



**HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT  
JULY 8, 2025**

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**Prepared by:** Amy Wolfson, City Planner

**DATA SUMMARY**

**Application Number:** 25PLN-23  
**Subject:** Minor Sign Review for Soulspace Collective above-awning sign.  
**Location/APNs:** 206 West Main Street / 008-342-016  
**Applicant:** Carly Eisner, business owner  
**Zoning/General Plan:** Town Core – Historic Combining (TC-H) / Commercial  
**Entitlement:** Minor Sign Review Permit  
**Environmental Status:** Categorical Exemption

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the Historical Commission recommend that the Development Review Committee approve the Minor Sign Review permit for Soulspace Collective as presented, or as modified by the Historical Commission, which includes the following actions:
  - a. Determine the project Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines, as detailed in the Staff Report;
  - b. Adopt Findings of Fact for approval of the Minor Sign Review permit as presented in the Staff Report; and,
  - c. Approve the Minor Sign Review permit in accordance with the Conditions of Approval, as presented in this Staff Report.

**BACKGROUND:**

Built in 1965, 206 West Main Street is a 3,950 square foot commercial structure. The building is considered a priority 3 structure, which is one that lacks significance and historic integrity due to major alterations or additions, but which may be recoverable through restoration. The Grass Valley Design Review Guidelines for the 1872 Historic Townsite note that, historically, signs in the historic district were manufactured of wood and were hand painted. Signs were mounted to exterior walls using cleats or metal brackets, or adhered to buildings using chains or ropes. Today, the façade of the building at 206 West Main Street consists of street-level windows and an awning or canopy that spans the entire frontage width. Since 1995, approved signage on the building front has only included sidewalk signage suspended from the canopy, though a projecting roof-mounted sign was installed at some point. A sidewalk sign,

suspended from the canopy was recently approved for Souldspace Collective at this space with an area of 7.875 square feet.



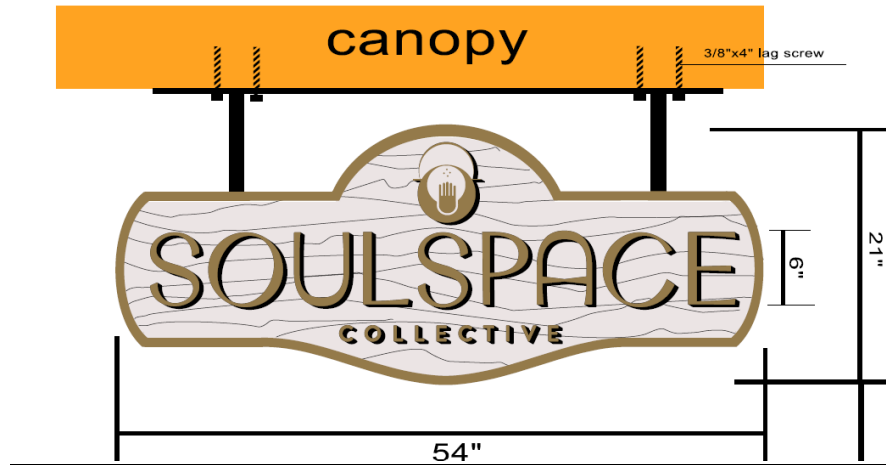
*Existing storefront façade*

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL:**

This Minor Sign Review permit is for a proposed “Soulspace Collective” wall-mounted sign above the existing canopy. The “Soulspace” lettering measures 10 feet, 7 inches in length by 18 inches in height, and “Collective” measures 4 feet, 3 inches in length and 4 inches in height, for a total square footage of approximately 17.022 square feet. The sign will be centered on the building, above the front door. The sign will be composed of individual aluminum letter that are  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches thick and painted black.



*Proposed Above-Awning Sign*



Previously approved signage

**Regulatory Authority:** The Community Design Guidelines call for signs “to be compatible with other signs on the premises,” and to be “designed as an integral architectural element of the project.”

Pursuant to Section 17.28.040 of the GVMC, a sign permit for signs located above the awning in the Historical combining zone, where there was not previously a sign, is to be reviewed and approved, denied, or approved with conditions by the Development Review Committee (DRC), with consultation from “persons and agencies and organizations knowledgeable in the history of Grass Valley,” including the Historical Commission.

Table 3-11 of the GVMC limits total signage for a commercial business to 1 square foot per lineal feet of tenant frontage. In this case, the signage limitation is 40 square feet. The total square footage of the previously approved suspended sign and the proposed above-awning sign is 24.897 square feet and is therefore in compliance with the signage area limitation.

### **GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING:**

**General Plan:** The Grass Valley 2020 General Plan identifies the site as Commercial (COM). The intent of the Commercial General Plan designation includes all types of commercial retail and service establishments on the highway and along major streets.

**Zoning:** The Town Core (TC) zoning designation is intended to strengthen the mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented nature of the existing downtown. The TC zone permits a full range of retail, restaurant, and housing uses. The Historical combining zone (-H) is intended to identify important cultural resource sites and structures in the city, to ensure that any proposal to alter the state of the site or structure is carefully considered prior to implementation.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines. A Class 1 Categorical Exemption consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alternation of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or

topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The proposed sign is intended to orient visitors to Mill Street and increase visibility of the store. Therefore, will not result in expansion of use of the commercial property.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. The City received a complete application for Minor Sign Review 25PLN-23.
2. The Grass Valley Development Review Committee reviewed Minor Sign Review application 25PLN-23 at their regular meeting on June 24, 2025.
3. The Development Review Committee reviewed the project in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and concluded that the project qualifies for a Class 1, Categorical Exemption in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and CEQA Guidelines.
4. This project is consistent with the City's General Plan and any specific plan.
5. The proposed sign relates to the architectural design of the structure.
6. The proposed sign does not unreasonably block the sight lines of existing signs on adjacent properties.
7. The placement and size of the sign will not impair pedestrian or vehicular safety.
8. The design, height, location, and size of the sign is visually complementary and compatible with the scale, and architectural style of the primary structures on the site, any prominent natural features on the site, and structures and prominent natural features on adjacent properties on the same street.
9. The proposed sign, as conditioned, is in substantial compliance with the design criteria in Subsection 17.38.060.F (sign design criteria and guidelines) and the city's design guidelines.

### **B. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:**

1. The final design shall be consistent with the Minor Sign Review application and plans provided by the applicant and approved by the Development Review Committee (25PLN-23). The project is approved subject to plans on file with the Community Development Department. The Community Development Director may approve minor changes as determined appropriate.
2. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall provide documentation demonstrating that no portion of the proposed sign will be located within the city right-of-way.

3. Prior to any work occurring, a building permit shall be obtained from the Community Development Department, Building Division.
4. An approved Encroachment Permit shall be obtained from the Engineering Division prior to any work being done within the City right of way.
5. The sign shall be maintained in good repair and functioning properly at all times.
6. The applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City of Grass Valley in any action or proceeding brought against the City of Grass Valley to void or annul this discretionary land use approval.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Aerial Map
3. Universal Application
4. Sign Drawing