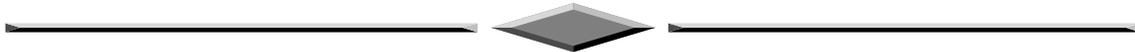


**HUNTINGTON BEACH
OFFICE OF THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

TO: Zoning Administrator
FROM: Jill Arabe, Assistant Planner
DATE: August 17, 2011

SUBJECT: **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 11-016/SIGN CODE EXCEPTION NO. 11-001 (AUTO DEALERS' ASSOCIATION READERBOARD SIGN)**

LOCATION: 7991 Center Avenue, 92647 (north side of Center Avenue, approximately 650 feet west of Beach Boulevard)



Applicant: Tony Shreve, Yesco, 5405 N. Industrial parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407
City of Huntington Beach, Economic Development, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Property Owner: City of Huntington Beach, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

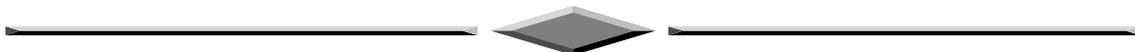
Request: **CUP:** To permit a multiple-user electronic readerboard sign measuring 85 ft. high and 2,740 sq. ft. of total sign face area. The proposed sign is designed in a wedge based shape and will contain approximately 1,370 sq. ft. of sign area on each sign face. The sign will reconstruct an existing 85 ft. high, 1,200 sq. ft., two-sided multiple-user electronic readerboard sign. **SCE:** To permit a wedge-shaped, freestanding sign with a total sign area of 2,740 sq. ft. in lieu of the maximum allowed 1,200 sq. ft..

Environmental Status: This request is covered by Categorical Exemption, Section 15302, Class 2, California Environmental Quality Act.

Zone: ROW (Right of Way)

General Plan: ROW (Right of Way)

Existing Use: Electronic readerboard sign



RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval with modifications of the proposed project based upon the following findings:

SUGGESTED FINDINGS FOR PROJECTS EXEMPT FROM CEQA:

The Zoning Administrator finds that the project will not have any significant effect on the environment and is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to section 15302 of the CEQA Guidelines, because the project involves the replacement of an existing sign where the new sign will be located on the same site and have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the sign replaced.

SUGGESTED FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 11-016:

1. Conditional Use Permit No. 11-016 to permit a multiple-user electronic readerboard sign measuring 85 ft. high and 2,400 sq. ft. of total sign area, as conditioned, will not be detrimental to the general welfare of persons working or residing in the vicinity or detrimental to the value of the property and improvements in the neighborhood. The proposed sign is designed in a wedge shape in order to provide greater visibility along the I-405 (San Diego) Freeway and maintain the visibility of other adjacent signage or structures within the area. The wedge shape allows for each sign face to be oriented at a 140 degree viewing angle toward the freeway as opposed to the existing sign. No impacts related to traffic safety or traffic circulation are anticipated with the new sign in the same location as the existing sign. As conditioned, the new sign will retain the same sign area of 1,200 sq. ft. per side, similar to the sign area of the existing sign. The proposed sign will not adversely impact vehicular visibility as it will comply with all standard design, location, and operating requirements set forth by the City and other agencies. The sign will operate within 200 ft. of the freeway, advertise for public service announcements, and demonstrate compliance with illuminance measurements.
2. The conditional use permit will be compatible with surrounding uses because the new sign will be updated with similar building materials and design elements utilized on the adjacent Bella Terra and Bella Terra Towers properties. The design will incorporate neutral colors and a stone veneer base. The new sign will have substantially the same purpose and height as the existing sign. It will advertise for automobile sales businesses and regional commercial uses along the freeway and it is proposed at the maximum permitted height of 85 ft. The proposed sign will be architecturally compatible with the surrounding area and similar to other freeway adjacent electronic readerboard signs. The LED technology on the electronic displays has dimming capabilities that are energy efficient and compliant with maximum illuminance requirements. The sign is surrounded by commercial uses and located more than 600 ft. from residential uses.
3. The proposed conditional use permit will comply with the provisions of the base district and other applicable provisions in Titles 20-25 of the Huntington Beach Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance. The conditional use permit will comply with all applicable specific sign requirements, except for the sign code exception. The sign code exception is required because opposite sides of the wedge shaped sign are separated by more than 12 inches at any point. The total sign area is therefore calculated on two sides in lieu of one side, which exceeds 1,200 sq. ft. as allowed by code. The wedge design is necessary because each sign face will be oriented at a 140 degree viewing angle toward the freeway and provide greater visibility to north and south bound traffic. Multiple-user electronic readerboard signs are permitted on parcels abutting a freeway subject to approval of a conditional use permit.

4. The granting of the conditional use permit will not adversely affect the General Plan. The sign is located within the Center Avenue and Caltrans right-of-way. It is consistent with the adjacent Land Use element designation of CR-F2-sp-mu (Regional Commercial – 0.5 FAR-specific plan overlay-mixed use overlay) on the neighboring Bella Terra property. In addition, it is consistent with the following goals and policies of the General Plan:

A. Economic Development Element

Policy ED 1.1.1: Maintain and expand economic and business development programs that encourage and stimulate business opportunities within the City.

Policy ED 2.2.3: Promote Huntington Beach businesses to increase their visibility and local patronage.

B. Urban Design Element

Goal UD 1: Enhance the visual image of the City of Huntington Beach.

The new sign will improve the architectural quality of the current auto dealer electronic readerboard sign by incorporating building materials, colors, and design consistent with the Bella Terra development. The wedge shape design will provide improved advertising visibility for automobile sales businesses and regional commercial uses along the freeway. The viewing angle of each side face is 140 degrees and oriented toward the freeway and provides greater visibility for both north and south bound traffic as opposed to the existing viewing angle of 120 degrees. The LED display is larger in size and sharper in technology than the existing sign.

SUGGESTED FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL – SIGN CODE EXCEPTION NO. 11-001:

1. The sign is compatible with the character of the area and is needed due to special circumstances defined by the applicant and applicable to the property. The new sign will improve the architectural quality of the current sign by integrating colors and building materials utilized in the nearby Bella Terra development. According to the applicant, the sign is setback at approximately 190 ft. from the middle lanes of the freeway as opposed to standard freeway signs that are setback at approximately only 70 ft. The sign is setback due to the location of the freeway off-ramp adjoining the subject site. Furthermore, the angle of the existing sign facing northbound traffic is 105 degrees as opposed to a standard sign's perpendicular facing orientation. The overall visibility of the existing sign is limited for southbound traffic; therefore, the new sign is designed as a wedge shape to improve vehicular visibility for both directions of traffic. The sign code exception will permit a total sign area of 2,400 sq. ft. in lieu of the maximum 1,200 sq. ft. The sign area calculation includes two sides of the sign in lieu of one side for a double-sided sign because the proposed sign is wedge shaped. As conditioned, each side face will have 1,200 sq. ft. of sign area, which consists of an LED panel and the wall signs (channel letters).
2. The sign will not adversely affect other signs in the area. It will be at the same location and height as the existing sign which has no other signs located on the subject site. The new sign will be compatible in design, colors, and materials of Bella Terra and Bella Terra Towers' overall design theme. It will incorporate neutral colors on the base of the sign and the channel letters. The new sign is not anticipated to block visibility of neighboring signs or

structures in the area because it is located more than 100 ft. from other signs or buildings. Wall signs on Bella Terra are also limited along the rear of the property.

3. The sign will not be detrimental to properties located in the vicinity. It will incorporate building materials and design elements to improve compatibility with adjacent signs and buildings. The existing multiple-user readerboard sign does not currently impact traffic safety or impede traffic circulation along Center Avenue and the 405 Freeway off-ramp; therefore no associated impacts are anticipated with the installation of the new sign at the same location and height. The north and south elevations of the wedge design sign, which contain the LED displays and channel letters, will be oriented toward the freeway. The sign will comply with the City and Caltrans requirements related to illumination, message timing, location, and size.
4. The sign will not obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic visibility and will not be a hazardous distraction. As conditioned, the new sign will be modified to reduce the sign area per side to 1,200 sq. ft., which is consistent with the maximum sign area permitted and the existing sign. The existing sign does not currently impact traffic safety or impede traffic circulation because it is situated away from pedestrian walkways and intersections. It is also the only structure on the site and is built at a height that is primarily visible from the freeway. The sign code exception will permit an overall sign area of 2,400 sq. ft. in lieu of the maximum allowed of 1,200 sq. ft. due to the wedge shape design, setback, and angle of the sign to the freeway. The wedge shape design requires the sign area to be calculated on two sides, which will alleviate the current disadvantage of having an approximately 150 ft. setback from the freeway and limited angle of vehicular visibility to the freeway. The new sign will improve visibility along the freeway for automobile sales businesses and surrounding commercial uses as a result of the redesign.

SUGGESTED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL - CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 11-016/SIGN CODE EXCEPTION NO. 11-001:

1. The site plans and elevations received and dated August 3, 2011, shall be the conceptually approved design with the following modifications:
 - a. The sign area of the north and south elevations shall be reduced to 1,200 sq. ft. per side. **(Staff's Recommendation)**
 - b. The graphic/image shall be revised on the west elevation (facing Center Avenue) over the perforated aluminum to be decorative and incorporate elements consistent with Bella Terra or the Surf City lifestyle.
2. Within 30 days of the Zoning Administrator's action, the City and the applicant shall agree to a graphic/image on the west elevation (facing Center Avenue) over the perforated aluminum. **(DRB's Recommendation)**
3. Prior to issuance of building permits, the following shall be completed:
 - a. The applicant shall demonstrate sign approval from Caltrans.
 - b. One set of project plans, revised pursuant to Condition of Approval No. 1 shall be submitted for review, approval and inclusion in the entitlement file, to the Planning & Building Department.

- c. Zoning entitlement conditions of approval and code requirements identified in separately transmitted memorandum from the Departments of Fire, Planning and Building, and Public Works shall be printed verbatim on one of the first three pages of all the working drawing sets used for issuance of building permits (architectural, structural, electrical, mechanical and plumbing) and shall be referenced in the sheet index. The minimum font size utilized for printed text shall be 12 point.
4. CUP No. 11-016/ SCE No. 11-001 shall become null and void unless exercised within two years of the date of final approval or such extension of time as may be granted by the Director pursuant to a written request submitted to the Planning Department a minimum 30 days prior to the expiration date.
5. Incorporating sustainable or “green” building practices into the design of the proposed structures and associated site improvements is highly encouraged. Sustainable building practices may include (but are not limited to) those recommended by the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Program certification (<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CategoryID=19>) or Build It Green’s Green Building Guidelines and Rating Systems (<http://www.builditgreen.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=guidelines>).

INDEMNIFICATION AND HOLD HARMLESS CONDITION:

The owner of the property which is the subject of this project and the project applicant if different from the property owner, and each of their heirs, successors and assigns, shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City of Huntington Beach and its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action or proceedings, liability cost, including attorney’s fees and costs against the City or its agents, officers or employees, to attack, set aside, void or annul any approval of the City, including but not limited to any approval granted by the City Council, Planning Commission, or Design Review Board concerning this project. The City shall promptly notify the applicant of any claim, action or proceeding and should cooperate fully in the defense thereof.