

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

March 10, 2021



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 7104 Watts Road
Project Name: Texas Roadhouse
Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage
Legistar File ID # [64037](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector
Reviewed By: Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review of signage for a new restaurant-tavern in a zoning lot which also contains AtHome and Walmart, an existing planned multi-use site. AtHome has an existing CDR for their parcel, but as Texas Roadhouse is under different ownership, a separate CDR approval is required. This property is located in a Planned Development (PD) District, and sits between West Beltline Highway (4 lanes, 55 mph) and Watts Road (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.*

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 a tenant space with less than twenty-five thousand (25,000) square feet in floor area, the maximum net area of wall signs shall be forty percent (40%) of the signable area, or two feet per lineal foot of tenant frontage, not to exceed 100% of the signable area. In no case shall a wall sign exceed eighty (80) square feet in net area. The signable area for a wall signs 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.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is proposing one wall sign on the south elevation, which would face Watts Road and have a total net area of 80 sq. ft., and two wall signs on the east elevation, which faces a parking lot. Of these signs, one sign would have a total net area of 18.15 sq. ft. and the other would have a total net area of 7.99 sq. ft.

Staff Comments: The south elevation sign, which only contains one sign, complies with code and does not need special approval from UDC. The east elevation, however, will have two signs located in different signable areas, while the sign ordinance only permits one sign per elevation. The sign labeled “B” is the main sign which identifies the entrance into the restaurant. Sign “C” is shown to be smaller and could be considered more of an oversized directional sign, identifying customers where to go to pick up food ordered ahead of time. Having the two signs helps customers determine which door they want to use. All three signs are similarly design and made of high quality materials. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Ground Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance: This zoning lot is allowed up to **two ground signs with a combined net area of 160 sq. ft.**, and a maximum height of 12’ for monument style signs, based off of the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes (in this case, four). The ordinance also allows for lots with frontage 500’ or more, as well as a vehicle entrance on that frontage, to have an additional monument-style ground sign, no larger than eight feet in height, with 32 sq. ft. per side, located at each vehicle entrance.

Proposed Ground Signage: The applicant is requesting a 6’ tall monument styled ground sign with a total net area of 54.66 sq. ft., located at the driveway entrance of the zoning lot. This sign would be considered a third ground sign for the zoning lot, as there are already two approved ground signs with a combined total net area of 600 sq. ft. (including the large multi-tent sign by the highway).

Staff Comments: This pad site has mature landscaping along the Watts Roads frontage, which somewhat obscures views of the building from the street. The restaurant has proposed modest wall signs, which may not be clearly visible further down Watts Road in either direction. Therefore, the ground sign will provide additional identification for the restaurant’s location. A ground sign is proposed to identify the principal entrance to the site, the eastern entrance. The proposed ground sign is of a compliant height and size relative to the allowances for ground signs in proximity to Watts Road. However, as this zoning lot was previously approved two ground signs (one which was originally built in 1989 by the highway, and the second approved by UDC in 2018 for AtHome and Walmart at the Watts Road entrance), proposed third ground sign requires approval from UDC. The sign is designed to match the signage proposed for the building, is of high design, and made of high quality materials. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met. This recommendation is subject to further testimony and new information provided during the hearing.**

Notes:

- The “Texas” state shape with cowboy hat logo on the ground sign does not comply with the ordinance standards for internally-illuminated signs, which require a dark background with light copy. The red background must be revised to be opaque in order to comply with the ordinance.
- Final submittal should include language stating all other signage not mentioned in this CDR shall comply with Chapter 31.
- Any new ground signage for the zoning lot must come before the UDC for approval.