



"Placerville, a Unique Historical Past Forging into a Golden Future"

Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: November 3, 2020

Prepared By: Andrew Painter, City Planner

ITEM 4: 1365 BROADWAY - SPR85-17-R – EL FORASTERO MEXICAN FOOD

Request: To consider Site Plan Review (SPR) 85-17-R, an amendment to the Master Sign Plan to allow for three new business signs totaling 125.75 sq. ft., for a new El Forastero Mexican Food business at the former Wienerschnitzel fast-food restaurant site; and, to consider a categorical exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15311(a), "On-premise signs."

Three new signs are proposed with this request. These are shown on the applicant exhibits provided in Attachment A of the staff report, and described in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1 –Proposed and Existing Signage

Proposed Signage	Lighting	Overall Sign Dimension and Area	
Sign #1: Wall Sign (south elevation): individual channel letters, w/red and green colored lettering and graphic images, wall mounted above entrance.	Internally illuminated L.E.D.	156" x 57"	61.75 Sq. Ft.
Sign #2: Wall Sign (east elevation): sign cabinet, w/red, yellow and white lettering and graphics, with black opaque background, wall mounted above entrance vestibule.	Internally illuminated	96" x 48"	32.00 Sq. Ft.
Sign #3: Replace Sign Cabinet (southeastern pole structure): double-sided cabinet mounted on existing pole; dimensions, sign copy and appearance match Sign #2.	Internally illuminated	96" x 48"	32.00 Sq. Ft.
		Total:	125.75 Sq.Ft.
Existing Signage			
Applicant intends to remove the Wienerschnitzel sign cabinet that sits on top of the pole sign near the northwest corner of the site, and then cap the pole so that it is flush with the top of the lower cabinet. The lower cabinet will be refaced (44 sq. ft.) with sign panels to match the sign copy of proposed Sign 1 and Sign 2.		Total	44.00 Sq. Ft.
Total Aggregate Sign Area:			169.75 Sq. Ft.

Representatives: Jose Davila, Applicant, El Forastero Mexican Food
Francisco Sanchez, Pacos Graffix & Signs
Farouk Diab, Property Owner

General Plan: Highway Commercial (HWC)
Zoning: Highway Commercial – Airport Overlay (HWC-AO)

Decision Making

Authority: Per Placerville Zoning Code (PZC) 10-4-9(P): Site Plan Review Changes; Section 10-4-17(H): Sign Regulations, the Planning Commission is the decision-maker for site plans and major changes.

Recommendations:

- 1) Open/close the public hearing;
- 2) Determine the project can be found exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15311(a) – “On-premise signs” of the CEQA Guidelines; and,
- 3) Approve Changes to Site Plan Review 85-17-R based on the findings identified in the Staff Report and subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval

Project Site, Size, Location and Parcel Number: The 0.32-acre project site is located at 1365 Broadway; northwest corner of the intersection of Broadway and Schnell School Road; adjacent and south of US 50. Assessor’s Parcel Numbers: 002-261-015 and -016. See Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1. Vicinity Map – 1365 Broadway

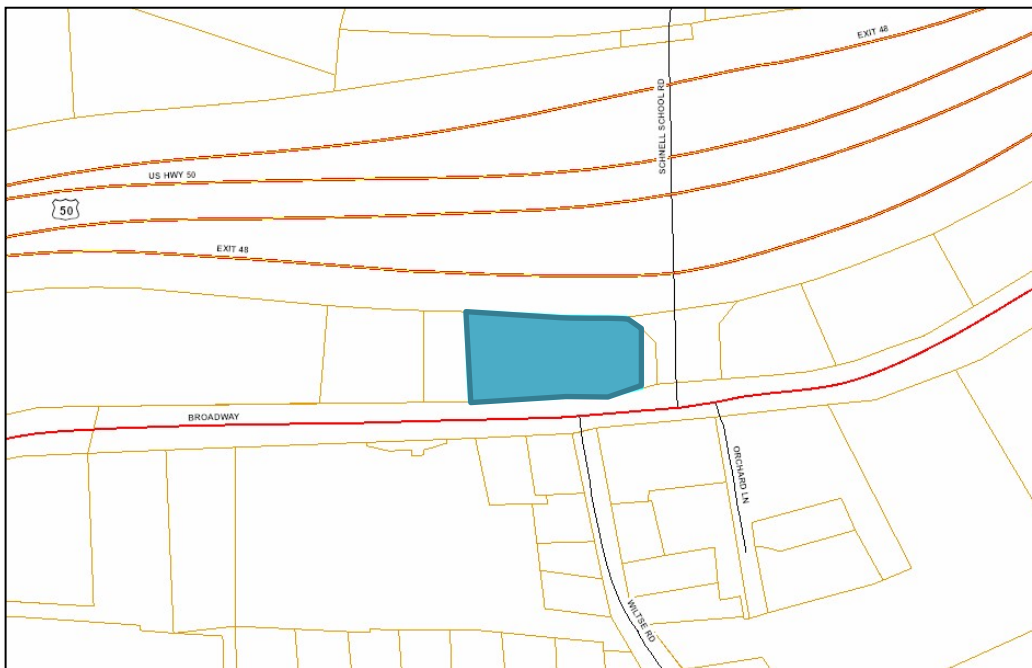


Figure 2. 1365 Broadway Street View



Source: Staff photos taken 10-14-2020

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT

Written notice for this public hearing was mailed to property owners within five hundred feet (500') of the project site on October 20, 2020, posted at Placerville City Hall as well as the City’s website (cityofplacerville.org), and published in the Mountain Democrat on October 21, 2020. No public comments were received as of October 28, 2020.

DISCUSSION

Surrounding Uses

	General Plan	Zoning	Current Land Use
On-Site:	Highway Commercial	HWC	Vacant fast-food commercial
North:	High Density Multi-family Residential	R4	US 50; church, school, multi-family residential; El Dorado Trail
South:	Highway Commercial	HWC	Indoor and outdoor commercial retail, commercial services, convenience market, eating and drinking establishment
East:	Highway Commercial	HWC	Restaurants, auto service, commercial retail
West:	Highway Commercial	HWC	Auto service, indoor commercial retail, restaurants, motel, gas stations.

Existing Site Development and Master Sign Plan Background: The subject site contains an approximate 3,000-square foot commercial building, paved driveway and parking area, exterior lighting, drainage system, street frontage improvements of curb, gutter and sidewalk and landscaping were approved and constructed in 1985 under the Planning Commission’s approval of SPR85-17 and CUP85-10 for a Wendy’s fast-food restaurant use.

SPR85-17 authorized two signs for the site, an internally illuminated wall sign along the east building elevation with approximately 38 square feet of sign area, and an internally illuminated sign cabinet of

120 square feet an existing pole support structure located at the northeast corner of the site. Conditions of Approval for CUP85-10 and SPR85-17 from 1985 are provided in Attachment B.

In 1988, a second internally illuminated pole sign was authorized by staff and constructed under building permit at the southeast corner of the site for the Wendy's business. This sign had a sign area of 170 square feet. City records do not indicate Planning Commission involvement with approval.

In 1999 and 2000, the site was re-imaged with construction permits from a Wendy's restaurant to a Weinerschnitzel restaurant. Signs consisted of two sign cabinets on the northwest pole sign with sign areas of 63 square feet and 44 square feet; one 24 square foot wall sign on east building elevation; one awning sign with 24 square feet of sign area along south building elevation. Several months later in 2000, the 170 square foot pole sign cabinet at the southeast corner of the site was replaced with a 24 square foot sign cabinet. Total sign area: 179 square feet. City records do not indicate Planning Commission involvement with approval. Staff approved the requests under building permits.

Note: The City's current Sign Regulations (City Code 10-4-17) were adopted in 2002. These regulations include the Master Sign Plan regulations of 10-4-17(H). Master Sign Plan regulations require that any changes to a sign plan previously approved by the Planning Commission shall require Planning Commission approval under the Major Change requirements of Site Plan Review (City Code 10-4-9(P)). As mentioned, the Planning Commission approved the original sign plan in 1985.

Figure 2 shows the existing condition of the subject site. Applicants have painted the building white with red trim and accent. Color scheme is carried throughout the site, including the retaining wall and trash enclosure onsite, and the painting of the parking lot light poles. Previous wall signs and awnings for the Weinerschnitzel business have been removed from the site. The pole sign support and cabinets located near the northwest corner of the site remain but have been covered temporarily. Directory sign structures at the driveway entrances and exits also remain. Temporary banner signs announcing restaurant opening on-site have been placed on-site. Temporary banner signs are permissible during grand openings and special events for a limited time.

Applicable General Plan Goals and Policies: The project site is designated Central Business District on the General Plan Land Use Map. To approve the proposed project, the Planning Commission must determine that the request is consistent with applicable General Plan goals and policies. Staff has identified the following goals and policies as most relevant to the proposed project:

Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources Element

Goal I: To protect and enhance Placerville's community character and scenic resources.

Policy 7. *The City shall protect the visual character of scenic street and highway corridors.*

Community Design Element

Goal A: To preserve and enhance the overall visual attributes of Placerville.

Policy 6. *The City shall maintain and/or enhance the visual character of scenic street and highway corridors.*

Goal J: To promote development of aesthetic and functional signage and reduce visual clutter.

Policy 1. *The City shall only allow new signs that are appropriate in design and scale, while making adequate provisions for business identification.*

Zoning Regulations:

Major Change

Under City Code 10-4-9 (P), a “major change” to an approved Site Plan Review is any change that would alter the appearance, character or intent of the approved site plan. Sign modifications are listed under this section as an example of a major change.

Major changes to an approved SPR may only be approved by the Planning Commission after conducting a public hearing. The Commission is required to consider the criteria provided under subsection (G) of the Site Plan Review Ordinance before it may approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove a Site Plan Review application, including a request for a major change to an approved SPR.

The following Site Plan Review criteria appear relevant to the business signs.

City Code 10-4-9(G)5(a), (c), (d), and (e):

Signs:

- (a) Wall signs shall be accomplished in continuity with the architectural concept. Size, color, lettering, location and arrangement shall be harmonious with the building design, and shall be compatible with approved signs on adjoining buildings. Signs shall have good proportions.*
- (c) Materials used in signs shall have good architectural character and be harmonious with building design and surrounding landscape. Wherever possible, signs shall be incorporated within the building components such as fascias, and/or eaves.*
- (d) Every sign shall have good scale in its design and in its visual relationship to buildings and surroundings.*
- (e) Colors shall be harmonious and used with restraint. Lighting shall be harmonious with the design. If external spot or floodlighting is used, it shall be arranged so that the light source is shielded from view.*

Sign Regulations

Regulations for the installation and use of signs within the City are provided under City Code 10-4-17: Sign Regulations. These regulations provide minimum standards to help safeguard life, health, property, and the public welfare in keeping with the unique aesthetic and historic character of the City by regulating and controlling the size, height, design, quality of materials, construction, location, etc. Applicable regulations for this SPR85-17-R request are as follows:

Sign Regulations (City Code)

10-4-17(B) Definitions:

Business Frontage: The lineal foot frontage of a building or portion therefore devoted to a specific business or enterprise, and having an entrance/exit opens to the public.

10-4-17(G)1. General Regulations:

b. Aggregate Area of Signs: Unless otherwise authorized herein, the aggregate area of on-premise signage shall not exceed two (2) square feet of sign area for each one (1) lineal foot of business frontage for each business entity or occupancy, unless authorized by the Planning Commission, under the provisions of the Master Sign Plan or Conditional Use Permit referenced herein.

10-4-17(G)2. Pole Signs – Regulations and Transferability:

c. Pole signs shall either be non-illuminated or internally illuminated. Internally illuminated pole signs shall have an opaque background and shall be designed so that only the lettering or advertising copy is visible at night.

10-4-17(G)5. Wall Signs:

- b. The area of a wall sign or combination of wall signs shall not exceed two (2) square feet of sign area for each one (1) lineal foot of business frontage for businesses that have up to fifty (50) feet of business frontage and an additional sixty-seven (.67) hundredths of a square foot for businesses with street frontage greater than fifty (50) feet, not to exceed a total aggregate area of two hundred (200) square feet.*
- c. In addition to the regulations of this Chapter, businesses which have more than one street frontage as defined herein may place one additional (two maximum) wall sign on premise provided the combined area of the signs does not exceed the area set forth in Subsection "b" above.*
- d. Internally illuminated wall signs shall have an opaque background and shall be designed so that only the lettering or advertising copy is visible at night. Externally illuminated signs shall utilize light fixtures which are fully shielded and designed to focus light only on the sign surface.*

Regulations for Master Sign Plan (City Code 10-4-17(H))

Per Zoning Ordinance Section 10-4-17(H): Master Sign Plan, a mandatory finding is required by the Commission or City Council upon appeal when approving or amending a Master Sign Plan, as follows:

That the proposed signs are compatible with the style and/or character of existing improvements on the site and are well-related to each other.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Environmental Review: This project qualifies as a Class 11 categorical exemption pursuant to Guideline 15311(a) of the California Environmental Quality Act (On-premise signs), in that the request involves on-premise signs that are appurtenant and accessory to the fast-food restaurant use.

Aggregate Sign Area: The business has business frontages along Broadway and Schnell School Road totaling 116 linear feet. Per the Sign Regulations, a maximum of 232 square feet of aggregate (total) sign area would be authorized for a site with 116 linear feet of business frontage. Requested new signs and the intended use of one existing pole sign cabinet total 169.75 square feet, well under the maximum for the site.

Wall Sign Area: Proposed wall sign area is 93.75 square feet of the total aggregate sign area of 169.75. This total is substantially less than the maximum wall sign area of 144.22 square feet the Sign Regulations would authorize for a site with 116 lineal feet of business frontage.

Materials and Colors: Proposed signs utilize colors, materials and finishes that have continuity with the color scheme of the business and are compatible with each other. They also are designed at a scale appropriate for their wall locations.

Internally Illuminated Signs: Proposed sign faces for the wall sign cabinet (Sign #2) on the building's east elevation, and the new cabinet for the pole structure (Sign #3) near the southeast corner of the site, are designed so that the sign text or sign copy the sign face would be illuminated at night and not the black opaque background. Sign #1 contains individual letters and graphics that each would be internally illuminated. Signs are consistent with City Code 10-4-17(G)2c and 10-4-17(G)5d for internal illumination.

Should this request be approved staff has added conditions of approval. Construction permits for new signs authorized by the Planning Commission are required; removal of all temporary signs and their support poles, as applicable, shall be done within 10-days after the installation of City approved and inspected signs for the restaurant; and, the removal of the Weinerschnitzel sign cabinet that sits on top of the pole sign near the northwest corner of the site and the lower cabinet sign copy reface shall be completed within six months of the Planning Commission authorization of SPR85-17-R.

Staff believes the Commission can make the required finding to approve the Master Sign Plan amendment request, in addition to findings that proposed signs are consistent with the Site Plan Review design criteria and Sign Regulations of City Code, as well as goals and policies relative to business identification and visual character within Placerville and the US 50 Scenic Highway Corridor.

SPR85-17 and CUP85-10 Conditions of Approval in 1985: The conditions are provided as Attachment B. City records and onsite inspection revealed that Conditions (a), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) have been met. Condition (b) required that materials used for retaining walls and the refuse enclosure be compatible with materials used on the building. This condition will be reworded to ensure that these feature requirements are retained going forward.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Commission take the following actions.

- I. Adopt the Staff Report as part of the public record.

II. Make the following findings:

1. The request is for the placement and use of an on premise sign and therefore is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15311(a) of the CEQA Guidelines.
2. Proposed SPR85-17-R Master Sign Plan amendment signs are compatible with the style and/or character of existing improvements on the site and are well related to each other, in that signs utilize colors, materials and finishes that have continuity with the color scheme of the business and are compatible with each other; signs are designed at a scale appropriate for their locations on-site.
3. Proposed SPR85-17-R Master Sign Plan is consistent with the Site Plan Review design criteria and Sign Regulations of aggregate and wall sign area, and internal illumination of City Code, as well as goals and policies relative to business identification and visual character within Placerville and the US 50 Scenic Highway Corridor.

III. Conditionally approve SPR85-17-R request subject to the following Conditions of Approval:

SPR85-17-R Conditions of Approval

1. Approve SPR85-17-R, located at 1365 Broadway, APN 002-261-015 and 016, involving an amendment to the Master Sign Plan for the site.

Approval is based upon the analysis provided in staff's November 3, 2020 report to the Planning Commission, and limited to compliance with the project description, the Applicant Submittal Package set forth below, except were deviated under a separate Condition of Approval, and all other conditions of approval set forth herein:

- Planning Application received October 8, 2020; and,
 - Sign Elevations and Site Plan, prepared by Pacos Graffix & Signs, received October 21, 2020.
2. New internally illuminated wall and pole cabinet signs authorized under SPR85-17-R shall conform to the City's Regulations for On-Premise Signs (City Code 10-4-17(G)), requiring the sign shall have an opaque background and be designed so that only the lettering or advertising copy is visible at night.
 3. Removal of the Weinerschnitzel sign cabinet that sits on top of the pole sign near the northwest corner of the site, and the lower cabinet sign copy reface shall be completed within six months of the Planning Commission authorization of SPR85-17-R, or City Council upon appeal.
 4. SPR85-17-R authorized activity shall expire and become null and void eighteen (18) months after the date of Planning Commission approval unless a construction permit been issued for activity construction.

5. SPR85-17-R shall apply only to the address specified, regardless of any change of ownership, but may not be transferred to another parcel.
6. SPR85-17-R conditions of approval shall be binding on the applicant and all successors in interest in the event the project site is sold to another party.
7. Any proposed future change to the use or modification to the application beyond what is authorized under SPR85-17-R shall be submitted to the Development Services Department for a determination of appropriate procedures.
8. Permits. The applicant shall obtain a construction permit for the Commission approved scope of work. Two complete copies of the ground sign project shall be submitted to the Development Services Department for processing.
9. Substantial Conformance. The use shall be implemented in substantial conformance to the Site Plan Review as approved by the Planning Commission. Any proposed future change to the site or modification to the application beyond what is authorized under this permit shall be submitted to the Development Services Department for a determination of appropriate procedures.
10. Other Applicable Requirements. The project approval is subject to all applicable requirements of the Federal, State, City of Placerville and any other affected governmental agencies.
11. Construction Hours. All exterior construction shall be limited to the daylight hours between 7:00 am to 7:00 pm on any weekday, and 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekends and state and federal recognized holidays.
12. All temporary signs and their support poles, as applicable, shall be removed within 10-days after the installation of City approved and inspected signs for the restaurant.
13. Conditions (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (g) approved in 1985 under SPR85-17 are eliminated as analyzed in Attachment "B" of Staff's November 3, 2020 report to the Planning Commission. Condition (f) is re- worded and re-lettered as 13a as follows:
 - 13a. Retaining walls and refuse enclosure shall be constructed of materials compatible with those used on the building.

Attachment A

Applicant Submittal Package

[Application](#)

[Plans](#)

Attachment B

1985 Conditions of Approval and Compliance Status for CUP85-10 and SPR85-17

Condition of Approval Compliance Status

Conditions of Approval	Compliance Status
(a) Sidewalks will be required to be installed along Broadway frontage and install curbs, gutters and sidewalks along Schnell School Road frontage.	Condition met. Staff recommends condition elimination.
(b) Signage will be limited to not more than two signs. The sign on the building must be an integral part of the building. Pole sign is restricted to use of existing pole structure at the existing northwest corner of site.	Condition not met, however construction permits issued in 1988, 1999 and 2000 authorized additional signs post the 1985 Commission approval. Staff recommends condition elimination in-lieu of 2002 Sign Regulation and Master Sign Plan.
(c) The maximum driveway width will be limited to 30 feet.	Condition met during site development in 1985. Staff recommends condition elimination.
(d) The proposed easterly driveway will not be permitted since it conflicts with Wiltse Road and turn lane movements in Broadway.	Condition met during site development in 1985. Staff recommends condition elimination.
(e) The applicant will be required to submit a detail of proposed lighting standards to staff for review and approval.	Condition met during site development in 1985 and 2000. Staff recommends condition elimination.
(f) The proposed retaining wall and refuse enclosure will be constructed of materials compatible with those used on the building.	Condition met. Condition to be reworded to retain material compatibility with building.
(g) The site will be redesigned, taking into consideration an improved flow into the drive-through and increasing the area for landscaping. The applicant will submit a detailed landscaping plan for approval by staff.	Condition met during site development in 1985. Staff recommends condition elimination.