from grade.

Staff Comments: This site is uniquely designed to have a plaza like space between the two, first-floor commercial spaces, where the primary entrances to the commercial tenant spaces are located. The projecting signs would provide better visibility to pedestrians walking by than wall signs or window signage, however these elevations do not face a street, so CDR approval is required. The signs are the same size and consist of routed aluminum faces backed by white acrylic. The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines generally speak to signage being compatible with the architectural style and detailing, as well as signage being simple, with only the business name, address, function, and logo. Given the projecting sign type, location in a pedestrian plaza, small size and design aesthetic, staff believe both the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines and CDR criteria for approval have been met. **Recommendation: Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the CDR criteria for approval and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Parking Lot Signage Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing MGO Sections 31.03(2) and 31.044(1)(I), parking lot directional signage are necessary for safety or prompting traffic flow to a location on the premises on which the sign is located. These signs can be a maximum size of 3 sq. ft. with a maximum height of 10 ft., and two signs per street frontage. These types of signs are exempt from permits but are only permitted as wall or ground signs.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting a non-illuminated projecting sign, mounted 14' above grade and a net area of 2.25 sq. ft. per side.

Staff Comments: The proposed signage complies in size, but the sign code only permits these types of signs as wall or ground signs. Since the building does not provide on-site parking for the commercial spaces, the sign is necessary to notify visitors that the garage entrance is only for residents in the building. The entrance to the underground parking is set back over 90' from the property line, with about a 10' grade different from the property line to the garage door, making a wall sign near the garage door not visible until a vehicle has pulled into the driveway and started going down toward the garage. This could create unsafe situations with vehicles backing across pedestrian traffic. The proposed projecting sign would be located closer to the property line, so vehicles will hopefully see the notification sooner and avoiding pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. The proposal complies with the projecting sign vertical clearance requirement for over vehicular ways of 14'. The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines generally speak to signage being architecturally compatible and integrated with design and detailing, as well as signage being simple, with only the business name, address, function, and logo. Staff believe the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines and CDR approval criteria have been met, given the demonstrated necessity for the sign related to traffic safety, as well as the increased visibility related to the sign

type, and design aesthetic. **Recommendation: Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the CDR approval criteria and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Ground Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: This zoning lot is allowed up to two ground signs with a combined net area of 64 sq. ft., and a maximum height of 10 feet for monument-style signs, based off the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes. The code also limits a single-sided sign to half of that net area, which in this case it cannot exceed 32 sq. ft. In addition, if a ground and projecting signs are displayed on the same a zoning lot, only one of such signs where permitted may exceed 12 sq. ft. in net area.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting a single-sided, internally illuminated monument styled ground sign located in front of the building by the commercial tenant space, with a total net area of 30.71 sq. ft. The applicant states the overall height of the sign is 5' 7" at its tallest point but the overall height is not shown in the graphics. Staff has recommended a condition of approval related to confirm the sign height.

Staff Comments: The proposed sign complies with the sign ordinance in size and height and does not need any exceptions. The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines speak to architectural compatibility and integration of signage and signs being simple, with only the business name, address, function, and logo. Staff believe the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines and CDR approval criteria have been met given the simple, elegant design aesthetic of individual channel lettering, as well as demonstrated necessity for identifying a place with multiple tenants. **Recommendation: Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the CDR approval criteria and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines have been met, subject to the condition of approval as noted below. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Canopy Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing MGO Section 31.071, above-canopy signs are restricted to the business name and logo, be constructed of freestanding characters and the logo, have a max height of 2' and the next of the logo being a max size of 4 sq. ft. These signs also cannot be wider than the width of the canopy or the corresponding façade, whichever is narrower. Above-canopy signage may not project further from the building than the canopy to which it is attached and a sign that crosses architectural detail may not be displayed closer than three feet from the nearest face of the building.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting an above canopy sign facing E Wilson St., located above the doors for the apartment lobby area. The letters are 2' tall and have a total net area of 16.83 sq. ft.

Staff Comments: The proposed sign complies with the sign ordinance in size and height and does not need any exceptions. The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines speak to architectural compatibility and integration of signage and simple, with only the business name, address, function, and logo. Staff believe the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines and CDR criteria for approval have been met, given the design aesthetic of the proposed sign (individual channel letters), sign type (above canopy sign), and location identifying the residential main entrance. **Recommendation: Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the CDR approval criteria and Downtown Urban Design Guidelines have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Conditions of Approval:

- The ground sign graphics shall be revised to show the height of the ground sign, measured from the top of the sign to the lowest part of the grade on the graphic. The overall sign height shall not exceed 5' 7".