

**SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF REPORT ON PETITION FOR ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT**

**ZOTA 2015-3: AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 17-7(k) TO ALLOW MULTI-TENANT LISTINGS ON FREE-STANDING SIGNS IN THE PLANNED SHOPPING CENTER (B-6P) ZONE**

**STAFF REVIEW:**

The staff recommended postponement of this text amendment one month ago in order to more thoroughly evaluate and respond to the applicant's proposal. Since that time, the applicant and the staff have met to discuss the expressed concerns.

While the staff recognizes the desire to have more information and more tenants listed on any and all free-standing shopping center signs, the staff believes that there is a point of diminishing return, which is when a sign becomes too cluttered and no longer conveys the information it is intended to convey. After more detailed discussions with the petitioner, the staff proposes an alternative text, which would meet the objective of allowing identification of a limited number of tenants to increase the visibility of their businesses within a shopping center; and possibly increase the likelihood of a company or franchise locating within that center. Drivers unfamiliar with such areas may also benefit from such signs, instead of using area landmarks for direction. The staff's position is that the shopping center identification should remain the primary focus of the sign; thus, the center's identification should occupy at least sixty percent (60%) of the sign. This would leave the remaining forty percent (40%) open for use as either a bulletin board or for tenant panels. In reviewing many local examples provided by the applicant, and researching sign examples from across the nation, the staff believes the community aesthetic will be preserved by limiting the percentage as well as the number of tenant panels, in that the shopping center name will remain the primary information and panels will be secondary.

The staff remains concerned about the number of panels permitted on the sign, but is comfortable with the average tenant panels being between 5 and 10 square feet in size. Based on the graphics submitted by the petitioner, the most appropriate number appears to be six panels, as their size appears to be legible from a distance. To solidify that legibility of the tenant panels, the staff proposes an additional requirement that the panels be legible from 200 feet away while traveling at a normal rate of speed.

Within the alternative text, language is also suggested to clarify that only conforming shopping center signs (in size, height, location) would be eligible to be improved with the inclusion of this new sign type (tenant panel). The staff believes that adding this new sign type to an existing non-conforming sign could expand its non-conformity significantly (up to 40 percent). This clarification is also important in attempting to encourage the eventual replacement of non-conforming signs from our community.

Lastly, the staff alternative text suggests adoption of a specific definition for "tenant panel" in order to avoid ambiguity by those applying for sign permits, and to maintain consistency within the remainder of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Staff Alternative Text:**

**Article 17: SIGNAGE REGULATIONS**

**17-3(c) (20) TENANT PANEL** – A portion of a free-standing shopping center identification sign that lists or advertises an individual tenant that occupies the site. Tenant panels of the same size and shape may be removed and replaced without a sign permit.

*Re-number remaining sections*

**17-7(k) PLANNED SHOPPING CENTER ZONE (B-6P)** - Signs within the B-6P zone shall be permitted and regulated as for B-1 [Section 17-7(f)], except as follows:

- (1) In place of the free-standing signs permitted under Section 17-7(f)(1)(b), the only permitted free-standing signs shall be shopping center identification signs. One sign shall be permitted per street frontage, with a maximum of two (2) signs. The maximum square footage of each sign shall be 150 square feet, with a maximum height of twenty-five (25) feet for a regional shopping center; and seventy-five (75) square feet, with a maximum height of twenty (20) feet in a community or neighborhood shopping center.

A shopping center identification sign that otherwise conforms to the requirements listed above may include either an attraction board or up to six (6) tenant panels. The shopping center identification sign portion of the free-standing sign shall at no time be less than sixty percent (60%) of the total square footage. The area of any tenant panel(s) or attraction board shall be included in the computation of the area of the total free-standing sign, not to exceed forty percent (40%) of the area of the free-standing sign. Tenant panels shall be legible to motorists traveling at a normal rate of speed when located a minimum of two hundred (200) feet from the sign location. An attraction board shall have ~~may be attached to the free-standing sign, provided it does not exceed the area of the identification sign and provided that no permanent copy identifying any specific business or product sold within the center is included on the attraction board. The area of the attraction board shall be included in the computation of the area of the free-standing sign.~~ The copy on such an attraction board shall be limited to sales or other events on the premises and civic meetings, rallies or other noncommercial events on or off the premises.

The Staff Recommends: **Approval of the Staff Alternative Text**, for the following reason:

1. The proposed text amendment appears to be addressing a recent national trend involving shopping center signage. While identifying tenants on an individual basis could be helpful, the community must also balance the aesthetic appearance and impression made by such signs. The alternative text addresses the desire for tenant panels in a limited fashion, yet ensures legibility and an appropriate hierarchy for a shopping center identification sign.

TLW/BJR/WLS

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