

MEMORANDUM

TO: Donna Barron, City Manager
FROM: Richard E. Luedke, Planning Director
DATE: April 1, 2019
SUBJECT: **Consideration of Five Alternative Standards to the IH-35E Corridor Overlay District Regarding Architecture and Landscaping Associated with Facade Changes for Zion Market on a 10.2754-Acre Lot, Legally Described as Vista Ridge Mall Addition, Block A, Lot 5; Located at 2405 South Stemmons Freeway; Zoned General Business (GB) District, as Requested by D.Y. Lee, of DL architecture+design, on Behalf of 2401 S. Stemmons LLC, the Property Owner (Case No. ODB-2019-02-01).**

BACKGROUND:

Zion Market is a Korean grocery store and retailer that plans to renovate and open in the former Sears department store at Music City Mall. As part of the renovations, extensive facade changes are proposed. Per the IH-35E Corridor Overlay District, changes to street facing facades require compliance with the architectural and landscaping section of the Overlay District. The City Council and Overlay District Board may approve or recommend Alternative Standards if the Board finds that hardship or practical difficulties may result from strict compliance with the Overlay District regulations, provided that such exception shall not have the effect of nullifying the intent and purpose of the regulations. The Overlay District Board recommended approval unanimously (7-0) on March 5, 2019.

ANALYSIS:

Zion Market has the option to occupy the building without making any exterior improvements. They desired to make facade improvements which were further enhanced to comply as best as possible with the I-35 Overlay. The original submittal did not include plans to improve the site landscaping; however, after working with staff, they are adding 36 new trees in order to move closer to compliance with the I-35 Overlay. The landscaping and facade improvements would not be required for a similar development outside of the Overlay District.

Building Design

This building lies in the IH-35E Corridor Overlay Core Sub-District, and as such has enhanced requirements to the design and materials used for the front facade. The enhancements the applicant propose include: adding windows and doors; adding height to the corner of the building; painting the existing brick neutral colors; adding brick veneer and wood veneer to the exterior; adding awnings along the facade. The proposed front facade will be comprised of 80% brick and stone, which meets the 80% requirement.

Landscaping

Zion Market is proposing to add or expand 10 landscape islands and plant an additional 36 canopy trees on the site. Sears was built with over 700 parking spaces with two lots separated by a sloped landscaped area. Zion Market is focusing landscaping improvements on the area near the main entrance as this is where most customers will park. Compliance with landscaping standards is required by the Overlay District as facade changes are made to a street facing elevation. The increased landscape will enhance the overall appearance of the site and provide more shade in the parking lot area.

Alternative Standards & Administrative Modifications

The existing big-box structure and parking lot design and layout render compliance with some architectural and landscaping standards unfeasible; therefore, Administrative Modifications and Alternative Standards are requested. Two Administrative Modifications have been approved by Staff and two Alternative Standards have been approved by the Overlay District Board as detailed below. The final five Alternative Standards (items a-e) require City Council approval.

Administrative Modifications Granted by Staff:

1. to reduce the minimum percent awning or canopy on the northeast facade from 75 percent to 69 percent, an 8 percent reduction. [Sec. 17.5-4 (c)(4)]
2. to reduce the minimum percent awnings or canopies on the southeast facade from 75 percent to 68 percent, a 9 percent reduction. [Sec. 17.5-4 (c)(4)]

In both elevations the applicant is providing canopies over all windows and entryways in a manner that is compatible with the architectural design of the building. Staff had no objection to this request and granted the Administrative Modifications.

Alternative Standards Approved by the Overlay District Board:

1. to allow four (4) colors be used on each elevation in lieu of the required three (3), an increase of 33 percent. [Sec. 17.5-4 (c)(3)b.]

The Overlay Sub-District Architectural Standards require that a minimum of two colors and a maximum of three colors be used on each elevation. Zion market is proposing to use a total of four colors in their elevation. All four of these colors will be earth tone colors. This Alternative Standard was approved by the Overlay District Board on March 5, 2019.

2. to reduce the minimum required windows along the ground floor from 60 percent to 44 percent, a 27% decrease [Sec. 17.5-4 (c)(3)e.1]

The applicant is proposing to significantly increase the ground floor window area, particularly by adding windows around what was the automotive center. Due to conflicts with existing interior conditions, they were able to achieve 44 percent windows along the

ground floor. This is a 27 percent decrease in the code requirement. This Alternative Standard was approved by the Overlay District Board on March 5, 2019.

Alternative Standards Requiring Council Action:

- a) to reduce the minimum required windows along the second floor from 25 percent to ten percent, a 60% decrease [Sec. 17.5-4 (c)(3)e.3]

The applicant is proposing to add new windows to the second floor at the corner of the building. Due to conflicts with interior conditions, they were able to achieve ten percent windows along the second floor. This is a 60 percent decrease in the code requirement. This Alternative Standard requires City Council approval. The Overlay District Board recommended approval on March 5, 2019.

- b) to not plant trees symmetrically along all driveways and private vehicular routes. [Section 17.5-4(d)(1)a.]

The applicant is adding 36 trees to the site. The majority of these trees will be planted in existing landscape areas along driveways. However, due to the current configuration of the site and parking lot, creating symmetry was not practical. This is a non-numerical standard which requires City Council approval. The Overlay District Board recommended approval on March 5, 2019.

- c) to space trees farther than 40 feet apart along the private vehicular route, an over 600% increase [Section 17.5-4(d)(1)d.]

The existing parking field and lot is configured such that creating a continuous landscape strip is challenging without disturbing circulation through the site. Along the northwestern portion of the site is a gap of over 250 feet. However, along the portion of the site closest to the building entrance, tree spacing is much tighter and separated only by drive aisles. 12 new trees and 21 total trees are provided along the ring road, which average to 1 tree per every 41 feet. This Alternative Standard requires City Council approval. The Overlay District Board recommended approval on March 5, 2019.

- d) to not provide a five-foot landscape strip between the sidewalk and parking lot with shrub row [Section 17.5-4(d)(1)g.)

The existing parking field and lot is configured such that creating a continuous landscape strip is challenging without disturbing circulation through the site. This item is not provided for the site; however, four landscape islands are added and one is widened along the ring road. This Alternative Standard requires City Council approval. The Overlay District Board recommended approval on March 5, 2019.

- e) to not provide a ten foot wide landscape island with 50% plant cover every eight spaces, a 74 percent decrease [Section 17.5-4(d)(1)h.]

The applicant is adding eight landscape islands that will hold 16 trees. In addition, they are widening two existing islands to meet the overlay standards. Per the Overlay District, full compliance would require 38 landscape islands. Ten are provided that meet the requirements of the Overlay District. This is a 74 percent decrease; however, additional trees are added to existing landscape areas to meet the required ratio of one tree per every eight parking spaces. This Alternative Standard requires City Council approval. The Overlay Board recommended approval on March 5, 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve Alternative Standards a) through e) as set forth in the caption above.