



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 222 West Gorham Street  
**Application Type:** Signage Approval in Downtown Core Zoning - Final Approval is Requested  
**Legistar File ID #** [68169](#)  
**Prepared By:** Kevin Firchow, Acting UDC Secretary

**Background Information**

**Applicant | Contact:** Josh Crowe, Sign Art Studio | Drew Deuster, Wild Planet Hospitality

**Project Description:** The applicant is seeking final approval for a wall sign with changeable copy for a restaurant-nightclub located in the Downtown Core (DC) zoning district.

**Approval Standards:**

The UDC is an **approving body** on this request. Chapter 31.13(9) of the Sign Control Ordinance states that in the DC-Downtown Core and UMX districts, all signs shall conform to the City’s adopted [Downtown Urban Design Guidelines](#), in addition to related code requirements. Please note, the application materials reference CDR approval standards, though those standards do not apply to this request.

**Summary of Design Considerations and Recommendations**

Staff recommends that the UDC review this item in regards to the referenced Downtown Urban Design Guidelines. Based on the review from City Zoning, staff understands that the sign complies with the underlying sign regulations and no approvals for signage exceptions or comprehensive signage review are currently being sought.

This signage request was originally submitted for administrative-level approval. Due to questions regarding conformance with the aforementioned guidelines, it was recommended that this item be considered by the Urban Design Commission. Staff’s primary question relates to the changeable copy marquee element in relationship to the following guideline:

Guideline 8b. Messages should be simple- only including the name, address, function (i.e. restaurant) and logo of the establishment.

Since reviewing the initial sign submittal, the applicant has received conditional use approval to operate a “restaurant-night club” (City Legislative File [67800](#)) corresponding to the facility’s previous approval for an entertainment license (City Legislative File [66377](#)). The entertainment license allows for live entertainment including live bands and DJs. Based on current capacity information from the City Building Inspection Division, the total allowable occupant load for the facility is 359 persons. Of these, 276 can be on first floor, 81 on second floor, and two in the office mezzanine.

The application materials cite the desire for the changeable copy to promote upcoming acts and references examples such as the Majestic and Orpheum Theaters. While such facilities do have changeable copy marquees, from a use standpoint, those are classified as “theater, assembly hall, concert hall” uses, different from this facility which is classified as “restaurant-night club.” Among the differences is that the latter requires the serving of food (at all hours it is open) and notes that the maximum capacity is to be approved by the Director of the Building

Inspection Division, not to exceed the number of available seats, plus staff, plus a reasonable number of people waiting for seats.

Staff notes that theater uses do more commonly have changeable copy marquee signage, though there are many restaurant-night club uses that don't have this type of signage. However, considering that there is live entertainment approved at this facility, staff believes on balance, it is possible that the proposed sign could be found to be consistent with the aforementioned guideline regarding "simple" messaging. In regards to the sign design itself, staff does not have concerns and believes that it could be found consistent with the other Signage Guideline 8a, regarding a sign's compatibility with the architectural theme of the building.