

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 26, 2023



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 2301 West Beltline Highway
Project Name: Kayser Ford/Lincoln
Application Type: Approval for an Alteration to an Approved Comprehensive Design Review
Legistar File ID # [78596](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

The applicant is requesting an amendment to a previously approved Comprehensive Design Review (CDR). The Urban Design Commission last approved proposals for this CDR on March 6, 2013, for three ground signs, three oversized directional signs, and nine wall signs for the large building on the site. In 2022, the used car dealership building was demolished in order to build the Lincoln dealership building. As part of this CDR Amendment application request, the applicant is requesting four signs for the new building, removal of four of the previously approved ground signs, and install three new ground signs. This site is located in the Commercial Center (CC) District and abuts the West Beltline Highway (six 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 MGO Section 31.071, below-canopy signs may be suspended below an attached canopy in a position parallel to the building face, in-lieu of a wall sign, and where there is no canopy fascia sign visible when facing the building. These signs are to be mounted beneath the canopy, and shall not project or extend beyond the limits of the attached canopy in any direction. The sign face shall have a maximum vertical height of two feet, shall not hang more than one foot from the lower most edge of the canopy, and must have a vertical clearance of nine feet above pedestrian areas, and 14 feet above vehicular ways.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting two below canopy signs and one wall sign on the north elevation. The Lincoln sign would have a vertical height of 2'-8" and hang 4" under the canopy, while the Service sign would have a vertical height of 1'-6" and hang 3" under the canopy. This is in addition to a wall sign with a total net area of 11.22 sq. ft. All three signs consist of individual channel letters and are internally illuminated, and both under canopy signs would have at least a 10-foot clearance from grade.

Staff Comments: It is common for auto dealerships to have more than one sign on an elevation identifying the dealership name, the vehicle manufacturer, and other accessory signage, like "service". This building was built in order to identify the Lincoln dealership from the other existing building, which also sells Ford vehicles. However, as the sign ordinance only permits one sign per elevation, Comprehensive Design Review is needed in order to have a wall sign and two under canopy signs. The proposed signs are of high design and compliment the architecture of the building. **Recommendation: 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.**

Signable Area defined in Sign Ordinance: One designated area of the facade of the building up to the roof line that is free of doors, windows (for purposes of this definition, spandrel panels or other non-vision glass used as an exterior building material are not considered windows) or other major architectural detail, that extends no higher than the juncture of the wall and the roof.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is requesting to install a three dimensional channel letter styled sign on a window located on the west, which is not considered a signable area. The sign would have a total net area of 12.14 sq. ft. and would not be illuminated.

Staff Comments: As stated in the letter of intent, the sign logo is designed to create an illusion of passing through the glass, by being installed on the exterior window on the west elevation, and an identical sign being mounted to the glass inside the building, creating a unique and high quality design. **Recommendation: 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 288 sq. ft., or 144 sq. ft. per side for a single sign. A maximum height of 13 feet is permitted for monument style signs and 22 feet for pole style signs, based off the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is proposing to remove three existing ground signs and one large directional sign on the site, most of which were approved in 2013, and install three new ground signs. One of the proposed signs is the Lincoln ground sign, which is a 13 feet tall internally illuminated monument styled sign with a total net area of 49.68 sq. ft., and would be installed near the Beltline in front of the new dealership. The second ground sign is the Ford Commercial Vehicle Center, which is a 22 feet tall internally illuminated pole sign, with a

total net area of 119.79 sq. ft., and would be installed by the driveway entrance mainly used for the commercial vehicles. The last ground sign proposed is a 4'-6" tall internally illuminated monument style sign, with a total net area of 4.67 sq. ft. This sign would be installed on a wall in front of the new Lincoln dealership, and as the wall is separate from the dealership building, it is technically considered a ground sign.

Staff Comments: Currently, the site exceeds the number and total net area allowed for ground signs, with three of the four ground signs also exceeding the permitted height. With this application, they will remove all the signs except for the Ford ground sign (which is one of the ground signs that exceeds the permitted height) and install three new ground signs that will comply with the height allowances. This will reduce the total net area from almost 700 sq. ft. to 382.14 sq. ft. One of the ground signs is of similar design to the existing Ford ground sign, while the other two ground signs match the material and style of the proposed signs for the new dealership, creating a uniform look. **Recommendation: 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.**