

## ZONING STAFF REPORT

November 8, 2017



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 600 Williamson Street  
**Project Name:** The Gateway Center  
**Application Type:** Approval for Comprehensive Design Review of Signage  
**Legistar File ID #** [49155](#)  
**Prepared By:** Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review for this shopping center. The request would replace building naming "THE GATEWAY" signage that is located on the east and south facades, which is currently not permissible per MGO31. Wall signs may only be displayed for each occupant/tenant of a building. "THE GATEWAY" is not an occupant or tenant, which is part of why the CDR is necessary for the signage to be permissible. The other reason is the design of the signs do not fit in a signable area, consisting of one box free of architectural detail. This property is located in the Traditional Employment (TE) district.

Pursuant to Section 31.043(4)(b), 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.*

### Signage Permitted per Sign Ordinance

#### Type: Wall signs (existing)

Summarizing Section 31.07, for each occupant/tenant, there shall be one signable area for each façade facing a street or parking lot 33 feet in width or greater.

Size: 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 requiring CDR exception: "THE GATEWAY" wall signs

Southwest wall (facing Williamson Street)

- 120" w x 35.25" h = 23.4 sq. ft. (2 boxes measurement method)
- Located in a gable, extends outside a *signable area* with the top portion of the sign

Southeast wall (facing Blair Street)

- 120" w x 57.92" h = 31 sq. ft. (2 boxes measurement method)
- Located in a gable, extends outside a *signable area* with the top portion of the sign

#### Staff Comments

The requested "THE GATEWAY" wall signs maintain the existing intent to *create place* for the shopping center. The signs are of a high quality design and generally match or compliment the architecture of the building and other signs on the site. The signs replace existing wood signs that have deteriorated, but served to identify the property for the past few decades. The original signs never had original sign permits issued. The existing ground sign is likely nearing the end of its practical lifespan, and any new ground sign should be designed in consideration of the existing building architecture and site design. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

This property is located within the *Third Lake Ridge Historic District*. Per MGO 31.13(1), local historic districts are Districts of Special Control. Staff have shared the initial plans with the Preservation Planner (Amy Scanlon) who expressed no initial concerns with the signs or the request for CDR. The City's Preservation Planner will review the signs prior to permit issuance, as required per MGO 31.13(1).

#### Notes:

- All wall signs shall comply with the approved material details standards, and if illuminated, shall be externally illuminated.
- Any new ground signs shall require an alteration to the CDR.
- The final CDR documents shall state that all other signage complies with MGO 31.
- The final CDR document shall include all complete inventory of all signs on the zoning lot.