



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: JANUARY 22, 2019

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FROM: MEGAN HUNTER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

BY: THOMAS WILES, SENIOR PLANNER

TITLE: **PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 2018-001; A REQUEST TO AMEND THE SIGN PROVISIONS SPECIFIED IN PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 2014-001 (PUD 2014-001) LOCATED AT 796 AND 1600 NORTHRIDGE MALL IN THE COMMERCIAL RETAIL (CR) ZONING DISTRICT**

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council affirm the findings and approve the attached Resolution approving an Amendment to Planned Unit Development Permit 2014-001 authorizing modification to an approved 60-foot pylon sign and placement of a 17-foot high freestanding sign at the Northridge Mall.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the attached Resolution approving an Amendment to Planned Unit Development Permit 2014-001 as described above and find the Amendment exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

BACKGROUND:

Northridge Owner, L.P., property owner of Northridge Mall, is requesting approval of an Amendment to Planned Unit Development Permit 2014-001 (PUD 2014-001) to allow the following:

1. Modify an approved 60-foot high freestanding LED readerboard pylon sign to increase the sign area from 1,656 square-feet to 1,852 square-feet and reduce the number of tenant cabinet signs from eight (8) to six (6) located along the U.S. Highway 101 frontage; and
2. Authorize a freestanding 17-foot high bowling pin sign for a commercial recreation and entertainment use (Round One) located at the east entrance of the Northridge Mall.

Northridge Mall is a regional mall consisting of 12 individual parcels totaling approximately 93.74-acres (4,083,410 square-feet) with approximately 1,140,000 square-feet of leasable area and

150 stores, located in the Commercial Retail (CR) District. Both of the proposed signs would be located on one parcel (796 Northridge Mall). The following provides an overview of the land uses and zoning districts adjacent to the project site:

North:	Commercial Retail/Commercial Retail (CR)
South:	Multi-Family Residential/High Density Residential (R-H-2.1)
East:	Commercial Retail/Commercial Retail (CR) and Commercial Office (CO)
West:	U.S. Hwy. 101 and the Salinas Auto Center/Industrial – General Commercial/Salinas Auto Center Precise Plan Overlay (IGC-SP-4)

Per City records, the mall was originally authorized by Planned Unit Development Permit 69-6 and related Amendments One and Two. Planned Unit Development Permit 78-8 (PUD 78-8) was approved by the City Council on January 15, 1979 and again to clarify technical changes in the wording on May 14, 1979. Planned Unit Development Permit 78-8 superseded the original Planned Unit Development Permit 69-6 and related Amendments One and Two and approved the Phase Two expansion of the mall, including the addition of the existing Sears store and an expansion to the former Mervyns store.

Planned Unit Development Permit 2014-001 (PUD 2014-001), which amended Planned Unit Development Permit 78-8, was approved by the City Council on April 14, 2015. The project approved by PUD 2014-001 consisted of several phases. One of those phases included an enlargement of the existing freestanding pylon sign located along U.S. Highway 101 to include a full color digital panel LED display and new tenant identification sign panels.

Another phase included an approximate addition of 48,337 square-feet to the mall to accommodate relocation of JC Penney. Subsequently, on February 27, 2018, the City Planner administratively approved a Conditional Use Permit (CUP 2018-001) to authorize a 53,500 square foot Commercial Recreation use for Round One consisting of a bowling alley, arcade, billiards, dining area with on-sale alcohol sales of beer and wine (Type 41 ABC license) within a portion of the former JC Penney store. As a part of their operations, Round One is requesting approval of a 17-foot high freestanding sign with a maximum 54-inch diameter shaped as a bowling pin (see Attachments).

DISCUSSION:

Readerboard Pylon Sign:

The project includes a modification to a proposed changeable copy readerboard pylon sign to be located along U.S. Highway 101 (Exhibit “S” of PUD 2014-001). Changeable copy signs are not permitted for shopping centers. Typically, this type of readerboard sign is only allowed for theaters and religious assembly uses. Thus, Planned Unit Development 2014-001 authorized deviations from the Zoning Code upon findings of the City Council. The proposed readerboard sign would replace an existing freeway sign.

Per Zoning Code Section 37-60.1030, the following findings for Planned Unit Development Permits shall be established (which are further addressed in the draft Resolution):

- (a) The location of the planned unit development is in accord with the objectives of this Zoning Code and the purposes of the district in which the site is located;
- (b) The planned unit development and the proposed conditions under which it would be developed or maintained are consistent with the Salinas General Plan, applicable specific plan, and other plans and policies adopted by the Salinas City Council and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in or adjacent to the planned unit development, nor detrimental to properties or improvements in the vicinity or to the general welfare of the city; and
- (c) The planned unit development does not represent an exception to the standards of this Zoning Code but rather an alternative resulting in an equal or superior design in comparison to development, which strictly complies with base district property development regulations.

The existing two-sided freeway sign is approximately 58-feet-high with approximately 306 square-feet of sign area (153 s.f. per sign face). This sign was intended to be replaced with a two-sided freeway sign that would be 60-feet high and would consist of approximately 1,656 square-feet of sign area (828 s.f. per side), a two-sided approximately 440 square-foot (220 s.f. per side) LED readerboard sign; and eight (8) individual two-sided cabinet signs identifying major shopping center tenants. This PUD modification was approved in 2014. The applicant is requesting a modification to the approved freeway sign, which would remain the same height, but would consist of 1,852 square-feet of sign area (926 s.f. per side including an increase in the LED readerboard sign from 440 to 756 square-feet (378 s.f. per side) and a reduced number of tenant cabinet signs from eight (8) to six (6). The approved 488 square-feet (244 s.f. per side) Northridge Mall identification sign at the top will remain. An increase of 196 square-feet of sign area (98 s.f. per side) is proposed, primarily to accommodate the new LED sign.

Off-site advertising is not proposed nor allowed by the Zoning Code. In the event that the modified readerboard sign is approved, conditions would be included requiring compliance with Caltrans and California Highway Patrol (CHP) regulations with respect to timing of message changes and illumination levels. The proposed readerboard pylon sign will assist in promoting the Northridge Mall a regional mall with approximately 1,140,000 square-feet of leasable area and 150 stores.

Round One Sign:

Round One is proposing a 17-foot high non-illuminated freestanding sign located adjacent to east side of the Northridge Mall near the entrance of their approved use at 1600 Northridge Mall. The proposed sign is shaped as a bowling pin and would have a maximum diameter of 56-inches. Round One is proposing the sign to advertise their commercial recreation use similar to their other locations. The proposed 17-foot high sign does not exceed the maximum allowed 20-foot freestanding sign height, but it does exceed the maximum allowed freestanding sign area of 50 square-feet. Per Zoning Code Section 37-50.610(a), sign area is calculated by a rectangle; therefore, the proposed sign is approximately 79 square-foot (17-feet x 56-inches wide = 79.3 square-feet). Accordingly, an Amendment to PUD 2014-001 is required for the proposed Round One sign. The unique bowling pin design will not be detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood and will provide a superior design in comparison to strictly required freestanding sign regulations. The proposed freestanding sign will assist in promoting the business within a regional shopping

center and would not be detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood since it would be located adjacent to the Northridge Mall and not directly along the North Main Street frontage.

Planning Commission Review:

On December 19, 2018, the Planning Commission recommended City Council approval of an Amendment to Planned Unit Development Permit 2014-001 authorizing modification to an approved 60-foot pylon sign and placement of a 17-foot high freestanding sign at the Northridge Mall per attached Planning Commission Resolution 2018-18.

Public Notice:

On December 20, 2018, public notices were sent to all property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site. A public notice was published in the Monterey Herald on December 28, 2018.

Permit Streamlining Act:

The project was deemed complete on November 28, 2018. Final action is required by January 27, 2019 pursuant to Government Code Section 65950(a)(4).

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

Other City departments have reviewed the proposed Amendment to Planned Unit Development Permit 2014-001 and have no comments on the project.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The environmental impacts of the project have been analyzed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The proposed construction of a 60-foot high pylon sign and a 17-foot high freestanding sign is categorically exempt from further environmental analysis per CEQA Guidelines Section 15311(a) (Accessory Structures).

Categorical Exemption:

Prior to taking action, the City Council will need to confirm that the project is exempt from further environmental review by establishing the following finding (supportive evidence is provided below):

The project has been found to be a Class 11 Categorical Exemption pursuant to Guidelines Section 15311(a) (Accessory Structures) of the Guidelines to the California Environmental Quality Act;

The project proposes on-premise signs, which are specifically exempt from CEQA per the above referenced Section. In addition, the site is served by existing utilities and public services and approval of the project does not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Fiscal impacts to the City are not expected to be significant whether Planned Unit Development Permit 2018-001 is approved or denied.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Planned Unit Development Permit 2018-001 assists the City Council's goals of Economic Development and Diversity by assisting in the promotion of the Northridge Mall as a regional mall and generating additional revenue for the City.

ALTERNATIVES/IMPLICATIONS:

The City Council has the following alternatives:

1. Affirm the findings set forth in the attached Resolution and approve Planned Unit Development Permit 2018-001 with modifications; or
2. Find that the proposal is not appropriate and establish findings at the public hearing stating the reasons for not approving Planned Unit Development Permit 2018-001

ATTACHMENTS:

Proposed City Council Resolution

Draft Planned Unit Development Permit (PUD 2018-001), including the following exhibits:

Exhibit "A" - Vicinity Map

Exhibit "B" - Site Plan for Northridge Mall Pylon Sign (Sheet 1 of 1)

Exhibit "C" – Proposed Northridge Mall Pylon Sign (Sheet NR-19)

Exhibit "D" – Site Plan for Round One Freestanding Sign (Page 1)

Exhibit "E" – Signage Detail for Round One Freestanding Sign (Page 2)

Exhibit "F" – Elevations for Round One Freestanding Sign (Page 3)

Planning Commission Resolution 2018-18

Planning Commission Staff Report dated December 19, 2018 without Exhibits

Northridge Mall Pylon Sign as originally approved by PUD 2014-001 (Sheet NR-18)