



City of Stamford
Zoning Board

STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY OF STAMFORD ZONING BOARD
FROM: VINEETA MATHUR, ACTING PRINCIPAL PLANNER
SUBJECT: ZB #221-28, Text Amendment, LGS, LLC, TPS Associates
DATE: November 01, 2021

Zoning Section: Section 4.B.10.d (16) Signage

Introduction

The applicants LGS, LLC and TPS Associates request the approval of a text amendment to Section 4.B.10.d.(16) to amend the wall signage standard for the Neighborhood Mixed Use Design District for industrial uses adjacent to highways.

Background

The N-XD Zoning district allows a mix of commercial and residential uses and the signage is governed by the Architectural Review Design District (ARDD) standards. The ARDD standards provide limitation on the size and design of signage to ensure the signage is compatible with residential and commercial uses. The NX-D district also permits industrial uses such as auto service and sales which typically have larger scale signs. The Zoning Board approved an amendment to the N-XD signage to allow a large ground sign for industrial uses fronting on interstate highways earlier this year. The proposed amendment expands this provision to allow larger wall signs under the same limited parameter (Industrial uses fronting interstate highway). The proposed amendment will facilitate the proposed Acura logos on the newly renovated building on West Avenue and Grenhart Road.

Text Amendment

The current ARDD standards limit the height of wall signs to 4 feet in Section. The proposed amendment will allow wall signage to be up to 8 feet tall only for industrial properties which are

adjacent an interstate highway. The horizontal signage is limited by the overall wall signage limitation of 1.5 sq.ft. per linear foot of the building or 2 sq.ft. per linear foot of the building in the case of wide spaced letter signs.

TO AMEND Section 4.B.10.d. (“Additional Development Standards Applicable to Uses within the NX-D”), subsection (16) related to Signage to read as follows:

Underlined and highlighted language is added.

(16) Signage. The design, location and size of signage for uses in the NX-D shall be governed by the definitions of these Regulations and by the design criteria and signage rights permitted in the Architectural Review Design District (Section 7.6 and Section 13.D of these Regulations), **except that the following special standards shall apply:**

(a) In the case of Industrial uses on properties adjacent to an Interstate highway roadway system, **Wall Signs placed on the street front wall of a Building may not exceed eight (8) feet in height,** **and** the Zoning Board, by administrative review, may allow one (1) Ground Sign or Pole Sign to be located along the frontage adjacent to the Interstate highway roadway system. Such sign shall not exceed sixty (60) square feet in area and no side of the sign face shall exceed ten (10) feet in length. A decorative or ornamental base structure supporting such sign may be allowed, provided the face of such decorative or ornamental base structure does not exceed one hundred (100) square feet in area, the structure contains no lettering and is one (1) color, which color may be different than the color of the sign. No Pole Sign authorized by this section, together with any decorative or ornamental base, shall exceed twenty-one (21) feet in height. The right to one (1) Ground Sign or Pole Sign shall not increase the aggregate signage rights allowed in the NX-D set forth in Section 7.6.D.1 of these Regulations.

The added language will allow for taller wall signage needed for visibility from the highway for industrial businesses.

With regards to the Planning Board recommendation of ensuring design control, staff believes that existing language in the ARDD sign standards provides sufficient standards and therefore additional language is not necessary. Section 7.6.D.2 states that “*Signage shall be designed to be compatible with the Building, in scale with the storefront and the intended viewer. Simple and clear designs maintaining strong contrast between letters and background, and constructed of high quality materials are encouraged.*” This allows staff to ensure that future tall wall signage are designed such that they complement the building and are not too busy or poor quality.

Referral Comments

Stamford Planning Board

The Stamford Planning Board, during its regularly scheduled meeting held on October 5, 2021 recommended approval of the text amendment application and found the request to be

compatible with the neighborhood and consistent with Master Plan Category #13 (Industrial-General). The Planning Board expressed concerns about the design for large signs and recommended language be added to ensure signs are compatible with the background and limited in color.

Traffic Transportation and Parking Bureau

In a letter dated September 30, 2021 Mani Poola, Traffic Engineer stated that the text amendment has no impact on traffic.

City of Stamford Engineering Bureau

In a letter dated October 12, 2021, Susan Kiskan, Coordinator of Site Plan Reviews and Inspections at the Engineering Bureau, determined that the amendment had no potential impact.

Western Connecticut Council of Government

In an email dated October 6, 2021 Kristin Floberg, stated that the proposal had no regional impact.

Summary

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Text Amendment to allow limited large signs on industrial properties in the NX-D district. This helps the viability of industrial businesses which are otherwise not located on major commercial thoroughfares.