



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 16-1079, **Version:** 1

Item #: PH-2.

PC: Consideration of a Zoning Code Amendment (P2017-0098-ZCA), Amending Zoning Code Section 17.330.015 - Definitions, and 17.330.020 - Sign Standards by Zoning District

Meeting Date: June 14, 2017

Contact Person/Dept: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director/CDD
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Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒

Action Item: ☐

Attachments: ☒

Public Notification: (Email) Master Notification List (05/31/17); (Posted) City website (05/31/17); (Published) in Culver City News (05/25/17)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (06/08/2017)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 2017-P011 (Attachment No. 1) recommending to the City Council approval of Zoning Code Amendment (P2017-0098-ZCA), amending Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC), Title 17 - Zoning (Zoning Code) Section 17.330.015 - Definitions, and 17.330.020 - Sign Standards by Zoning District in order to establish standards and permit requirements for temporary menu board and promotional/seasonal projecting signs.

PROCEDURES:

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing, providing the applicant the first opportunity to speak, followed by the general public.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND:

Culver City businesses have expressed the need for changeable copy signs in order to promote their businesses and to convey information regarding seasonal sales, daily menu items and other time specific information to customers. In some cases, the proposed changeable copy signs would be partly located above the public right-of-way. This issue originally surfaced with restaurants that desired to place “A-frame” menu signs on the sidewalk, which is prohibited by the City’s sign ordinance. In order to accommodate the needs of restaurants and other city businesses, staff is proposing revisions to the city’s sign ordinance to allow business owners more opportunities in advertising their businesses on a temporary basis with changeable copy signs that include time specific information (menus, specials, entertainment) to potential patrons.

DISCUSSION:**Definitions**

The proposed Zoning Code text amendment to Section 17.330.015 includes a new definition for two new types of permitted signs with the intent of allowing businesses the ability to promote seasonal or time-specific activities, sales or services with changeable copy without applying for additional permit approvals. The proposed permitted sign additions are menu board signs and promotional projecting signs which by virtue of the proposed sign design and location are easily changed as needed.

- 1) **Menu Board Sign.** A sign for the purpose of displaying menu items that may be for a restaurant or similar food and beverage use. The menu board sign may be changeable copy.
- 2) **Promotional Projecting Sign.** A sign that is temporary and promotes the on-site business with the intent to convey a message regarding business activity, special sales, seasonal promotions, or special events.

Standards

In Section 17.330.025, standards for menu board signs and promotional projecting signs are being proposed that specify where the signs may be located, overall sign dimensions, and number of signs permitted. The menu board sign and promotional projecting sign would require a sign permit approval from the Planning Division and a building permit the first time the sign is installed, typically on the outdoor dining area perimeter barrier of the face of the building. Each time thereafter, the sign copy may be changed as long as the size of the sign and installation remains the same, and there is no change in use.

I. Menu Board Signs.

1. **Location.** The menu board sign may contain changeable copy and shall be subject to the following standards:
 - a. **Pedestrian oriented;**

- b. Located near the storefront entrance or along the street frontage of a restaurant or food and beverage retail business;
- c. Affixed flat to a building wall, window, or outdoor dining enclosure;
- d. Located no greater than 5'-0" from the adjacent finished walking surface;
- e. One free-standing menu board may be displayed, which shall have no more than two faces and shall not be placed higher than 5'-0" above the sidewalk;
- f. Menu boards shall not be placed outside of the approved outdoor dining area; and
- g. Sandwich-board displays shall be prohibited.

2. **Size.** Maximum of 6 square feet.

3. **Number.** One free-standing or affixed-to-enclosure menu board sign permitted per business; and one additional menu board sign affixed to a wall or building face.

4. **Design.** Constructed shall be a durable material such as blackboard, whiteboard, or covered with glass or transparent plastic with a durable frame.

J. Promotional Projecting Signs.

1. **Location.** The promotional projecting sign may contain changeable copy and shall be subject to the following standards:

- a. Project perpendicular from the wall of a building;
- b. Pedestrian oriented
- c. Located near the storefront entrance of the business and affixed to a building wall or window, at a location below the parapet for a one-story building or the top plate of the first story of a multi-story building, and not less than 8 feet above the adjacent finished walking surface.

2. **Size.** The promotional projecting sign may project no greater than 2 1/2 feet from the adjacent finished wall surface and shall not be greater than 3 feet in length.

3. **Number.** Two promotional projecting signs shall be permitted per business.

4. **Design.** The promotional projecting sign shall be designed as a projecting sign perpendicular to the wall and installed with a bracket permanently affixed to the building wall which allows for removal or replacement of the sign as necessary.

Review Process and Appeals

In Section 17.330.050, Section C - Signs Exempt From Planning Permit - was added into 17.330.050 - Review Process and Appeals - to list signage that would be exempt from Planning Division review. Menu board signs and promotional projecting signs are added to this section to be exempt from Planning Division review and any review related permit costs.

C. Signs Exempt From Planning Permit

1. The following signs are exempt from planning permit requirements but shall conform to the applicable standards of this chapter.
 - a. Construction signs
 - b. National flags
 - c. Garage/yard sale signs
 - d. Menu board signs
 - e. Promotional projecting signs
 - f. Window signs
 - g. Signs of political nature
 - h. Street address signs
 - i. Temporary real estate signs, for sale, open house signs

FINDINGS:

Chapter 17.620 of the Zoning Code establishes the authority and procedures for amending the General Plan Zoning Map and Zoning Code through City Council approval of three mandatory findings. The necessary findings to approve the proposed Zoning Text Amendment may be made as follows.

Finding No. 1: The proposed amendment will ensure and maintain the internal consistency with the goals, policies, and strategies of all elements of the General Plan and will not create any inconsistencies.

The proposed text amendment, will create consistency between the General Plan and Zoning Code, and be a tool to implement the policies listed in the Land Use Element, Objective 5. Economic Diversity. Policy 5.C Encourage development of cultural, educational and entertainment uses that will provide leisure activities for Culver City's residents and enhance the image of the City; Policy 5.G Encourage the location of high-quality retail shops and fine restaurants in areas which could serve both businesses and residential patrons; and Objective 6. Commercial Corridors. Policy 6.E Encourage restaurants that feature outdoor dining, especially sidewalk cafes within Downtown and areas designated for neighborhood-serving uses.

Finding No. 2: The proposed amendment(s) would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City.

The proposed amendments regarding menu board signs and promotional projecting signs give standards regarding size, location, and design that ensure that the signs will not be detrimental to public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare.

Finding No. 3: The proposed amendment is in compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Pursuant to Sections 15162 and 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project is within the scope of the Culver City General Plan Update Program EIR approved on September 24, 1996 (PEIR 1) and the Culver City Redevelopment Plan Amendment and Merger Program Subsequent EIR approved on November 16, 1998 (PEIR 2). The circumstances under which PEIR 1 and PEIR 2 were prepared have not significantly changed and no new significant information has been found that would impact either PEIR 1 or PEIR 2; therefore, no new environmental analysis is required.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Pursuant to Sections 15162 and 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project is within the scope of the Culver City General Plan Update Program EIR approved on September 24, 1996 (PEIR 1) and the Culver City Redevelopment Plan Amendment and Merger Program Subsequent EIR approved on November 16, 1998 (PEIR 2). The circumstances under which PEIR 1 and PEIR 2 were prepared have not significantly changed and no new significant information has been found that would impact either PEIR 1 or PEIR 2; therefore, no new environmental analysis is required.

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission:

1. Approve the attached resolution recommending to the City Council approval of Zoning Code Amendment P2017-0098-ZCA regarding changes to the sign definitions and standards

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution No. 2017-P011 and Exhibit A - Draft Zoning Code Text Amendment
2. Images of Sign Concepts.
3. Sign Height and Location Exhibit