

<b>Title:</b>	Applebee’s Master Sign Permit
<b>Project:</b>	Master Sign Permit SGNM-25-1
<b>Location:</b>	2846 Broadway
<b>APN:</b>	007-111-002
<b>Applicant:</b>	Peyman Kohanbash (Agent for Applebee’s)
<b>Property Owner:</b>	Sam Soleimani
<b>Purpose/Use:</b>	Master Sign Program for 18 signs: eight wall, nine awning, and one pole, requiring a deviation from the standard limit of two wall signs per tenant frontage. The existing pole sign was legally permitted in 2014 and exceeds current height and area limits; future modifications, other than sign copy changes, must comply with current zoning standards.
<b>Complete Application:</b>	July 3, 2025
<b>Deadline for Action:</b>	October 1, 2025
<b>General Plan:</b>	GSC – General Service Commercial
<b>Zoning:</b>	CS – Service Commercial
<b>CEQA:</b>	Exempt under §15311, Class II (Accessory Structures)
<b>Staff Contact:</b>	Chris Lohofener, Senior Planner
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Hold a public hearing; and Adopt a resolution finding the project is exempt from CEQA, and conditionally approving.
<b>Motion:</b>	<i>“I move the Design Review Committee adopt a resolution finding the project is exempt from CEQA, and conditionally approving the Applebee’s Master Sign Permit.”</i>

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The Applicant, Peyman Kohanbash, authorized agent for Applebee’s Restaurant, proposes a Master Sign Program to authorize a total of 18 signs: eight wall signs, nine awning signs, and one pole sign. The project includes installation of five new signs and replacement of 13 existing sign faces on the north-, south-, and east-facing building frontages, as well as updated copy on the existing pole sign (see Table I and Figures 1–6 below). No ground disturbance is proposed.

Pursuant to EMC §10-5.1707.3(b), a Master Sign Permit may be requested for sites greater than one acre. Under EMC §10-5.1707.3(f)(iv), a Master Sign Program may also allow deviations from the type and number of signs otherwise permitted. The proposed program would allow Applebee’s to exceed the standard limit of two wall signs per tenant frontage and maximum height and sign area for the existing pole sign, and authorize the full set of proposed signage.

Figure 1: Location Map

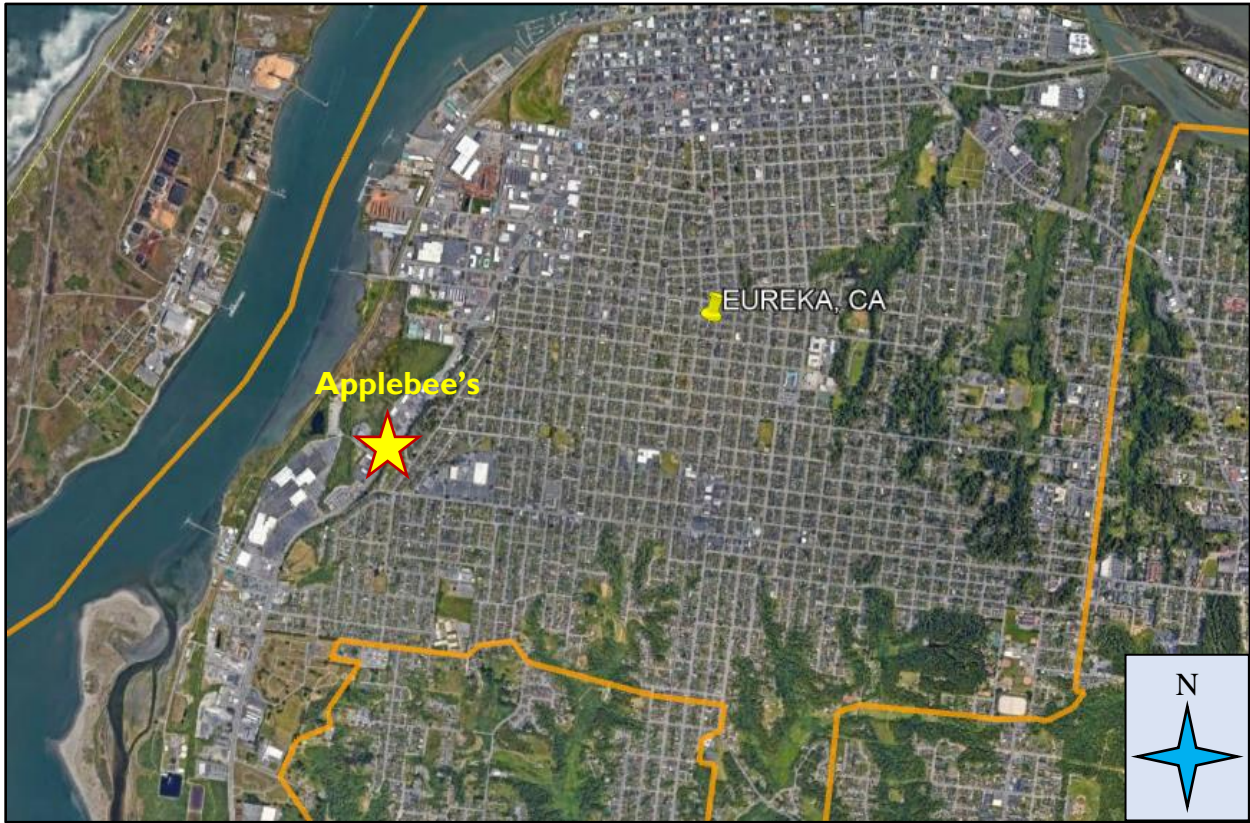


Figure 2: Site Map and Proposed Sign Locations



**BACKGROUND**

Situated on a 1.17-acre parcel, the project site (site) is within the Coastal Zone and zoned Service Commercial (CS), with a General Service Commercial (GSC) land use designation. The site fronts Broadway/Highway 101 and Bayshore Way, which connects Broadway to the rear of the Bayshore Mall. To the west are the U.S. Forest Service regional headquarters and a small wetland adjacent to the Applebee's parking lot, roughly 250 feet from the restaurant. Nearby uses include commercial businesses to the north (e.g., Discovery Inn, Chevron, Gold Rush Coffee and Cannabis), light industrial and retail uses to the south (e.g. Evans Mechanical, Eureka Tire & Service, Broadway Commercial Center strip mall) across Bayshore Way, and a vacant vegetated hillside to the east across Broadway. Most parcels along the west side of Broadway have large parking areas, direct access to Broadway, and sidewalks along the frontage.

Applebee's was constructed in 2000 and permitted under Coastal Development Permit CDP-07-99 and Building Permit AA-30-99, replacing the long-standing Sea Breeze Motel. The motel's original pole sign structure was retained and refurbished under Sign Permit 00-0309 to display Applebee's signage. In 2014, Sign Permit SIGN-14-0015 authorized upgrades to wall signs, awnings, and the pole sign, including LED illumination and a new sign copy. Since then, Applebee's branding has evolved, and the proposed project aims to bring existing signage into alignment with new corporate standards.

In 2022, the City comprehensively updated Eureka Municipal Code (EMC) Article 17 (Signs), establishing new Coastal Zone standards for wall, pole, and awning signs. These standards address size, height, location, quantity, and design to promote visual order and public safety. While Applebee's signage was installed prior to the comprehensive ordinance update, its current configuration remains consistent with the updated standards. However, the proposed wall signs exceed the current quantity per frontage limitations, necessitating approval of a Master Sign Permit.

As shown in Table 1: Proposed Sign Inventory, the Applicant proposes 18 new signs totaling 689 square feet. The project includes replacement of three existing illuminated Applebee's wall signs, addition of three new illuminated accessory wall signs, two stencil wall signs, and updated sign copy for both the existing pole sign and nine awning signs. The Applicant submitted proposed plans and specifications for the updated signs, are included as Attachment 2.

**Table 1: Proposed Sign Inventory**

Quantity	Type	Copy	Square Feet per sign	New / Replace	Illuminated?	Deviation?
1	Wall Sign	Apple stencil	65 sf	New	No	Yes
1	Wall Sign	To Go stencil	65 sf	New	No	No
1	Wall Sign	Neighborhood	15 sf	New	Yes	No
1	Wall Sign	Grill & Bar	14 sf	New	Yes	No
1	Wall Sign	Welcome Back!	12 sf	New	Yes	No
3	Wall Sign	Applebee's	49 sf (each)	New	Yes	No
1	Pole Sign	Applebee's	128 sf	Replace	Yes	Yes
9	Awning	Apple stencil	27 sf (each)	Replace	No	No
Total Wall Sign and Awning Sign Area: 689 sf						

Figure 3: Existing vs. Proposed Wall Signs and Awning Signs on Broadway-Facing (East-Facing) Frontage



Figure 4: Existing vs. Proposed Pole Sign on Broadway-Facing (East-Facing) Frontage

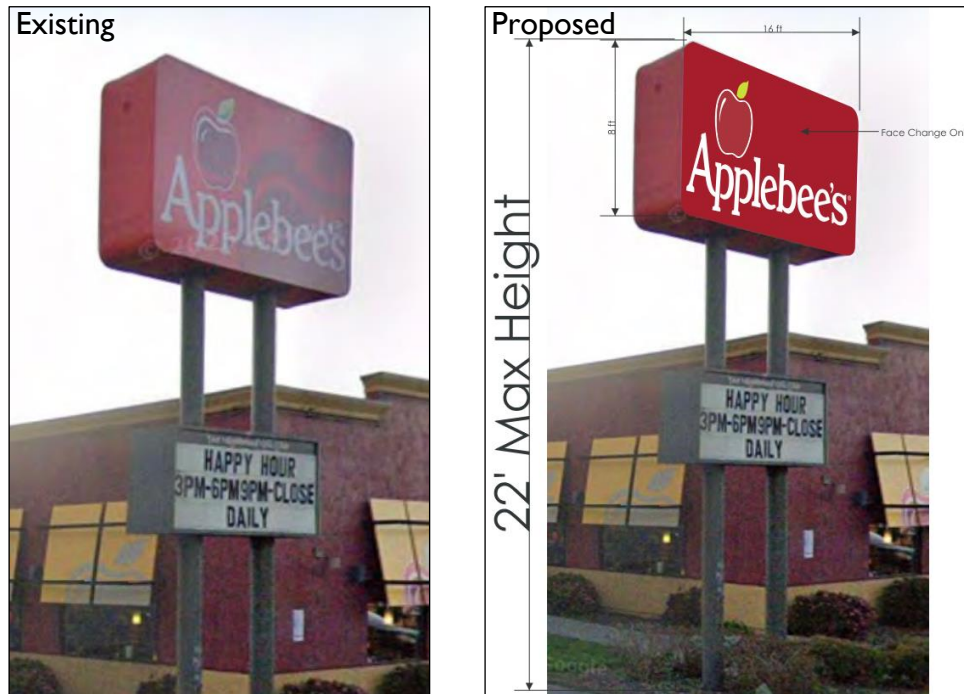
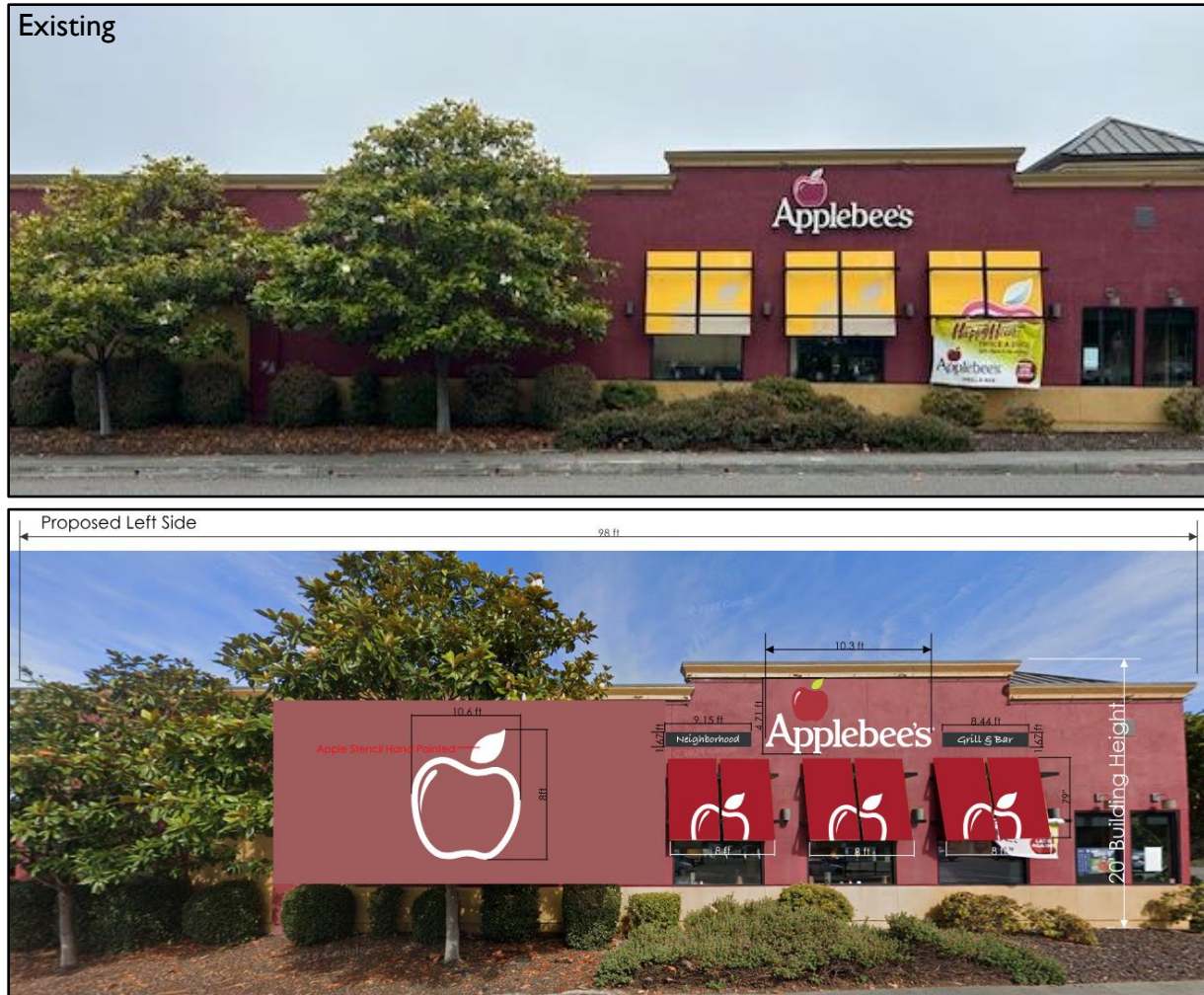


Figure 5: Existing vs. Proposed Wall Signs and Awning Signs on Parking Lot-Facing (North-Facing) Frontage



**Figure 6. Existing vs. Proposed Wall Signs and Awning Signs on Bayshore Way-Facing (South-Facing) Frontage**



### **APPLICABLE REGULATIONS**

Under EMC §10-5.1708.3(e), all Master Sign Permit applications must include a proposed 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. Although many of the proposed signs could be permitted with an Administrative Sign Permit, the requested deviation to allow more than two wall signs per frontage requires all new and replacement signs be included in a Master Sign Program (see Table 2 below). All sign standards and proposed deviations are included as Attachment 3, Sign Standards and Deviations.

EMC §10-5.1707.7 specifies that signs located in the Coastal Zone are subject to the requirements of Article 29 (Coastal Development Permit Procedures) and new signs must be sited to avoid and minimize obstruction of scenic views and scenic coastal areas as defined in EMC §10-5.2944(1) – Scenic Coastal Areas, and protect the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas. Although the proposed project involves development in the Coastal Zone, the signs are exempt from the need for a CDP pursuant to EMC §10-5.29303(b) (Improvements to Structures) because all of the signs are either attached to the building walls or are receiving replacement sign copy on existing structures, and none of the exceptions to the exemption listed in Title 14, §13253 apply.

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 2, 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 §10-5.1708. Future signs consistent with the approved program are allowed with an Administrative Sign Permit; however, signs inconsistent with the approved program and any applicable sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708 will require an amendment to the program or a modification of inconsistent signs.

**Table 2: Master Sign Program Standards Specific to Applebee's at 2846 Broadway**

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Parking Lot Frontage</b>	Max 2 wall signs (114 sq. ft. total) and 3 awning signs (81 sq. ft. total). No other sign types allowed (e.g., blade, monument, window).
<b>Broadway Frontage</b>	Max 2 wall signs (61 sq. ft. total) and 3 awning signs (81 sq. ft. total). No other sign types allowed.
<b>Bayshore Way Frontage</b>	Max 4 wall signs (143 sq. ft. total) and 3 awning signs (81 sq. ft. total). No other sign types allowed.
<b>Pole Sign</b>	One pole sign (128 sq. ft. max). Future modifications (except sign copy changes) must comply with current zoning standards.
<b>Total Sign Area</b>	Combined total of all wall, awning, and pole sign copy must not exceed 689 sq. ft.
<b>Design Consistency</b>	All signs must share similar design elements (e.g., color palette, materials, typography) and be proportionate and evenly spaced across façades, subject to approval by Development Services – Planning.
<b>Amendments</b>	Any proposed sign not meeting the above standards or other applicable EMC Article 17 standards will require a Master Sign Program amendment, subject to approval by Development Services – Planning.

## **ANALYSIS**

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

1. Allowed signs are consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the City Council;
2. 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;
3. If deviations from sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708 (Sign standards) are proposed, the deviations are necessary to accommodate the unique signage needs of the site;
4. Allowed signs comply with all applicable standards in this section, unless specific deviations are allowed by the Master Sign Program;

5. The allowed signs will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare;
6. The allowed sign sizes are proportionate to the building and site where they are located;
7. The number, placement, design, and material of the allowed signs are compatible with the architectural design of buildings on the site.

**I. Allowed signs are consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and any applicable specific plan or area plan adopted by the City Council.**

The proposed signage is consistent with the City of Eureka's General Plan, Zoning Code, and certified Local Coastal Program. The site is designated GSC and zoned CS, which are intended to support a broad mix of retail, service, and restaurant uses in cohesive, accessible commercial corridors that serve both local residents and regional visitors. Located along the Broadway/Highway 101 corridor, a vehicle-oriented commercial area, Applebee's contributes to the corridor's economic identity and commercial function. The City's sign regulations (EMC §10-5.1701) recognize Broadway's role as a high-speed arterial and allow larger, more auto-visible signage in this area when balanced with aesthetic and scale considerations. The proposed signage, including wall signs, awning sign copy, and one pole sign, is consistent with this intent and helps maintain Applebee's recognizable branding and visibility in a commercial setting.

A review of the certified Local Coastal Program confirms consistency with coastal resource protection policies. All proposed signs are affixed to existing structures or located within already developed portions of the site and do not encroach into habitat areas. Illuminated signage is placed adjacent to existing lighting infrastructure, avoiding new glare or light pollution. While the proposed signage includes a deviation from the wall sign standard, the Master Sign Permit process allows for such modifications when justified by site-specific conditions and design integration. The proposed signage is part of a coordinated, site-specific sign plan that enhances functionality and supports the City's goals for a safe, attractive, and economically vibrant commercial corridor. Therefore, the proposed signage is consistent with the General Plan, Zoning Code, and Local Coastal Program.

**2. 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.**

The proposed signage establishes a cohesive and coordinated signage system across three building frontages, as well as one pole sign. All signage types, including wall signs and awning sign copies, are scaled to the size and visibility of each façade and placed to ensure even spacing, readability, and architectural integration. Sign materials include metal and hardened plastic, with consistent use of Applebee's national brand colors and typography. This unified design approach ensures compatibility across all sign types while reinforcing brand identity and visual clarity. The signs are aligned with existing architectural features such as parapet walls, pop-out entries, and awnings, enhancing the building's modern design and providing a clean, organized appearance.

Despite slight variations in individual signs due to differing frontage dimensions, the overall composition maintains visual harmony with the signs appropriately sized and positioned to support business visibility while avoiding clutter. As such, the Master Sign Program achieves a unified and professional aesthetic that aligns with the City's goals for high-quality commercial signage in key corridors like Broadway.

**3. If deviations from sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708 (Sign standards) are proposed, the deviations are necessary to accommodate the unique signage needs of the site.**

The proposed signage includes one deviation from the sign standards in EMC §10-5.1708: the Bayshore Way frontage includes four wall signs, exceeding the maximum of two wall signs per tenant frontage. This deviation is necessary to address the unique visibility and access needs of the site, which features three distinct frontages on Broadway, Bayshore Way, and the parking lot. The building occupies a prominent corner lot along Broadway/Highway 101, a major regional corridor with high-speed, high-volume traffic. Each of the three façades functions as a key visual point of entry, with customers approaching from multiple directions. Additional signage on the Bayshore Way frontage enhances visibility from the adjacent intersection and supports effective identification of the business from that side of the property. The placement of the wall signs is balanced and proportionate to the length and architectural articulation of the Bayshore Way façade, and the apple stencil wall sign is designed to help break up a large blank wall. Signs are aligned with architectural features and spaced to avoid visual clutter, maintaining consistency with the overall design approach of the Master Sign Program.

The deviation is narrowly tailored to the site's operational needs and is not excessive in scale or impact. It allows the business to achieve appropriate visibility while preserving the City's goals for aesthetic quality and orderly signage. The Master Sign Permit process is the appropriate mechanism to allow this flexibility where justified by site-specific conditions.

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

With the exception of the number of wall signs on the Bayshore Way frontage, all proposed signage complies with the applicable standards in EMC §10-5.1708 (Sign standards). The project includes three sign types, wall signs, awning sign copies, and one pole sign, consistent with EMC §10-5.1709.3 which limits properties to no more than three sign types without a Master Sign Permit. All proposed signs meet standards related to prohibited sign types (EMC §10-5.1704), materials (EMC §10-5.1709.7), and vertical/horizontal clearance (EMC §10-5.1709.9). Illuminated signage is located in already lit areas and complies with the illumination standards in EMC §10-5.1709.8 to prevent glare and avoid safety hazards to pedestrians or motorists.

No new sign types or structural sign elements are proposed beyond what is allowed under this permit. Sign modifications consistent with the standards in Table 2 may be approved through an Administrative Sign Permit. Any elements not addressed by the Master Sign Program must either comply with the sign standards in EMC Article 17 or require a modification to this permit. The existing monument sign at the southwest corner of the property is an off-site Bayshore Mall sign and is not included in the scope of this project. As conditioned, the project meets all applicable sign standards outside of the approved deviation.

**5. The allowed signs will not adversely impact the public health, safety, or general welfare.**

The proposed signage will not create visual or physical obstructions or hazards for pedestrians, motorists, or adjacent properties. All wall signs and awning sign copy are mounted to the building façades and comply with required clearance standards above sidewalks and walkways. The single pole sign is located within landscaped areas, outside of pedestrian paths and vehicle travel lanes, and is situated to maintain adequate visibility at driveways and intersections.

The signage is designed for auto-oriented visibility along Broadway/Highway 101 and adjacent streets, which is consistent with the area's commercial context. No signage is placed within vision clearance triangles or within the public right-of-way. Sign heights and placements are appropriate for visibility without causing distraction, glare, or obstruction. Illuminated signs are limited to areas that already include lighting infrastructure, minimizing the potential for glare or light spillover. All illumination will comply with EMC §10-5.1709.8, which prohibits lighting that creates safety hazards or visual nuisance to nearby uses. As designed, the signage maintains safe sightlines, allows clear pedestrian movement, and supports the safe and orderly function of adjacent public streets. A project referral was sent to City departments and agency partners on July 8, 2025, and no comments have received indicating the proposed signage will result in any potential impacts to public health, safety, or general welfare.

**6. The allowed sign sizes are proportionate to the building and site where they are located.**

The proposed signage is appropriately scaled and proportionate to the building's size and site context. The restaurant occupies a freestanding, single-story building approximately 5,100 square feet in size, with two distinct street-facing façades (and a third façade that is visible from the street) of varying lengths. The total proposed signage area is 686 square feet, distributed among wall signs, awning signs, and one pole sign. Signage on each façade is sized relative to the building frontage: the longest frontage on Bayshore Way accommodates the largest total sign area, while the Broadway and parking lot façades feature proportionally smaller signage. The awning sign copy is scaled to complement the building's architectural features without overwhelming the façade.

The freestanding pole sign is appropriately sized for visibility along Broadway/Highway 101, matching the scale of other signage along this heavily trafficked corridor. Its height and size provide clear identification from a distance, balanced against the site's overall dimensions. Sign spacing and placement create a balanced, uncluttered appearance, with signage integrated into the building's modern architectural rhythm. Overall, the sign sizes support visibility and business identification while maintaining proportionality, in keeping with the City's goals for scale and aesthetic compatibility in commercial corridors.

**7. Design, materials, and colors are compatible with the design of structures on the site.**

The proposed signage is fully integrated with the architectural character of the building. The signs utilize materials such as metal and durable plastic, with finishes that complement the building's contemporary exterior. Colors and fonts match Applebee's national brand standards, providing visual contrast without clashing with the neutral-toned façade. Each wall sign is positioned to align with key architectural elements, such as parapet walls, pop-outs, and canopies, reinforcing the building's clean lines and modern design. The signage avoids overpowering the structure and is distributed in a way that enhances the visual rhythm of each frontage.

The pole sign features a streamlined cabinet design consistent with commercial signage found along Broadway/Highway 101. Its form and materials are professional in appearance and compatible with both the on-site building and the broader commercial setting. Awning sign copies is limited to stencil only, placed on solid-colored awnings that match the building's aesthetic. Overall, the signage is thoughtfully designed to integrate with the site's architecture, contributing to a cohesive and visually appealing commercial frontage in line with City design objectives.

## **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 II 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 consists of the removal and replacement of existing on-premise signs, and installation of new wall signs onto an existing structure, the project is exempt from the CEQA.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff has provided findings which support the approval of a Master Sign Permit to allow Applebee's to deviate from the maximum allowed wall signs per tenant frontage, including the replacement of 3 existing wall signs and addition of 5 new wall signs across 3 separate frontages, as well as replacement of awning and pole sign copies. The deviation is justified by site-specific factors and is consistent with the City's goals for coordinated, attractive, and functional signage in key commercial areas such as Broadway. These findings are based on the condition that any proposed modifications or additional signs are allowed with an Administrative Sign Permit provided they are consistent with Table 2: Master Sign Program Standards for Applebee's, as described above, as well as any sign standards in EMC Article 17 not included in or limited by the Master Sign Program. Any proposed changes inconsistent with the Master Sign Program will require a formal amendment.

## **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

Public notification consisted of mailing notice to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site, posting notice on the project site, and posting on the City's website and bulletin boards, on or before August 13, 2025.

## **STAFF CONTACT**

Chris Lohofener, Senior Planner, 531 K Street, Eureka, CA 95501; [planning@ci.eureka.ca.gov](mailto:planning@ci.eureka.ca.gov); (707) 442-4160.

## **DOCUMENTS ATTACHED**

Attachment 1: Design Review Committee Resolution

Attachment 2: Applicant's Submitted Materials

Attachment 3: Sign Standards and Proposed Deviations