

Capitola Planning Commission

Agenda Report



Meeting: July 18, 2024

From: Community Development Department

Address: 2155, 2165, 2175 41st Avenue

Project Description: Application #24-0258 Master Sign Program application for the retail center in the Regional Commercial (C-R) zoning district.

Environmental Determination: Categorical Exemption

Recommended Action: Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve application #24-0258 based on the Conditions and Findings of Approval.

Property Owner: Novin Properties, Inc.

Representative: Bryce Berryessa, Filed: 5/01/2024

Background: The applicant was approved to operate a retail cannabis business at 4170 Gross Road on December 5, 2019.

On April 4, 2024, the Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit to allow the relocation of the business to 2175 41st Avenue, Suite A. The Planning Commission also reviewed a Master Sign Program (MSP) application for a single-tenant monument sign. The Commission continued the MSP application with direction to the applicant to revise the program to fit within the purpose of a master sign program incorporating multiple tenants and address concerns related to the proposed monument sign size, height, and required landscape plan for the front planter area.

Discussion: The existing structure at 2155, 2165, 2175 41st Avenue is located in the City's entry corridor for 41st Avenue in a highly visible location. The structure is a one-story commercial building with four tenant spaces, including Savy Flare Beauty, 41st Avenue Liquor, Wash Dry, and The Hook. The lot is flanked by Men's Warehouse to the south, a dental office to the north, and a residential neighborhood to the west. The building has no ingress/egress at the rear.

Master Sign Permit

Pursuant to 17.80.130.B, a master sign program is required for commercial uses with four or more tenants. The commercial building recently completed a tenant improvement to create four commercial tenant spaces and therefore is required to have a master sign program.

The three existing tenants have one wall sign each located in the archway above each establishment. The details of the existing wall signs are as follows:

Existing Wall Signs

- Number of Signs: Three total. One for each original tenant space
- Location: Each sign is centered above each storefront archway
- Design: Individual channel letters
- Sign Dimension and Area:

Location	Business	Width	Height	Sign Area
2155 41 st Avenue	41 st Ave Liquor	22 feet	2.5 feet	54 sf
2165 41 st Avenue	Salon	17 feet	4 feet	59 sf
2175 41 st Avenue	Wash & Dry	27 feet	2.5 feet	67 sf

- **Materials:**
 - Face 3/16 inch acrylic sheeting
 - Trim Cap: Plastic
 - Return (side of channel letters): 3-inch aluminum sheeting
- **Lighting:** Individual internal illumination. Raceway is not exposed.

The applicant is proposing one new multi-tenant monument sign and one additional wall sign. Also, one art piece is proposed on the exterior wall between 2155 and 2165 to balance out the building signage and symmetry. Within the master sign program, the wall art could be converted to a wall sign in the future if a fifth tenant space were created. The new wall sign, wall art, and monument sign will be equipped with solar gooseneck style down lighting. The following is a summary of the proposed monument sign, wall sign, and wall art:

Monument Sign:

- **Number:** One monument sign with four quadrants for four individual tenant signs
- **Location:** Located a minimum of 5 feet behind the sidewalk within raised planter.
- **Materials:**
 - Monument sign to have stucco siding painted off-white. Staff is recommending that the arched top of the sign have wood cladding. (condition #8)
 - Sign Materials: Four individual hand-painted aluminum signs
- **Dimensions:**
 - Overall Monument Sign: Six feet wide by five feet nine inches tall.
 - Concrete Base: Six inches above grade
 - Monument sign divided into four equal quadrants with individual sign dimensions of 2 feet 9 inches wide by one foot ten inches tall. Each tenant is allowed one sign in the respective quadrant
- **Height:** The top of sign shall not exceed five feet nine inches above the planter and in no circumstances eight feet above adjoining sidewalk.
- **Sign Area:** 34.5 square feet



Applicant's proposed monument with stucco top.



Staff recommended monument with wood top.

New Wall Sign:

- **Number:** One wall sign
- **Location:** Between storefront arches of units 2165 and 2175
- **Design:** Circular sign with The Hook Outlet logo painted on aluminum.
- **Dimension:** Six feet diameter
- **Sign Area:** 36 square feet (excludes portion of tree outside the circle)
- **Material:** Painted aluminum. Staff is recommending that the tree logo and/or lettering be raised proud of the rest of the sign to provide depth and articulation. (condition #9)

- Lighting: 1 gooseneck style solar downlight

New Wall Art:

- Number: One wall art
- Location: Between storefront arches opposite The Hook wall sign
- Design: Circular painted aluminum
- Dimension: Six feet diameter
- Sign Area: 36 square feet
- Material: Painted aluminum
- Lighting: 1 gooseneck style solar downlight

All MSPs must identify the materials, color, size, type, placement, and general design of signs located on a project or property. The proposed program integrates the existing channel letter signs with the new wall sign, wall art, and monument sign. Attachment #2 is the proposed MSP for the entire building and up to five tenants. All subsequent signs proposed at the subject property shall comply with the standards and specifications included in the master sign permit. Signs consistent with an approved master sign program are allowed with an administrative sign permit issued by City staff.

Master Sign Programs are required to comply with the design standards of CMC Section 17.80.130.F. as listed in underline below:

1. Master sign programs shall feature a unified and coordinated approach to the materials, size, type, placement and general design of signs proposed for a project or property. Master sign programs may allow for variety in the design of individual signs.

Staff analysis: The subject property was developed in 1962 and the three original tenant spaces mounted signs to center on the dominant, three-arch features. The new and smaller tenant space at 2175 41st Avenue, Suite A is proposing to add a multi-tenant monument sign, a wall sign, and a piece of wall art. The theme of the proposed sign program is to continue the balance and symmetry of the existing signs by adding the new sign and wall art in the voids between the existing wall signs.

The existing wall signs on the building are channel letter signs which vary in materials, size, and design. To create a more unified look in the future, the proposed master sign program has been drafted to continue to allow the channel letters with a letter height of 2.5 feet and added standards for the individual channel letters including the sign face material, trim material, and three-inch depth of the return. Also, the MPS specifies that any new or replacement signs shall be limited to 50 square feet.

2. A master sign program may deviate from standards contained in this chapter relating to permitted sign height, number of signs, sign area, and type of sign. A master sign program may not allow prohibited signs as identified in Section 17.80.060 (Prohibited signs).

Staff analysis: The sign code allows one square foot of signage for every one linear foot of tenant or building frontage with a cap of the total combination of site signage at 50 square feet. The three existing tenant signs are nonconforming and exceed the 50 square foot maximum. However, collectively the signs are less than the linear frontage (244 linear feet) of the building and they do not appear out of scale with the building. The proposed Master Sign Program will add interest to the building with color and shapes while maintaining symmetry with the new wall sign and art piece. The proposed stucco monument sign is a traditional multi-tenant monument consistent with other similar retail centers along 41st Avenue.

In the Community Commercial zone, sign materials may vary as long as letters and logos are raised, routed into the sign face, or designed to give the sign variety and depth. The current proposal for “The Hook” wall sign is for a circular aluminum sign painted with The Hook logo. Staff is recommending that the sign include a raised logo and/or lettering. Replacement signs for the existing tenants require the channel letters to have a three return.

Landscaping: The applicant is proposing to install new landscaping in the arched planter at the front property line. The front planter and other onsite planters have been neglected and are in disarray. The proposed plants include a mix of red and white clover ground cover. The applicant also proposes to repair the existing drip irrigation system in the planter for use with the new plantings. Staff is recommending that the applicant submit a revised landscape plan to (1) incorporate 15-gallon native and drought tolerant shrubs in the front planter to screen the garbage dumpster, (2) add perennial flowers and grasses to soften the streetscape, (3) install clover ground cover at a minimum size of 1 gallon with maximum 12-inch spacing between plants and (4) fill open areas between plants with bark mulch. The property has minimal landscaping and installation of new shrubs can be required pursuant to 17.72.020 (A)(1). (Condition #10) The planting installation and irrigation repair will be inspected prior to issuance of sign Building Permit pursuant to condition #13.

CEQA

Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines exempts minor alterations to existing structures. This project involves a monument sign, wall signs, artwork, and lighting throughout the shopping center in the C-R (Regional Commercial) Zoning District.

Findings:

A. The proposed signs are consistent with the general plan, local coastal program, zoning code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the city council.

The proposed signage is consistent with the general plan, local coastal program, and the zoning ordinance with the approval of the Master Sign Program. The Master Sign Program for this retail center allows for a coordinated approach to allow signage for the new tenant space without disrupting the existing symmetry and balance of the established building signage.

B. The proposed signs comply with all applicable standards in Chapter 17.80 (Signs).

Chapter 17.80 allows for the establishment of Master Sign Programs to manage multi-tenant properties. Master Sign Programs are specifically allowed to deviate from Chapter 17.80 to achieve a customized approach for signage at unique properties.

C. The proposed signs will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare.

The proposed signs will not have an adverse impact on the public health, safety, or welfare. The signs are non-illuminated and comply with size and placement allowances for the respective tenant space.

D. The number, size, placement, design, and material of the proposed signs are compatible with the architectural design of buildings on the site.

The Master Sign Program is intended to address the unique architecture and established symmetrical design of the wall signage at the property. The proposed monument sign has space for four tenant signs and will be stucco painted an off-white color with a wood clad top.

E. The proposed signs are restrained in character and no larger than necessary for adequate identification.

The proposed signage are proportional to the size of the building and the length of the frontage wall. The new signs will not be internally illuminated. Additionally, the new wall sign is over 90 feet from the curb. The size of the wall sign is proportional to the building and location from the primary viewing point. There are three existing channel letter signs that are large ranging from 54 to 67 feet. The MSP requires all future channel letter size to comply with the 2.5 feet height limit.

Conditions of Approval:

1. The project approval consists of a Master Sign Program to establish sign criteria for the retail center at 2155, 2165 and 2175 41st Avenue in the C-R (Regional Commercial) zoning district. The proposed project is approved as indicated on the final plans reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission on July 18, 2024, except as modified through conditions imposed by the Planning Commission during the hearing. The applicant is required to update the master sign program to reflect all conditions imposed by the Planning Commission within 30 days of the program approval.
2. Prior to construction, a building permit shall be secured for any new construction or modifications to structures authorized by this permit. Final building plans shall be consistent with the plans approved by the Planning Commission. All construction and site improvements shall be completed according to the approved plans.
3. All subsequent signs proposed for a development or property subject to an approved master sign program shall comply with the standards and specifications included in the master sign program.
4. Signs consistent with an approved master sign program are permitted with an administrative sign permit.
5. Approval of a master sign program shall supersede the regulations of CMC Chapter 17.80 Signs. Any aspect of the proposed signs not addressed by the master sign program shall comply with CMC Chapter 17.80 Signs.
6. All conduit and raceways associated with lighting and signage shall not be visible.
7. Prior to acceptance of plans for Building Permit plan check, the applicant shall provide the Planning Department with an updated record set of plans that incorporates the final design and conditions following Planning Commission approval.
8. The monument sign shall include wood cladding on the broad sides of the arched top.
9. The tree logo and/or lettering on The Hook wall sign shall be raised proud of the rest of the sign.
10. The landscape plan shall be revised to: (1) incorporate 15-gallon native and drought tolerant shrubs in the front planter to screen the garbage dumpster, (2) add perennial flowers and grasses to soften the streetscape, (3) install clover ground cover at a minimum size of 1 gallon with maximum 12-inch spacing between plants and (4) fill open areas between plants with bark mulch. The landscaping shall be inspected pursuant to condition #13.
11. Any sign illumination shall be downward directed and shielded from direct view, so that the illumination source does not shine into adjacent property or distract motorists or pedestrians.
12. Prior to issuance of individual sign permits, all Planning fees associated with permit #24-0258 shall be paid in full.
13. Prior to issuance of building permit, the applicant shall call for a final inspection of the installed landscape plan and repaired irrigation system. General maintenance on existing landscape is required on an ongoing basis.

14. The monument signs shall use illumination with an external source only. The light fixtures shall be downward directed and have shielded cutoffs so that the source of light is not visible from off property.
15. The wall art sign shall be installed at the same time as The Hook Outlet wall sign and shall be included in the same Building Permit submittal.
16. Prior to any land disturbance, a pre-site inspection must be conducted by the grading official to verify compliance with the approved erosion and sediment control plan.
17. Prior to any work in the City road right of way, an encroachment permit shall be acquired by the contractor performing the work. No material or equipment storage may be placed in the road right-of-way.

Attachments:

1. Master Sign Program Plans
2. Master Sign Program Written Document

Report Prepared By: Brian Froelich, Senior Planner

Reviewed By: Austin Westly, Deputy City Clerk

Approved By: Katie Herlihy, Community Development Director