



STAFF REPORT
12/16/2020

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Luis Lopez, Development Services Director

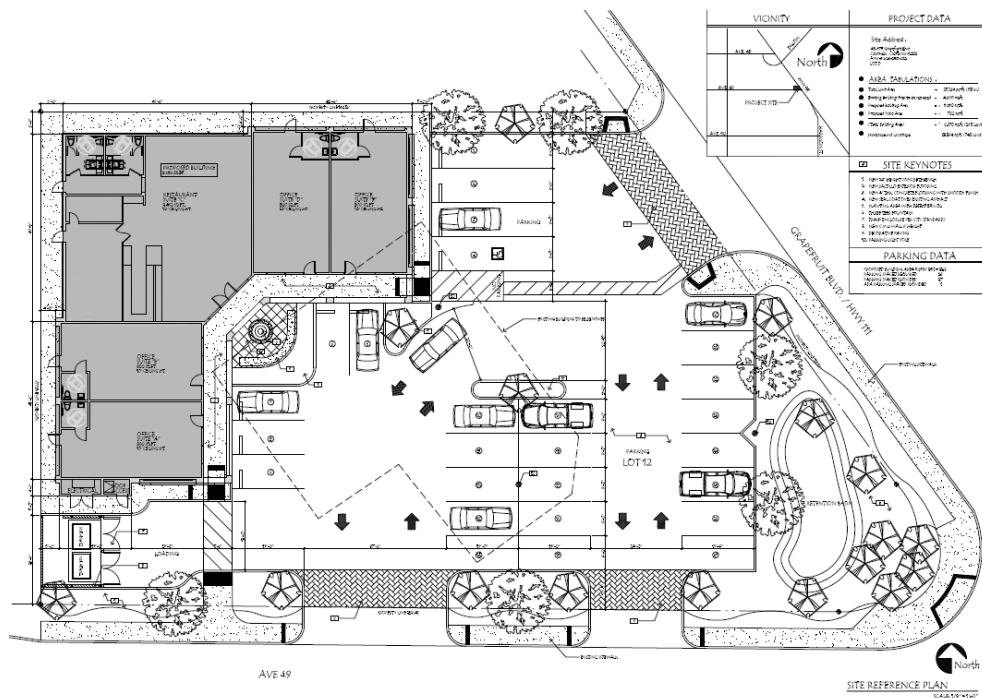
SUBJECT: Review of Sign Program - Plaza Mi Pueblo (48-975 Grapefruit Boulevard)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the sign program for “Plaza Mi Pueblo” and make a finding of consistency with Section 17.56.010-e of the Coachella Municipal Code for the anchor tenant sign facing Grapefruit Boulevard.

BACKGROUND:

On April 19, 2017 the Planning Commission approved Architectural Review No. 17-01 to allow the demolition of an existing one-story building and construction of a new 5,650 sq. ft. multi-tenant commercial building, known as the “Plaza Mi Pueblo” project at the northwest corner of Avenue 49 and Grapefruit Boulevard. The site plan below shows the approved layout for the five-tenant space commercial center, showing the anchor tenant (restaurant) and the four smaller suites.



A condition of approval was imposed requiring the applicant to submit a sign program to staff prior to obtaining sign permits. The sign contractor installed business identification signs on the entire center but did not submit a sign program.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to Section 17.56.010-d of the Coachella Municipal Code (CMC), the Planning Commission must approve a sign program for new commercial buildings, as part of Architectural Review for a project. Additionally, Section 17.56.010-e of the CMC allows for a separate identification sign for any individual building or business, as part of an approved sign program. Said sign may be freestanding (monument sign) or as approved by the Planning Commission and shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in size. The applicant is proposing to install this “Separate Identification Sign” consisting of a wall sign on the east-facing tenant frontage that advertises the central “anchor” tenant (El Pecado Restaurant).

The applicant recently submitted photographs showing the installed signage for the individual tenants, which consist of non-illuminated hanging wooden signs attached to the under-side of the walkway arches, and wall signs on the side facades facing Avenue 49 and Grapefruit Boulevard. The photographs shown below show the sign placement on the buildings and the detailing of the typical signs for each tenant.



Typical hanging signs in front of tenant suites



Close-up of hanging sign (metal frame box with wood sign face)



Sign Dimensions (2 ft. X 7.5' = 15 sq. ft.)



- Typical Wall Signs on south-facing tenant frontage - Individual Letter Casings



Separate Wall Sign - advertising "anchor" tenant space

Sign Program:

The City's sign regulations require that a "sign program" be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Commission, and this usually consists of written guidelines for the design of the typical wall signs, designs of any freestanding signs, and the type of illumination proposed, and architectural or pictorial exhibits that show where on the buildings/property each sign will be placed. Staff encourages the use of "channel lettering" (internally illuminated letters) or "letter casings" (non-illuminated) with backlit illumination (i.e., gooseneck lamps or downlights, etc.). Although the City cannot regulate sign content, it is the City's interest to create a cohesive design theme with respect to sign placement, size/massing, and design features, to avoid "sign clutter", or a mixture of "cabinet /encased signs" with "channel lettering/ individual letter casing" signs within the same shopping center.

Because the owner installed all the tenant identification signs using a uniform design, the City's goal of getting consistency in design and proportionality is substantially achieved, as evidenced by the photographic images above. Each tenant identification sign consists of a 15 square foot hanging wooden sign encased in a metal frame with two brackets that are bolted to the arch structure above the sign. The sign background colors and frame substantially match the colors of the building and the letters are catered to the logo and specifications of each tenant. The end units closest to the streets have individual letter casing signs facing the street.

The owner has indicated that in the future they may install a multi-tenant freestanding "monument" sign within the landscaped planter located along Grapefruit Boulevard, as would be typical for this type of commercial center. That sign would be required to incorporate the exterior stucco material and paint color to match the building, and could identify the center ("Plaza Mi Pueblo") in addition to the tenant directory showing the five tenants.

Separate Business Identification Sign:

The sign regulations limit the size of a wall sign to a maximum of 1.5 square feet of sign area per linear foot of occupancy frontage. Additionally the wall signs must be placed on the business occupancy frontage. The owner/landlord has requested a "separate identification sign" to be placed on the exterior wall facing Grapefruit Boulevard, for the anchor tenant (El Pecado Restaurant). The restaurant is located in the center of the building and includes an outdoor patio for seating. The "El Pecado Restaurant" wall sign is located near a covered walkway entrance from Grapefruit Boulevard that leads into the restaurant area, but that is the occupancy frontage of the end suite ("Kings Barber Shop"). The Planning Commission has the discretion to allow one "separate sign" for commercial centers that is up to a maximum of 32 square feet, provided it is approved as part of a sign program.

Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission authorize the use of the sign photographic images to be used as a sign program, limiting the signs to individual 15 square foot hanging wooden signs, individual letter casings for the wall signs, and the "separate identification sign" advertising the anchor tenant only, on the building frontage closest to Grapefruit Boulevard.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Sign Program as shown in this staff report.
2. Deny the Sign Program as shown in this staff report.
3. Continue this item and provide staff with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends Alternative #1 as noted above.