

4-7-2020

City of Los Gatos  
Planning Commission  
110 E. Main St.  
Los Gatos, CA 95030

ATTN: Community Development Department

**RE: Letter of Justification for a Variance from the Town Code and an Exception to Commercial Design Guidelines for 50 University Ave. #B260, for wall sign area and letter height.**

To Whom It May Concern,

This Letter of Justification is respectfully submitted for your consideration, in the installation of the proposed wall signage for Sephora at 50 University Ave, Suite B260.

A variance is requested from the Town Code Section 29.10.135 (c)(2) to exceed the maximum allowable sign area. This code section states, "Allowed sign area is (1) square foot for each lineal foot of primary business frontage plus one-half square foot for each lineal foot of secondary business frontage." The maximum allowable sign area is 51'8". The proposed sign area is 72.82 square feet included a 70.82 square foot wall sign and 2.62 square foot in awning letters. A special exception is requested from the Commercial Design Guidelines Chapter 6.2.5, Maximum Letter height to allow the proposed signage to exceed the maximum allowed letter height. The Commercial Design Guidelines Chapter 6.2.5 require a maximum 12" letter height in the C-2 district is allowed where the proposed letter height is 2' 6" (30 inches).

Including the city's mandated 6" border around the copy of the proposed sign, this signage is proposed at an overall length of 20' 0 11/16" with an overall letter height of 3'6" and an overall square footage of 70.2 square feet. The business frontage measures 51'8", which would permit 51'8" square feet for allowable sign area. The actual square footage of the sign is 47.64 square feet; however, the required 6" border, per the Commercial Design Guidelines, around the sign copy added an additional 22.56 square feet of counted sign area, which cause the proposed signage to exceed the allowed square footage prescribed by code.

This building is set back from University Boulevard approximately 188 feet and proposes a unique challenge for visibility due to the multitude of mature trees and shopping center signage that blocks clear view from the roadway. The trees are fully grown and the foliage is full and blocks the visibility of any signage for this site. In addition, there is a shopping center sign that sits at the roadway in front of the tenant space the Sephora is occupying that prevents visibility of signage for drivers on University Boulevard.

This tenant space is unique from the other tenant spaces as it is a larger tenant space and has a pitched roof over the entryway that most of the other tenants do not have. This design feature provides a unique opportunity to showcase a well-designed sign that is in proportion to the open space that the pitched roof provides. The larger sign is visually more aesthetic than a smaller sign would be and fits the overall scale of the building face and pitched roof design. A smaller sign would look out of place amongst the large pitched roof space over the entryway.

Standard 12" letters would not be able to be seen from vehicular traffic passing along University Boulevard because of these two factors, which would prevent Sephora from being able to adequately identify their business location to vehicular traffic. One of the purposes of signage is to be able to help travelers quickly identify the location of stores as they travel so as to prevent traffic incidents. In this case, it would be difficult for a traveler to identify Sephora's location with the required 12" letter height as the sign would not be easily visible from the roadway. Sephora's proposed larger letter height of 2'6" would provide a sign that is more easily visible through the foliage of the trees and existing shopping center sign.

There are other businesses in the area, both in the shopping center and in surrounding shopping centers that have signage that appears to exceed these same allowances. Photographs have been provided as reference. The granting of this variance for Sephora's signage would not grant special privileges that other surrounding properties do not also enjoy. Instead, it would allow Sephora to be able to adequately identify their business to vehicular and pedestrian traffic traveling along University Boulevard where the strict application of the code would inhibit this ability and deprive Sephora of the ability to advertise their business to this pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

With your approval of the additional letter height and sign area, the signage would be able to provide vehicular traffic the opportunity to more quickly and safely identify Sephora's location in order to be able to safely arrive at the destination without causing traffic delays or cause additional risks for vehicular traffic. The signage is still tasteful and aesthetically pleasing at the proposed letter height and will not detract from the overall look of the building, but rather enhance the purpose of the shopping center by allowing Sephora to be able to adequately advertise their business while maintaining a visibly pleasing exterior appearance that other businesses in the shopping center and nearby shopping centers enjoy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Liu  
SR Store Design Manager  
Sephora USA