

MEETING DATE: 05.11.09

AGENDA ITEM: **Consideration of a Modification to the Design for Development
for the Fox Hills Mall.**

ATTACHMENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
1. Proposed DFD (and attachments) as amended May 11, 2009;	1-19
2. Agency Agenda Item Report from December 2007;	20-25
3. Request from Westfield dated April 10, 2009;	26
4. Revised Elevation Drawings; and	27-29
5. OPA Exhibit K (Sign Revenue Sharing).	30

**CULVER CITY
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**DESIGN
FOR
DEVELOPMENT**

WESTFIELD CULVER CITY

(Fox Hills Mall)

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Adopted December 17, 2007
Amended May 11, 2009

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I. Introduction

The Fox Hills Mall (Mall), recently renamed Westfield Culver City is located at 200 Fox Hills Mall in the City of Culver City ("City") on nearly 44 acres of land. This property, identified in Exhibit A, is joined by five public roadways including Sepulveda Boulevard, Slauson Avenue, Hannum Avenue, Green Valley Circle and Fox Hills Drive. In addition, the Mall borders both the San Diego (405) Freeway and the Marina (90) Freeway. The location, size, and unique architectural design of the Mall give it the potential to serve as a physical gateway to Culver City.

The property owner, Westfield Corporation ("Westfield"), has proposed a Master Sign Program ("MSP") that focuses upon the Mall's significant freeway orientation as part of redevelopment of the site. The size and unique location of the signs adjacent to the 405 and 90 Freeways requires special design and regulatory considerations. The purpose of this Design for Development (DFD) is to promote signage standards that are appropriate to the Mall, considering site and planning constraints.

This DFD is intended to set signage controls necessary to reposition the Mall as an important commercial enterprise both within the City and the surrounding region. To further attract commerce, tourism and visitation to the Mall and surrounding area, this DFD will ensure signage for the site is attractive, aesthetically pleasing, effective and compatible with the Mall's environment and the community. The DFD will further implement the goals of the Culver City Redevelopment Agency ("Agency") and the City by enabling the continued economic viability of the Mall and the continued improvement of the economic welfare of the community. The DFD is intended to only regulate the signs described herein and all other signs shall be in compliance with Zoning Code Section 17.330 and as approved as a part of the Master Sign Program.

This DFD supplements, augments, and focuses the goals, policies and objectives of the various Planning and Redevelopment documents affecting this area. However, these standards are not inclusive of all applicable City procedures, provisions, regulations and requirements that may apply to the development of the area.

A. General Objectives

The Agency wishes to encourage design concepts that will:

1. Expand Culver City's economic base by attracting visitors to the Mall;

2. Provide regional, local and neighborhood visibility to the Mall without negatively impacting community character;
3. Regulate special signage that may be viewed along the elevated 405 Freeway and provides a major focal point along the Sepulveda Boulevard and Green Valley Circle frontages;
4. Redevelop an architecturally distinctive Mall that will utilize its location at the intersection of the 405 Freeway and major thoroughfares to create a gateway for the area;
5. Contribute to the expansion of the City's economic base through the development of underutilized property, thereby providing additional tax revenue to the City and Culver City Redevelopment Agency;
6. Support the business community by bringing employees and visitors into the area that will frequent local stores, restaurants, and hotels; and
7. Enhance a major employment center in the region, while retaining, expanding and attracting businesses that enhance the City.

B. Special Controls

Consistent with the purposes of this DFD and pursuant to the authority of the Agency under Section 423 of the Redevelopment Plan for the Culver City Redevelopment Project, Component Area No. 1, the Agency hereby establishes the following controls and restrictions for development of the Mall, which are in addition to applicable General Plan requirements and guidelines, Zoning and Building Codes, and other requirements of the Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC).

C. Definitions

For the purposes of this DFD, the following definitions shall apply: (For all other definitions in this DFD, refer to the definitions listed in Section 17.700 of the CCMC.)

1. **Development:** The physical alteration of any parcel or area of land, including buildings, structures, grading and other related changes by any private person or entity and/or by any public body or agency. (Applies to both public and private construction and development.)
2. **Freeway-Oriented Signs:** As used herein, are on-site signs that are directed essentially to be visible only from a freeway.

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3. Pole Mounted Signs: A sign that is displayed on or totally supported by one or more support elements that are on the ground with no part of the sign attached to a building or structure.
4. Wall Mounted Signs – A sign that is displayed on or attached to an exterior wall of a building or structure.

II. Westfield Culver City

A. Background

The existing Mall was opened in 1975 and is improved with approximately 1,054,150 square feet of commercial space including department stores, numerous smaller retail shops, restaurants and related uses, and a freestanding office building at the southwest corner of the site. There are 4,359 parking spaces presently serving the Mall. Westfield does not own the two large department stores; JC Penny's and Macy's are independently owned.

Westfield acquired the Mall as the primary property owner in October 1998, and as the representative of all of the site's property owners filed a complete Site Plan Review application for the expansion and remodeling of the existing Mall in August 2005. The application proposed demolition of some 180,000 square feet of existing space including the existing freestanding office building, and new construction of slightly over 446,000 square feet of new retail and related space in a multi-level configuration with rooftop parking. The total resulting floor area within the Mall after demolition and new construction was to be 1,320,465 square feet.

Onsite and offsite elements include architectural improvements such as pedestrian plazas and wall mounted signage; retail and restaurant uses; revisions to vehicle access ramps and expansion of the parking structure; parking lot improvements including striping, curbing, landscaping and handicapped parking upgrades; relocation of two primary driveway locations and realignment of medians and left turn pockets along Sepulveda Boulevard; and signalization of the Hannum Avenue driveway.

B. Purpose and Intent of Signage

A major objective of the City for the Mall in 1975 was that this large new retail development would serve as an attractive new gateway to the City of Culver City as well as an important sales tax generator. Anticipated patrons included City residents, residents from surrounding communities and, importantly, from those utilizing the nearby freeway.

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While the Mall enjoyed success for many years, it has more recently fallen on slower times due to the introduction of newer and upgraded competing properties, limited reinvestment by the owners and to the fact that, despite appreciable effective freeway frontage, only limited freeway visibility has ever been established at the Mall.

Currently, the Mall lacks a sense of connection to the rest of Culver City. The discontinuity of established streets to the north limits easy access to the rest of the City and exacerbates a sense of separation. To the southwest, the site vicinity is distinguished by the Howard Hughes Center's signage and mid- and high-rise buildings. Signage and design guidelines of the Mall are based on its uniqueness as outlined in the following findings:

- 1) The project is 43.77 acres. This is the largest commercial site in Culver City.
- 2) The Mall includes over one million Gross Square Feet of retail space, making it the largest retail space within the City.
- 3) The site is surrounded by five public streets and adjacent to the elevated 405 Freeway, the 90 Freeway and the obstructing overpass interchange between the two.
- 4) The project site's elevation is below the 405 Freeway and below the neighboring properties.
- 5) The elevation of the Mall on Sepulveda Boulevard ranges from approximately 23 feet to 30 feet below the 405 Freeway from North to South.
- 6) The actual Freeway frontage with an obstructed view to the Mall is approximately 1,375 feet in length.
- 7) The unobstructed 405 Freeway view is framed on the north end by the three story office building located at 5995 Sepulveda Avenue and the tree blind at the Sepulveda Avenue exit at the south.
- 8) The elevated 405 and 90 Freeways, and overpass interchange, visually obstruct and prevent the project site from realizing its potential as a gateway to Culver City.
- 9) The project site is not primarily visible to freeway passerbys until after they have passed any viable freeway exit ramps.

C. Proposed Master Sign Program

Planning Commission Resolution No 2005-PO19 approving Westfield's expansion and remodel of the Mall requires that Westfield submit a MSP for the exterior signs. Westfield submitted a MSP to the City in September 2007, which includes the following signs:

- Vertical Signs - Three Vertical Signs (Signs AP-A, Exhibit C) are proposed to be oriented primarily to the 405 Freeway and would

be located atop the expanded Mall structure's western façade overlooking Sepulveda Boulevard. Each vertical sign contains two separate display panels approximately 70 to 80 feet in length and 35 feet in width facing generally opposite directions. In addition, the Vertical Sign structural framework extends beyond the sign advertising panel display length by up to 15'-6" to create an architectural feature and spire. The Vertical Signs will be mounted on top of the Mall which varies in height from 46'-10" to 57'-2". With the Vertical Signs mounted at the Mall roof line, the height of the advertising display will extend up to 137'-2" and the spire will extend up to 152' - 8" on the south-west elevation.

- Wall-Mounted Signs - Four Wall-Mounted Sign panels (Signs AP-B, Exhibit C) would be located on the expanded Mall's western façade and on the western ends of the Mall's northern and southern facades. These would be oriented to both freeways as appropriate and would vary in size from 14 feet in length and 48 feet in width to 29 feet high and 64 feet in width; and
- Pole-Mounted Signs (billboards) - Four Pole-Mounted Signs (Signs AP-C, Exhibit C) would be located in the parking lot north of the Mall primarily addressing the 90 Freeway, which is elevated over the project site approximately 27 feet. Pole-Mounted Signs would each be as high as 60 feet above grade. Three of these signs provide sign panels 14 feet in length and 48 feet in width and one is proposed in a more vertical configuration with three panels 40 in length and 24 feet wide.

III. General Provisions

Uses permitted in the DFD area shall be compatible with the General Plan, the Redevelopment Plan and the Zoning Code.

A. General Plan

The General Plan designates the Mall as Regional Center. This designation allows large-scale commercial uses that may share parking. It is intended to support existing and anticipated commercial developments that serve a regional market area and would serve both the residential and business communities. The designation is characterized by varying height limits, expansive landscaped setbacks, and a minimum parcel size.

The following policies of the General Plan guide the DFD for the Mall Area and are especially pertinent. The DFD is based on the General Plan as it currently exists or as amended in the future.

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1. Land Use Element

- i. **Policy 5.D** Provide development incentives for projects that provide specific community or neighborhood needs.
- ii. **Policy 5.G** Encourage the location of high quality retail shops and fine restaurants in areas which could serve both businesses and residential patrons.
- iii. **Policy 6.A** Encourage revitalization of commercial corridors in the City through new development and renovation of existing structures with incentives which address development standards and the project approval process.
- iv. **Policy 6.B** Focus commercial development into cohesive districts by identifying and encouraging intensities and qualities of commercial uses that are sensitive to their locations, and by emphasizing specific uses (i.e., general commercial or regional commercial corridors).
- v. **Policy 7.B** Allow existing regional and community centers to upgrade and expand in response to changing market demands, to maintain their economic viability, with adequate mitigation of impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods.
- vi. **Policy 25.B** Improve the Fox Hills Sub Area's identity as part of Culver City by assigning high priority to signage and gateway improvements to this area.
- vii. **Policy 25.F** Reinforce the physical and visual connection between the Fox Hills mall and nearby hotels.

B. Redevelopment Plan for the Culver City Redevelopment Project

The DFD area falls within Redevelopment Project Component Area No. 1. Section 423 of The Redevelopment Plan ("The Redevelopment Plan") applies:

Within the limits, restrictions, and controls established in the Plan, the Agency is authorized to establish heights of buildings, land coverage, setback requirements, design criteria, traffic circulation, traffic access, and other development and design controls necessary for proper development of both private and public areas within the Component Area. Such controls may not relax the requirements of the Culver City Planning and Zoning Ordinance, or any applicable specific plan.

No new improvement shall be constructed and no existing improvement shall be substantially modified, altered, repaired, or rehabilitated except in accordance with any such controls. In the case of Real Property that is the subject of a disposition and development or participation agreement with the Agency, it shall be constructed in accordance with architectural, landscape, and site plans submitted to and approved in writing by the Agency.

One objective of the Redevelopment Plan is to create an attractive and pleasant environment in the Component Area. Therefore, such plans must give consideration to good design, open space, and other amenities to enhance the aesthetic quality of the Component Area. The Agency will not approve any plans that do not comply with the Redevelopment Plan.

C. Zoning Code

The sign regulations are enacted to "serve the interests of community aesthetics, vehicular and pedestrian safety, to protect and preserve property values, to improve the visual environment of the City so as to promote commerce, investment, tourism, and visitation, and the overall quality of life for persons living in, doing businesses in, or visiting the City" (CCMC 17.330.005).

All signs must conform to City sign standards and regulations as they now exist or are hereafter legislated. It is recognized that the coordination of signs within this DFD area affect its appearance and image. Therefore, it is the intent of this DFD that the Agency may adopt additional signage standards and guidelines which may be more restrictive than City standards in order to further the goals of the Redevelopment Plan or the objectives of a special district.

IV. Signage Standards

The DFD establishes appropriate regulations for the sign program for the Mall related to quantity, size, height, location, color construction materials, lighting, and other design features. The DFD addresses signs and graphics on the exterior of the Mall and throughout the site. Each sign in the proposed sign program shall also comply with applicable city, state and federal regulation with regard to size, materials and structure, illumination and content. Signs within the interior of the Mall are exempt from the DFD.

One of the critical issues related to the proposed Vertical Signs is height. The signs must be tall enough to serve their purpose of commanding customer attention from the freeway, but not so tall that they intrude upon the views from surrounding residential neighborhoods. The elevation of the Mall on Sepulveda Boulevard ranges from approximately 23 feet to 30 feet below the 405 Freeway from North to South. Thus, to be seen from the freeway, the

signs must at minimum be located above the freeway elevation. The size of the signs also has bearing on the proposed repositioning of the Mall. The DFD goal of attracting new customers with highly visible signage may not parallel the goal of creating a more upscale mall environment.

Photo simulations modeling the project vertical signs at varying heights above the freeway elevation have been prepared to evaluate the height effects of the signage from vantage points in the areas surrounding the Mall. The photo-simulations indicate that at the currently proposed heights, the signage will be visible from residential neighborhoods to the east and west and commercial areas to the north and south. Westfield's proposed height for the signs may be obtrusive to these neighborhoods, unless the sign height is modified.

The following provides a discussion of standards that may be applied to achieve the goals of the MSP and moderate the effects of sign height upon neighborhoods in and around Redevelopment Component Plan Area No. 1:

A. Type, Quantity & Size

a. Vertical Signs. The success of the Mall is dependent upon its ability to attract customers. Without Freeway Oriented Signs, the Mall owners believe that they will have difficulty drawing a larger customer base that is required for high quality retail tenants. Pursuant to the findings in Section II B and consistent with the economic development and Redevelopment Plan goals for Component Area 1 noted in Sections III A and B, Vertical Signs should be permitted to be large enough to be legible from the 405 and 90 Freeways. If appropriately sized, these signs will reinforce the Mall's identity and guide customers from the freeway to the Mall, while minimizing the effects upon surrounding neighborhoods. In this manner, the Mall signage will support the General Plan's goal for the Mall to serve as a gateway to Culver City.

1. Maximum Number and Height:

Up to three Vertical Signs (oriented to the 405 Freeway and located on the expanded Mall roof structure's Western façade overlooking Sepulveda Boulevard) may be permitted. Each Vertical Sign may provide two separate display panels measuring approximately 50-80* feet in length and 35 feet in width facing generally opposite directions. Mounted at the roof level, the signage would extend up to a maximum of 100' from the finished grade immediately below it, providing adequate visibility from the Freeway and moderating visibility to residential areas to the east and west of the Mall as shown in Exhibit C).

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The photo-simulations (Exhibit C) reveal that at 100 feet in height, the vertical signs will be visible from an approximate distance of 1000 feet along the 405 Freeway, the approximate length of the Mall freeway frontage. From this distance, the signs may be visible though not readily legible. In addition, existing freeway landscaping partially obstructs the view of some of the Vertical Signs along the freeway. (Please see Photo-simulations – Exhibit C).

Further, signs that are part of the structural support of the building should not exceed 56 feet above grade. Any sign that is part of the structural support of the building and that exceeds 56 feet in height above grade should be prohibited.

If the goal is to maximize Vertical Sign visibility for the distance of the mall frontage, (approximately 1000') then the Vertical Sign height must be a minimum of 100 feet. (Approximately 30' above grade is required to clear the freeway elevation and 50' to 60' above the freeway is required to provide enough elevation to see the signs over a 1000 foot distance. The actual length of the Vertical Signs would be 50' to 60' mounted at the Mall roof level. Consistent with the definition of Freeway Oriented Signs and based upon the visibility criteria above, Vertical Signs should not exceed 100 feet above grade. (Originally, Westfield had proposed Vertical Signs with advertising displays in excess of 120 feet above grade*). The DFD must strike a compromise between meeting the goal of visibility along the Freeway and protecting views from the surrounding residential area.

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According to the photo-simulations, at this elevation, the Vertical Signs provide sufficient visibility from the freeways; however they are partly visible to surrounding residential areas (Culver Crest, Westchester Bluff and surrounding neighborhoods). Signs with a height less than 100 feet above adjacent grade do not provide sufficient visibility from the freeway along Mall frontage and may not achieve the goal of drawing customers through increased freeway visibility. (Please see Photo-simulations – Exhibit C).

2. Maximum Number of Sign Faces:

No more than two sign faces per Vertical sign are permitted and the portion of the sign not oriented toward the freeway shall not contain advertising of any kind. The portion of the

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sign not oriented toward the freeway must be a solid material and painted to match the remainder of the sign structure.

b. Wall-Mounted Signs.

1. A maximum of four Wall-mounted Sign Panels may be located on the expanded Mall's western façade and on the western ends of the Mall's northern and southern facades. These may be oriented to both freeways where feasible.
2. Façade-mounted signs may vary in size from 14 feet in length and 48 feet in width to 29 feet in length and 64 feet in width.

c. Pole-Mounted Signs (Billboards).

1. Pole-mounted signs are prohibited.

B. Advertising Display

Signs will be used exclusively for advertisements consisting of fixed copy and images and shall not be digitally sequencing.

C. Advertising Content

Signs will be used exclusively to advertise the business conducted or services rendered or goods produced or sold upon the property upon which the sign(s) is placed. A sign which advertises a brand name, trade name, product or service only incidental to the businesses or services conducted or operating at the Mall shall not be permitted. Goods, products or services are incidental if they do not make up a significant portion of the business. For example, as to the list of restaurants found in Schedule II – Preapproved Tenants to the Owner Participation Agreement, advertising as to alcohol and soft drinks offered at a restaurant would be incidental.

D. Architectural Design

This DFD is intended to promote project design that is attractive, functional and consistent with the regional commercial designation of the General Plan and the applicable zone. Toward that end, the MSP must harmonize with the architecture of the mall buildings and surrounding area and comport with the City's Zoning Code.

Vertical Signs must be architecturally but not structurally integrated into the building facade in order to avoid creating an over-height building condition. They must clearly be signage affixed to the building and not a structural building feature. The signs should be integrated with the building's architectural form and be compatible with the new Mall design.

The signs structural elements shall be consistent with the Mall's exterior color.

E. Illumination

Sign illumination shall not adversely affect adjacent uses, especially nearby residential development. All exterior sign illumination shall be designed, installed and maintained so as to be non-intrusive to surrounding areas.

Creative, energy efficient, low-maintenance illumination solutions (Photovoltaic) are required. Sign panels shall be powered with solar collectors (photovoltaic or other systems, as appropriate) made either a part of the respective signage structures or located elsewhere on the property with the intent to be power grid and carbon neutral.

Signs shall only be illuminated from 5:00 A.M. to daylight and from dusk to midnight and only the sign copy shall be illuminated (no architectural lighting).

F. Prohibitions

Signs shall not include any use or structure which by reason of design, traffic, smoke, glare, noise, odor, or similar factors would be incompatible with the surrounding areas or structures.

Signs shall not contain multiple advertisements (no stacked advertising signs).

Signs shall be for advertising only and shall not contain telecommunication facilities.

The following sign types are prohibited within the DFD area:

- Pole-Mounted Signs.
- Internally illuminated Digitally Sequence Signs.
- Off-site Advertising Signs.
- Changeable Copy Signs (Manually, Mechanically Electronically).

V. Implementation - Signage Review Procedures

CCMC Chapter 17.330 specifies a comprehensive sign regulating process that considers types of signs, maximum sign areas, maximum sign heights, maximum number of signs, and locations of signs. The CCMC provides for MSPs as a mechanism "...to modify the CCMC and to ensure the signs for a uniquely planned or designed development or area are most appropriate for that particular development or area." [17.330.050(D)(2)].

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Signs for the Mall shall be subject to the applicable signage requirements of the City Zoning Ordinance and this DFD, and shall be processed pursuant to a Master Sign Program as outlined in Section 17.330.050.D.2. Formulation of a MSP by the "developer" as an integral part of the overall development concept shall be required. Notwithstanding specific CCMC provisions having citywide application, the Agency intends to allow only signs essential and appropriate to the scale and character of a quality regional center. Within this general framework, the Agency is receptive to innovative and imaginative sign techniques and proposals.

When appropriate, notice to surrounding properties, community outreach, and opportunities for early public participation in the design and development process may be required and are always encouraged.

VI. Environmental Review

Development of buildings, structures, and public and private facilities within the DFD Area shall be subject to specific environmental review pursuant to the applicable City and Agency review procedures. Such environmental review may include, but is not limited to:

1. Completion of the City's Preliminary Environmental Information Form; and
2. Any additional review up to and or including a full environmental impact report or negative declaration.

Cost for any such environmental review, consultants, and contract administration (if required) shall be paid by the property owner or developer. A technical study has been prepared to examine potential aesthetic environmental effects related to views, light and glare, traffic and climate change and found that the proposed MSP will not cause new significant environmental impacts.

VII. Responsibility for Securing Permits and Paying Applicable Fees

Nothing contained in this DFD or in subsequent agreements shall be construed in any way to exempt the developer, person or agency proposing the public or private development or facility (or his/her assignee, buyer, transferee, conveyee or lessee) from securing all permits and paying all fees required of developers of private property within the City of Culver City.

VIII. Conclusions

Westfield has proposed a Mall improvement and expansion program to help reposition it as a modern regional retail center. The DFD incorporates a Sign Program proposed by Westfield to support the Mall improvements. The DFD

is based upon the land use policies of the General Plan which recommend upgrading and expanding the Mall to maintain economic viability while mitigating the impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods. To the extent that the Sign Program helps attract new customers and expands the customer base, it supports the Mall improvement and may achieve this redevelopment objective. Many of the proposed signs are freeway oriented, and as such, require enough height to be clearly visible along Freeway mall frontage. However, the DFD must strike a compromise between meeting the goal of Freeway visibility and protecting views from surrounding residential areas. Also the size of the signs has bearing on the proposed repositioning of the mall. The goal of attracting new customers with highly visible signage may not be consistent with the goal of creating a more upscale mall environment that harmonizes with the surrounding community.

Exhibit A

SITE MAP DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT WESTFIELD CULVER CITY

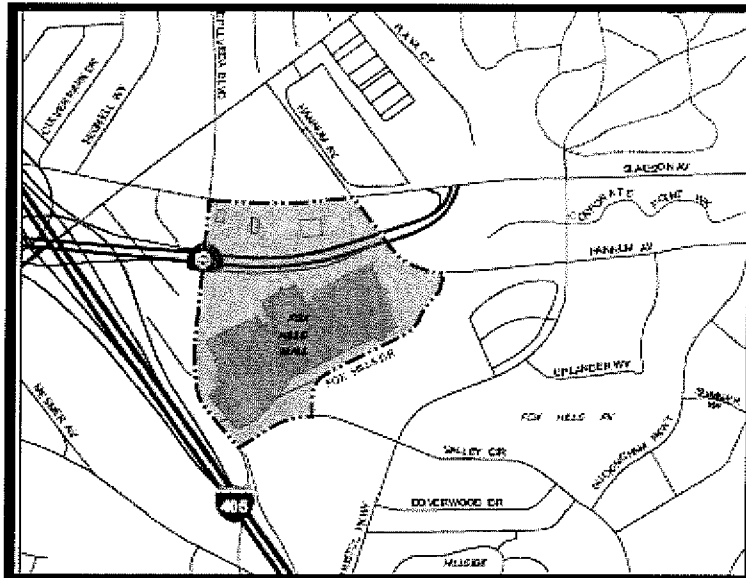


Exhibit B

LOCATION OF SIGNS (MAP)

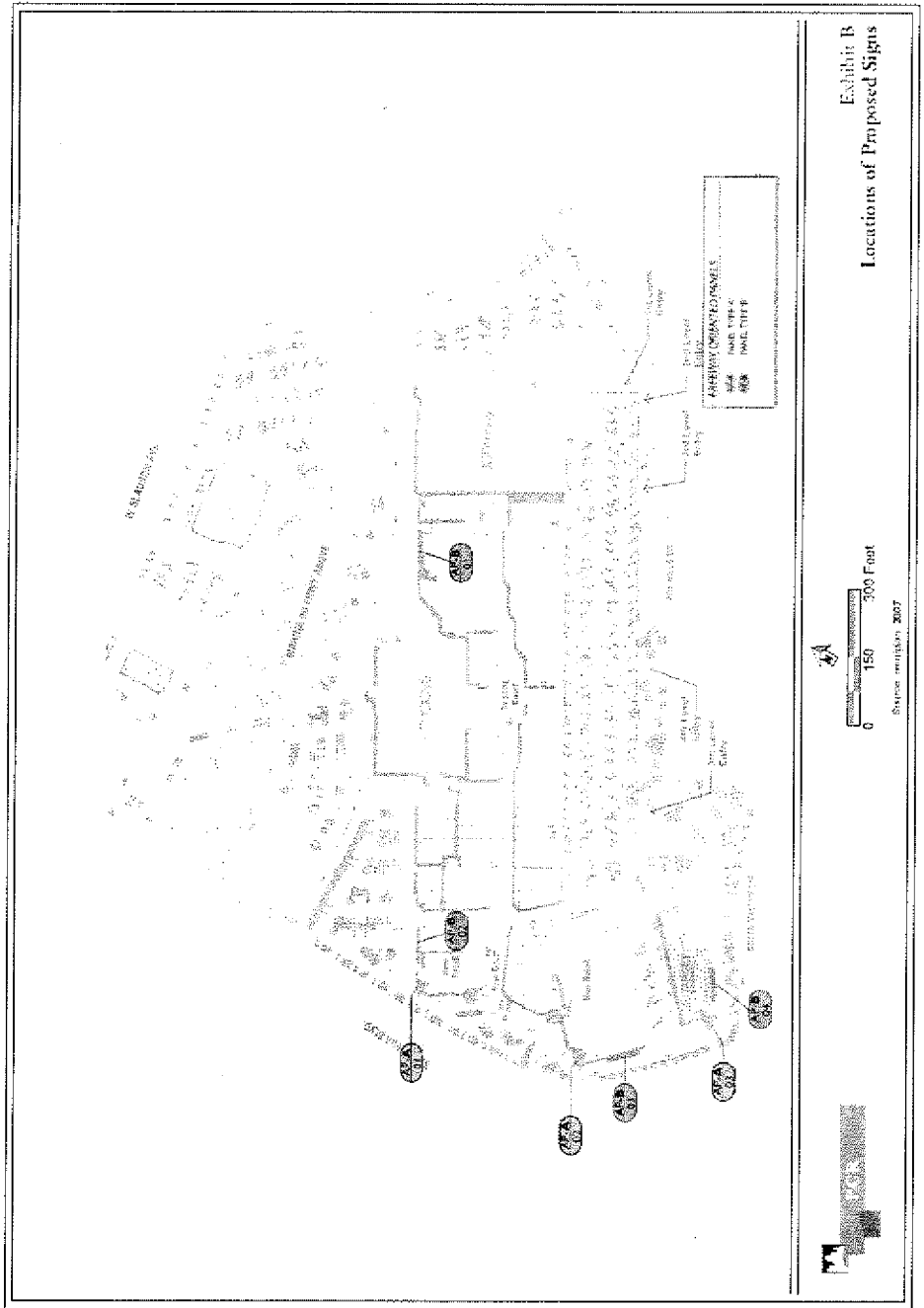
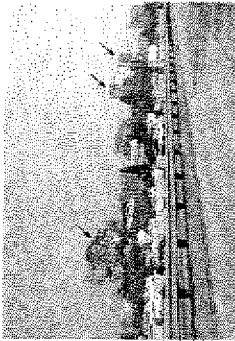
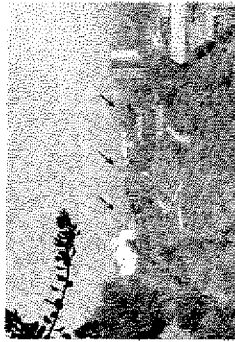


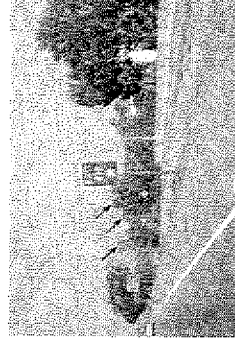
Exhibit C
PHOTO SIMULATIONS OF PROPOSED SIGNS IN
ADDENDUM TO THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION



View 1 of the Project with Signage Height at 100 Feet Above Grade.



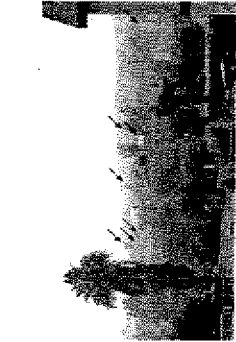
View 2 of the Project with Signage Height at 100 Feet Above Grade.



View 3 of the Project with Signage Height at 100 Feet Above Grade.



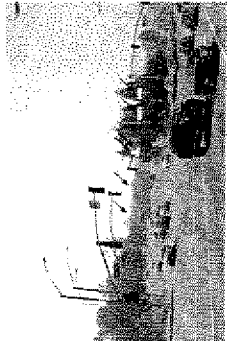
View 4 of the Project with Signage Height at 100 Feet Above Grade.



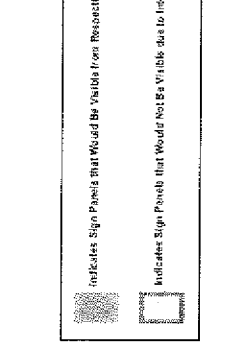
View 5 of the Project with Signage Height at 100 Feet Above Grade.



View 6 of the Project with Signage Height at 100 Feet Above Grade.



View 7 of the Project with Signage Height at 100 Feet Above Grade.



View 8 of the Project with Signage Height at 100 Feet Above Grade.

Indicates Sign Panels that Would Be Visible from Respective Viewages

Indicates Sign Panels that Would Not Be Visible due to Intervening Structures, Topography, or Vegetation

Exhibit C:
Photo Simulations of Proposed Signs from
Addendum to Aligned Mitigated Negative Declaration

Source: 100 Feet Above Grade, 300 Feet Above Grade, and 500 Feet Above Grade

ATTACHMENT 1

Exhibit D

Refer to Attachment No. 5

ATTACHMENT 2

City of Culver City, California
Redevelopment Agency Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 12/17/07		Item Number: <u>A-3</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of a Design for Development for the Westfield Mall at Fox Hills.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Sol Blumenfeld or Todd Tipton		Phone Number: (310) 253-5760	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Consent Item: ☐ Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Master Notification List; Fox Hills Homeowner Association on December 14, 2007; Chamber of Commerce on December 14, 2007.			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld 12/13/07		Executive Director Approval: Jerry Fulwood 12/13/07	
Chief Financial Officer: Jeff Muir 12/13/07			

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Culver City Redevelopment Agency (the "Agency") direct staff as deemed appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

In November 2005, Westfield obtained Planning Commission approval to construct a project that consisted of modifying the existing 1.05 million square foot mall by demolishing some 180,000 square feet of existing space and replacing it with some 446,000 square feet of new space in a multi-level configuration with rooftop parking. The new mall would have approximately 1.3 million square feet of retail space upon completion, would be supported by 4,233 parking spaces, and would implement an array of on-site and off-site access and circulation improvements.

This expansion and remodeling project (the "Project") was subject to environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act via the preparation of a Mitigated Negative Declaration ("MND") by the City in August 2005 and revised in September and November 2005. This document was duly circulated for public review and adopted by the City Planning Commission with the conclusion that the Project would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts.

In the successive two years, the mall's scale, massing and mix of uses has remained in substantial conformance with that approved by the Planning

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Commission in November 2005. At the time, several wall-mounted panel signs located on the mall's westerly, freeway-facing facades were proposed by Westfield. The project's conditions of approval required Westfield to submit a Master Sign Program ("MSP") that further described the proposed signs. Pursuant to the Culver City Municipal Code, Master Sign Programs are subject to administrative review and approval.

Westfield submitted a MSP in September 2007, which proposed the following signs in addition to the wall-mounted panel signs:

- Three vertical freeway-oriented signs each rising approximately 80 feet over the expanded mall's rooftop located along the Sepulveda Boulevard frontage; and
- Four pole-mounted, billboard-type signs located in the parking lot west of the mall building.

Because the freeway and billboard signs were not contemplated in the initial MND, a subsequent environmental analysis ("the Analysis") is necessary. The Analysis considers aesthetics, traffic safety and impacts on global climate in connection with the MSP. The global climate change portion of the Analysis will determine whether or not the proposed signs substantively increase the mall's power demand beyond what is currently consumed.

On December 3, 2007, the Agency authorized execution of an agreement with PCR Services Corporation to conduct the necessary environmental review. The agreement took into consideration potential environmental impacts such as aesthetics, light/glare, (height?), energy consumption, etc. The agreement was fully funded by Westfield.

DISCUSSION:

In 1975 when the mall was developed, a primary objective of the City was that this large new retail development serves as an attractive gateway as well as an important sales tax generator. While the mall enjoyed success for many years, it has more recently experienced a slowdown due to the loss of Robinson-May, introduction of newer and upgraded competing properties, which resulted in limited reinvestment by the owner.

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Since Westfield acquired the mall in 1998, it has sought to improve the mall's performance via a major renovation that was approved by the Planning Commission in August 2005. The City, Agency and Westfield desire that the mall redevelopment be of the highest quality design and materials, and be comprised of the best possible tenants.

In order to achieve this goal, Westfield believes it imperative that the mall's visibility be improved. To accomplish this, Westfield proposed an aggressive Master Sign Program in August 2007 consisting of:

- Vertical Signs - Three vertical signs (Signs AP-A) are proposed to be oriented primarily to the I-405 Freeway and would be located atop the expanded mall structure's western façade overlooking Sepulveda Boulevard. Each would provide two separate display panels approximately 70 to 80 feet in length and 35 feet in width facing generally opposite directions. When mounted on the mall roof the display panels of these signs would be approximately 120 feet in height from adjacent grade ;
- Façade-Mounted Signs - Four façade-mounted sign panels (Signs AP-B) would be located on the expanded mall's western façade and on the western ends of the mall's northern and southern facades. These would be oriented to both freeways as appropriate and would vary in size from 14 feet in length and 48 feet in width to 29 feet in length and 64 feet in width; and
- Pole-Mounted Signs (billboards) - Four pole-mounted signs (Signs AP-C) would be located in the parking lot north of the mall primarily addressing the SR 90 Freeway, which is elevated over the project site approximately 27 feet. Pole-mounted signs would each be as high as 60 feet above grade. Three of these latter signs would provide sign panels 14 feet in length and 48 feet in width, while a fourth is proposed in a more vertical configuration with three panels 40 feet in length and 24 feet in width.

The content on all eleven freeway-oriented signs would consist of fixed copy and images (that is, they would not be digitally sequencing) and each would be illuminated. Each would be operable from 5:00 A.M. to daylight and from dusk to midnight. All of these signage panels will be powered with solar collectors (photovoltaic or other systems, as appropriate) made either a part of the respective signage structures or located elsewhere on the property. As a result, operation of all eleven freeway-oriented signs will be power grid and carbon neutral.

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A DFD is required in order to thoroughly analyze Westfield's proposal due to the unique nature of the mall property and the type of signs proposed. The DFD must consider:

1. Regional, local and neighborhood visibility to the mall and potential negative impacts to community character.
2. Regulate special signage that could be viewed by those traveling on the San Diego (405) and Marina (90) Freeways, and provides a major focal point along the Sepulveda Boulevard and Green valley Circle frontages.
3. Enhance a major employment center in the region, while retaining, expanding and attracting businesses that enhance the City.
4. Support the business community by attracting employees and visitors to the area that will frequent local stores, restaurants, and hotels;
5. Expand Culver City's economic base by attracting visitors to the mall.
6. Contribute to the expansion of the City's economic base through the development of underutilized property, thereby providing additional tax revenue to the City and Culver City Redevelopment Agency;
7. The proposed DFD establishes standards that assure the Master Sign Program is appropriate to the mall, that the signs are attractive, aesthetically pleasing and compatible with the mall's environment and that they do not create an adverse environmental impact (see attached environmental analysis). In regard to the signs, the DFD specifically addresses:
 - Sign type, quality and size;
 - Content
 - Architectural design;
 - Height;
 - Illumination; and
 - Prohibitions

It is noted for the Agency member's information that the DFD does not permit all items requested by Westfield in their Master Sign Program. Staff believes it important that the size and number of signs be limited in order to maintain the aesthetic character of the area.

Maximum Sign Height

The success of the mall is dependent upon its ability to attract customers. Without freeway oriented signs, the mall owners believe that they will have difficulty drawing

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the larger customer base required for high quality retail tenants and will not be able generate sufficient revenue to reduce the funding gap for the mall improvements.

The critical issue related to the proposed MSP is sign height. The signs must be tall enough to serve their purpose of commanding customer attention from the Freeway but not so tall that they intrude upon the views from surrounding residential neighborhoods. The elevation of the mall on Sepulveda Boulevard must also be considered relative to the Vertical sign height. The mall ranges from approximately 23 feet to 30 feet below the San Diego (405) Freeway from North to South. Thus, to be clearly seen from the Freeway, the signs must be elevated to the height of the Freeway.

If the goal of the Master Sign Program is to ensure sign visibility for the distance of the mall frontage, (approximately 1000') then the vertical sign height must be a minimum of 100 feet. Approximately 30' above grade is required to clear the Freeway elevation and 50' to 60' of elevation is required to provide enough height to see the signs over a 1000' foot distance. (Please see Attached DFD, Exhibit C). The actual length of the vertical signs would be 50' to 60' and mounted at the mall roof level which is approximately 40 feet in height. Consistent with the definition of freeway oriented signs and based upon the visibility criteria described in the DFD, Vertical signs should not exceed 100 feet above grade. (Currently, Westfield has proposed Vertical signs with advertising displays in excess of 120 feet above grade). The DFD must strike a compromise between meeting the goal of visibility along the Freeway and protecting views from the surrounding residential area.

According to the photo-simulations, at a reduced elevation, the Vertical signs provide sufficient visibility from the Freeways, but are also partly visible to surrounding residential areas (Culver Crest, Westchester Bluff and surrounding neighborhoods). Signs with a height less than 100 feet above adjacent grade, however, do not provide sufficient visibility to view them along the length of the freeway mall frontage and may not achieve the goal of drawing customers through increased Freeway visibility. (Please see Photo-simulations – DFD, Exhibit C).

Limiting the height of the vertical signs to 100 feet above grade permits sufficient sign visibility along the length of the mall frontage without severely affecting surrounding areas (Culver Crest, Westchester Bluff and surrounding neighborhoods). The photo-simulations indicate that Vertical signs with a height less than 100 feet above grade do not provide sufficient visibility from the Freeway to fully meet the intent of the freeway oriented signs.

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Prohibited Pole Mounted Signs:

The four pole-mounted signs proposed to be located in the parking lot north of the mall and oriented to the SR 90 Freeway, are prohibited.

CONCLUSIONS:

Westfield has proposed a mall improvement and expansion program to help reposition it as a modern regional retail center. The DFD incorporates a Sign Program proposed by Westfield to support the mall improvements. The DFD is based upon the land use policies of the General Plan which recommend upgrading and expanding the mall to maintain economic viability while mitigating the impacts to nearby residential neighborhoods. To the extent that the Sign Program helps attract new customers and expands the customer base, it supports the mall improvement and may achieve this redevelopment objective. Many of the proposed signs are freeway oriented, and as such, require enough height to be clearly visible along Freeway mall frontage. However, the DFD must strike a compromise between meeting the goal of Freeway visibility and protecting views from surrounding residential areas.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Westfield Culver City Design for Development with related exhibits.

MOTION:

That the Culver City Redevelopment Agency:

1. Direct staff as deemed appropriate.



100 Fox Hills Mall
Design & Construction
Culver City, CA 90230
T 310.754.3600
F 310.754.3580

Mr. Sol Blumenfeld
Assistant Executive Director
Culver City Redevelopment Agency
9770 Culver Boulevard
Culver City, California 90232

April 10, 2009

**RE: Request to Modify the Design for Development
Master Sign Program – Westfield Culver City**

Dear Sol:

Westfield Corporation, Inc., hereby requests that the Design for Development (DFD) that was adopted by the Culver City Redevelopment Agency on December 17, 2007 be modified. The requested modification is to adjust the panel size of the Vertical Signs. As you are aware the Vertical Signs are three sided structures with advertising panels located on two faces.

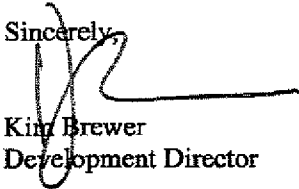
We are requesting to change three of the six panels. In the original submission - the panels measured 80 feet in length and 35 feet in width with a total structure height of 120 feet from grade. At the hearing Westfield agreed to reduce the height of the structure to 100 feet above grade. In addition, upon completion of the hearing, Staff modified the vertical length of the panels to 60 feet. Westfield would like modify the 60 feet back to the original 80 feet in length. The change in panel size does not extend the panels higher, it simply allows the panel to come down and sit in front of the building face. Please reference the attached drawings for reference. The left image reflects currently drawn and the right image depicts the requested change.

The width of the signs will not change. The change in length would be for three faces, these are:

- Sign A-1 side A
- Sign A-2 side A
- Sign A-3 side A

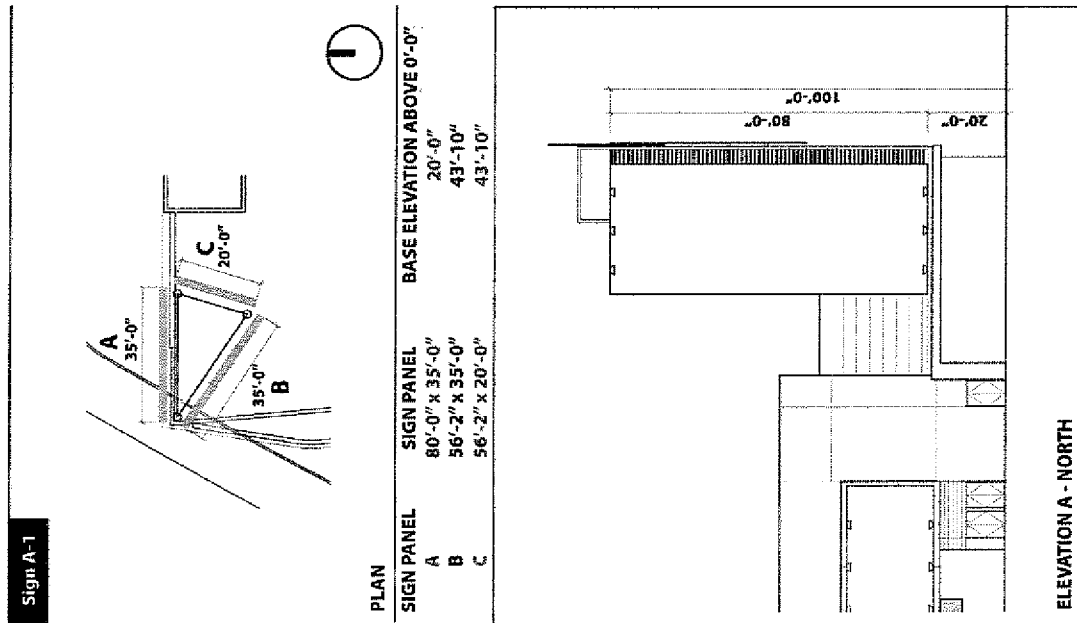
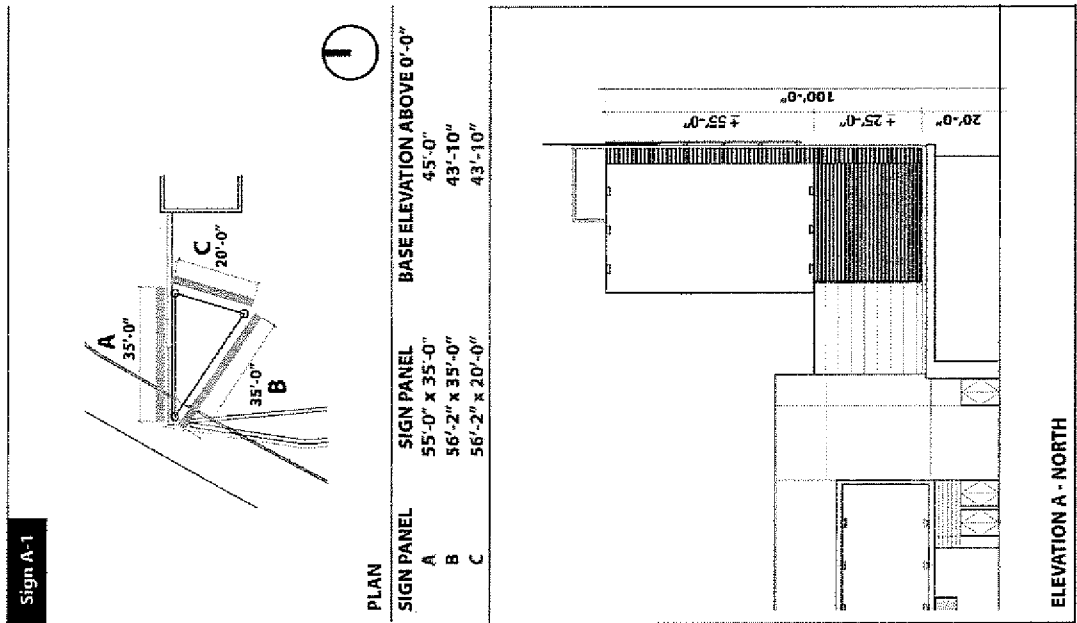
After extensive review of the current panel size in order to lease the panels and work to achieve the desired income levels - we need to adjust the size on these three panels back to the 80 x 35 ft dimensions. We originally estimated all of the income from six panels measuring 80 ft x 35 ft.

Sincerely,


Kim Brewer
Development Director



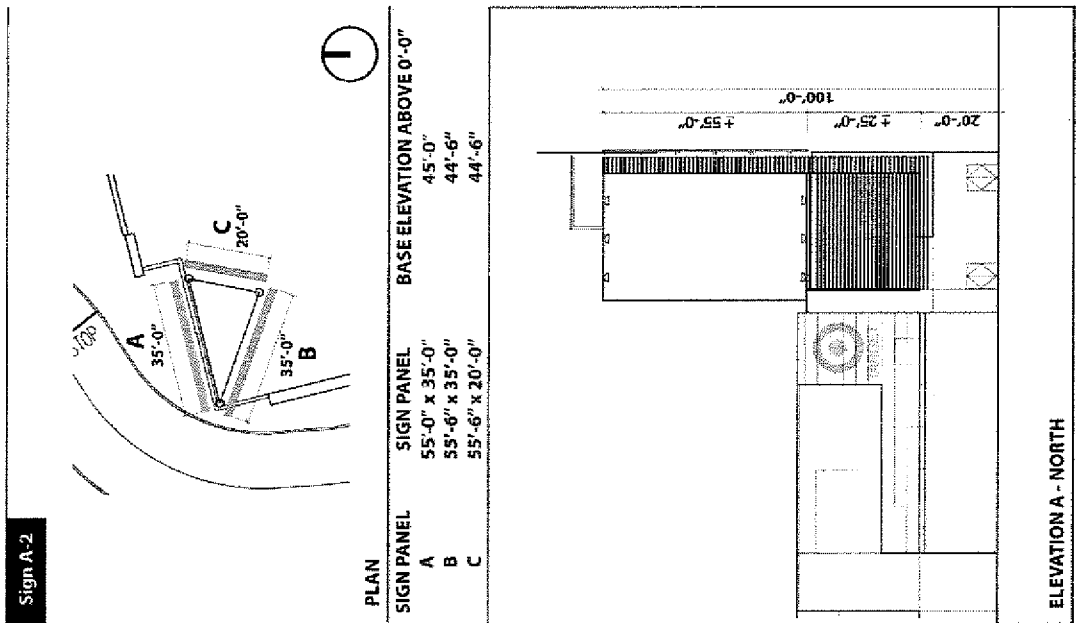
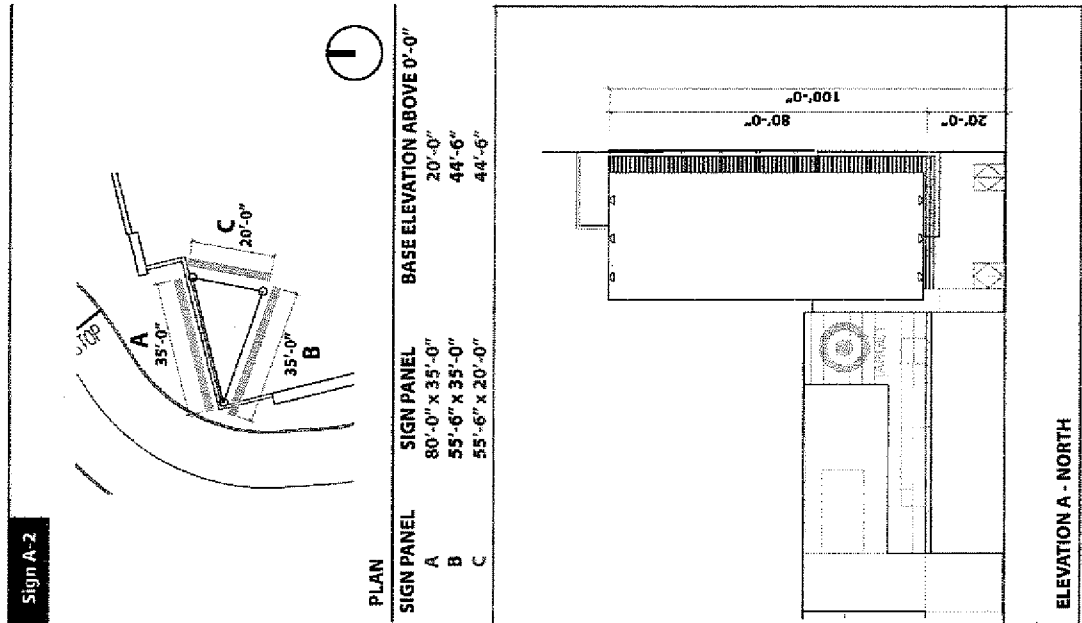
ATTACHMENT 4



CURRENTLY APPROVED

PROPOSED NEW

ATTACHMENT 4



PROPOSED NEW

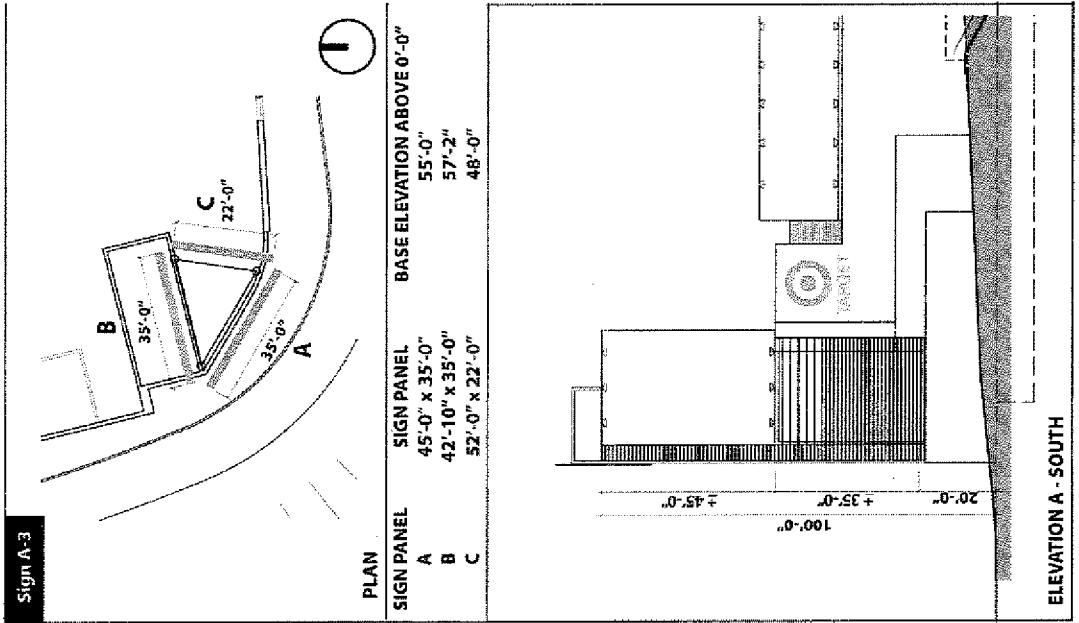
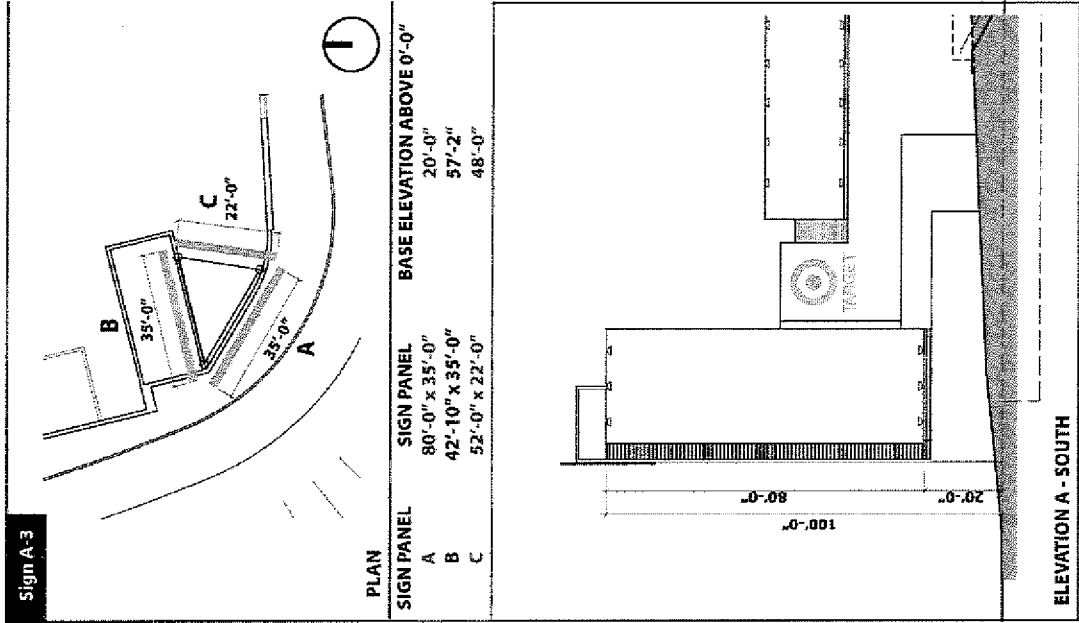
CURRENTLY APPROVED

SIGN A-2 PLANS AND NORTH ELEVATIONS

WESTFIELD DESIGN
11601 WILSHIRE BLVD., 11TH FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CA 90025

SCALE AS NOTED DATE: MARCH, 2009





PROPOSED NEW

CURRENTLY APPROVED

SIGN A-3 PLANS AND SOUTH ELEVATIONS

WESTFIELD DESIGN
11601 WILSHIRE BLVD., 11TH FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CA 90025

SCALE AS NOTED DATE: MARCH, 2009

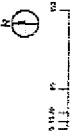


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REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

APR 14 2008

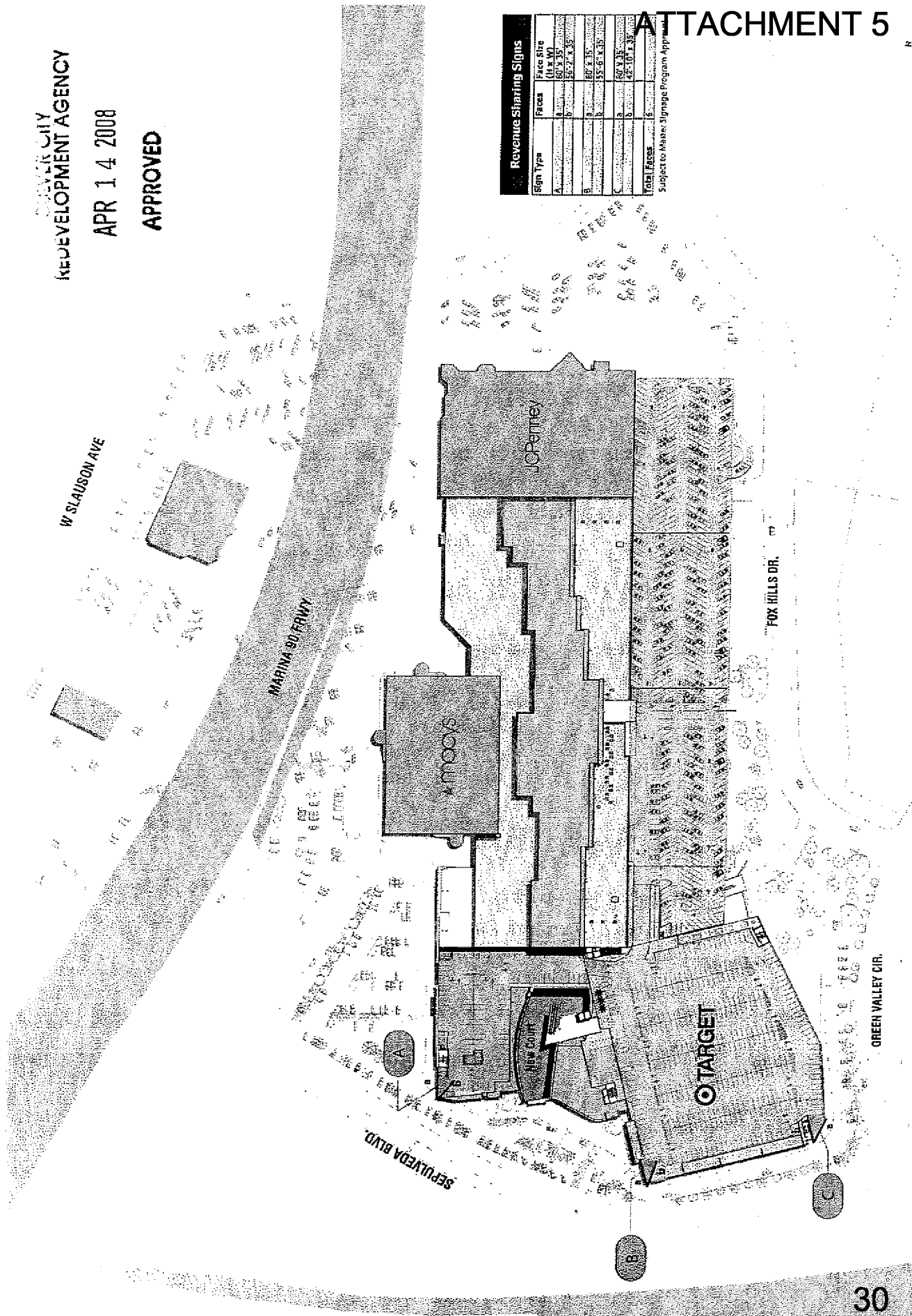
APPROVED

ATTACHMENT 5



Revenue Sharing Signs		
Sign Type	Face Size (H x W)	Number of Faces
A	60" x 35"	1
B	35" x 35"	2
C	35" x 15"	4
D	35" x 15"	4
E	35" x 15"	4
F	35" x 15"	4
G	35" x 15"	4
H	35" x 15"	4
I	35" x 15"	4
J	35" x 15"	4
K	35" x 15"	4
L	35" x 15"	4
M	35" x 15"	4
N	35" x 15"	4
O	35" x 15"	4
P	35" x 15"	4
Q	35" x 15"	4
R	35" x 15"	4
S	35" x 15"	4
T	35" x 15"	4
U	35" x 15"	4
V	35" x 15"	4
W	35" x 15"	4
X	35" x 15"	4
Y	35" x 15"	4
Z	35" x 15"	4
TOTAL FACES		16

Subject to Mayor's Signage Program Approval



Signage Plan

omniplan