

Agenda Item: 2014-619 Text Amendment – Independence Blvd. Sign Corridor

DATE: August 29, 2014

FROM: Jim King, Planner II

Background/Issue:

Pep Boys is requesting a text amendment to the Independence Blvd. Sign Corridor to allow for an increased sign area for attached signage for single structures 20,000 to 39,999 square feet on a single parcel within the Independence Blvd. corridor. Pep Boys is currently in the process of rezoning their property from the old Conditional zoning to B-H (CD). They are doing this in order to rebrand their image with new building façade treatment and new sign logo. Under the old Conditional zoning, Pep Boys was allowed 374 square feet of attached sign area which was specific to each individual sign (size and appearance) and its location on the building. The B-H zoning only allows 80 square feet of sign area with a maximum of three signs. Pep Boys inquired about a variance, however, realizing they had to prove practical difficulties, they felt that a text amendment would be a more feasible approach.

The request is to amend Section 155.608.16 (B) (5) Table 1 by adding a provision that allows properties with single-users greater than 20,000 square feet in the B-1, B-3, B-H, MUD, TS, ENT, and B-1 SCD to have up to 3 attached identification signs and a total maximum sign area of 145 square feet and to amend the text in Section 155.608.16 (B) (1) (a) to reduce the gross building square feet threshold from 40,000 to 20,000.

Proposal/Solution:

At this time staff can **NOT** support this request because the 145 square foot sign area requested for structures greater than 20,000 square feet is too close to the 150 sign area square foot allowance that is already permitted for structures between 40,001 and 74,999 square feet. Staff has engaged in dialog with the applicant and requested that they revise their request to reduce the sign area square footage requested and better define the parameters to support their request. The applicant is also unclear in their request if the building square foot reference is heated or gross square feet. Staff feels that it is imperative that the applicant reassess their request before the Board takes any final action.

Financial Impact:

None to the Town

Related Town Goal:

Economic Development / Land Use Planning

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Town Board either deny the request as submitted or further consider revised text the applicant may provide to reduce the square footage request and better define the parameters in which increased sign area would be allowed.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Board of Commissioners

FROM: Jim King, Planner II

DATE: August 29, 2014

RE: Proposed Text Amendment to US 74 Corridor

In review of the proposed text amendment to increase sign area for single-use structures on an individual parcel within the US 74 Sign Corridor, Planning Staff have the following concerns:

1. Sign Corridor Justification:

Section 15.608.15 (A) (4)

“Regulations which may be modified shall take into consideration those factors causing the unique signage needs, including but not limited to: horizontal distance of the affected property from the major highway right-of-way, natural and man-made topography and road grade changes, road overpasses and underpasses, limited access for drivers, the greater than normal length of road frontage and/or building frontage along the major highway, the total building area covered by a single use or group of uses on a property, and the average speed of vehicles traveling on the major highway.”

When these regulations were originally adopted the Town set the threshold for big boxes at 40,000 gross square feet

2. Applicability:

Section 15.608.16 (B)

“The special regulations for US 74 Sign Corridor apply to all properties fronting on US 74 and all properties immediately adjacent to (not across a public street from) properties touching US 74 up to a maximum of 1000 ft. in depth from the center line of the US 74 right-of-way.”

The regulations in the US 74 Sign Corridor apply to the following criteria:

- Single-user business greater 40,000 sq. ft. (Big Boxes); and/or

- Properties which are greater than 5 acres and developed for 1 use or multiple uses as a unified development; and/or
 - Properties with direct frontage on US 74 with at least 100 ft. of frontage and all principal buildings and/or uses are more than 150 ft. from the edge of the right-of-way; and/or
 - Properties that include a single-user housed and actively conducting business in two buildings, each greater than 15,000 square feet gross floor area; and/or
 - Public and/or commercial recreation facilities within the ENT district that can accommodate 500 or more participants/spectators at one time.
3. A cursory evaluation of the Independence Corridor indicates there are at least 4 other locations from the Charlotte City limits to Sam Newell Rd. that would qualify for increased sign area if approved as submitted.
4. Other existing structures today may not qualify for the additional sign area but could with minor modifications such as follows:
- A single use structure today on a single parcel with 15,000 - 18,000 gross square feet could build a 2000 – 5000 square feet addition.
 - An existing multi-tenant building over 20,000 square feet could be converted into a single use structure.

Staff encourages the Council to take in consideration the original purpose and intent for the current requirements of the US 74 Sign Corridor when considering Text Amendment 2014-619. Town Council for years has reviewed rezoning request in old Conditional districts for new signs and has reduced the allowable sign area to match, or closely meet, the sign size of commercial structures elsewhere in Matthews.