



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2020

TO: THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF SAVANNAH

FROM: METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: MPC RECOMMENDATION

PETITION REFERENCED:

Proposed amendment to a previously approved Planned Development

Re: Amendment to create a sign section for the Eastern Wharf Planned Development

Applicant: SRL Land Venture LLC

Agent: Harold B. Yellin (Hunter MacLean)

File No. 19-006731-ZA

MPC ACTION:

Approval of the request to amend the Eastern Wharf Planned Development to include a sign ordinance as outlined in Exhibit A.

MPC STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the request to amend the Eastern Wharf Planned Development to include a sign ordinance as outlined in Exhibit A.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 10 + Chairman

Joseph Ervin, Chairman	Linder Suthers
Thomas Branch	Joseph Welch
Ellis Cook	Tom Woiwode
Karen Jarrett	
Lacy Manigault	
Tanya Milton	
Eula Parker	
Lee Smith	

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Approve Staff Recommendation (10-0)

APPROVAL Votes: 10	DENIAL Votes: 0	Abstained	ABSENT
Ervin Branch Cook Jarrett Manigault Milton Parker Smith Woiwode Welch		Linder	Coles Monohan Noha

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Wilson
Executive Director

/jh

Enclosure

cc Mark Massey, Clerk of Council
Lester B. Johnson, Assistant City Attorney
Jennifer Herman, Assistant City Attorney
Beth Barnes, Department of Inspections



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METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

"Planning the Future - Respecting the Past"

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: The Mayor and Aldermen City of Savannah

FROM: The Planning Commission

DATE: February 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Proposed amendment to a previously approved Planned Development
Re: Amendment to create a sign section for the Eastern Wharf Planned Development
Applicant: SRL Land Venture LLC
Agent: Harold B. Yellin (Hunter MacLean)
File No. 19-006731-ZA

Marcus Lotson MPC Project Planner

ISSUE:

A request to amend a previously approved Planned Development (PD) for the purpose of adding a corresponding sign ordinance to the Eastern Wharf PD.

BACKGROUND:

The Eastern Wharf Planned Development is located east of the Historic District and is bounded approximately by General McIntosh Boulevard to west, Truman Parkway to the east, the Savannah River to the north and President Street to the south. It is approximately 56 acres in size and is currently governed by Appendix A-2.5 of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance. The property was originally rezoned in 2004 to the PUD-MXU (Planned Unit Development-Mixed Use) zoning classification to allow for a mixed use development within an area identified for "downtown expansion" on the Comprehensive Plan future land use map. The land was prepared for development, including the installation of streets and utilities. Vertical construction did not occur at this time due to the economic downturn.

In 2017, the subject property was rezoned to the Savannah River Landing Planned Unit Development. The purpose of the rezoning was to create a predictable land planning guide for future development of the property. The PUD request also included a revised master plan. The proposal maintained the block plan of the previously approved Civic Master Plan as well as open space, other public areas. The 2017 action intentionally did not include a sign plan because it was

determined that it was too early in the development process to reasonably establish the signage needs of the Planned District.

FINDINGS:

1. A comprehensive sign ordinance was adopted for the City of Savannah in 1960 as part of the zoning code. In 1976 it was amended to create special sign districts for Broughton Street and River-Street Factors Walk areas. In 1979 it was amended again to create the Historic Sign District which governs the remaining areas of the Savannah Historic District. In 2017, The Plant Riverside Sign District was created to accommodate a series of hotels and other commercial buildings at the west end of River Street.
2. Special sign districts have been a part of the city ordinance for some time and have been used in circumstances when development patterns dictate certain considerations beyond the base sign ordinance. The Eastern Wharf Planned Development allows a different scale and mix of development than is allowed in the city at large. Because of this, specific sign regulations are necessary to accommodate the area.
3. The development of a special sign ordinance is necessary because the property will be subject to a master plan and a private declaration of covenants that will guide the type of development including land uses permitted on a block-by-block basis. The proposed standards are specific to this property.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to:

1. Create a sign ordinance which the entire development will be subject to;
2. Allow for sign types and sizes specific to the Eastern Wharf Planned Development;
3. Streamline the review process for City staff and establish the requirements for each future development within the district.

The proposed amendment identifies the types of signs permitted, maximum sign area for each type and the number of signs permitted for each business. **(See Exhibit A)**

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The proposed amendment to the Eastern Wharf Planned District appears to provide the predictability associated with a planned development while appropriately managing signage for the various uses that will eventually become part of the complete buildout of this 56 acre tract. As this is essentially a standalone development and not contiguous with other properties or districts. The standards applied here will not impact the existing development pattern.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Recommend approval of the request to amend the Eastern Warf Planned Development.
2. Recommend an alternate amendment.
3. Recommend denial of the request.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends approval of the request to amend the Eastern Wharf Planned Development to include a sign ordinance as outlined in Exhibit A.

Draft Ordinance

Exhibit A

ENACT

Appendix A-2.5 – Eastern Wharf PD / Article N. Eastern Wharf Planned Development – Sec 8-3352 Signage.

1) All of the following signs listed in Section 1 and Section 2 of this Ordinance are permitted within Eastern Wharf but must be approved, in writing, by the Eastern Wharf Commercial District Association, Inc.¹ Additional signs and sign requirements for each sign type can be found in Section 2 of this Ordinance:

	Max. Area	# of Signs Permitted	Additional Information
Temporary Sale/Promotional Signs	10% of total glassed area or 40% of glassed area of display case	N/A	Section 2(a)
Portable Signs	6 sq.ft. per street frontage	1 per business	Section 2(a)
Temporary Sale and Leasing Signs	16 sq.ft.	1 per street frontage	Section 2(a)
Announcement Signs	3 sq. ft.	N/A	Section 2(b)
Readerboard Signs	18 sq. ft.	1 per business	Section 2(b)
Non-Advertising Traffic Guidance Sign	16 sq. ft.	1 per business	Section 2(b)
Principal Use Sign (Fascia Signs)	For all principal uses occupying one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet or less linear feet of street frontage, fascia signs shall be permitted of two (2) square feet of sign area per linear foot of frontage occupied by each principal use; provided, that a maximum sign area of ninety (90) square feet and a minimum of forty-five (45) square feet shall be permitted for each fascia sign allowed. For all principal uses with building frontage exceeding one hundred and twenty-five (125) linear feet, one (1) additional square foot of sign area shall be allowed for each linear foot over one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet; provided, that such sign shall not exceed three hundred (300) square feet in area.	1 per business (must elect either projection or fascia)	Section 2(c)
Principal Use Sign (Projecting Signs)	For all principal uses occupying one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet or less linear feet of street frontage, "projecting" signs shall be permitted one (1) square foot of display area per sign face per linear foot of frontage occupied by each principal use; provided, that a maximum sign area of forty-five (45) square feet and a minimum of twenty (20) square feet shall be permitted per sign face for each projecting principal use sign	1 per business (must elect either	Section 2(c)

¹ In the event of any conflict between this Section of the Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Savannah, this Section of the Ordinance shall control.

	allowed, For all principal uses with building frontage exceeding one hundred and twenty-five (125) linear feet, one (1) additional square foot of sign area shall be allowed for each linear foot over one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet; provided, such sign shall not exceed one hundred and seventy-five (175) square feet in area.	projection or fascia)	
Under-awning or Canopy signs	6 sq. ft.	1 per principal entrance providing access	Section 2(d)
Marquee Signs	45 sq. ft.	N/A	Section 2(e)
Building Identification Sign	½ sq. ft. per linear foot of building frontage; not to exceed 90 sq. ft.	N/A	Section 2(f)
Window and Transom Signs	N/A	N/A	Section 2(g)
Printed Fascia Signs and Murals	N/A	N/A	Section 2(h)
Directional Signs	24 sq. ft.	N/A	Section 2(i)
District Identity Signs	60 sq. ft.	N/A	Section 2(j)

2) Additional requirements for signs within Eastern Wharf:

a) **Temporary signs.** Temporary signs shall be permitted provided that:

- i) Temporary sale or promotional signs shall be located wholly within a window or display.
- ii) Portable Sandwich board or A-Frame Signs:. Display frame materials are limited to wood or metal. Portable signs shall only be displayed during the establishment's hours of operation.
- iii) Temporary Sale and Leasing signs: Signs erected during the promotion of sale, lease or rental of the property upon which the sign is located shall be permitted as follows:
 - (1) The sign shall be placed no closer than five (5) feet from the street right-of way or shall be attached to the principal use structure.

(2) Any such sign shall be removed within seven (7) days after the property has been sold, leased or rented.

b) ***Announcement signs.*** Announcement signs shall be permitted provided that:

i) Announcement signs shall be attached flat against the face of the building, window, or door and shall only be permitted at the entrance or exit; provided such signs shall be restricted to emergency information, business hours, credit cards honored, or other such incidental information related to business and provided that such signs shall be three (3) square feet or smaller

(1) Licensed establishments serving food or drink may have an additional announcement sign not to exceed four (4) square feet for the purpose of displaying menus and/or entertainment provided therein.

(2) Registered trademarks, service marks, or portrayal of specific commodities shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total announcement sign area.

ii) Principal uses which operate an off-street parking area, available to the general public, shall also be permitted one (1) non-advertising traffic guidance announcement sign not to exceed an area of sixteen (16) square feet as a means of directing attention to such off-street parking facilities. Such sign may be attached to the underside of a canopy.

iii) One (1) readerboard of shall be permitted in combination with a principal sign only. Provided further, that when such sign is located along President's Street, such sign may be increased up to a maximum of thirty (30) square feet in area. Electronic readerboards shall be subject to the following:

(1) Such signs shall be equipped with automatic dimming technology that adjusts the sign's brightness in direct correlation with natural ambient light conditions.

(2) Such signs shall not exceed a brightness level of 0.3 footcandles above ambient light as measured using a footcandle (Lux) meter at a preset distance depending on sign area. Such distance is calculated by taking the square root of the product of the sign area and 100. For example, the calculation for the measurement distance for a 40 square foot sign would be $\sqrt{(40 * 100)} = 63$ feet.

c) ***Principal use and supplemental identification signs.*** Principal use and supplemental identification signs shall be permitted provided that:

- i) Only one (1) principal use sign shall be permitted for each business establishment and may be mounted or erected as either (i) a fascia sign or (ii) as a projecting sign. Notwithstanding the foregoing, where a business establishment fronts on more than one (1) street or pedestrian walkway providing public access, one (1) principal use sign for each frontage shall be permitted; provided, that only the maximum sign area computed for a given street frontage, as provided in below in (i) and (v), shall face that street. The copy area shall not exceed sixty percent (60%) of the display area of a principal use sign.

(1) Size, height and location of principal use signs. Such signs shall be limited by the most restrictive of the following:

(a) Fascia signs.

- (i) No fascia sign shall extend above the parapet wall of the building or extend beyond the edge of the building or an adjoining principal use, nor shall such sign project out from the building facade more than fifteen (15) inches; provided, that for a principal use fascia sign on an awning or canopy, such sign shall project out from the building face no greater distance than would a permitted projecting sign.
- (ii) The fascia sign shall be located along the signable area of the building facade, and not more than sixty percent (60 percent) of the display area shall be occupied by such sign copy.
- (iii) For office buildings, where multiple business establishments share a common public entrance, the allowable sign area for a building fascia may be divided among establishments, provided that no more than two (2) establishments are represented with principal use signs.
- (iv) In addition to the permitted principal use sign, one (1) canopy or awning principal use sign shall be permitted for each entrance providing public access. Such sign

shall not exceed a size of more than one (1) square foot of sign face per linear foot of canopy or awning, or a maximum of twenty (20) square feet, whichever is lesser; provided, however, that the aggregate total principal use sign area for the subject use is not exceeded along that street frontage. Signs on the opposite ends of an awning shall be considered a single sign. Individual letters or symbols not to exceed six inches indicating use, address, or an exit or entrance, painted, stenciled or otherwise applied directly to any awnings or canopy within the district, shall be exempt from this provision.

(b) Projecting signs.

- (i) The outer edge of a projecting sign shall not extend more than six (6) feet from the building to which it is attached.
 - (ii) No projecting sign shall extend above the parapet wall of the building, and the lowest point of the projecting sign shall not be less than ten feet above the established grade.
- ii) One (1) supplemental identification sign, not exceeding an aggregate sign area of four (4) square feet, shall be permitted adjacent to each entrance of the principal use.
- d) ***Under-awning or canopy signs.*** Signs shall not be less than one (1) foot from the outer edge of the canopy.
- e) ***Marquee signs.*** Marquee signs shall not extend greater than (8) eight feet from the facade of a building. The height of a marquee sign shall not extend above the parapet wall of the building, and the lowest point of the marquee sign shall not be less than ten (10) feet above the established grade. If a marquee structure is utilized to support a principal use sign, such sign shall conform to the size and area requirements of a projecting principal use sign and shall not project more than eight (8) feet from the main facade of the building.
- f) ***Building identification sign.*** Building identification signs shall be permitted along the signable area of each building facade.

- g) ***Window and Transom Signs.*** Window and transom signs shall be permitted..
- h) ***Printed Fascia Signs and Murals.*** Printed fascia signs and murals shall be permitted provided that:
 - i) After approval by the Eastern Wharf Commercial District Association, Inc., any mural must obtain approval by the City of Savannah's Historic Site and Monument Commission.
- i) ***Directional Signs.*** Directional shall be permitted provided that:
 - i) Directional signs may be permitted in the public right-of-way provided that any encroachment obtains a revocable license encroachment agreement (RLEA) from the City Savannah.
 - ii) Directional signs shall be freestanding signs indicating wayfinding, businesses, events or other related district information and shall be operated, controlled and maintained by the Eastern Wharf Commercial District Association, Inc.
 - iii) Directional signs may include internal lighting, and may solely display maps, graphics, and locators, or information related to features of the district.
 - iv) Directional signs shall not exceed twelve (12) feet in height.
- j) ***District Identity Signs.*** The district identity signs shall be permitted:
 - i) ***Integral Markers:*** Signs and markers intended to be a permanent and integral part of a building, hardscape, or streetscape remaining in place regardless of ownership changes.
 - ii) ***Area Identification Signs:*** Single- or double-faced identification signs not exceeding (sixty) 60 square feet in area (excluding architectural embellishments and decorative sign support structures), nor extending more than five (5) feet above the established ground level, noting the name of the district, a subdivision or residential development.
 - iii) ***Flags and Display Banners:*** Flags and banners shall be permitted provided that:
 - (1) Display banners and temporary signs be attached to designated site-furnishings, such as flag poles or light poles.

- iv) *Event and Information Displays:* Structures designated for the display of temporary public information and event announcements shall be permitted provided that:
 - (1) The structure shall have a defined display area. The size and placement of any applied signs or displays shall be restricted to the defined display area.
 - v) *Development Signs.* Development signs shall be permitted upon site equipment, construction fence coverings, buildings/structures under construction, and shipping containers located on-site.
- 2) ***Signs within the public right-of-way.*** Signs within the public right-of-way shall be required to obtain an encroachment license from the City of Savannah.
- 3) ***Definitions.*** For the purposes of this Ordinance, certain words or terms used herein shall be defined as follows:
- b) ***Sign.*** Any structure, part thereof, or device attached thereto or painted or represented thereon or any material or thing, illuminated or otherwise, which displays or includes any numeral, letter, word, model, banner, emblem, insignia, device, trademark or other representation used as or in the nature of an announcement, advertisement, direction or designation of any person, group, organization, place, commodity, product, service, business, profession, enterprise or industry which is located upon any land or any building or upon a window. The flag, emblem or other insignia of a nation; governmental unit; educational, charitable or religious group shall not be included within the meaning of this definition. For the purposes of this ordinance sign types shall be identified as follows:
 - i) ***Development sign.*** A temporary construction sign denoting the architect, engineer, contractor, subcontractor, financier or sponsor of a development which may also designate the future occupant or use of the development.
 - ii) ***Directional sign.*** A sign containing information relative to the location, distance to, entrance to, and exit from structures or land use activities. Also known as a wayfinding sign.
 - iii) ***Announcement sign.*** A single-faced nonilluminated professional or announcement sign attached wholly to a building, window or door unless otherwise permitted within this Code as a freestanding illuminated sign. Where such sign only includes emergency information, business hours, credit

cards honored, and other accessory information it shall be known as an incidental use sign.

- iv) ***Principal use sign.*** A sign which identifies or advertises a profession, principal land use activity, or service occupying or available on the premises upon which such sign is located.
- v) ***Outdoor advertising or separate use sign.*** An off-premises sign which advertises or directs attention to businesses, products, services or establishments not usually conducted on the premises on which the sign is located.
- vi) ***Public information sign.*** A sign containing emergency or legal notices, regulatory information, or historical data of interest to the general public, or a church bulletin board.
- vii) ***Temporary sign.*** A restricted sign or outdoor display consisting of materials such as a pinwheel, windsock, flag, balloon or other inflatable object, pennant, banner and/or metallic or other strip of material which is designed and/or erected so as to flutter, rotate, shimmer or otherwise create movement or produce action to draw attention to a product or attract the attention of the passing public to use, product, service or event when erected for not greater than 30 consecutive days nor greater than 60 days within a calendar year (January 1—December 31).
- viii) ***Fabricated sign.*** A sign which does not meet the specifications of the "standard poster panel sign," but which is permitted in accordance with the provisions of this chapter as they relate to a separate use sign.
- ix) ***Fascia sign.*** A single-faced sign which is in any manner attached or fixed flat to an exterior wall of a building or structure. Individual letters in addition to the "box type" (i.e., letters and symbols on an attached backing) sign may also be installed as a fascia sign. A principal use sign on a canopy or awning shall be interpreted as a fascia sign.
- x) ***Flashing sign.*** An illuminated sign of direct or indirect lighting on which the artificial light flashes on and off in regular or irregular sequence.
- xi) ***Freestanding sign.*** A sign supported by one or more upright poles, columns or braces placed in or upon the ground surface, and not attached to any building or structure.

- xii) ***Illuminated sign.*** A sign illuminated directly or indirectly by gas, electricity or other artificial light, including reflective or fluorescent light.
 - xiii) ***Under-awning or canopy sign.*** A sign other than a principal use sign, attached or applied to or below a canopy, awning or other roof-like structure.
 - xiv) ***Double-faced sign.*** A sign more than one side of which is visible. A "V" sign shall be considered a double-faced sign providing the least angle of intersection does not exceed 90 degrees.
 - xv) ***Portable sign.*** A freestanding sign not permanently anchored or secured to either a building or to the ground.
 - xvi) ***Projecting sign.*** A double-faced sign end mounted to an exterior wall of a building or structure and which projects out from the wall more than 15 inches.
 - xvii) ***Single-faced sign.*** A sign, only one side of which is visible.
 - xviii) ***Supplemental identification sign.*** A nonilluminated sign limited to providing the trade name, logo or principal use of the establishment.
 - xix) ***Building identification sign.*** A facia sign used to identify or indicate the name of a building.
 - xx) ***Readerboard sign.*** An announcement sign with changeable letters, which may or may not be internally illuminated; also called a display panel.(25)Area identification sign. A single- or double-faced identification sign not exceeding 30 square feet in area (excluding architectural embellishments and decorative sign support structures), nor extending more than five feet above the established ground level, noting the name of a subdivision; residential development; or public, charitable, educational or religious institution.
 - xxi) ***District identity sign.*** A sign or marker identifying Eastern Wharf, which does not advertise an individual business or service and is controlled and maintained by the Eastern Wharf Commercial District Association, Inc.
- c) ***Sign area.*** The entire face of a sign and all wall work including illumination tubing incidental to its decoration. In the case of an open sign made up of individual letters, figures or designs attached directly to the building, the space between such letters, figures or designs shall not be included as part of the sign area.

- d) ***Sign clearance.*** The vertical distance from the established finished grade of the sidewalk to the lower edge of a sign.
- e) ***Sign copy area.*** The sum of the area of the words or numbers included in the sign copy, inclusive of pictorials, trademarks or other advertising symbols.
- f) ***Sign display area.*** The total area upon which sign copy may be placed. In computing the total display area of the sign, mathematical formulas or geometric shapes formed by straight lines drawn closest to the extremities of the sign, excluding any framing or support structure, ornament or other embellishments shall be used.
- g) ***Signable area.*** That area of the facade of a building up to the roofline, free of windows and doors or major architectural detail, to which a sign may be attached or erected; provided, however, that the "signable area" for a facia sign shall be further restricted to the horizontal area along the building facade below any upper story windows when a principal use structure is greater than one story in height. A permitted awning or canopy may also be considered as part of the signable area.
- h) ***Signable quadrant.*** An area extending for a set distance along the roadways from the intersection of the rights-of-way of two or more collector or arterial streets (excluding areas along a protected or interstate roadway) and a set distance parallel to the rights-of-way of such roadways.