

# ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

May 8, 2019



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 6918 Seybold Road  
**Project Name:** Verizon  
**Application Type:** Approval for a Street Graphics Variance Request  
**Legistar File ID #** [55395](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector  
**Reviewed By:** Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

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The applicant is requesting approval for a Street Graphics Variance, as well as exception to a few UDD #2 requirements. This variance would allow for the re-use portions of the existing signs, with some modifications. This property is located in the Commercial Center (CC) district, which abuts the Beltline Highway (4 lanes, 55 mph), S. Gammon Road (6 lanes, 35 mph), and Seybold Road (2 lanes, 25 mph). UDC approved the façade alteration April 24, 2019.

Pursuant to Section 31.043(2), MGO, the UDC may approve a sign with up to fifty percent (50%) greater net area or fifty percent (50%) higher than the maximum height otherwise allowed, or reduce the required yard or setback if such approval:

- (a) Is necessary for a sign located on the site of an establishment to be identifiable and legible from the nearest roadway at prevailing speeds; and
- (b) Will result in a sign more in scale with the building and site and in a superior overall design.

Section 33.24(9)(d)4., Signage Criteria for Urban Design District No. 2, indicates the Urban Design Commission shall consider in each case those of the following guidelines and requirements as may be appropriate to signage:

Signs. Because of the relationship between the residential and commercial activities of this area, it is necessary that the location and treatment of signs be appropriate to both activities. In this sense the Urban Design Commission shall evaluate proposed signs based on the following guidelines and requirements:

a. Guidelines.

- i. Signs should identify the activity without imposing upon the view of residents, businesses, or activities of the district.
- ii. Signs should be appropriate to the type of activity and clientele at which its message is aimed.
- iii. Signs should be designed so as to be legible to the intended viewer in relation to the surrounding circumstances.
- iv. Signs should avoid covering or impinging upon landscape features or significant structures.

b. Requirements.

- i. Signs, if located on or adjacent to buildings, shall be integrated with the architectural design of the buildings.
- ii. Signs shall be located and designed only to inform the intended clientele.
- iii. Signs shall be used only as identification of the establishment and shall have no more than a total of eight (8) symbols and/or words.

- iv. No portion of an illuminated sign shall have a luminance greater than two hundred (200) foot lamberts for any portion of the sign within a circle two (2) feet in diameter. No sign or part of any sign shall change its level of illumination more than once every one (1) hour. (Am. by ORD-09-00091, 8-1-09)
- v. Electronic changeable copy signs, if permitted in the District, shall comply with [31.046\(1\)](#) which requires that electronic changeable copy signs in Urban Design Districts shall not alternate, change, fade in, fade out, or otherwise change more frequently than once every one (1) hour. (Am. by ORD-09-00091, 8-1-09)
- vi. A minimum setback of five (5) feet is required of all detached signs. A minimum setback of ten (10) feet from the public right-of-way is required for signs exceeding ten (10) square feet in net area and fifteen (15) feet in height. A minimum setback of twenty (20) feet is required for all signs exceeding twenty (20) square feet in net area or twenty (20) feet in height. No detached sign shall exceed seventy-five (75) square feet in net area and twenty-five (25) feet in height. Based upon the following criteria the Urban Design Commission may specifically approve a larger sign or reduce the setbacks above:
  - A. An exception from the size and setback limitation is necessary for a sign located on the site of an establishment to be identifiable and legible from the nearest roadway at prevailing speeds; and
  - B. An exception from the size and setback limitation will result in a sign more in scale with the building and site and will result in a superior overall design. (Am. by Ord. 9593, 10-14-88)
- ii. No detached sign shall occupy the space between two (2) feet and ten (10) feet above grade within fifteen (15) feet of the public right-of-way except for its support, which shall not exceed a total cross-section area of one (1) square foot.
- iii. The net area of an attached sign of any occupancy on any facade shall not exceed forty (40) square feet.
- iv. All signs and their words shall be mounted parallel to the building surface to which they are attached. No sign or words shall project more than eighteen (18) inches from the surface to which they are attached. Attached signs shall not be mounted on roofs and shall not project above roofs.

**Ground Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance:** This zoning lot is allowed up to two ground signs with a combined net area of 160 sq. ft., with a maximum height of 13' for monument style signs and 22' tall for pole signs, based off of the prevailing speeds and number of traffic lanes.

**Proposed Signage:** The applicant is requesting two ground signs at 96 sq. ft. each, totaling to 192 sq. ft. in net area, which is 32 sq. ft. more than what the code allows. The sign that is next to South Gammon Road is a pole sign, as the base is less than 1/3 of the sign cabinet width. However, the ground sign next to the Beltline is a monument sign, as the base is more than 1/3 of the sign cabinet. The height measurements for the two ground signs are compliant with the sign ordinance.

**Staff Comments:** The right-of-way width on Gammon Road ranges from 175' (under the beltline) to 210' (directly in front of the lot) and the lot sits at an elevation above Gammon Road. The applicant is asking for a variance to allow for a sign size for the two signs that exceeds the maximum by 32 sq. ft. The images submitted in the application show how the existing sign is viewed from the roadway, showing the limited visibility of the lot. The signs are not practically visible from the Beltline Highway except for the eastbound on-ramp.

As for the UDD setback requirement, the two ground signs are closer than 20' from the property line (the applicant believes them to be 5'), but there is a large amount of open space that is technically part of the right-of-way (about 20 feet from the property line to the sidewalk along Gammon Road). This results in the ground

signs appear further from the right-of-way than they are. The lot also has limited amount of space to place any ground signs without affecting parking and traffic flow around the site, which is why retaining the existing location is being requested. Any sign set back the minimum 20 feet from the property line would place the sign in the parking lot drive aisle or blocking a parking stall.

**Staff has no objection to the Variance request for the ground signs and recommends the UDC find the standards for Variance review have been met.**

Other signs: The applicant shows wall signs with the submittal that do not require a variance and comply with the maximum size allowed in this UDD district of 40 sq. ft. and the setback of at least 20' from the property line.

Notes:

- The dimensions of the boxes shall be shown on the artwork when applying for a sign permit.