



**PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
February 18, 2025**

Prepared by: Lucy Rollins, Senior Planner

DATA SUMMARY

Application Number: 24PLN-43
Subject: Master Sign Program for 406/412 E Main St
Location/APNs: 406/412 E Main St / 009-230-038
Applicant: Peter Mwangi, 406-412 East Main LLC
Representative: Wairimu Kaggio
Zoning/General Plan: Central Business (C-2) – Hills Flat Business District (HFBD)/Commercial
Entitlement: Development Review Permit
Environmental Status: Categorical Exemption

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Planning Commission approve the Master Sign Program for the 406/412 E Main Street office complex as presented, or as modified by the Development Review Committee, 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 Development Review Permit as presented in the Staff Report; and,
 - c. Approve the Development Review Permit in accordance with the Conditions of Approval, as presented in this Staff Report.

BACKGROUND:

The office buildings at 406 and 412 East Main Street were constructed in 2002. In 2003, a sign permit was issued for the installation of one wall sign and a monument sign shared between the buildings despite not having a valid Master Sign Program.

At their regular meeting on January 14, 2025, the DRC reviewed the proposed sign criteria and recommended a few minor changes: clarify tenant space for frontage standards, edits to accommodate building façade maintenance, and fix two typos. These changes were addressed by the applicant for the sign criteria presented to the Planning Commission.

PROJECT PROPOSAL:

The applicant seeks to establish master sign criteria for future signage at this location. The UPS Store anticipates occupying the ground floor suite of 412 East Main and wishes to install a wall sign for their location. This spurred the need to establish sign criteria to guide signs for all tenants at the property. The applicant has proposed standards for a freestanding pylon (monument) sign, wall signs, and window signs, as well as general regulations for design, installation, and maintenance of all signs. The intent of the proposal is to support navigation of the office complex and improve awareness of tenants for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The attached Master Sign Program includes the full scope of the proposed standards.

Regulatory Authority:

Pursuant to Section 17.38.030 GVMC, a master sign program is to be reviewed and recommended by the Development Review Committee (DRC) and approved by the Planning Commission for any site with two or more tenants or five or more total signs. An approval may include exceptions for typical signage height, area, and lighting styles.

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.”

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 C-2 Zoning designation applies to existing auto-oriented areas. The C-2 zone permits a full range of retail and restaurant uses. The Hills Flat Business District (HFBD) combining zone applies to an area around the Idaho-Maryland Road/East Main Street intersection. The combining district allows all uses permitted in C-2 with the exception of drive-through restaurants, which the city determined are not appropriate for this area due to traffic-related impacts.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:

The office complex includes two buildings on one parcel (APN: 009-230-038) with a unique address for each building: 406 and 412 East Main Street. 406 East Main Street is currently occupied by personal services and outpatient medical offices. 412 East Main Street is currently occupied by administrative and professional service offices and personal services.

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 Master Sign Program is intended to orient shoppers and aid in navigation to existing businesses. Therefore, will not result in expansion of use of the commercial property.

FINDINGS:

1. The City received a complete application for Master Sign Program Application 24PLN-43.
2. The Grass Valley Development Review Committee reviewed Master Sign Program Application 24PLN-43 at their regular meeting on January 14, 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 project site has two or more tenants, or five or more total signs.
6. The project allows signs that relate to the architectural design of the shopping center.
7. The project ensures signs to not unreasonably block the sight lines of existing signs or adjacent properties.
8. The project ensures placement and size of signs to not impair pedestrian or vehicular safety.
9. The project encourages design, height, location, and size of signs that are 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.
10. The project, as conditioned, complies with the City of Grass Valley Community Design Guidelines.

B. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

1. All signs associated with the 406/412 East Main Street office complex shall adhere to the standards set forth in the Master Sign Program, as approved by the Planning Commission.
2. 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. Master Sign Program Application
5. Proposed Master Sign Program