

Mono County Community Development Department

PO Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
760.924.1800, 924.1801 fax
commdev@mono.ca.gov

Planning Division

PO Box 8
Bridgeport, CA 93517
760.932.5420, 932.5431 fax

NOTICE OF DECISION Director Review 19-008 Reimaging and Refacing of Gas & Go Station into a Valero Gas Station/Sign Development Inc.

APPLICANT: Sign Development Inc. on behalf of John Simpson

SUBJECT PROPERTY: 377 Main Street, Bridgeport, APN 008-132-034

PROPOSAL: Permit additional square footage of signage and additional lighting for a gas station on a Commercial (C) property. The property is in Bridgeport and is approximately 0.43-acres. The gas station is changing from a Gas & Go into a Valero. With the rebranding of the gas station, additional signage and lighting is proposed in order to be consistent with Valero advertising.



Location of subject property (highlighted in blue)

Pursuant to the Mono County General Plan, Chapter 31 Director Review Procedures, based upon the following findings, you are hereby notified that Director Review 19-008 has been:

- Granted as requested.
 Granted subject to the attached Conditions of Approval.
 Denied

BACKGROUND

The Commercial Land Use Designation (LUD) is intended to provide for a wide range of uses and services for the resident and visitor including retail, business, and professional uses and services in community areas, including commercial lodging and higher density housing, when found compatible with retail and service functions.

The Gas & Go station has existing signage that meets the provisions of 07.070, Nonconforming Signs. Nonconforming signs are those that were in existence at the time of adoption of land development regulations that do not conform to the provisions of Chapter 7, Signs. Nonconforming signage may not be expanded or reconfigured. Nonconforming signs are allowed a change of copy. A change of copy simply 'changes out' the current advertising with new advertising, with the same size and configuration.

Based on requirements of 07.030 Signs subject to Director Review, the following signs are subject to Director Review as specified in Chapter 31:

1. Attached:

Definition: A sign mounted flush and affixed securely to a building wall that projects no more than 6 inches from the face of a building wall and does not extend vertically or horizontally beyond the building.

Requirements:

1. Attached signs may occupy 1 sq. ft. for each 2 lineal feet of business frontage upon which the sign is located. In intensive commercial and industrial areas (e.g., C, IP and I), the maximum area of any attached sign shall not exceed a 100 sq. ft., but need not be less than 25 sq. ft. In rural, agricultural, residential and neighborhood commercial areas, the maximum area of any attached sign shall not exceed 50 sq. ft., but need not be less than 15 sq. ft.
 2. When two or more separate businesses (located in separate offices, spaces, or buildings) are located on one parcel, each shall be eligible for at least the minimum square footage (i.e., 15 or 25 sq. ft.).
 3. Further, the maximum height of the sign shall be 20 feet or the height of the building, whichever is less. A maximum of two attached signs per occupancy is permitted, but in total combined area cannot exceed the maximum permitted. Additional square footage may be awarded as specified in Section .050, Design excellence.
2. Freestanding and Monument Signs: One freestanding or monument permitted for parcels with a minimum of 100 feet of street frontage. Shopping centers with 10 or more shops/offices may have one for each street frontage.

1. Freestanding:

Definition: A sign anchored directly to the ground or primarily supported from the ground rather than a building.

Requirements: The maximum height of the sign shall be 20 feet or the height of the associated building, whichever is less. Freestanding signs may occupy 1sq. ft. for every 3 lineal feet of street frontage, up to a maximum of 100 sq. ft. Freestanding signs shall be set back a minimum of 5 feet from the property line. Additional square footage may be awarded as specified in Section 7.050, Design Excellence.

07.040 General provisions include all signage that is constructed or altered and is not considered a nonconforming sign. The awning canopy sign falls within these regulations. Per 07.040.B., the Director may approve internal lighting when integrated with an architectural or design theme. Additionally, the maximum

number of awning signs allowed are one per street or parking lot frontage based on the requirements of 07.010, Sign Standard Summary.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal includes the following changes and/or modifications to current signage:

- Freestanding sign: change of copy (Attachment 2, page 2)
- Awning sign: expansion of square footage, alteration of signage configuration, and additional lighting (Attachment 2, pages 3-4 and 7-8)
- Wall sign: change of copy (Attachment 2, page 5)

In addition to the proposed signage, the application is also proposing additional lighting. The additional lighting will be located on the awning canopy and the purpose of the lighting is to illuminate the Valero brand. Per 23.050 General Requirements E. Fixture Types, all new outdoor lighting shall use full cutoff luminaires with the light source downcast and fully shielded with no light emitted above the horizontal plane. The proposed light bar on the awning canopy is shielded by an eyebrow cover and downward cast and therefore is fully shielded. The Valero brand and logo will have an applied white opaque vinyl on top of the signage that prevents the transmission of light upward. (see Attachment 2, page 4). This design is allowable based on 23.040 Exemptions B: "The Community Development Director may authorize minor deviations when proposed outdoor lighting does not conflict with the purpose of this chapter. An application for such deviation must be made in writing and include an outdoor lighting plan pursuant to sections 23.050 G and 23.060."

DIRECTOR REVIEW FINDINGS

Under Mono County General Plan, Land Use Element, Chapter 31.030, the Community Development Department Director may issue a Director Review permit after making all the following findings:

1. *All applicable provisions of the Land Use Designations and Land Development Regulations are complied with, and the site of the proposed use is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the use and to accommodate all yards, walls and fences, parking, loading, landscaping and other required features.*

The subject property is an existing and developed lot with a gas station. The proposed signage changes are permitted subject to a Director Review approval. The new signage and lighting will meet all Land Development Regulations, including setbacks, and will also comply with the requirements of Chapter 7, Signs, and Chapter 23, Dark Sky Regulations.

2. *The site for the proposed use relates to streets and highways adequate in width and type to carry the quantity and kind of traffic generated by the proposed use.*

The property is accessed by Highway 395. This project will not alter traffic capacity or patterns. The change of signage and lighting will not increase use and simply with rebrand the Gas & Go into a Valero gas station.

3. *The proposed use will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the area in which the property is located.*

The proposed use is a change in advertising and will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the area. The additional signage will not be obnoxious, as it will comply with Chapter 7. The additional lighting will not increase light pollution or create a nuisance, as it will comply with Chapter 23.

4. *The proposed use is consistent with the map and text of this General Plan and any applicable area plan.*

The proposed use supports residential activity in the Bridgeport Valley and is consistent with the General Plan and Bridgeport Valley Area Plan.

Mono County General Plan, Countywide Land Use Policies

Policy 1.A.1. Contain growth in and adjacent to existing community areas

Policy 1.A.5. Avoid the juxtaposition of incompatible land uses.

Policy 1.A.6. Regulate future development in a manner that minimizes visual impacts to the natural environment, to community areas, and to cultural resources and recreational areas.

Objective 1.C. Provide a balanced and functional mix of land uses.

Policy 1.C.1. Designate adequate sites for a variety of land uses in order to provide for the land use needs of community areas.

Objective 1.E. Provide for commercial development to serve both residents and visitors.

Policy 1.E.1. Concentrate commercial development within existing communities.

Action 1.E.1.a. Designate a sufficient amount of commercial land within communities to serve the needs of residents and visitors.

Policy 1.E.2. Commercial uses should be developed in a compact manner; commercial core areas should be established/retained in each community area and revitalized where applicable.

Mono County General Plan, Bridgeport Valley Land Use Policies

Objective 7.A. Guide future development to occur on existing private lands in Bridgeport Townsite, east of Bridgeport Reservoir, in the Evans Tract, and at Twin Lakes.

5. *The improvements indicated on the development plan are consistent with all adopted standards and policies as set forth in the Land Development Regulations, this General Plan and any applicable area plan.*

The additional signage and lighting are consistent with all adopted standards and policies set forth in the Land Development Regulations and the General Plan.

The proposed freestanding sign is an existing nonconforming use due to internal illumination, and complies with the requirements of 07.040 C. Sign Copy Changes. Therefore, a change of copy to the freestanding sign for gas prices and rebranding to Valero, with retention of the internal illumination, are permitted under this DR.

The wall sign is an existing compliant sign with only a change of copy from “Food Mart” to “Food Shop”. No increase to the sign size or additional lighting is being proposed.

The awning sign will integrate Valero brand signage and additional lighting. The awning sign consists of Valero lettering and brand logo with an opaque top in order to prevent light from transmitting above the horizontal plane, and a blue decorative graphic with yellow and white trim that is lit from the underside of the eyebrow cover. The portion of the sign lit by the eyebrow cover is fully shielded and downward directed, and therefore compliant with Chapters 7 and 23. The Valero lettering and logo do not qualify as channel lettering, which is permitted under Chapter 23 – Dark Sky Regulations, because

the sides, top and bottom of are not opaque. However, 07.040.B. **and** 23.040.B. apply because the opaque top of the lettering and logo prevents the transmission of light upward and therefore does not conflict with Chapter 23, and the lighting is part of an overall architectural design for Valero branding, and therefore the design is approved by determination of the Director.

Except for the freestanding sign, which is an existing nonconforming sign, and the Valero lettering and logo, both of which have opaque tops, no internal illumination of any signage is permitted, including the fascia of the awning.

6. *The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).*

The project qualifies for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guideline 15301, Existing Facilities. Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Interior or exterior alterations involving such things as interior partitions, plumbing, and electrical conveyances;
- New copy on existing on and off-premise signs;
- Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences; or
- Conversion of a single-family residence to office use.

The proposed project falls within a Class 1 exemption because majority of the project site is existing. The existing gas station is marginally increasing signage and lighting and therefore is considered a minor alteration to a private structure.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

DR 19-008 is issued with the following conditions:

1. The project shall comply with Mono County Building Division requirements.
2. The project shall comply with Mono County Planning Division requirements, including Chapter 7, Signs, and Chapter 23, Dark Sky Regulations. Except for the freestanding sign, which is an existing nonconforming sign, and the Valero lettering and logo, both of which have opaque tops, no internal illumination of any signage is permitted, including the fascia of the awning.
3. The existing nonconforming signage shall not be modified, altered, or changed, other than change of copy. No additional lighting is allowed on or within the nonconforming signage.
4. An opaque top shall be applied to the top of the Valero brand and Valero lettering located on the canopy. No light shall be emitted above the horizontal plane.
5. Termination. A Director Review shall terminate, and all rights granted therein shall lapse, and the property affected thereby shall be subject to all the provisions and regulations applicable to the land use designation in which such property is classified at the time of such abandonment, when any of the following occur:

- A. There is a failure to commence the exercise of such rights, as determined by the Director, within two years from the date of approval thereof. Exercise of rights shall mean substantial construction or physical alteration of property in compliance with the terms of the Director Review.
 - B. There is discontinuance for a continuous period of one year, as determined by the Director, of the exercise of the rights granted.
 - C. No extension is granted as provided in Section 31.080.
8. Extension: If there is a failure to exercise the rights of the Director Review within two years of the date of approval, the applicant may apply for an extension for an additional one year. Any request for extension shall be filed at least 60 days prior to the date of expiration and shall be accompanied by the appropriate fee. Upon receipt of the request for extension, the Planning Division shall review the application to determine the extent of review necessary. Conditions of Approval for the Director Review may be modified or expanded, including revision of the proposal, if deemed necessary. The Planning Division may also deny the request for extension. Exception to this provision is permitted for those Director Reviews approved concurrently with a tentative parcel or tract map; in those cases, the approval period(s) shall be the same as for the tentative map.
 9. Revocation: The Planning Commission may revoke the rights granted by a Director Review, and the property affected thereby shall be subject to all the provisions and regulations of the Land Use Designations and Land Development Regulations applicable as of the effective date of revocation. Such revocation shall include the failure to comply with any condition contained in the Director Review or the violation by the owner or tenant of any provision pertaining to the premises for which such Director Review was granted. Before revocation of any permit, the commission shall hold a hearing thereon after giving written notice thereof to the permittee at least 10 days in advance of such hearing. The decision of the commission may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors in accordance with Chapter 47, Appeals, and shall be accompanied by an appropriate filing fee.

This Director Review permit shall become effective 10 days following the issuance of the Director's decision. This decision may be appealed within 10 days by filing a written notice of appeal with the secretary of the Planning Commission. If an appeal is filed, the permit will not be issued until the appeal is considered and the Planning Commission renders a decision.

PREPARED BY: Hailey Lang, Planning Analyst

DATE OF DECISION: Oct 4, 2019

SIGNED: 
 Wendy Sugimura, Community Development Director

Attachment 1- Valero Signage Example
Attachment 2- Signage and Lighting Plan

Attachment 1-Valero Sign Example

Note: Opaque top to be applied in final product.

