

ZONING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

July 17, 2019



PREPARED FOR THE URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

Project Address: 5202 Cottage Grove Road
Project Name: Messiah Lutheran Church
Application Type: Approval for a Street Graphics Variance Request
Legistar File ID # [56307](#)
Prepared By: Chrissy Thiele, Zoning Inspector

The applicant is requesting approval for a Street Graphics Variance. The church has an existing ground sign 32' away from the property line, 30 sq. ft. per side, that they are looking to replace. This property is located in the Suburban Residential – Consistent 1 (SR-C1) district, which abuts Cottage Grove Road (4 lanes, 35 mph).

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.

Ground Signs Permitted by Sign Ordinance: One wall and one ground signs per street frontage may be displayed; identifying the entity, with a maximum of two ground signs and two wall signs per zoning lot. Signs, whether displayed on a wall or the ground, shall not exceed 12 sq. ft. in net area, nor be closer than ten feet to any lot line, except such signs may be increased in net area by one square foot for each additional foot that the sign is set back more than 12 feet from the street lot line. **No sign under this section shall exceed 32 square feet in net area.** No sign shall project higher than one story, or 12 feet above the curb level, whichever is lower.

Proposed Signage: The applicant is looking to construct a new sign in the same location (32 feet away from the property line), 5' 10" tall with a total net of 48 sq. ft. (50% more than what is allowed per code). The sign will sit 7 feet above the curb level due to the grading of the site.

Staff Comments: The right-of-way width on Cottage Grove Road is 120', with a landscaped boulevard between the east and westbound lanes. The applicant is asking for a variance to allow for a sign that exceeds the maximum by 16 sq. ft. and one foot taller than permitted from the curb level. The images submitted in the application show how the existing sign is viewed from the roadway and how small the sign appears when heading east. The church itself is set further back in the lot and does not provide any additional signage, making this ground sign the only sign providing identification to vehicles driving by. The stone used in the base of the ground sign is similar to the stone found on the church façade. **Staff has no objection to the Variance request for the ground sign and recommends the UDC find the standards for Variance review have been met.**