

**COUNTY OF EL DORADO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**



Agenda of: August 12, 2010
Item No.: 10
Staff: Tom Dougherty

DESIGN REVIEW

FILE NUMBER: DR10-0004/Valero Service Station Sign Re-imaging

APPLICANT: Kandahari Trading Company

AGENT: Elizabeth Schmidt

REQUEST: Design Review to re-image the price identification sign and canopy signs to reflect updated Valero logos for an existing service station. Proposed are a reduction in height of the price sign and an increase in size of the existing gas pump canopy signs.

LOCATION: East side of Camino Heights Drive, approximately 245 feet south of the intersection with U.S. Highway 50, in the Camino area, Supervisorial District III. (Exhibit A)

APN: 048-510-01 (Exhibit B-1)

ACREAGE: 0.607 acre

GENERAL PLAN: Commercial-Platted Lands (C-PL) (Exhibit C)

ZONING: Commercial-Design Sierra (C-DS) (Exhibit C)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: Categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15311 of the CEQA Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Certify that the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15311 of the CEQA Guidelines.
2. Approve Design Review DR10-0004 subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment 1, based on the Findings in Attachment 2.

BACKGROUND: The existing structures were permitted as follows:

Valero Pole Sign: The Humble Oil and Refining Company service station was granted Special Use Permit S65-0031 in 1965 to allow a 50-foot tall pole sign. On August 25, 1988 the Planning Commission granted Variance V88-0012 to Enadel Corporation to allow the pole sign to be increased to 60 feet in height. The 58 square-foot sign copy at the top of the pole was refaced with the Valero logo, and the existing "Food Shop" wall sign were permitted by Building Permit 196802 in May of 2010.

Existing price sign: On September 28, 1978 the Planning Commission granted Special Use Permit S78-0120 to Marvin LeDane to allow a price sign of 160 square feet. The sign is 20 feet tall.

The project site is located within the Design Sierra (DS) overlay zoning district which requires the submittal of a Design Review application for all new external alterations on site.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Project Description: The project includes a Design Review request for the re-imaging of the price identification sign and canopy signs to reflect updated corporate Valero logos for an existing service station. Proposed are a reduction in height of the price sign and an increase in size and re-surfacing of the gas canopy trim as follows:

1. **Existing internally illuminated price/identification sign with changeable numbers:**
 - a) Lower the height from 20 feet to 12 foot, 6 inches tall.
 - b) Use existing footing structure/frame and paint it Valero Mocking bird (dark gray).
 - c) Acrylic copy face to include Valero Teal, Valero Yellow and White colors as shown in Exhibits F-2 and F-5 and to remain 60 square feet, (six feet wide by ten feet tall), in copy area.
2. **Existing gas pump canopy (60 feet by 44 feet):**
 - a) Add new galvanized steel roofing.
 - b) Add Valero corporate logo on a 36-inch tall fascia around the bottom edge of the entire canopy. Install raised channel letter, internally-illuminated Valero logo signs on the west and north sides of the new fascia using Valero Teal, Valero Yellow and White colors, as shown in Exhibits E-3, E-4, and E-6.
 - c) Paint all canopy support columns Valero Casa Blanca (beige) and all existing bumper poles and hoops Valero Teal. All canopy curbs around the canopy base and fueling pumps at ground level proposed to be painted Valero Mocking bird (dark gray), all as shown in Exhibits E-3, E-4, and E-6.

Site Description: The site has been developed as a service station/ fueling pump canopy and minimart. There is an outdoor ice machine and propane tank filling area along the front of the fenced storage area that is attached to the building on the east side and south sides. There are existing unapproved signs advertising fuel prices and decorative flagging currently placed at the corner of Camino Heights Drive and U.S. Highway 50 within the Cal Trans right-of-way. There are existing unapproved signs advertising minimart specials at the corner of Sierra Blanca Drive and Camino Heights Drive as well as decorative flagging draped at various areas on structures within the parcel. There is an approximately 50-foot tall flag pole next to the approved 60-foot tall pole sign.

Adjacent Land Uses:

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	C-DS	C-PL	Commercial/Service station and mini mart
North	R20K	OS-PL	Open Space/Cal Trans right-of-way
South	C-DS	OS	Commercial/Cal Trans owned
East	C-DS	C-PL	Commercial/Vacant
West	C-DS	C-PL	Commercial/Western Sierra Medical Center

Discussion: The sign re-imaging project would be consistent with the commercial development in the area and would not create visual incompatibilities to the surrounding land uses.

General Plan: The General Plan designates the subject project site as Commercial-Platted Lands (C-PL). The purpose of the Commercial land use category *is to provide a full range of commercial retail, office, and service uses to serve the residents, business, and visitors of El Dorado County.* The project is located within an area designated by the General Plan as a Rural Region. The following General Plan policies apply to this project:

Platted Lands: **Policy 2.2.2.3** assigns the PL overlay to those lands that have been historically zoned commercial that would be inconsistent with the General Plan.

Discussion: This parcel and the western adjacent parcel have been historically been zoned Planned Commercial (CP) and were rezoned to Commercial-Platted Lands(C-PL) by the Camino/Fruitridge Area Plan on June 27, 1985. The Cal Trans parcel surrounding the subject parcel on the north and south was rezoned as well at that time from Tourist Residential (RT) to Open Space (OS) and Open Space-Platted Lands (OS-PL) at that time as well. All the adjoining parcels except the portion of the Cal Trans parcel on the north side were also given the Sierra Design overlay designation at that time. All other zoning designations for the adjoining parcels have not changed since that time.

Land Use Compatibility: **Policy 2.2.5.21** directs that *development projects shall be located and designed in a manner that avoids incompatibility with adjoining land uses that are permitted by the policies in effect at the time the project is proposed.*

Discussion: The sign re-imaging would not create visual incompatibility with similar commercial projects within the project vicinity because they resemble the approved other gas station/mini mart signage along U.S. Highway 50 to the east of the project site.

Community Design Guidelines: **Policy 2.4.1.2** directs that the County *develop community design guidelines in concert with members of each community which will detail specific qualities and features unique to the community as Planning staff and funds are available. Each plan shall contain design guidelines to be used in project site review of all discretionary project permits. The guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, the following criteria:*

- A. *Historic preservation*
- B. *Streetscape elements and improvements*
- C. *Signage*
- D. *Maintenance of existing scenic road and riparian corridors*
- E. *Compatible architectural design*
- F. *Designs for landmark land uses*
- G. *Outdoor art”*

Discussion: The “Sierra Design Guide,” adopted October 28, 1982, is the guide used as a basis for review of projects such as the subject project, which are located within the Sierra Design Control District. The design review of this project is discussed in more detail below in the *Other Design Issues* section.

State Scenic Highway: **Policy 2.6.1.2** directs that *until such time as the Scenic Corridor Ordinance is adopted, the County shall review all projects within designated State Scenic Highway corridors for compliance with State criteria.*

Discussion: The portion of U.S. Highway 50 from the Ray Lawyer Drive to South Lake Tahoe is designated by Caltrans to be a State Designated Scenic Highway, (El Dorado County EIR, May 2003, Exhibit 5.3-1). The project parcel is located within this area. There currently is no Scenic Corridor Ordinance however, Policy 2.6.1.2 directs that projects be reviewed as stated above.

Zoning: The project site is zoned Commercial- Design Sierra (C-DS) which permits the proposed use subject to Section 17.32.040, (C District development standards), and Design Review approval pursuant to Section 17.74.040.C, (architectural styling).

Section 17.32.020.D (signs) of the Zoning Ordinance for C zone districts, allows *two signs not exceeding fifty feet in total area of any one display surface, or one sign not exceeding eighty square feet in area, advertising authorized activities on the premises.* The applicant has submitted sign plans (Exhibits F-1 to F-6) to allow the following re-imaging of the price sign and fueling station canopy:

1. **Existing internally illuminated price/identification sign with changeable numbers:**
 - a) Lower the height to 12 foot, 6 inches tall.
 - b) Use existing footing structure and paint it Valero Mocking bird (dark gray).
 - c) Acrylic copy face to include Valero Teal, Valero Yellow and White colors as shown in Exhibits E-2 and E-5 and to remain 60 square feet, (six feet wide by ten feet tall), in copy area.

2. **Existing gas pump canopy (60 feet by 44 feet):**
 - a) Add new galvanized steel roofing.
 - b) Add Valero corporate logo on a 36-inch tall fascia around the bottom edge of the entire canopy. Install raised channel letter, internally-illuminated Valero logo signs on the west and north sides of the new fascia. using Valero Teal, Valero Yellow and White colors, as shown in Exhibits E-3, E-4, and F-6.
 - c) Paint all canopy support columns Valero Casa Blanca (beige), and all existing bumper poles and hoops Valero Teal. All canopy curbs around the canopy base and fueling pumps at ground level to be painted Valero Mocking bird (dark gray), all as shown in Exhibits E-3, E-4, and E-6.

Discussion: This request is consistent with what is allowed by right in the Commercial zone district.

17.14.130: Architectural Supervision states that *in case an application is made for a permit for any building or structure in any RL, RM or C district and where it faces on a state highway, the application shall be accompanied by architectural drawings or sketches showing the elevations of the proposed building or structure. The drawings or sketches shall be considered by the Planning Commission in an endeavor to provide that the architectural and general appearance of the buildings and structures be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood, and such as not to be detrimental to the orderly and harmonious development of the county, or to impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood.*

Discussion: The proposed project site is within the viewscape of U.S. Highway 50, in a commercial district that has access to that Highway. In addition, the project is located within the Design Sierra overlay district, pursuant to Section 17.14.130, the location of the proposed project along a state expressway also directs that it be reviewed by the Planning Commission. This particular section of U.S. Highway 50 is considered an expressway and not a highway because it has direct encroachments onto it from side roads.

Conclusion: The proposed project meets the applicable standards in said sections as well as those contained in Section 17.16 (Signs). As proposed and conditioned, the project would be consistent with the Zoning Ordinance

Other Design Issues:

The subject property is within a defined Design Review district. As such, Section 17.74.040.C of County Code requires compliance with the design guidelines contained in the *Sierra Design Guidelines* prepared by the Planning Department in October 26, 1982. As directed under Policy 2.4.1.2, sign permits are to meet the following criteria:

Signs are a necessary aid to commercial enterprise but need to be handled as carefully as the building and site.

Design Compatibility: Signs, their materials, size, color, lettering location and arrangement should be an integral part of the site and building design and compatible with the surroundings.

The proposed fueling canopy and fuel price signs would be consistent in size, height, and materials with the signs located on other commercial service station/mini mart properties within the Camino area, most of which also have the plastic face component. Proposed sign materials include face materials that would be molded high impact clear acrylic faces with translucent 3M vinyl second surface decoration to match the materials utilized for the retail structures and existing 60-foot tall Valero pole sign on site.

Consistency: Keep signing consistent in location and design throughout a development. This includes shopping centers.

Discussion: The proposed fueling station canopy and fuel price signs are part of the commercial development. The signs are consistent with the proposed building materials and colors as outlined above.

Restraint: Signing should be simple, restrained and subordinate to the overall project design. A sign ought to attract and identify, but not dominate the site.

Discussion: The proposed signs and building signage are subordinate to the overall project design and would adequately identify the proposed building tenant.

Types: Wall signs, graphic symbol signs and low profile, freestanding signs are encouraged. Flashing, moving and rotating signs are prohibited by County ordinance.

Discussion: The proposed and existing signs include one wall sign on the north wall advertising "Food Shop," the price sign replacing the existing previously approved price sign, the existing 60-foot tall pole sign and the requested canopy sign, none of which contain or propose to include any flashing or moving parts.

Simplicity: Signs should use minimum copy and suitable lettering and avoid garish colors, materials and shapes.

Discussion: As shown in exhibits E-1 to E-6, the proposed "Valero" corporate logo has a minimal copy area in relation to the sign sizes. The teal, white, dark gray and yellow colors and copy sizes would not appear to create a garish presentation and are typical of other Valero service stations throughout the County.

Lighting: Subtle lighting and landscaping can enhance a sign's setting and draw attention to it. The light source should be screened. Plastic, neon or other non-rustic sign materials should be discouraged. An excess of signs or wrong placing confuses a potential customer and destroys the sign's purpose.

Discussion: According to the plans supplied by the applicant, the service station signs were designed to appear consistent with each other and incorporate the intent of the Sierra Design Guide for consistency, simplicity, and restraint. The project is conditioned to assure that the internal illumination included in the sign designs would comply with Section 17.14.170 of the Zoning Code to prevent any excessive lighting spillage upward and outward.

Conclusion: As discussed above, staff finds that the project (signs), as proposed/conditioned, do conform to the General Plan and Sierra Design Guide in the use of materials and design techniques.

Agency Comments

California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans): Cal Trans has concerns about the placement of signs within their right-of-way without expressed permission and recommended a condition of approval to assure the applicants are aware of that requirement and it has been included in Attachment 1.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project has been found to be Categorical Exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15311 of the CEQA Guidelines stating that Class 11 *consists of construction, or replacement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to: (a) on-premise signs.* A \$50.⁰⁰ processing fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachments to Staff Report:

Attachment 1	Conditions of Approval
Attachment 2	Findings
Exhibit A	Location Map
Exhibit B-1, B-2	Assessor's Parcel Maps
Exhibit C	General Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit D	Zoning Map
Exhibit E-1	Sign Plans, Sheet 1 of 4
Exhibit E -2	Sign Plans, Sheet 2 of 4
Exhibit E -3	Sign Plans, Sheet 3 of 4
Exhibit E -4	Sign Plans, Sheet 4 of 4
Exhibit E -5	Sign Plans, Sheet PID-1
Exhibit E -6	Sign Plans, Sheet CAN-1
Exhibits F-1 to F-4	Site Visit Photos
Exhibits G-1, G-2	Aerial Site Photos

ATTACHMENT 1

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Design Review DR10-0004/Valero Service Station Sign Re-imaging
Planning Commission/August 12, 2010

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Planning Services

1. The authorization for the construction and use of the fueling station canopy and price sign allowed by this Design Review Revision Permit is based upon and limited to compliance with the project descriptions and conditions of approval set forth below. Any deviations from the project description, exhibits or conditions must be reviewed and approved by the County for conformity with this approval. Deviations may require approved changes to the permit and/or further environmental review. Deviations without the described approval will constitute a violation of the permit approval and may subject the authorized activities to revocation hearings.

The DR10-0004 project approval for the parcel identified by Assessor's Parcel Number 048-510-01 allows for the re-imaging of the following:

- a. **Existing internally illuminated price/identification sign with changeable numbers:** a) Lower the height to 12 foot, 6 inches tall. B) Use existing footing structure/frame and paint it Valero Mocking bird (dark gray). c) Acrylic copy face to include Valero Teal, Valero Yellow and White colors as shown in Exhibits E-2 and E-5 and to remain 60 square feet, (six feet wide by ten feet tall), in copy area.
- b. **Existing gas pump canopy (60 feet by 44 feet):** a) Add new galvanized steel roofing. b) Add Valero corporate logo on a 36-inch tall fascia around the bottom edge of the entire canopy. Install raised channel letter, internally-illuminated Valero logo signs on the west and north sides of the new fascia. using Valero Teal, Valero Yellow and White colors, as shown in Exhibits E-3, E-4, and E-6. c) Paint all canopy support columns Valero Casa Blanca (beige), and all existing bumper poles and hoops Valero Teal. All canopy curbs around the canopy base and fueling pumps at ground level to be painted Valero Mocking bird (dark gray), all as shown in Exhibits E-3, E-4, and E-6.

The grading, development, use, and maintenance of the property, the size, shape, arrangement, and location of structures, parking areas and landscape areas, and the protection and preservation of resources shall conform to the project description above and the hearing exhibits and conditions of approval below. The property and any

portions thereof shall be sold, leased or financed in compliance with this project description and the approved hearing exhibits and conditions of approval hereto. All plans must be submitted for review and approval and shall be implemented as approved by the County.

2. Sign structure design and colors and sign structure placement shall be completed in conformance with the plans submitted and in conformance with the Conditions of Approval herein (Exhibits E-1 through E-6). The Development Services Director may approve minor modifications to an approved project where he/she finds the change:
 - a. Is in substantial conformance with all applicable provisions of Title 17 of the County Code;
 - b. Does not involve a feature of the project that was specifically addressed in the conditions of approval, mitigation measures, or findings for approval of the project;
 - c. Does not result in substantial expansion of the project; and
 - d. Does not substantially alter the original approval action.
3. The authorizations enabled by this Design Review shall become null and void if not initiated and diligently pursued by the applicant in good faith within two years from the date of the Notice of Decision.
4. All outdoor lighting, including the internal lighting for the fueling station canopy and price signs subject of this permit, sign subject of this permit, shall conform to Section 17.14.170 of the Zoning Code and be fully shielded pursuant to the Illumination Engineering Society of North America's (IESNA) full cut-off designation. The project lighting shall be reviewed by the Planning Services prior to final building occupancy to ensure that all project lighting has been fully shielded and/or voltage minimized and that excessive glare has been minimized.
5. Prior to issuance of a building permit or commencement of any use authorized by this permit the applicant shall provide a written description to Planning Services, together with appropriate documentation, showing conformance of the project with each condition imposed as part of the project approval.
6. All other existing signs, with the exception of the wall sign on the north wall of the building advertising "Food Shop," and the propane tank filling sign mounted on the north building side storage area fencing, as shown in Exhibit F-3, and 60-foot tall pole sign with a 58-square-foot copy area atop, shall either be removed or be subject to a Special Use Permit prior to issuance of a Non-Residential/Commercial Project "Signs" permit. Any new subsequent signs shall comply with Chapters 17.16, (Signs), Section 17.32.020 (D), (Commercial Districts), and Chapter 17.74, (Design Review Districts) of the Zoning Ordinance. No off-site signs are permitted with this Design Review approval.

7. Prior to final occupancy being issued, the applicant shall notify Planning Services in writing after all conditions have been satisfied and shall provide Planning Services with proof that the fueling station canopy and price signs have been constructed as shown in Exhibits E-1 to E-6.
8. No signs shall be placed in the right-of-way, and no project site signs shall interfere with sight distances. All signage shall conform to Chapter 17.16 and 17.32.140 (D) of the County Code or as approved and described in the description. Planning Services shall review all existing and proposed signage for compliance with approved plans prior to issuance of a building permit. All signage shall be in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. Any future signage that is proposed for the site shall require a revision to this approved Design Review or the submittal of a sign specific Design Review application.
9. Prior to issuance of any Building Permit, all Development Services fees shall be paid.
10. A \$50.00 administrative processing fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption. This fee must be delivered to the El Dorado County Planning Services prior to the issuance of any development permit being issued on the project parcel.
11. In the event of any legal action instituted by a third party challenging the validity of any provision of this approval, the developer and landowner agree to be responsible for the costs of defending such suit and shall hold County harmless from any legal fees or costs County may incur as a result of such action.

The applicant shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless El Dorado County and its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against El Dorado County or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval by El Dorado County.

County shall notify the applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding and County will cooperate fully in the defense.

California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans)

12. No signs or any other advertising shall be placed within the Cal Trans right-of-way or any other portion of the Caltrans owned property identified by Assessor's Parcel Number 048-471-30.

ATTACHMENT 2

FINDINGS

Design Review DR10-0004/Valero Service Station Sign Re-Imaging Planning Commission/August 12, 2010

Based on the review and analysis of this project by staff and affected agencies, and supported by discussion in the staff report and evidence in the record, the following findings can be made:

FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL

1.0 CEQA Findings

- 1.1 The project has been found to be Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15311 stating that Class 11 *consists of construction, or replacement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or*
- 1.2 The document and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based are in the custody of the Development Services Department-Planning Services at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA

2.0 Administrative Findings

2.1 General Plan:

The General Plan Land Use Map designates the subject project site as Commercial (C). A finding can be made that the proposed use is consistent with the General Plan policies and land use map for C designations.

No uses would be permitted through this Design Review which would be inconsistent within the C land use designation.

3.0 Zoning Ordinance Findings

The Zoning Ordinance designates the site as Commercial-Sierra Design (C-SD). As conditioned, the design and use of the monument sign is consistent with the development standards of the C zone district as well as the SD overlay.

- 3.1 **The proposed use and design will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare, nor injurious to the neighborhood.**

The proposed re-imaging of the existing signs will not create any hazards that will negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood. The proposed use is not considered detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare, and pursuant to the text of the Sierra Design Guidelines, the design can be found to be aesthetically compatible with the neighborhood, based on the conclusions contained in the Staff Report.