	<p>Staff Report & Notice of Decision Podunk Pizza Wall Signs Permit (File # 2023-004-SIGN)</p>
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PROPOSAL:	The applicant is requesting to install one wall sign on the east-facing facade of their business, Podunk Pizza Co. It will have sign face area of 15.33 square feet. The proposed sign will be flush mounted above the rear door facing East Birch Avenue. The applicant has indicated that this sign is to be made of a one-quarter-inch thick routed aluminum composite panel overlaid in vinyl print mounted on brackets. The sign is to be halo illuminated with white LEDs.
LOCATION:	630 East Birch Avenue, La Center, WA 98629. The sign would be attached and located on the wall above the rear door along East Birch Avenue.
APPLICANT:	Tosha Emerson 630 East Birch Avenue La Center, WA 98629. Email: toshaeme@gmail.com Phone: 503-888-1575
OWNER:	Don and Dana Janigian PO Box 888 Battle Ground, WA 98604
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:	January 10, 2023
SEPA:	This project is categorically exempt per WAC 197-11-800(2)(c).
DECISION:	Approval subject to conditions.
DECISION DATE:	February 9, 2023
CITY REVIEWER:	Tony Cooper, PE, City Engineer; and Bryan Kast, City Public Works Director; Ethan Spoo, AICP, and Alec Egurrola, Consulting Planners, WSP USA Inc.

CONTACT LIST

APPLICANT/SIGN INSTALLER

Anthony and Tosha Emerson
Podunk Pizza Co.
630 East Birch Avenue
La Center, WA 98629
503-888-1575

OWNER

Don and Dana Janigian
PO Box 888
Battle Ground, WA 98604

LA CENTER STAFF

Bryan Kast, Public Works Director
City of La Center
210 East 4th Street
La Center, WA 98629
360-263-5189
bkast@ci.lacenter.wa.us

Anthony Cooper, PE, City Engineer
City of La Center
210 East 4th Street
La Center, WA 98629
360-263-7665
acooper@ci.lacenter.wa.us

SIGN CONTRACTOR

Advanced Electric Signs, Inc
1550 Down River Drive
Woodland, WA 98674
360-225-6826

Ethan Spoo, AICP, Consulting Planner
WSP USA
1207 Washington Street, Suite 115
Vancouver, WA 98660
360-823-6138
ethan.spoo@wsp.com

Alec Egurrola, Consulting Planner
WSP USA
1207 Washington Street, Suite 115
Vancouver, WA 98660
360-823-6133
alec.egurrola@wsp.com

Overview and Procedural Background

The applicant is proposing to construct a wall sign above the building door along East Birch Avenue at Podunk Pizza Co. The wall sign will have a sign face area of 15.33 square feet (forty-six inches by forty-eight inches) with lettering reading “Podunk Pizza Co.”. The plans and additional information provided by the applicant indicate that the proposed sign will be flush mounted above the building door facing East Birch Avenue. The applicant has indicated that this sign is to be made of a one-quarter-inch thick routed aluminum composite panel overlayed in vinyl print and mounted on brackets 2.5 inches from the wall. The sign is to be halo illuminated with white light-emitting diodes (LEDs). The applicant’s design for the sign are shown below in Figures 1 – 3.

Figure 1: Rendering of Proposed Sign



Figure 2: Proposed Wall Sign Facing East Birch Avenue

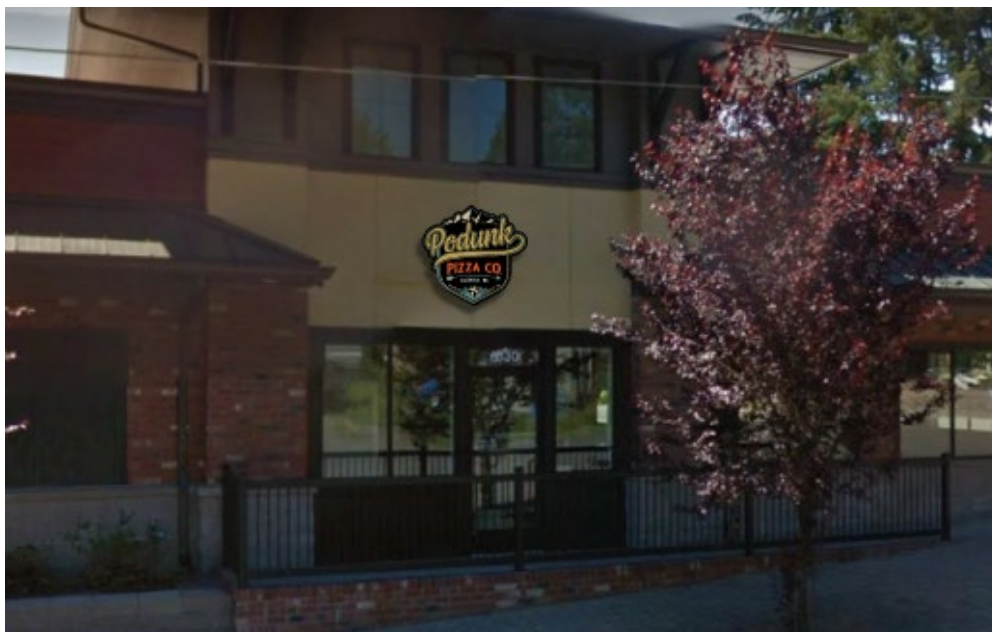


Figure 3: Simulated Night View



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 requirements of this chapter.*

Finding(s):

- The applicant is proposing a wall sign, one of the permitted types of signs in LCMC 8.60.050. 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 and correspondence 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:

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- 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 required as determined by the City's Building Official as illumination is proposed. The wall sign would be flush mounted with brackets two and a half inches from the wall and above the front building entrance. The sign will be inspected by the City's Building Official for safety and fire hazards.
- The proposed sign would be located above the building door facing East Birch Street entrance of the establishment. Pedestrian and vehicular access to the building is from the parking lot and sidewalk along the west and north sides of the building. The placement of the wall sign on the east side of the building would in no way obstruct free ingress or egress from doors, windows, fire escapes, alleys, driveways, fire lanes, from the sidewalk to transit stops or disabled parking or access ramps or building exits.
- The wall sign would not be located in vision clearance areas. The sign would not conflict with ADA access requirements and would not interfere with traffic, visibility, or passage within the public right-of-way, including vehicle travel lanes, sidewalks, and bike lanes. There are no governmental signs in proximity to the wall sign that it would obstruct or be confused with.
- The applicant is proposing a sign that is halo illuminated with white LEDs. The light will not shine through the sign and will reflect directly on the wall and the sign itself, creating the "halo" look as shown in Figure 3 above. The applicant states that this light is not very bright, but enough to enhance the space where the sign is located. Staff have determined this is an acceptable lighting form as these lights will cast light onto the subject building; are not a form of internal illumination; and will not shine directly onto an adjacent property, buildings, or the public right-of-way or cast glare onto users of the public right-of-way. The applicant is not proposing a lighting style that is prohibited, such as flashing, strobe, or rotating lights.
- The authorized owners, Don & Dana Janigian, signed the permit application.
- Conclusion: The above requirements are met.

As a **condition of approval**, the applicant shall apply for a building permit prior to the installation of the sign.

As a **condition of approval**, the applicant shall provide the wall sign as designed and illuminated on the

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approved plans.

As a **condition of approval**, the applicant shall apply for a sign permit for any additional signage proposed at the site.

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.

(i) Wall Sign. Maximum sign face area for an individual wall sign shall not exceed 24 feet. One wall sign may be placed on each business frontage. Two wall signs may be installed on the same frontage if they are separated by more than 200 feet. Wall signs shall not extend above a roof line.

Finding(s):

- The proposed sign complies with the general requirements in LCMC 8.60.050 as demonstrated above in this staff report.
- The sign is located in the Downtown Commercial (C-1) zone and visible from East Birch Avenue. It is to be made of a one-quarter-inch thick routed aluminum composite panel overlaid in vinyl print mounted 2.5 inches from the wall on brackets. Staff have determined that the materials of the signs are compatible with the building's exterior façade, including the font of the sign, and the applicant has confirmed the sign will not be made of highly reflective materials.
- Letter or painted signs on the building face are not proposed and although encouraged by the code and, will not be required by Staff as the proposed wall sign is an approved sign type in the

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City and the C-1 zone.

- Corporate design standards will not be used and will not require a variance. The proposed lighted method as discussed above in LCMC 8.60.050 will be externally lighted with halo illumination and will consist of downward-facing lighting sources as the lighting will be cast onto the subject building, behind the sign.
- The sign will be flush mounted to the building façade and are positioned in such a manner as to not obscure significant architectural details.
- La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines provide guidance for signs in the Downtown Overlay zone. A majority of the applicable design guidelines provisions are also included in LCMC 8.60.070. However, the guidelines do specify that flush-mounted signs shall be positioned so they will fit within architectural features, which is not a provision of the LCMC. Staff have determined that the proposed wall sign will be positioned in a manner that it fits within the architectural features of the building.
- The proposed wall sign is not an excluded sign type in LCMC 8.60.020(1) and is also not a prohibited sign type as listed in LCMC 8.60.020(2). Therefore, the proposed sign type requires a sign permit.
- Businesses are allowed to have one wall sign for each business frontage. The sign face area must be less than twenty-four square feet and shall not extend above a roof line. The sign face area, as defined by LCMC 8.60.150, is approximately 15.33 square feet, which is less than the maximum allowed. The sign will be flush mounted 2.5 inches from the wall with brackets and will not extend above the roof line, meeting these requirements.
- The applicant is not proposing a freestanding sign, projecting sign, portable sign, direction sign, electronic reader board, digital video display, or window displays as allowed in LCMC 8.60.070(a).
- Each business is allocated a total maximum sign area that can be distributed between allowed wall, freestanding, and projecting signs. The total sign area allocated to the business shall not exceed on square foot per linear foot of primary frontage plus one-half square foot per linear foot of secondary frontage and frontage abutting a parking lot. The business has ninety feet of primary frontage along East Birch Street, thirty feet of secondary frontage (measured horizontally along north building elevation), and ninety feet of parking frontage. Therefore, the business is allowed 150 square feet of maximum sign area. The proposed sign will be a total of 15.33 square feet and meet this requirement. Additionally, the business is newly established and does not have previously approved or existing signs on the site associated with the business. Therefore, there are 134.66 square feet remaining for the business to use for allowed wall, freestanding, and projecting signs if the applicant chooses to apply for these signs.

As a **condition of approval**, if the applicant applies for a wall, freestanding, or projecting sign as allowed by code, they will be subject to the remaining maximum sign area allocation consistent with LCMC 8.60.070(a)(i).

As a **condition of approval**, the applicant shall construct the sign using the approved plans as shown in Attachment A.

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. The standards in this chapter do not apply to the following:

(4) Exterior building improvements less than 80 percent of the building and land assessed valued.

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Finding(s):

- The proposed wall sign is an exterior improvement of the site and does not exceed eighty percent of the assessed value of the building and land. In addition, LCMC 18.155 does not contain requirements regulating signs in downtown. Therefore, Staff finds the downtown overlay standards in the LCMC 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 apply for a building permit prior to the installation of the sign.
2. The wall sign shall be provided by the applicant as designed and illuminated on the approved plans.
3. The applicant shall apply for a sign permit for any additional signage proposed at the site.
4. If the applicant applies for a wall, freestanding, or projecting sign as allowed by code, they will be subject to the remaining maximum sign area allocation consistent with LCMC 8.60.070(a)(i).
5. The sign shall be constructed 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).



Tony Cooper
City Engineer

Attachments

- Attachment A: Sign permit application materials
- Attachment B: Applicant email dated February 6, 2023