

Title:	North Coast Co-Op Master Sign Permit
Project:	SGNM-23-3
Location:	25 4 th Street
APNs:	001-064-012 and 001-064-013
Applicant:	Eric Ernst, McHale Sign Co.
Property Owner:	CUE III LLC
Purpose/Use:	Allow deviations from wall sign standards in order to utilize ten existing wall signs, and replace three existing mounted wall signs with new mounted wall signs, for a total of 13 signs on one building frontage.
Application Date:	October 31, 2023
General Plan:	DC – Downtown Commercial
Zoning:	DW – Downtown West
CEQA:	Exempt under §15311: Accessory Structures
Staff Contact:	Vanessa Odom, Planning Technician
Recommendation:	Hold a public hearing; and Adopt a resolution finding the project is exempt from CEQA, and approving the application.
Motion:	“I move the Design Review Committee adopt a resolution finding the project is exempt from CEQA, and conditionally approving the Co-Op Master Sign Permit for 25 4 th Street.”

Figure 1: Location Map

North Coast Co-Op Master Sign Permit (25 4th Street)
Project No: SGNM-23-3

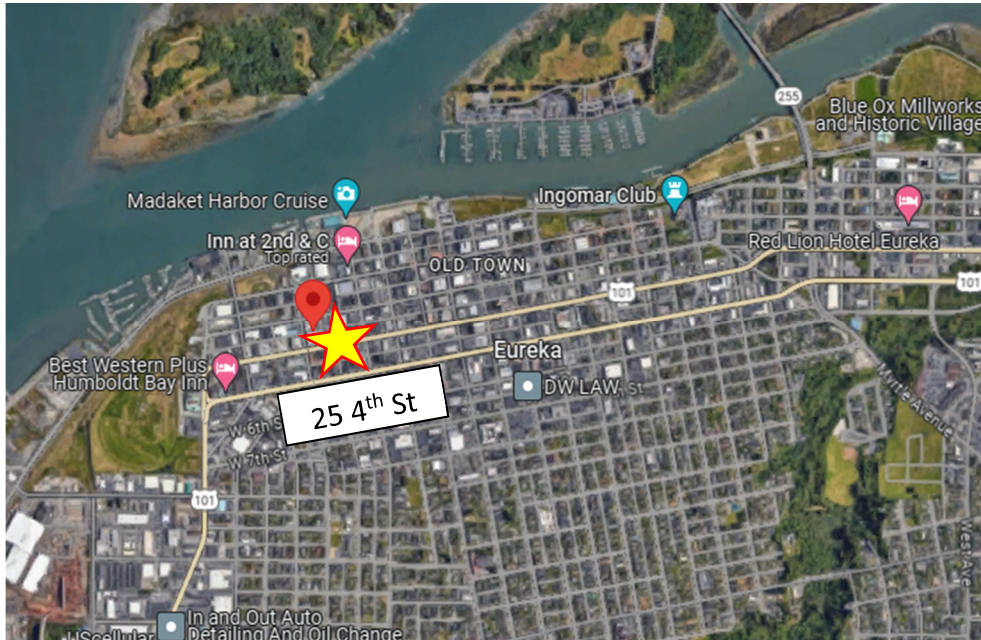


Figure 2: Site Map



PROJECT SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting approval to utilize ten existing nonconforming wall signs and to replace three mounted wall signs with three new, larger mounted wall signs. Because the number of wall signs and total sign area on the tenant frontage exceeds the number and sign area

permitted by City sign standards, the entire site requires approval of a Master Sign Program through a Master Sign Permit.

Figure 3: Current storefront with existing signs marked E.01 through E.10 which will remain. Signs marked TBR are to be replaced with new signs. See Table 1 below for sign inventory.



Figure 4: Rendering of new storefront after installation of proposed signs A.1, A.2, and B.



Background

The 1.32-acre property adjoins 4th Street (Highway 101 southbound) to the south near Eureka's downtown. The site is located in the Inland Zone, within the DW – Downtown West zoning district, and is surrounded by residential, commercial and industrial uses. The site is comprised of two APNs: (1) 001-064-012, which contains the store, and (2) 001-064-013, which contains the parking lot. To the north of the site, across 3rd Street, which serves as the Inland extent of the Coastal Zone, are auto service and repair, construction, and security businesses as well as the Eureka Rescue Mission. To the west of (behind) the site, across A Street, are two commercial properties (one previously housed the Dick Taylor Chocolate factory, and the other houses various cannabis businesses). To the east of the site, across B Street, is a brewing supply store and a dry cleaner business. To the south, across 5th Street (Highway 101), is the Travelodge Hotel, and the Bayview Heights housing complex.

The property contains thirteen wall signs; eight painted wall signs and five mounted wall signs. Three of the five mounted wall signs depict the co-op name, and are to be replaced with new,

larger wall signs. All of the wall signs are located on the eastern tenant frontage (facing B Street). In addition to signage, the southern building façade is covered in a mural that does not advertise a product, business, or service, and therefore is not considered a sign and not included in the site’s sign program. An additional small mural is proposed for the central window on the eastern façade, below the central “CO-OP” sign. The north and west building façades have no signs, and there are no freestanding (i.e. monument or pole) signs on the site.

As listed in Table 1: Sign Inventory below (and seen in Figures 3 and 4 above), the eastern tenant frontage (facing B Street) will include the following thirteen wall signs:

- two identical non-illuminated mounted acrylic wall signs (signs A.1 and A.2 on Figure 4) depicting “NorthCoast Co-Op” and sprout logo with white aluminum backing and a sign area of 95.5 square feet (sf) each (191-sf for both) which will replace the two existing mounted wall signs on each “tower” and are each 20.5 sf larger (41 sf for both) than the existing signs they replace (signs TBR.1 and TBR.3 on Figure 3);
- a mounted non-illuminated acrylic wall sign depicting “CO-OP” with an area of 110.6-sf (sign B on Figure 4) which will replace the existing “CO-OP” mounted wall sign and is 54.6-sf larger than the existing sign it replaces (sign TBR.2 on Figure 3);
- two painted wall signs depicting “Open 7am-9pm” each with an area of 47.6 sf (E.01 and E.10);
- two mounted wall signs depicting “local, fresh, natural” each with an area of 40 sf (E.02 and E.09);
- a painted wall sign depicting “deli” with an area of 10-sf (E.03);
- a painted wall sign “coffee” with an area of 17 sf (E.04);
- a painted wall sign depicting “groceries” with an area of 27 sf (E.05);
- a painted wall sign depicting “sushi” with an area of 14.6-sf (E.06);
- a painted wall sign depicting “meat” with an area of 13.8-sf (E.07); and
- a painted wall sign depicting “seafood” with an area of 23.5-sf (E.08).

No changes are proposed to any of the eight existing painted wall signs or the “local, fresh, natural” mounted wall signs (E.02 and E.09). Attachment 2 includes the applicant’s submitted materials showing sign dimensions and locations as well.

Table 1: Sign Inventory (TBR for signs to be replaced, E for existing signs to remain.)

Sign Inventory						
Number	Type	Copy	Height (ft)	Width (in)	Length (ft)	Total Area (sf)
A.1 (new)	Wall sign (mounted, painted acrylic)	North Coast Co-Op w/ sprout	6.7 ft	2 in	14.25 ft	95.5 sf
A.2 (new)	Wall sign (mounted, painted acrylic)	North Coast Co-Op w/ sprout	6.7 ft	2 in	14.25 ft	95.5 sf
B (new)	Wall sign (mounted, painted acrylic w/ white lettering)	CO-OP	4.9 ft	2 in	22.5 ft	110.6 sf

TBR.1	Wall sign (mounted, white aluminum backing)	North Coast Co-Op w/ sprout	6.3 ft	2 in	12 ft	75 sf
TBR.2	Wall sign (mounted, acrylic w/ green lettering)	CO-OP	4 ft	2 in	14 ft	56
TBR.3	Wall sign (mounted, white aluminum backing)	North Coast Co-Op w/ sprout	6.3 ft	2 in	12 ft	75 sf
E.01	Wall sign (painted)	Open 7am-9pm	4 ft	0 in	11.9 ft	47.6 sf
E.02	Wall sign (mounted, digitally printed vinyl graphic on aluminum backer)	local, fresh, natural	4 ft	0 in	10 ft	40 sf
E.03	Wall sign (painted)	deli	2 ft	0 in	5 ft	10 sf
E.04	Wall sign (painted)	coffee	2 ft	0 in	8.5 ft	17 sf
E.05	Wall sign (painted)	groceries	2 ft	0 in	13.5 ft	27 sf
E.06	Wall sign (painted)	sushi	2 ft	0 in	7.3 ft	14.6 sf
E.07	Wall sign (painted)	meat	2 ft	0 in	6.9 ft	13.8 sf
E.08	Wall sign (painted)	seafood	2 ft	0 in	11.75 ft	23.5 sf
E.09	Wall sign (mounted, digitally printed vinyl graphic on aluminum backer)	local, fresh, natural	4 ft	0 in	10 ft	40 sf
E.10	Wall sign (painted)	Open 7am-9pm	4 ft	0 in	11.9 ft	47.6 sf
Total existing signage area (sf)		487.1 sf	Total proposed signage area (sf)			582.7 sf

Applicable Regulations

Pursuant to Eureka Municipal Code (EMC) §155.340.070, Table 340-1: Wall Signs, only two wall signs are permitted per tenant frontage in the DW zoning district, and only to a maximum of 32-sf for all signs per tenant frontage. The EMC defines “tenant frontage” as the linear measurement of a tenant’s building wall that abuts and faces a street, a tenant’s building wall that abuts and faces a parking lot, or a tenant’s building wall that abuts and faces a pedestrian walkway or alley. One or two of the painted wall signs together may meet current wall sign standards, but when combined with other existing and proposed wall signs on the eastern tenant frontage, the two-sign, 32-sf maximum outlined by City sign standards is far exceeded, with a total of 487.1-sf of existing sign area, and 582.7-sf of proposed sign area, shared between 13 signs.

The eight existing painted wall signs were legally established in 2015. At the time, City sign standards allowed 3-sf of signage per every square foot of tenant frontage which allowed up to 3,150-sf of sign area and an unlimited number of signs. After sign standards were updated in 2019, the total number and area of signs was rendered legally nonconforming.

Per EMC §155.340.060.C, any site greater than one acre may request approval of a Master Sign Permit, which would allow for certain deviations to the sign standards to provide a coordinated approach to signage for large sites/buildings. The parcel where the Co-op building is located is only 0.9 acres in size, but combined with the adjacent parking lot parcel, the total site area is over one acre and thus can qualify for a Master Sign Permit. The parking lot is an accessory use and is therefore legally encumbered as part of the 1.23-acre project site. A Master Sign Permit considers all the signage on the site under one Master Sign Program that identifies the placement, size, materials, type, and general design of signs located on a site, including both existing and proposed signs.

The Co-op sign permit application was received prior to the 2023 Annual Zoning Code Update (Ordinance No. 951-C.S, effective November 17, 2023) which recently removed a provision that allowed a Master Sign Program to deviate from the maximum size of signs permitted (i.e. deviate from maximum sign area which this application proposes), where currently, the total amount of sign area must stay below the overall sign area limits by the code for specific signs (i.e. under the most recently sign regulations, the Co-op would only be allowed a maximum of 128 sf of sign area because they have four building frontage and each frontage can't exceed the 32-sf maximum). Therefore, because the application was received prior to the most recent zoning code update, the application may request a deviation from the maximum sign area, in addition to the number of signs per tenant frontage as previously allowed by Ordinance No. 938-C.S.

Table 2 below provides information on the proposed signs and how they conform or deviate from the wall sign standards.

Sign Standards for the DW Zoning District and Proposed Deviations			
Description	Standard	Proposed	Deviation
Wall Signs (EMC §155.340.070, Table 340-1)			
Max. number	2 per tenant frontage	13 on the eastern frontage	Exceeds number allowed by 11
Max. Area (applies to all walls signs on a tenant frontage)	1-sf per linear foot of tenant frontage to a maximum of 32-sf per tenant frontage	582.7-sf (all 13 wall signs)	Exceeds square footage allowed by 550.7-sf
Max. height	Roof/parapet	No signs over roof line	None
Max. projection from building wall	12 in	2 in	None

Illumination allowed?	Yes, external and internal	None	None
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Table 2: Sign deviations per DW zoning district standards.

Lastly, the Design Review Committee may require modifications to the proposed Master Sign Program including limits on allowed sign types, height, area, dimensions, placement, materials, and

other sign design features. All signs on the site are subject to the requirements of the approved Master Sign Program standards as listed in Table 3 below which is included as a condition of approval, while any aspect of the signs not addressed by the program shall comply with the sign standards in EMC §155.340.070. Future signs consistent with the approved program are allowed with an Administrative Sign Permit; however, signs inconsistent with an approved program and any applicable sign standards in EMC §155.340.070 will require an amendment to the program or a modification of inconsistent signs.

Table 3: Master Sign Program Standards Specific to 25 4th Street

Master Sign Program Standards for 25 4 th Street (North Coast Co-Op)	
Max. area for wall signs	Modifications to the wall signs shall not exceed a total sign area of 582.7 sf (as currently proposed), and mounted wall signs may not exceed 381 sf (as currently proposed).
Max. number and type of wall signs on eastern building frontage	Up to thirteen wall signs are allowed, of which only five may be mounted signs, and the remaining signs must be painted directly on the wall.
Required design features	No more three wall signs may depict "Co-op", and all mounted signs must exhibit a similar character to each other, to the satisfaction of Development Services - Planning.
General location of signs	Any new signs on the eastern frontage must display a degree of visual symmetry across the eastern façade as currently proposed, to the satisfaction of Development Services - Planning.
Any proposed modifications to existing signs or new signs must be consistent with the standards above as well as any sign standards in EMC §155.340 (Signs) not included in the allowed deviations. Any proposed sign changes inconsistent with the Master Sign Program will require an amendment to the Program, to the satisfaction of Development Services – Planning.	

ANALYSIS

To approve a Master Sign Permit, the Design Review Committee must make all of the following seven findings:

- a. Allowed signs are consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the City Council;
- b. The Master Sign Program features a unified and coordinated approach to the materials, size, type, placement, and general design of signs proposed for a project or property;
- c. If deviations from sign standards in EMC §155.340.070 (Sign Standards) are proposed, the deviations are necessary to accommodate the unique signage needs of the site;

- d. Allowed signs comply with all applicable standards in this section, unless specific deviations are allowed by the Master Sign Program;
 - e. The allowed signs will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare;
 - f. The allowed sign sizes are proportionate to the building and site where they are located; and
 - g. The number, placement, design, and material of the allowed signs are compatible with the architectural design of buildings on the site.
- a. Allowed signs are consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the City Council.

The 1.32-acre project site has a land use/zoning designation of Downtown Commercial (DC)/Downtown West (DW). The DC land use designation is “intended to have a high intensity urban form, retain and enhance Eureka’s identity and historic character, and promote a vibrant pedestrian environment.” The purpose of the DW zoning district is to provide “an extension of the Downtown (DT) zoning district with a broader range of allowed land uses [than what the DT zoning district allows] to further encourage investment and development and to provide a transition zone from Broadway to Downtown.” The existing grocery store is located just north of 4th Street (Highway 101 South; 5th Street serves as Highway 101 North) at the northwestern-most edge of the DW zoning district, just east of the Hinge Industrial (HI) zoning district in the Inland Zone and just south of the Light Industrial (ML) zoning district in the Coastal Zone.

All of the signs included in the proposed Master Sign Program are intended to be large-scaled to fit in the with the height, scale, and massing of the existing building. Due to the eastern building frontage’s orientation being perpendicular to the highway, the signs can easily be seen by vehicles traveling the highway. Additionally, the overall project site already provides for a pedestrian environment with landscaping, bicycle parking, and pedestrian walkways from the sidewalk to the store’s entrances. Although the signs are fairly large-scaled due to the massing and scale of the existing building, the majority of the signs (8 of 13) are painted directly on the wall so they are not as prominent as the mounted wall signs and don’t create a sense of clutter of signage or overwhelm pedestrians on nearby sidewalks. Further, because of the building’s orientation, the sidewalks on B, 3rd, and 4th Streets from which the signs are visible, are not immediately adjacent to the signs (e.g. from the B Street sidewalk, the signs are over 100 feet away.) The scale of the signs is appropriate to accommodate non-motorists, thus aligning with the intention of the Downtown Commercial (DC) land use designation.

The applicant proposes to utilize ten existing nonconforming wall signs (eight painted and three mounted), and proposes three new mounted wall signs that exceed the allowed number and square footage of signage permitted by City sign standards; however, with the approval of a Master Sign Permit, the proposed signs will be consistent with the Zoning Code. Additionally, the site is located in the transition zone between Downtown and the Broadway (Highway 101) auto-oriented commercial corridor, which is to serve both vehicular and pedestrian travel. Two of the intentions of the sign regulations in EMC §155.340.010 are to

“[promote] pedestrian-oriented and appropriately-scaled signage in all parts of town other than Broadway,” and to “acknowledge Broadway’s role as a primarily vehicular corridor through Eureka and allow for larger-scale and more vehicle-oriented signs on Broadway while still emphasizing aesthetic quality and scales appropriate for Eureka.” The proposed deviations are consistent with this intention for signage near the 4th/5th Street and Broadway transition zone because they allow for higher visibility from both vehicular and pedestrian passageways.

For these reasons, a finding can be made the proposed signs do not conflict with, and therefore are consistent with the General Plan and Zoning Code.

- b. The Master Sign Program features a unified and coordinated approach to the materials, size, type, placement, and general design of signs proposed for a project or property. Six of the eight existing painted wall signs share similar dimensions and style. They are all the same height, color, and font, and there isn’t significant deviation in length to note. They are all evenly spaced across the eastern building frontage facing B Street. The proposed mounted “CO-OP” wall sign in the middle of the store’s building frontage will match the look, in terms of color and font style, of the proposed mounted “North Coast Co-Op” with sprout logo wall signs located on each building “tower” on opposite sides of the eastern building frontage, just as the existing mounted wall signs do. There are two other sets of matching wall signs on the frontage as well: the two painted “Open 7am-9am daily” wall signs and the two mounted “local, fresh, natural” wall signs. The mounted and painted wall signs are placed symmetrically across the eastern frontage, contributing to an effective and aesthetically pleasing sign program that complements the design of the building façade with its multiple symmetrical bays. The signs also complement the mural covering the entire south building frontage.

Therefore, the finding can be made that the proposed signs in the Master Sign Program feature a unified and coordinated approach to the materials, size, type, placement and general design of the signs on the property.

- c. If deviations from sign standards in EMC §155.340.070 (Sign Standards) are proposed, the deviations are necessary to accommodate the unique signage needs of the site.

There are two ways in which the proposed signage deviates from sign standards:

1. All thirteen wall signs (ten existing and three proposed) are located on the eastern building tenant frontage, exceeding the maximum of two wall signs per tenant frontage.
2. The existing sign program exceeds the permitted 32 sf of wall signs per tenant frontage by 550.7-sf.

Allowing more than two wall signs on the building’s eastern frontage is necessary because the site is a large grocery store with a tall exterior building frontage that sells various products. Allowing a deviation in square footage of signage is appropriate and compatible

with the viewing distance from 5th Street (Highway 101) as well as the pedestrian walkways, which are not immediately adjacent to the signs.

For these reasons, it can be found that these deviations are necessary to accommodate the unique signage needs of the site.

- d. Allowed signs comply with all applicable standards in this section, unless specific deviations are allowed by the Master Sign Program.

As shown in Table 2 above, other than the two deviations listed above in the Background section and in Finding C, all thirteen signs comply with the applicable sign standards for wall signs, including maximum height, maximum wall projection and illumination standards found in EMC §155.340.070 (Sign Standards), Table 340-1(Wall Signs). EMC §155.340.080.C. (Maximum Number of Sign Types) allows no more than three different sign types on a site without approval of a Master Sign Permit, and the project proposes only one sign type (wall sign), thus meeting this standard. As a result, the proposed Master Sign Program would allow two deviations to the sign standards (exceed maximum number of wall signs per frontage, and exceed maximum square footage of wall signs per frontage), while still meeting all of the other applicable sign standards. Any modifications to the signs under this Master Sign Program that are consistent with the standards as listed in Table 3 above are allowed with an Administrative Sign Permit while any aspect of the signs not addressed by the program shall comply with the sign standards in EMC §155.340 (Signs) or require a modification to this Master Sign Permit.

Therefore, the proposed sign program complies with all applicable standards unless specific deviations are allowed by the Master Sign Program.

- e. The allowed signs will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare. Pursuant to EMC §155.340.010, City sign standards are partially intended to promote the free flow of traffic and protect pedestrians and motorists from injury and property damage caused by, or which may be fully or partially attributable to cluttered, distracting, or illegible signage. The proposed sign program's sign type, location or placement, design features, and sign content are not prohibited by EMC §155.340.040 (Prohibited Signs). In addition, the proposed signs comply with the standards outlined in EMC §155.340.080.G. (Materials) as the signs are all made of either weather-proof paint, metal, or similar durable materials such as aluminum and acrylic. No illumination is proposed for the new mounted wall signs, so there would be no risk of light hazard to motorists or wildlife.

For these reasons, despite the two deviations described in Table 2 and Finding C, the proposed sign program will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or general welfare.

- f. The allowed sign sizes are proportionate to the building and site where they are located. The eastern building frontage of the 1.32-acre project site is located perpendicular to Highway 101. Although the number and size of the wall signs on that frontage significantly exceed sign standards, these are appropriate with the height, scale and massing of the

existing building, in order to be easily seen by pedestrians on the 3rd, 4th and B Street sidewalks as well as by motorists traveling 4th Street. Additionally, because there is no signage on the other three building frontages, and there is only one sign type on the site, the signage is not overwhelming.

Therefore, considering the site has a larger tenant frontage than most of the surrounding sites (except for the veteran's apartment complex located at the south east corner of B and 4th Street), the allowed sign sizes are proportionate to the building and the site where they are located and are evenly-spaced and symmetrical without the appearance of overcrowding.

- g. The number, placement, design, and material of the allowed signs are compatible with the architectural design of buildings on the site.

There is only one building on the project site. Its color theme resembles classic and natural earth-tones, with hues of green and yellow to complement the use of the building as a natural food and holistic grocery store. The use of painted wall signs spaced evenly across the building frontage complements the simplicity of the store's design. The eastern façade is divided into a series of bays with their own roof dormers and the signs are spaced evenly in line with the individual bays. The three newly proposed mounted wall signs (A.1, A.2, B) also include a simplistic and natural look, including acrylic painted with a deep green background and white lettering. Signs A.1 and A.2 also include a painted light-green leaf symbol, and will be located on opposite "towers" of the building frontage. The signs are non-illuminated and blend in well with the store's frontage while also enhancing the signs' aesthetic value and visibility.

Therefore, the finding can be made that the number, placement, design, and material of the allowed signs are compatible with the architectural design of buildings on the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The City of Eureka, as Lead Agency, has determined the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to §15311, Accessory Structures, Class 11 of the CEQA Guidelines which consists of the construction or replacement of minor structures accessory to existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including on-premise signs. Because the site is developed and the scope of work is the replacement of three existing on-premise signs, the project is exempt from the CEQA.

CONCLUSION

Staff has provided findings which support the approval of a Master Sign Permit for the proposed Master Sign Program to allow deviations from wall sign standards which are necessary to accommodate the unique signage needs of the North Coast Co-Op, with the condition that any proposed modifications or new signs must be consistent with Table 3: Master Sign Program Standards for 25 4th Street described above, as well as any sign standards in EMC §155.340 (Signs) not included in the allowed deviations, and are allowed with an Administrative Sign Permit. Any proposed sign changes inconsistent with the Master Sign Program will require an amendment to the Program.

North Coast Co-Op Master Sign Permit (25 4th Street)
Project No: SGNM-23-3

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public notification consisted of mailing notice to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site, and posting notice on the City's website and bulletin boards, on or before February 2, 2024. In addition, a public hearing notice sign was posted on the site on or before February 2, 2024.

STAFF CONTACT

Vanessa Odom, Planning Technician, 531 K Street, Eureka, CA 95501; planning@eurekaca.gov;
(707) 441-4160

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED

Attachment 1: Design Review Committee Resolution
Attachment 2: Applicant Submitted Material