

## ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

March 21, 2018



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

**Project Address:** 725, 749, and 750 University Row  
**Project Name:** University Crossing  
**Application Type:** Comprehensive Design Review Initial/Final Approval  
**Legistar File ID #** [50649](#)  
**Prepared By:** Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector  
**Reviewed By:** Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator

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The applicant is requesting Comprehensive Design Review INITIAL/FINAL APPROVAL. This property is located in a Planned Development (PD) District, which previously had a sign package approved by UDC. The shown signage remains the same, but is back for UDC approval because of a change to the Sign Ordinance (Sec. 31.13(4)), which requires previously approved sign packages to either comply with the sign ordinance for the selected zoning district assigned by the Zoning Administrator, or, if it cannot, obtain approval from the UDC through Comprehensive Design Review.

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.*

Signable Area defined in Sign Ordinance: One designated area of the facade of the building up to the roof line that is free of doors, windows (for purposes of this definition, spandrel panels or other non-vision glass used as an exterior building material are not considered windows) or other major architectural detail, that extends no higher than the juncture of the wall and the roof.

Proposed Wall Signage: Three of the wall signs proposed in the application are signs on raceways located in front of the storefront windows, which is not a qualifying signable area in the ordinance.

Staff Comments: The storefronts on the North West elevation of 725 University Row have few qualifying signable areas, limiting the size of the signs tenants can use to identify their locations to customers. The raceways that span the windows of the tenant storefronts provide a larger and more noticeable sign. Location, size, and type of the signs are limited to what is shown in the provided plans. **Staff has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

Canopy Signs Permitted per Sign Ordinance: Summarizing Section 31.071, the signable area for a canopy fascia sign shall not project beyond the limits of the canopy in any direction, and shall be no wider than the width of the canopy. Any canopy fascia sign shall be in lieu of an above-canopy or below-canopy signage.

Above-canopy signs can be installed instead of canopy fascia signs, but are restricted to the business name and logo, be constructed of freestanding characters and the logo, have a max height of 2' and the next of the logo being a max size of 4 sq. ft. These signs also cannot be wider than the width of the canopy or the corresponding façade, whichever is narrower. Above-canopy signage may not project further than from the building than the canopy to which it is attached and a sign that crosses architectural detail may not be displayed closer than three feet from the nearest face of the building.

Below-canopy signs are mounted beneath the canopy, but cannot project beyond the limits of the attached canopy in any direction. The sign face shall have a maximum vertical height of two feet, but shall not hang more than one foot from the lower most edge of the canopy, and must have a vertical clearance of 9 feet for pedestrian areas, and 14 feet for vehicular ways.

Proposed Signage: The signage in the submittal has a mixture of canopy signs. 725 University Row has two signs that are under-canopy signs (one is EVP Coffee and the other is the building's main sign, University Row). Both these signs are no more than two feet in vertical height, but these signs hang more than one foot from the lowermost edge of the canopy.

The other building, 749 University Row, shows signage on the first floor mounted above the canopy, but the signs also hang over onto the canopy fascia, meeting neither requirements of above-canopy or canopy fascia signs.

Staff Comments: Again, 725 University Row has few qualifying signable areas, limiting the size of the signs on the building, and the under-canopy signs provide a larger and more noticeable sign. Location, size, and type of the signs are limited to what is shown in the provided plans.

The storefronts on the first floor of 749 University Row have a signable area above the canopy, allowing for potentially larger signs for tenants, however the propose above canopy signage creates a more uniform and higher quality look. Location, size, and type of the signs are limited to what is shown in the provided plans **Staff**

**has no objection to the CDR request and recommends the UDC find the standards for CDR review have been met.**

Staff Comments regarding other shown signage: The parking lot directional sign already exists, but should be noted, exceeds 3 sq. ft. in size, but the applicant wishes to include the existing size of the sign as part of the CDR approval, in case the sign needs to be replaced. The original sign package also had originally approved three ground signs, all already installed, but should also be noted as part of the CDR package approval.

Notes: As part of the conditions of approval, all other signage should comply with the standards of Chapter 31, as a Group 2, and signs shall have landlord approval before obtaining a permit.