

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 29, 2020



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 4101 Commercial Avenue
Project Name: UW Credit Union
Application Type: Comprehensive Design Review of Signage
Legistar File ID # [61128](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector
Reviewed By: Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review of signage for an existing UW Credit Union building, constructed in 2002. UWCU is updating the branding and has been gradually replacing existing signage at their many branches. The property is located in the Commercial Center (CC) district and abuts Commercial Avenue (2 lanes, 25 mph), North Stoughton Road (6 lanes, 45 mph), and Highway 30 (4 lanes, 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.*

Canopy Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing Section 31.071, above-canopy signs can be installed instead of canopy fascia signs, but are restricted to the business name and logo, be constructed of freestanding characters and the logo, have a maximum height of 2' and the logo is allowed a maximum of 4 sq. ft. in net area. 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 than 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 for a sign to be mounted to on a free standing architectural feature above the canopy. This area is not eligible for signage per the City's sign ordinance. The sign will have an overall height of 3' 5" and the logo will have a maximum net area of 11.67 sq. ft. The overall net area of the sign is 26.76 sq. ft.

Staff Comments: As stated above, the credit union has updated their branding and has been updating their signage existing branches. The existing sign above the canopy was installed in 2002 and has an existing net area of 39.63 sq. ft. The proposed sign will go in the same location but will be 12.87 sq. ft. smaller. This is the only sign facing the south, which also fronts Highway 30, where the right-of-way is roughly of 490' wide. There are other qualifying signable areas available on this elevation, but they are not practically visible. There is also a grade change of more than 10' between the westbound highway and the property of the credit union, making a sign above the drive-thru canopy much more visible than a wall sign lower on the building. As for the architecture feature above the canopy, it appears it was designed and intended to serve for signage, as it is of similar design to the parapet walls on the other elevation, which also contain signage. This gives the building a uniform look and if a sign were installed elsewhere on the southern façade, it wouldn't relate as well to the other signs and their placements on the building. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

Staff Comments regarding other shown signage: The application shows two new ground signs, two new wall signs, and seven parking lot directional signs. All of these signs appear to meet Chapter 31 and do not require special approval through the CDR. The new signs are of high quality material and uniform design. Staff does not have any concern over the proposed code compliant signs.

Notes:

- The final CDR documents shall state that all other signage complies with MGO 31.