

# **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT**

## **COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN**

**Case/Permit Number: CC-21-00297**

**DATE:**

**April 11, 2021**

**MEETING DATE:**

**May 12, 2021**

**REPORT BY:**

**Genevieve Pearthree**

### **REQUEST:**

Apartment Ventures and the Village at Aspen Place apartments (property owner and applicant) and Signarama (sign contractor) request Planning and Zoning Commission review and approval of an addendum to the Aspen Place at the Sawmill Comprehensive Sign Plan at 601 E. Piccadilly Dr. The request is to increase the maximum allowed sign area and height for a multifamily residential building sign from 2.8 square feet in area, and 4.8 feet above grade, to 20 square feet in area and 10.5 feet above grade.

### **PRESENT/PROPOSED LAND USE:**

The current land use is a five-story vertical mixed-use development, consisting of 12 commercial suites, a leasing office, parking garage, tenant amenities, and 222 residential units in the HC (Highway Commercial) Zone.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT:**

- **North:** Commercial portion of the Aspen Place at the Sawmill development in the HC Zone (Highway Commercial); businesses include Eddie Bauer, Wildflower Bread Company, and others
- **East:** Whole Foods in the HC Zone
- **South:** The Grove Apartments in the HR Zone (High Density Residential)
- **West:** REI and The Grove Apartments in the HC and HR Zones

### **COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PROGRAM REVIEW**

The purpose of the comprehensive sign plan is to provide a process to respond to the special signage needs of this mixed-use development, as well as provide for sign design guidelines that promote superior sign design, material and installation methods. Staff administratively reviews and approves comprehensive sign plans that reflect proposed signage in compliance with Division 10-50.100: Sign Standards of the City of Flagstaff Zoning Code. The Planning & Zoning Commission shall review, and may approve, plans that request an increase in the permitted height, area, and/or number of signs.

### **STAFF REVIEW:**

### **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

Aspen Place at the Sawmill is an approximately 35-acre vertical and horizontal mixed-use development located south of Butler Ave. between Lone Tree Rd. and Sawmill Rd. It developed in two phases, both of which required a rezoning. The site plan and rezoning for the first phase were approved in 2007; the second phase was approved in 2013. The second phase includes the leasing office that is the focus of this Plan addendum request. Phase 2 covers approximately 3.15 acres within the larger development and consists of one five-story building, with 33,000 square feet of retail at the first floor level, a five-story parking garage, and 222 luxury apartments.

Staff approved the Aspen Place at the Sawmill Comprehensive Sign Plan (the 'Plan') in 2008 and an update in 2016. Staff was able to approve the Plan and update because the proposed signage was within what Staff could approve administratively. The Plan currently shows the building sign envelopes for each commercial tenant space (these are the

locations where signage can be placed). It also includes the maximum allowed sign area for each tenant space and sign design standards.

The focus of this request is to add two pages to the end of the Plan to allow a suspended, internally illuminated sign to be placed above the leasing office entrance. See the attached *Sign Plan Addendum* for more information.

**Proposed Multifamily Residential Signage**

The Plan addendum requests an approximately 20 square foot sign envelope for a suspended sign located approximately 10.5 ft. from grade above the leasing office entrance. It requires Planning and Zoning Commission approval because it is larger in area and taller in height than what staff can approve administratively (staff can approve a residential building sign up to 2.8 square feet in area and 4.8 feet off the ground).

**ALLOWED SIGNAGE (WHAT STAFF CAN APPROVE ADMINISTRATIVELY)**

**General Standards for All Signs**

The Zoning Code (Table 10-50.100.060.A: Standards for Permanent Signs by Use and Section 10-50.100.080: Sign Design Performance Standards) permits staff to administratively approve a comprehensive sign plan that proposes signage that meets the following requirements:

<b>Type of Use</b>	<b>Sign Type</b>	<b>Maximum Height</b>	<b>Maximum Area</b>	<b>Total Number of Signs</b>
Single-Family Subdivision, <b>Multifamily Developments</b> , Manufactured Home Parks	Building Mounted	<b>4.8 feet</b> (maximum height above grade of 4 feet plus 20% height increase for taking four Sign Design Incentives: Raised Letters, Simplified Letter and/or Logo Copy, High Quality Sign Structure Materials, Sign Structure Which Blends With Development Site)	<b>2.8 square feet</b> (maximum area of 2 square feet plus 40% increase by taking four Sign Design Incentives: Raised Letters, Simplified Letter and/or Logo Copy, High Quality Sign Structure Materials, Sign Structure Which Blends With Development Site)	One
<b>Nonresidential Use in Commercial or Industrial Zone</b> – Live/Work, Single Tenant Building, and Detached Buildings within a Multi-Tenant Development or Shopping Center	Building Mounted – Single Frontage (each tenant space has a single frontage)	<b>30 feet</b> (maximum height of 25 feet above grade plus 20% height increase for taking four Sign Design Incentives: Raised Letters, Simplified Letter and/or Logo Copy, High Quality Sign Structure Materials, Sign Structure Which Blends With Development Site)	Maximum area of <b>1 square foot to 1 linear foot of primary building frontage, up to 100 square feet</b> (can be increased up to 40% by taking four Sign Design Incentives: Raised Letters, Simplified Letter and/or Logo Copy, High Quality Sign Structure Materials, Sign Structure Which Blends With Development Site)	Limited by maximum sign area

**General Standards for Suspended Signs**

Staff can also approve suspended signs that meet the standards in Table 10-50.100.060.N in the Zoning Code:

<b>Table 10-50.100.060.N: Standards for Suspended Signs</b>		
	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Other Requirements</b>
Sign Area	Signs ≤ 4 sq. ft. are not included in the total allowable sign area for building mounted sign area.	Signs > 4 sq. ft. in area are included in the total allowable building mounted sign area.
Sign Placement	On or immediately adjacent to the business the sign identifies.	Min. of 8 feet from the bottom of the sign to nearest grade/sidewalk.  Sign shall not extend beyond the edge of the building facade or overhang on which it is placed.
Number of Signs	Max. 1.	
Illumination	Permitted – See Section <a href="#">10-50.100.050(C)</a> .	
Permitting	Sign permit is required.	

**Aspen Place at Sawmill Standards for Commercial Tenant Signs**

Signs located in Aspen Place at the Sawmill are subject to additional design standards included in the *Aspen Place at the Sawmill Comprehensive Sign Plan*:

<b>Sign Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Sign Area</b>	<p>The Plan allows commercial tenants up to 1.5 sq. ft. of building sign area per 1 linear foot of primary tenant space frontage (up to 150 sq. ft.) and 0.5 sq. ft. of building sign area per 1 linear foot of auxiliary tenant space frontage (up to 80 sq. ft.). These were the sign standards in the Land Development Code when the Plan was originally approved in 2008. The Plan also allows tenants to increase the maximum sign area up to 40% through the use of Design Performance Standards (DPS), which include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised letter signs: 10% increase</li> <li>• Simplified letter &amp; Logo: 10% increase</li> <li>• Sign structure materials: 10% increase</li> <li>• Sign structure integration: 10% area increase</li> </ul> <p>These are very similar to the increases currently allowed in Section 10-50.100.080: Sign Design Performance Standards.</p>
<b>Sign Location</b>	The Plan identifies specific sign envelopes where tenant signs can be placed.
<b>Sign Design Standards</b>	Page GD214 of the Plan provides standards for suspended signs. The sign must be mounted in a metal frame (with very specific dimensions/details) and the bottom of the sign must be at least 8 feet above the sidewalk. Letters and graphics may project up to 2 inches from the sign face, and may be recessed up to ½ inch from the sign face. The sign face should be a ¾ inch wood panel. Letters can be no taller than 75% of the height of the sign face.

**SIGN INCREASE REQUESTS THAT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

The applicant requests Planning & Zoning Commission approval to increase the permitted area and height of the multifamily residential building sign for the multifamily residential portion of the development. Staff can administratively approve one multifamily residential building sign that is 2.8 square feet or less in area, and 4.8 feet or

less in height. The applicant requests an approximately 20 square foot building sign located slightly more than 10.5 feet above grade.

## **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

There are several issues to consider when determining whether to approve the addendum to the Sawmill at Aspen Place Comprehensive Sign Plan.

### **Reason for Requesting a Larger and Taller Multifamily Residential Building Sign**

The applicant requests a larger and taller multifamily residential building sign than what staff can approve administratively because they state that one is needed for wayfinding purposes. They suggest the public has trouble finding the leasing office entrance because it does not have any permanent building signage and is surrounded by commercial tenant spaces that are well signed.

### **Existing Multifamily Residential Signage**

There are currently two freestanding signs on the northeast and northwest corners of the building that serve the Village at Aspen Place apartments. However, the applicant states that the signs are located too far from the leasing office entrance to be useful for wayfinding purposes (the signs are approximately 240 feet [northwest sign] and 395 feet [northeast sign] away from the leasing office entrance).

### **Relevant Sign Standards**

Residential signage above the leasing office would meet all applicable standards in the Zoning Code (Table 10-50.100.060.N: Suspended Signs and Table 10-50.100.060.A: Standards for Permanent Signs by Use) with the exception of the increased area and height for residential signs that is the focus of this request. It also meets all relevant sign standards on page GD 214 of the Aspen Place at the Sawmill Comprehensive Sign Plan with the exception that the applicant requests a sign panel that is a 3 inch deep internally illuminated cabinet instead of a ¾ inch wood panel.

### **High Quality Sign Design**

If approved, signage above the leasing office would be subject to the sign design standards included in the addendum. These standards are taken directly from the existing sign plan and are intended to foster high quality sign design. They would also make the sign eligible for the raised letter/logo and simplified letter sign design incentives included in the Zoning Code and in the Plan.

### **Adjacent Signage**

The Village at Aspen Place leasing office entrance is located in the middle of a row of twelve tenant spaces on the first floor of the building. It is adjacent to Chopstix Vietnamese Kitchen (formerly Paleo Brio) to the west and Grimaldi's Pizzeria to the east, each of which has several building signs, as allowed on Page GD210 of the Sawmill at Aspen Place Comprehensive Sign Plan. The Plan also allows each commercial tenant to have one projecting or suspended sign perpendicular to the building face located under the pedestrian awning.

### **Visibility**

If approved, the sign would likely be visible only to pedestrians and vehicles within the Aspen Place at the Sawmill development site.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning and Zoning Commission has the discretion to approve signage that exceeds the sign standards with the review and approval of a Comprehensive Sign Program.

**Attachments:**

- Sign Permit Application
- Aspen Place at the Sawmill Comprehensive Sign Plan p. 1-21
- Aspen Place at the Sawmill Comprehensive Sign Plan p. 22-32
- Sign Plan Addendum
- Street View of Proposed Sign Location
- Aerial Image of Proposed Sign Location