

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

January 9, 2018



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 1827 E. Washington Avenue
Project Name: The Marling
Application Type: Comprehensive Design Review Initial/Final Approval
Legistar File ID # 49800
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector
Reviewed By: Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review INITIAL/FINAL APPROVAL. This property is located in a Traditional Employment (TE) District, as well as Urban Design District #8. This part of East Washington has 6 lanes of traffic plus two parking lanes, and a speed limit of 35 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.*

Qualifying Signable Areas 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 buildings with more than one tenant, each tenant is allowed a signable area as reasonably close to its tenant space as possible. Standard net area allows for 40% of the signable area, or two square feet of signage for each lineal foot of building frontage not to exceed 100% of the signable area. In no case shall the sign exceed 80 sq. ft. in net area.

Proposed Signage: The Marling will have tenant spaces facing the Yahara River, and proposes either wall signs or above canopy signs with small projecting signs for each tenant. Without facing a street or parking lot as noted above, these spaces do not have any qualifying signable areas, making it difficult for any clientele to locate them. The wall and above canopy signs are limited to 20 sq. ft. and may be illuminated, and the projecting signs would be limited to 6 sq. ft., and non-illuminated.

Staff Comments: The requested signs facing the Yahara River are limited in size, allowing these tenant spaces to identify themselves without be obtrusive to the adjacent park along the river. Tenants can choose between either an above canopy sign or a wall sign, with specific requirements to materials, creating uniformity with the rest of the signage facing East Washington Ave. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

Parking Lot Signage Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing Section 31.03(2) and 31.044(1)(I), parking lot directional signage are necessary for safety or prompting traffic flow to a location on the premises on which the sign is located. These signs can be a maximum size of 3 sq. ft. with a maximum height of 10 ft., and two signs per street frontage. These types of signs are exempt from permits.

Parking lot regulation signs, on the other hand, designate the condition of use or identity of such parking areas. These signs can be a maximum of 9 sq. ft. and require a 10 ft. setback from the property line.

Proposed Signage: The Marling is requesting 19 sq. ft. parking lot directional signage located above the garage entryways on both on East Washington and East Main, to direct vehicles entering the building.

They are also requesting what the applicant calls a hybrid ground sign, which they describe as a combination of a ground sign and a parking directional sign. This is classified per the sign code as an oversized parking lot regulation sign. This sign has a net area of 12 sq. ft. and is located near the East Washington Avenue vehicle entrance. This ground sign provides necessary identification of the garage entrance for both residents and customers, as the other oversized parking directional sign is setback much further on the lot at the actual entrance to the parking structure.

Staff Comments: The oversized parking lot directional signage guides visitors to the appropriate side of the driveway, allowing vehicles to enter and exit the building safely. The parking lot regulation sign helps visitors identify the entrance of the driveway for The Marling. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

Other signage shown in the application: The Marling shows a number of signs on East Washington Avenue and East Main Street that will comply with the Sign Ordinance and do not need special exceptions for the CDR:

- an above canopy sign for office space on East Washington,
- a projecting signs for The Marling on East Washington and East Main,
- above canopy signs or wall signs for tenants located on East Washington Avenue, and
- projecting signs for tenants located on East Washington Avenue.

Notes:

- The applicant shows the above canopy signage will be over 3' away from the building, so no special exceptions are needed at this time. If in a tenant space runs into an issue with this code requirement, the applicant will need to amend the CDR for this exception.