

Legislation Text

File #: 17-596, **Version:** 1

Presenter

*Christopher Looney, Planning & Community Development Director
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SUBJECT:

Discuss and consider a request for a conditional sign permit for a pole sign along the IH 35 Access Road at the future Long Motors at 116 IH 35 South.

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

Case No.: CS-17-019

Council District: 6

Owner/Applicant: Long Real Estate Holding, LLC
Paul Long
6900 IH 35 South
Austin, TX 78745
(512) 587-1161

Agent: Custom Sign Creations
Maggie Star
1703 Dungan Lane
Austin, TX 78754
(512) 374-9300

Staff Contact: Benjamin Campbell
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Background:

The subject property is located on the IH 35 South Access Road just west of the new Valero Corner Store at the corner of S. Seguin Avenue. The property consists of three parcels with frontage on both the Access Road and E. Merriweather Street; 210 feet along the access road, and 150 feet along E. Merriweather Street. The applicant indicated the property is intended for use as an automobile dealership.

The property is zoned "M-1" Light Industrial District. While the Sign Ordinance includes requirements for signs based on zoning, it also includes limitations and allowances based on the adjacent thoroughfare classifications. Signs on property along main thoroughfares, including IH 35, are granted additional size and heights.

One of subject parcels is currently improved with a former Enterprise Rent-A-Car building and parking lot fronting the access road. The other two subject lots fronting E. Merriweather Street are occupied by single-family houses. The applicant has not indicated any plans for the houses along E. Merriweather Street, nor has a future site plan been submitted (Attachment 5 is an existing site plan).

The previous sign cabinet for Enterprise Rent-A-Car was removed from the existing pole, which is all that presently remains. This remaining pole is 51 feet, 7 inches tall exceeding the maximum allowable height by 5 feet, 7 inches. New Braunfels' Sign Ordinance currently allows pole signs along the Interstate to be 40 feet tall plus the difference between the elevation of the location of the sign and the elevation of the nearest main travel lanes of IH 35 (6 feet) for an allowable height of 46 feet.

Per the Sign Ordinance, allowed signage for this entire site consists of a maximum total of 4 freestanding signs, 2 for each street frontage, as identified in the tables in Attachment 8.

Proposal:

The applicant is requesting to reuse the existing pole and place an elliptical/oval cabinet at the top of the pole with the top of the cabinet flush with the top of the pole (51 feet, 7 inches). The applicant indicated that the sign will be 270 square feet (25 feet wide by 10 feet, 10 1/8 inches tall), but the sign will actually be smaller in area when accounting for the curves of the ellipse. In either event, 270 square feet is less than the maximum allowed by the Sign Ordinance.

The applicant has not indicated the setback for the pole or the sign cabinet. Staff calculated that the pole is setback approximately 20 feet, deducing that the cabinet will be approximately 7.5 feet from the property line if oriented perpendicular to the right-of-way. The minimum setback required is 5 feet.

The applicant has not indicated whether or not additional signs are intended for the property, either presently or in the future.

Existing Signs in the Vicinity:

A Conditional Sign Permit was denied for the neighboring Valero property on November 14, 2016 (CS-16-031), which requested a pole sign height of 75 feet. Accounting for the additional height granted by the elevated highway, the allowable height for that site is 54 feet. Valero's existing pole sign complies with the height requirements.

A Conditional Sign Permit was approved for the nearby Hyundai dealership at 485 N. Business 35 on July 28, 2014 (CS-14-033), which allowed a monument sign to be larger and/or taller than the Sign Ordinance allows. The monument sign is 39 feet tall and 429 square feet.

Additional signs in the area include:

Burger King	83 feet
Drive Time	70 feet
River Hoffbrau	60 feet
Jack in the Box	50 feet
CVS Pharmacy	65 feet

Lot Size:

115 IH 35 South (Access Road): 0.4970 acres

110 E. Merriweather Street: 0.3099 acres

116 E. Merriweather Street: 0.2066 acres

Surrounding Zoning & Land Use:

North - across Merriweather, "C-3" Commercial District / Bluebonnet Motors

East - "M-1" Light Industrial District / Valero gas station and convenience store

South - IH 35 Right-of-Way

West - "M-1" Light Industrial District / Chiropractor's office and single-family home

Comprehensive Plan/Future Land Use Designation:
Commercial

Improvement(s):

1,581 square-foot commercial building, and two residential structures each smaller than 800 square feet

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

While the subject property is along the Interstate Highway where taller signs are allowed, a residential neighborhood does exist immediately to the west that deserves protection. Conditional sign permits provide opportunities for trade-offs and alternatives that can often achieve a balance that benefits a business while protecting neighbors.

Therefore, staff recommends approval of the conditional sign permit, but only with the following condition:

- That no additional monument or pole signs be allowed on the subject property, including all 3 lots.

The existing pole is less than 6 feet taller than the maximum allowable height. This difference in height should have minimal impact to passing motorists in comparison to existing signs in the immediate vicinity and the previous height of the Enterprise sign. Being shorter than some of the other nearby signs creates a tapering effect as distance from the major roadway intersection increases. And limiting any additional signage on the site will also be a benefit to the nearby residents.

Attachments:

1. Aerial Map
2. Application
3. Approved Sign
4. Proposed Sign
5. Existing Site Plan
6. Contour Map
7. Comparison Table Showing Allowable Signs vs. Requested Sign
8. Excerpt from Sign Ordinance