



ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

November 4, 2020

PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 3650 Milwaukee Street
Project Name: Amazon
Application Type: Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage
Legistar File ID # [62149](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector
Reviewed By: Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review of signage for an Amazon package delivery service, which also has an area located in front of the building where individuals may pick up their packages, called the "Amazon Hub". The building is located to the rear of the site and has two separate parking lots. The smaller parking lot located between the building and Metro East transfer point is reserved for employees and visitors, while the larger parking lot is for Amazon's fleet vehicles and delivery trucks. This site is located in an Industrial Limited (IL) district, and abuts Milwaukee Street (4 lanes, 35 mph) and West Corporate Drive (2 lanes, 25 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 by Sign Ordinance: This zoning lot is allowed up to two ground signs with a combined net area of 128 sq. ft., and a maximum height of 12' for monument style signs, based off of the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes. 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 proposing four ground signs for this property. The main ground sign, which has already been approved, is a 5' 9" tall, externally illuminated monument styled sign, with a total net area of 52.29 sq. ft. The three proposed ground signs would be the same in appearance and illumination as the main ground sign, but smaller in size. These signs would be 5' tall, and each would have a total net area of 29.25 sq. ft., making the combined net area of all four ground signs 140 sq. ft. The signs are made of aluminum, and the letters and logo are 1/8" thick aluminum mounted flush to the panel, creating subtle dimension to the sign faces.

Staff Comments: This lot does not have enough frontage on either Milwaukee Street or Corporate Drive to meet the requirement for additional monument styled ground signs as allowed by code, because the East Metro transfer point was previously separated from the lower right corner of the subject site when Swiss Colony was the tenant. However, as stated above, this lot has two separate parking areas serving different needs. The applicant is requesting additional ground signs to help with wayfinding for customers and delivery vehicles accessing the property. The ground signs are uniform in style and also tie in to the building colors and existing wall sign design. **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 other wall signage shall comply with code.**

Wall Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing Section 31.07, Wall signs may be attached flat to or affixed parallel with a distance of not more than 15 inches from the wall. No sign affixed flat against a building wall shall extend beyond any edge of such wall. There shall be one signable area for each façade facing a street or parking lot 33 feet in width or greater. Standard net area allows for 30% of the signable area. In no case shall the sign exceed 120 sq. ft. in net area. On each façade exceeding 125 feet in length, where a primary wall sign is displayed, up to four additional accessory signs may be displayed. These accessory signs shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the size or fifty percent (50%) of the height of the permitted primary wall sign already displayed on that façade (Sec. 31.07(6)(a)).

Accessory Sign is defined in MGO 31.03:

A wall sign on a large building, subordinate in area to the principal sign, located elsewhere than the primary signable area, listing other businesses or generic services or departments in the building, such as pharmacy, optical, auto repair, garden center and excluding product brand names.

Proposed Signage: The applicant has obtained permits for two wall signs; one for the business, and an accessory sign noting the space where customers pick up packages. The wall sign has an overall height of 6' 4" and is just under 120 sq. ft. in total net area. The accessory sign has an overall height of 3' 2" and a total net area just over 27 sq. ft. Both signs consist of an internally illuminated logo and individual channel letters, with a layer of perforated vinyl so the letters appear black during the day and shine white at night. These individual letters will be mounted flush to the wall, giving the signs a simple, clean look.

Staff Comments: No exception is being requested and therefore not needed.

Notes:

- The final CDR documents shall state that all other signage not requiring permits shall comply with MGO 31.