

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

September 4, 2019



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 20 South Park Street

Project Name: UW-Health

Application Type: Approval for an Alteration to an Approved Comprehensive Design Plan

Legistar File ID # [57097](#)

Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

The applicant is requesting an amendment to a previously approved Comprehensive Design Review. The original CDR was approved October 23, 2013 by the UDC for five ground directional signs and two building parking lot directional signage. This property is located in a Campus Institutional (CI) District, which is permitted Group 1 signage. Normally, Group 1 signage is associated with more residential areas, like residential building complexes, apartments, churches, schools, etc. However, across Regent Street are buildings with group 2 signage and to the south and east are institutional uses (clinics and a hospital). The character of the area is typical for a general commercial corridor. This lot is also part of a larger zoning lot (202 S. Park St.) through the shared access and circulation between the two sites. The property is adjacent to the Regent Street (2 lanes, 25 mph), South Brooks Street (2 lanes, 25 mph), and South Park Street (4 lanes, 30 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.

Ground Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Section 31.14(4), MGO, allows for nonresidential buildings to have an identification sign indicating only the name of the building occupant or management and address. These signs shall be wall signs only, and as this building is on a corner lot, it would be allowed two identification signs, one facing each street. The wall sign could be placed at a maximum height of 12'. These signs are to be non-illuminated only. Any individual sign may not exceed 6 sq. ft. in area.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is proposing to replace two existing ground signs. Both proposed signs would be 8' 8" tall monument style signs, but the sign for the corner of South Brooks and Regent St. would be a double faced sign with a total net of 60.03 sq. ft., and the sign for S. Park St. and Regent St would have four sides with a total net of 120.06 sq. ft.

Staff Comments: The applicant is looking to replace two existing signs with the same style (double or four sided monument signs), but taller. The existing ground sign at the corner of South Brooks and Regent is a double faced monument style ground sign, 5' tall with a total net of 25.08 sq. ft., and the existing sign at the corner of Regent and S. Park St. is a four sided monument style sign, 7' tall with a total net of 90 sq. ft. The proposed signs would have a greater height and net in comparison, however the applicant is adding additional wayfinding signage for the neighboring parcel, UnityPoint Health at 202 S. Park Street. These two adjacent parcels share a skywalk between the two buildings, making this a zoning lot, which allows UnityPoint Health to share ground signage with UW Health. The proposed signs are intended to provide clearer identification of the facilities and better direction for patients and visitors coming to the site. Other properties along S. Park Street with a Group 2 conventional zoning district would be allowed a ground sign 10' tall, and a maximum net of 96 sq. ft.

As for the design of the signs, they are of similar style from what was previously there, but the colors have changed. The color is used to help the sign stand out and be easily viewed, and the signs do match each other. However, the new signs won't really match the existing signs that were previously approved by UDC in 2013. Staff recommends that any ground signs replaced on this lot be required to match the style and colors of the proposed signage. As for the materials of the signs, no information is provided. As this property is in the Urban Design District No. 7, plastic face signs are highly discouraged, and routed aluminum face signs are the preferred alternative. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met, with the condition that all future ground signs for the lot match the style and coloring of the proposed signs, and the sign have routed aluminum faces.**

Notes:

- Applicant shall update letter of intent, redacting the request to merge 202 S. Park Street CDR with this request.