

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant: South Loop Investments LLC (Owner of Alpha B site)

Location: Citywide

Request: Privately initiated City Code Amendments to:

- Section 19.108 General Provisions
- Section 19.115 Class VI Sign District (CX-2, CO-2)
- Section 21.501.06 Master Sign Plan

CHRONOLOGY

Planning Commission Action: 05/21/15 – Recommend approval.

City Council Agenda: 06/22/15 – Public hearing scheduled.

PROPOSAL

South Loop Investments LLC is the developer of the Alpha B mixed use Planned Development located on the southeast corner of 24th Avenue and Lindau Lane. The applicant is requesting amendments to City Code Chapters 19 and 21 to allow a master sign plan process for the entire South Loop District, which is the area east of T.H. 77 as defined by the Bloomington Comprehensive Plan. The applicant has stated that they feel the South Loop District is a unique urban district that should allow for trendy and iconic expressions of urban lifestyles through signs.

BACKGROUND

On November 17, 2014, the City Council approved an ordinance amendment to allow master sign plans. The master sign plan process provides flexibility from the sign district regulations, at the reasonable discretion of the City Council, regarding the number, size, location and type of signs. To ensure signs are coordinated and create a comprehensive and attractive appearance, master sign plans must meet the design principles of balance, character, architectural integration, materials, and safety/maintenance. Currently, the master sign plan process is available only within the Class VI Sign District, which is limited to property zoned CX-2 and CO-2 (Mall of America and IKEA owned property).

In March 2015, plans were submitted for the Alpha B mixed use Planned Development. The submittal included several variances for signage on the AC Hotels by Marriot, a new brand to the United States, which uses an iconic “cube” sign. On many of their existing hotels, this cube sign is located on the roof of the hotel structure. The City Code prohibits rooftop signs, and due to this unique cube sign, the site would have required six variances to allow the sign package as proposed. Because there are many City Code complying options available for signage, making the findings for such variances would have been difficult.

Staff discussed several options with the applicant. The applicant chose to withdraw the variance applications and pursue an ordinance amendment to allow the master sign plan approach within the full South Loop District.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS

The proposed ordinance amendments moves the master sign plan reference from the Class VI sign district to the general provisions section of Article X, allows the master sign plan process to be available in the entire South Loop District, and clarifies a respective reference section. Please see the attached ordinance for all proposed changes.

ANALYSIS

Staff believes the request to allow the master sign plan process in the South Loop District is consistent with the vision for the South Loop District, which is:

“To transform South Loop from a dispersed, suburban commercial area into a walkable urban neighborhood that attracts residents, office tenants, hotel guests and shoppers by virtue of its unique character and assets.”

And

“Establishes the District as a branded Place.”

Many of the existing sign districts were created for the suburban commercial and industrial areas of the City. The South Loop District is meant to be more of a destination and branded place that has a unique feel, including public art, and other visual elements. Having a master sign plan process in place for the district will allow further experimentation with sign types and styles not present throughout the remainder of the City. Each master sign plan will be subject to the review of both the Planning Commission and City Council and will have to meet the overall design principles. Over time, alternative sign plans will contribute to a unique character within the South Loop.

SIGN PLANS

The applicant's submitted sign package for AC Hotels is not formally before the City for review. Instead, plans were submitted by the applicant for reference purposes. The sign package cannot be formally submitted or acted upon until the City Code is amended to allow the master sign plan flexibility process for this property.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Commission and staff recommend the following motion:

In Case 10000C- 15, move to adopt the privately initiated ordinance to amend the City Code attached to the staff report.

ORDINANCE NO. 2015 - 17

**AN ORDINANCE REFERENCING THE MASTER SIGN PLAN IN THE GENERAL PROVISIONS,
REVISING THE CLASS VI SIGN DISTRICT STANDARDS AND REVISING THE MASTER SIGN PLAN
PROCESS, THEREBY AMENDING CHAPTERS 19 AND 21 OF THE CITY CODE**

The City Council of the City of Bloomington, Minnesota ordains:

Section 1. That Chapter 19 of the City Code is hereby amended by deleting those words that are contained in brackets [] and adding those words that are underlined, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 19

ZONING

ARTICLE X. SIGN REGULATIONS

Division C. General Regulations

SEC. 19.108. GENERAL PROVISIONS, INCLUDING BASIC DESIGN ELEMENTS

- (i) Master Sign Plan. Flexibility to the sign standards, for number, size, location, and type, within the South Loop District Plan may be approved at the reasonable discretion of the City Council through the master sign plan process outlined in Section 21.501.06.

Division D. District Provisions

SEC. 19.115. CLASS VI SIGN DISTRICTS (CX-2, CO-2).

- ~~[(g) Master Sign Plan. Flexibility to the sign standards, for number, size, location and type, within the Class VI Sign District may be approved at the reasonable discretion of the City Council through the master sign plan process outlined in Section 21.501.06.]~~

Section 2. That Chapter 21 of the City Code is hereby amended by deleting those words that are contained in brackets [] and adding those words that are underlined, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 21

ZONING AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

ARTICLE V. ADMINISTRATION AND NONCONFORMITY

Division A. Approvals and Permits

SEC. 21.501.06. MASTER SIGN PLAN.

- (b) **Where Applicable.** The master sign plan process is available only within the [~~Class VI Sign District~~South Loop District (area east of TH 77) as defined by the Bloomington Comprehensive Plan. Applicants located within the South Loop District seeking significant flexibility from the City sign regulations [~~of the Class VI Sign District~~] must use the master sign plan application process.

- (f) **Standards.** Master sign plans must meet the following standards:

- (2) Signs are limited to one or more of the following functions:
- (A) Tenant identification.
 - (B) On-site advertising.
 - (C) Arts-related.
 - (D) Events.
 - (E) Public service announcement.
 - (F) Other signs as referenced in the respective Sign District regulations.[~~under Section 49.115(d)~~]

Passed and adopted this 22nd day of June, 2015.



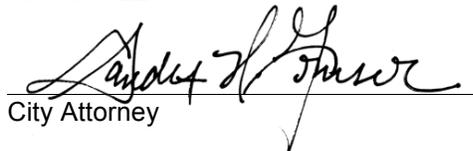
Mayor

ATTEST:



Secretary to the Council

APPROVED:



City Attorney