

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



February 14, 2024

ITEM TITLE

Planned Sign Program for a shopping center on approximately 4.76 acres in the MU-2 (Mixed Use Corridor) zone of the Palomar Gateway District Specific Plan

Location: 765 Palomar Street (APNs: 622-020-65, 622-020-51, 622-020-05, and 622-020-68)

Environmental Notice: The proposed project qualifies for a Class 11 categorical exemption pursuant to Section 15311 (Accessory Structures) of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.

Recommended Action

Adopt a Resolution approving the Planned Sign Program based on the findings and subject to the conditions contained therein.

SUMMARY

The proposed Planned Sign Program No. PSP23-0001 (“Project”) consists of a total of ten (10) signs, including seven (7) wall signs, two (2) freestanding (pylon) signs, and one (1) monument sign for a proposed shopping center on a vacant site within the Palomar Gateway District Specific Plan area. The subject property is located at 765 Palomar Street and is generally bounded by Palomar Street on the north, Frontage Road on the west, and Industrial Boulevard on the east (“Project Site”).

HOUSING IMPACT STATEMENT

While residential units are allowed within the MU-2 zone of the Palomar Gateway District Specific Plan, no housing is proposed as part of this Project; therefore, no additional housing units will result from the Project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Director of Development Services has reviewed the proposed Project for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and determined that the Project qualifies for a Class 11 categorical exemption pursuant to Section 15311 (Accessory Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines; therefore, no further environmental review is required.

DISCUSSION

On March 30, 2023, Chedraui USA, Inc. DBA El Super Stores (“Applicant”) submitted an application for a Planned Sign Program No. PSP23-0001 proposing ten (10) total signs as part of a previously approved shopping center.

The Palomar Gateway District Specific Plan regulates wall signs (i.e., signs painted or directly mounted to the building surface) within the Specific Plan area while delegating regulation of other signs to the sign

provisions of the Chula Vista Municipal Code (“CVMC”). Additionally, the Planning Commission may allow deviations from applicable sign regulations pursuant to CVMC 19.60.050(J). Signs other than wall signs would normally be regulated by the provisions of CVMC 19.60.560 concerning the C-T (Commercial Thoroughfare), which was the Project Site’s previous zoning designation prior to adoption of the Specific Plan.

A comparison of the existing and proposed sign regulations as they pertain to the Project is outlined in the table below. Shaded cells indicate proposed sign regulations that deviate from existing regulations:

Table 1 - Summary of Sign Regulations	
Existing Sign Regulations	Proposed Sign Regulations
<i>Wall - Anchor/Supermarket (Building D)</i>	
<u>Area:</u> One square foot per linear foot of building frontage (100-square foot maximum per business)	<u>Area:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One square foot per linear foot of building frontage facing a street, or up to three square feet per linear foot of frontage, to be no larger than 50 percent of the sign background area One square foot per linear foot of building frontage facing parking, or up to two square feet per linear foot of frontage, to be no larger than 50 percent of the sign background area
<u>Copy Height:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12-inch maximum for buildings 30 feet or shorter in height 18-inch maximum for buildings between 30 and 60 feet in height 	<u>Copy Height:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy height not restricted but must fit within the allowable sign area Logos no more than 55 percent of total sign area Anchor may use secondary signage to advertise products and/or services
<u>Placement:</u> No closer than half of the vertical height of copy to a building corner (vertical edge) or roofline	<u>Placement:</u> (Not mentioned in proposed PSP, defaults to existing regulation.)
<i>Wall - In-Line Tenants (Buildings A, B, & C)</i>	
<u>Area:</u> One square foot per linear foot of building frontage (100-square foot maximum per business)	<u>Area:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One square foot per linear foot of building frontage facing a street, or up to three square feet per linear foot of frontage, to be no larger than 50 percent of the sign background area One square foot per linear foot of building frontage facing parking, or up to two square feet per linear foot of frontage, to be no larger than 50 percent of the sign background area (100-square foot maximum)

Wall - In-Line Tenants (Buildings A, B, & C)	
<u>Copy Height:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12-inch maximum for buildings 30 feet or shorter in height • 18-inch maximum for buildings between 30 and 60 feet in height 	<u>Copy Height and Length:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-thirds of wall height for double row • Half of wall height for single row • Maximum 80 percent of wall length • Separate logo/graphic limited to 20 percent of total sign area
<u>Placement:</u> No closer than half of the vertical height of copy to a building corner (vertical edge) or roofline	<u>Placement:</u> (Not mentioned in proposed PSP, defaults to existing regulation.)
Freestanding (Pylon) - (P1 & P2)	
One freestanding sign per lot	Two freestanding signs
One square foot per linear foot of street frontage (150-square foot maximum)	150-square foot maximum per sign
35-foot maximum height	35-foot maximum height, 19-foot maximum width
Eight-foot minimum ground clearance	Eight-foot minimum ground clearance
Five-foot maximum projection into public right-of-way	Five-foot maximum projection into public right-of-way
Minimum 10-foot setback from all interior property lines	Minimum 10-foot setback from all interior property lines
Ground (Monument) - (M1)	
One ground sign in lieu of a freestanding sign	One ground sign in addition to pylon signs
Eight-foot maximum height	Eight-foot maximum height, 9.5-foot maximum width
50-square foot maximum sign copy area	50-square foot maximum sign copy area
Minimum five-foot street and interior property line setback	Minimum five-foot street and interior property line setback

The proposed Project is similar in scope to other shopping centers in the area and is compatible with the type of shopping center development approved for the site. The proposed changes will also ensure visibility from the arterial thoroughfares as they exist today and after Palomar Street is relocated under Industrial Boulevard and the nearby train tracks with the future San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Grade Separation Project.

Additionally, the proposed signs are compliant with the City’s Design Guidelines, which limit materials and colors of the signs to those compatible with other materials and colors throughout the site. The development of the Project Site includes a large supermarket, which requires larger signage to maintain proportionality. Additional pylon and monument signs will assist with wayfinding to the property.

Wall Signs - Anchor/Supermarket

Two wall signs are proposed along the north side of Building D fronting Palomar Street. The existing sign regulations allow a maximum sign area of 100 square feet per business. The proposal deviates from the existing sign regulations in the Palomar Gateway District Specific Plan by using the C-T zone provisions in the CVMC for wall signs facing north towards Palomar Street (CVMC 19.60.560(A)). This would allow the two proposed primary signs to be 160.75 and 107.52 square feet in area.

Five wall signs are proposed on the east side of Building D, facing the interior parking lot. The existing sign regulations allow a maximum sign area of 100 square feet per business. The proposal deviates from the

existing sign regulations by using the C-T zone provisions in the CVMC for wall signs facing east towards the parking lot (CVMC Section 19.60.560(A)), except that individual signs may be larger than 100 square feet. This would allow one primary sign 160.75 square feet in area and four secondary signs totaling 78.63 square feet in area.

The regulations for sign lettering (copy) allow for a maximum height of 12 inches for buildings 30 feet in height or shorter. The proposed Project would have no copy height restrictions and allow logos to be no more than 55 percent of the total sign area. The anchor will be allowed to have secondary signage to advertise products or services.

The existing sign placement regulations require that a wall sign is no closer than one-half (1/2) the vertical height of the letters (sign copy) to a building corner (vertical edge) or to a roofline. The proposal includes no changes to these requirements.

Wall Signs – In-Line Tenants

The existing sign regulations allow a maximum of 100 square feet of sign area per business. The proposal deviates from existing sign regulations by using the C-T zone provisions in the CVMC. Wall signs would be allowed one square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage. If facing the street, sign area could increase up to three square feet of sign area per linear foot of building frontage, not to exceed 50 percent of the sign's background area. If facing a parking lot or walkway, sign area could increase up to two square feet per linear foot of building frontage, not to exceed 50 percent of the sign's background area and/or a maximum of 100 square feet.

The existing sign copy regulations allow for a maximum letter height of 12 inches for buildings 30 feet in height or shorter. The proposed maximum letter height is two-thirds (2/3) of the height of the sign background for a double row and one-half (1/2) of the sign background for a single row, with a maximum sign length of 80 percent of a tenant business's wall length. Separate logos are limited to 20 percent of the total sign area.

The existing sign placement regulation requires that a wall sign is no closer than one-half (1/2) the vertical height of the letters (sign copy) to a building corner (vertical edge) or to a roofline. The proposal includes no changes to these requirements.

Freestanding (Pylon) Signs

The existing sign regulations allow one pylon sign or one monument sign, but the proposed Project would allow two pylon signs instead of one, using the existing development standards for each. The request increases site visibility relative to similar developments in the area and the aforementioned grade separation project would result in improved site visibility once built. Both proposed pylon signs are consistent with the design of the proposed monument sign and the previously approved shopping center.

The first pylon sign will be located at the future intersection at Palomar Street and Trenton Avenue, on the north side of the site where a driveway will be located. The second pylon sign will be located at the northeast corner of the site, at the location of the future underpass of Palomar Street, under Industrial Boulevard and the train tracks.

Ground (Monument) Signs

The existing sign regulations allow one monument sign in lieu of a pylon sign, but the proposed Project would allow one monument sign in addition to the two proposed pylon signs using the existing development standards in CVMC 19.60.560(C). The proposed monument sign is consistent with the design of the proposed pylon signs and the shopping center. The proposed monument sign will be located along Industrial Boulevard on the east side of the Project Site where another driveway will be located.

CONCLUSION

The proposed Project complies with the applicable policies, guidelines, and design standards for the Palomar Gateway District Specific Plan, as well as the Chula Vista Municipal Code and the City's Design Manual. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the proposed Project, subject to the applicable requirements of CVMC 19.60 and the Palomar Gateway Specific Plan, and the conditions listed in the attached resolution.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff has reviewed the property holdings of the Planning Commission and found that Commissioner Leal has real property holdings within 500 feet of the boundaries of the Project Site. Consequently, pursuant to California Code of Regulations Title 2, sections 18700 and 18702.2(a)(7), this item presents a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code § 87100, et seq.) for the above-identified member.

Staff is not independently aware nor has been informed by any Planning Commission member of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision-maker conflict of interest in this matter.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no current or ongoing fiscal impacts to the General Fund or Development Services Fund as a result of this action. All processing costs are borne by the applicant.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Locator Map
2. Planned Sign Program PSP23-0001
3. Resolution
4. Disclosure Statement

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