

CC MEMO 01-296
LRP MEMO 01-038

DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 2001

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

THRU: LLOYD HARRELL, CITY MANAGER
DOUG BALLARD, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

FROM: HANK PLUSTER, LONG RANGE PLANNING MANAGER

SUBJECT: ZCA01-0005 SIGN CODE AMENDMENT (CCD SIGNAGE)
Introduction of Ordinance No. 3316

Request: City Initiative to amend the Chandler City Code, Chapter 39 (Sign Code), Section 39-9.18, CCD – City Center District (revised standards for downtown storefront signage)

Applicant: City of Chandler

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Commission and Staff recommend an amendment to the City Sign Code, relative to the standards and requirements for downtown storefront signage in the City Center District (CCD), as set forth in the attached draft (Exhibit “A”).

BACKGROUND

The current regulations of the Sign Code governing signage for downtown storefronts was adopted in 1990 as part of the Downtown Revitalization Program. The intent has been to enhance the visual character of the downtown area, while promoting the early Twentieth Century Commercial historical look of the original storefronts. Hence the regulations have been very specific relative to the types, sizes, and styles of signs allowed, including methods of attachment, materials allowed, and suggested letter styles. Given the increased level of interest in downtown business, i.e., those that have opened recently and those that have expressed interest in opening downtown, it is clear that some revisions to the current sign standards are necessary, to further promote revitalization efforts.

DISCUSSION

The proposed regulations (as do the current standards) allow for four (4) primary types of signs for downtown storefronts (see Exhibit “B”):

- a) Surface-mounted above the colonnade
- b) Surface-mounted below the colonnade

- c) Colonnade hanging sign
- d) Window/door signs

The proposed revisions specify that all surface-mounted signage (above or below the colonnade) be individual letters, or be manufactured as a signboard, which may then be mounted onto the building. Painted-on signs (other than windows/doors) would be prohibited. All signage materials, including sign boards and letter styles, will be required – to the extent possible – to replicate the historic look of signage consistent with the Early Twentieth Century Commercial architecture of buildings within the CCD.

The intent of the proposed revisions is to provide a greater degree of flexibility, which in turn will enhance the ability of downtown merchants to be “visually competitive” with signage allowed for commercial uses elsewhere in the City, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the historic downtown look. Hence the following changes in the proposed regulations have been carefully crafted to achieve these objectives:

- Surface-mounted signs, whether above or below the colonnade, may be flush, angled, bowed, or perpendicular to the exterior wall surface of the building (*current regulations: flush-mounted only, and for those below the colonnade, signs must be painted-on above the windows only*).
- Surface-mounted signs above the colonnade may be illuminated internally by the merchant or property-owner, including the use of neon, whether internal or external to the sign face (*current regulations: additional lighting beyond what the City provides, is prohibited*).
- In addition to redwood, sign boards may be manufactured from a facsimile of redwood, or be a fabrication of metal or other materials that achieve a 2" thickness (*current regulations: redwood only*).
- Window and door signs may be painted-on free-hand, and be illuminated by the merchant, including the use of neon (*current regulations: the fore-going techniques, including neon, are prohibited*).
- In addition to business name, address, and hours of operation, window and door signs may also include logos, services/products, etc. (*current regulations: logos, services/products are prohibited*).

Other key provisions of the proposed regulations, such as the size, height, number, and clearance distances, remain unchanged from current code. Further, the proposed regulations provide that any sign installation legally permitted previously, may remain in existence.

COMMISSION VOTE

Motion to approve: 5 for; 1 against

The one (1) dissenting vote expressed concern for allowing neon on the exterior face of letters above the colonnade, feeling that it would be out of character for the downtown storefronts, and urging that Council engage some discussion relative to that point. In making its recommendation for approval, the Commission majority added some

provisions to the text, i.e., prohibiting the use of neon to outline windows or to identify services/products offered (business name/logo, as well as “open/closed” signs in neon would be permitted), and to prohibit the use of banners above the colonnade for more than thirty (30) days. Staff has incorporated these additions into the ordinance language.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Provisions of the current sign code, and most recently the proposed revisions as now drafted, have all been presented to downtown merchants and building owners within the CCD (two letters in support of the proposed amendment, following an October 16th presentation, are also attached). In addition, an 1/8-page display ad of the draft text appeared in the October 23rd Tribune newspaper.

RECOMMENDATION

Upon finding consistency with the Chandler General Plan and good zoning practice, Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval to amend the City Sign Code relative to the standards and requirements for storefront signage within the City Center District, as set forth in the attached draft (Exhibit “A”).

PROPOSED MOTION

I move to introduce and tentatively adopt Ordinance No. 3316, SIGN CODE AMENDMENT (ZCA01-0005), amending the standards and requirements for storefront signage within the City Center District, as set forth in the draft Exhibit “A”, and recommended by Planning Commission and Staff.

Attachments:

1. Section 39-9.18 CCD – City Center District (Exhibit “A”, proposed sign regulations)
2. Typical Storefront (Exhibit “B”)
3. Letter of support (Serrano’s Mexican Restaurants, 10/16/01)
4. Letter of support (Valhalla Investments, LLC, 10/16/01)
5. Ordinance No. 3316