

	<p>Final Staff Report & Notice of Decision Stonehill Coffee House Sign Permit (File # 2022-032-SIGN)</p>
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PROPOSAL:	The applicant is requesting to replace one freestanding sign in front of their business, Stonehill Coffee House. The proposed single pylon sign would be dual sided and 3 feet by 3 feet (nine square feet) which will be held up by a 5-foot tall and 6.75-inch-wide metal frame with a smooth pine covering and a 54-inch brace. The sign is to be made of a plastic and acrylic material with a matte black surface and white lettering.
LOCATION:	209 E 4th Street, La Center, WA 98629. The sign would be located in front of the business behind the sidewalk and right-of-way line along and visible from East 4th Street.
APPLICANT:	Eric and Trudy Stenberg. 209 East 4th Street, La Center, WA 98629. Email: stonehillcoffeehouse@comcast.net . Phone: 360-909-1599.
ZONING:	Downtown Commercial (C-1) and Downtown Overlay District
APPROVAL CRITERIA:	The City reviewed the application for compliance with the La Center Municipal Code (LCMC) Chapter 8.60, Sign Regulations and Chapter 18.155, Downtown Overlay District.
Submittal Date:	August 30, 2022
SEPA:	This project is categorically exempt per WAC 197-11-800(2)(c).
DECISION:	Approval subject to conditions.
DECISION DATE:	September 26, 2022
CITY REVIEWER:	Ethan Spoo, AICP, and Alec Egurrola, Consulting Planners; Tony Cooper, PE, City Engineer; and Bryan Kast, City Public Works Director

CONTACT LIST

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Overview and Procedural Background

The applicant is requesting to replace one freestanding sign in front of their business, Stonehill Coffee House. The existing sign is made of wood and has begun to rot, which is compromising the sign's structure (Figure 1). The single pylon sign face would be dual sided with a sign face of 9 square feet (SF). The plans and additional information provided by the Applicant indicate that the proposed sign will hang from a 5-foot tall and 6.75-inch-wide metal pole with a smooth pine covering and a 54-inch brace. The sign is to be made of a heavy plastic and acrylic material with a matte black surface and white lettering. The applicant's plans for the sign are included in Attachment A.

Figure 1: Existing Business Sign



Approval Criteria

LCMC 8.60.030

(4) Approval Criteria. The department shall approve a sign permit where the applicant demonstrates compliance with all of the following approval criteria:

- (a) The proposed sign is not one prohibited under LCMC 8.60.020(2)(a) through (k), Prohibited Signs; and*
- (b) The proposed sign complies with all applicable dimensional, durational, locational and other*

Finding(s):

- The applicant is proposing a dual-faced, single pylon sign, one of the permitted types of signs in LCMC 8.60.050(4). The sign is not a prohibited type under 8.60.020(a) through (k).
- The sign complies with dimensional, durational, locational, and other requirements of this chapter, as demonstrated in materials submitted by the applicant and documented in this staff report.
- Conclusion: The proposed sign will meet the approval criteria as conditioned in this staff report for the City to issue a sign permit.

LCMC 8.60.050 General Requirements Applicable to All Signs

(1) *General Requirements. The following requirements apply to all signs allowed in the city:*

- (a) *Building and Specialty Code Compliance. All signs, whether regulated by this chapter or not, shall meet all applicable construction and operation standards of the International Building Code adopted by the city of La Center. Where these codes conflict with the requirements of this chapter, the more stringent or restrictive shall control.*
- (b) *No sign shall be insecurely erected, or constructed so as to constitute a safety hazard, fire hazard or a nuisance.*
- (c) *Sign Obstructing View, Passage or Safety. No sign shall:*
 - i. *Obstruct free ingress to or egress from any door, window, fire escape, alley, driveway, fire lane, access from the sidewalk to transit stop areas, designated disabled parking spaces, disabled access ramps or building exits;*
 - ii. *Be located so as to obstruct or interfere with intersection sight distance for vehicles exiting a driveway or street in accordance with the line of sight triangle requirements in the La Center engineering standards;*
 - iii. *Obstruct or interfere in any way with the public's ability to clearly view government signs;*
 - iv. *By reason of their size, location, movement, content, coloring, or manner of illumination be subject to being confused with a government sign; or*
 - v. *Interfere in any way with traffic, visibility or passage within the public right-of-way, including vehicle travel lanes, sidewalks and bike lanes.*
- (e) *Lighting. Signs, excluding temporary signs and canopy signs, may be lit, either from within the sign structure or by external lights shining on the sign face. External light sources shall be aimed downward and be shielded to direct light solely on the sign face, and in no case shall sign lights shine directly onto an adjacent property, buildings or the public right-of-way or cast glare into the eyes of pedestrians or motorists in the public right-of-way. Flashing, strobe and rotating lights are prohibited in all situations. Sign lights shall not substitute for security or safety lighting that may otherwise be required.*
- (f) *Property Owner Consent. No sign shall be erected on property or a structure (e.g., a building or utility pole) owned by someone other than the person responsible for the sign without the express consent of the property's owner. If the city cannot verify owner consent, the sign will be deemed unlawful and subject to removal.*

Finding(s):

- A building permit and compliance with the International Building Code is not required as determined by the City's Building Official. As proposed, the single pylon sign would be supported using an above-and-below ground support structure with a concrete footing. Four feet of the metal post will be buried and cemented in. Therefore, the sign will be securely constructed and will not be a safety or fire hazard.
- The proposed sign would be located in front of the business on privately owned property. Ingress and egress to the subject site is available with a driveway and sidewalk on East 4th Street and the sign will not obstruct these accesses. The sign would not obstruct free ingress or egress from

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doors, windows, fire escapes, alleys, driveways, fire lanes, from the sidewalk to transit stops or disabled parking or access ramps or building exits. The City Engineer has verified that the sign will not interfere with vision clearance, as depicted on the attached site plan prepared by the applicant. The sign does not conflict with ADA access requirements.

- The sign is proposed at five feet tall from finished grade and there are no governmental signs in proximity to the site that the proposed sign would obstruct.
- The applicant stated the sign will not be illuminated and will not use upward facing lighting.
- The authorized owner and applicant, Eric and Trudy Stenberg, signed the permit application.
- Conclusion: The above requirements are met

(i) *Freestanding Signs. When a freestanding sign is allowed by this chapter, Figures 8.60.050(1) through 8.60.050(5) illustrate the five allowed freestanding sign configurations: monument, single and dual pedestal, and single and dual pylon. The signs shall comply with the dimensional standards specified in these figures and the area and height requirements specified in this chapter.*

(j) *Freestanding Sign Base Material. The sign base and support structure of freestanding signs must be constructed of or covered with quality materials such as real or faux stone, brick, stucco, textured wood, tile, and textured concrete.*

(k) *Freestanding Sign Landscaping. All freestanding signs shall have landscaping surrounding the base of the sign equal in area to a minimum of 80 percent of the sign face area. Landscaping shall consist of grass, low shrubbery, and/or ground cover. Whenever possible and appropriate, native vegetation that is drought resistant and requires minimal or low maintenance shall be used for sign-related landscaping. Landscaping shall be well maintained. Sign-related landscaping may be included in any calculation of total landscaping required in a zoning district.*

Finding(s):

- The applicant is proposing a single pylon sign, which is a permitted sign listed in LCMC 8.60.050(1)(i). The sign's face area is also elevated 9 inches above grade, which is 20% of the sign face height of 45 inches. Additional verbal clarification was provided by the Applicant indicating the sign pylon will be 6.75 inches wide, which is 15% of the sign face height. Therefore, the dimensional requirements for single pylon signs shown in Figure 8.60.050(4) are met. As a **condition of approval**, the applicant shall adhere to the single pylon sign dimensional requirements as shown in LCMC 8.60.050(4).
- The sign supports would be metal covered with smooth pine. The code does not define "textured wood"; staff have determined the applicant's proposal to cover the support with smooth wood and paint meets the requirements for freestanding sign base materials. As a **condition of approval**, the applicant shall construct the sign using the approved plans as shown in Attachment A.
- The base of the sign is required to be landscaped, which must include grass, low shrubbery, and/or ground cover with native vegetation and drought resistant varieties preferred. Given the sign face area is 9 SF, the landscaping must be at least 7.2 SF and placed at the base of the sign. As this sign is to be placed in an existing, established grassy front yard of the business, the site already meets and exceeds landscaping requirements.
- The sign is not located within wetland, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, or frequently flooded critical areas or their associated buffers.
- Conclusion: the sign meets the material, and landscaping requirements, and dimensional requirements subject to conditions.

(2) *Modifications to Existing Signs. Any sign that is structurally altered, relocated, or replaced shall be brought into compliance with all applicable substantive requirements of this chapter, including the requirement to obtain a permit. Any modification to a sign for which a permit has been issued shall be processed as an administrative review in the same manner as for a new sign. This requirement to obtain a new permit for sign modifications does not apply to copy or panel changes where the physical size, shape, height, or support structure is not changed by more than 10 percent of the*

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applicable numeric standard.

Finding(s):

- The applicant is proposing to replace an existing sign on their property; therefore, a sign permit is required. Proposed changes exceed more than 10 percent of the applicable numeric standard, which deems this application ineligible for exemption. This will be processed as an administrative review as required in this section.

LCMC 8.60.070 Signs in C-1 and C-3 Zones

(1) This section governs signs in the city's C-1/C-3 zones. All signs in the C-1 and C-3 zones shall:

- (a) Comply with the requirements of LCMC 8.60.050*
- (b) Use materials compatible with the façade materials*
- (c) Avoid highly reflecting materials and surfacing, limit the use of plastic, and employ painted wood or metal where reasonably feasible*
- (d) Apply letter or painted signs to the building face where reasonably feasible.*
- (e) Use fonts which complement the period of the building's architecture.*
- (f) Avoid corporate design standards which cannot be used as justification for granting a variance to this chapter.*
- (g) If illuminated, the sign shall be externally illuminated by downward-facing light sources.*
- (h) Mounted so that the sign does not obscure significant architectural details.*
- (i) comply with the La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines.*

(2) Sign Permits. Signs excluded in LCMC 8.60.020 are not regulated under this chapter and therefore do not require a permit. All other signs are either prohibited or require a permit.

(3) Signs in the downtown commercial (C-1) and cardroom overlay (C-3) zones shall comply with the following additional requirements

(a) Individual Business Signs. The following are the signs allowed for an individual business. A total sign area is allocated to each business and this maximum sign area can be distributed between allowed wall signs, freestanding signs, and projecting signs not to exceed the maximum individual sign area specified below. The total sign area allocated to each business shall not exceed one square foot per linear foot of a primary frontage plus one-half square foot per linear foot of secondary frontage and frontage abutting a parking lot, with an allowed minimum of 24 square feet allocated to each business.

(ii) Freestanding Sign. One freestanding sign is allowed for each business and may not exceed 32 square feet in sign area and five feet in height. One such sign is allowed per business license.

Finding(s):

- The proposed sign complies with the general requirements in LCMC 8.60.050 as demonstrated in this staff report.
- The sign is located in the C-1 zone visible from E 4th Street. The sign is made of a heavy plastic and acrylic material that has a matte black surface with white lettering. Staff has determined that the sign materials are compatible with the building's exterior façade, including the font of the sign, and the sign will not be made of highly reflective materials.
- Letter or painted signs on the building face are not proposed and will not be required by Staff as

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the business is not a typical commercial structure that can accommodate this kind of sign.

- Corporate design standards will not be used and will not require variance and no illumination is to be provided. The sign will be mounted perpendicular to the street frontage and building façade, which will limit any obscuring of significant architectural details.
- Businesses are allowed to have one freestanding sign, and in this case, placed in the front yard of the business. The sign face area must be less than 32 SF and the total sign's height must be equal to or less than 5 feet tall to meet the zoning requirements. The sign face area, as defined by LCMC 8.60.150, is approximately 9 SF, which is less than the maximum allowed. The sign is proposed to be 5 feet tall above finished grade meeting requirements.
- The applicant is not proposing an illuminated sign, electronic reader board, or digital video display.

LCMC 18.155 Downtown Overlay District

18.155.020 Applicability

The downtown overlay standards apply to all new commercial, mixed-use, and multifamily buildings within the downtown overlay zone as designated on the city's zoning map. These standards also apply to major exterior redevelopment or rehabilitation with costs exceeding 80 percent of the assessed value of the building and land. For exterior improvements exceeding this threshold, the requirement is that only the proposed improvements meet the standards of this chapter.

Finding(s):

- The proposed sign is an exterior redevelopment of the site and does not exceed eighty percent of the assessed value of the building and land, therefore, Staff finds the downtown overlay standards do not apply.

CONCLUSIONS & DECISION

The review authority finds the applicant has sustained the burden of proving the application complies with the applicable provisions of La Center's Municipal Code. Therefore, the subject application is hereby APPROVED subject to the following conditions of approval:

1. The applicant shall adhere to the single pylon sign dimensional requirements as shown in LCMC 8.60.050(4).
2. The applicant shall construct the sign using the approved plans as shown in Attachment A.

APPEALS

Decisions on sign permits are appealable to the City Council per 8.60.030(2)(d).



Bryan Kast
Public Works Director

Attachments

- Attachment A: Sign permit application materials