

December 16, 2018

Brad Eatherly, Planner I
City of Great Falls, Planning and Community Development
beatherly@greatfallsmt.net 406-455-8433

RE: December 20, 2018 Public Hearing – Variance for Signs
Great Falls International Airport and Love’s Travel Stop

Dear Mr. Eatherly:

Thank you for providing the proposed signage variance submittal information, confirming that staff will recommend approval of the sign variance, and clarifications to my questions.

I received three notices about the Great Falls International Airport and Love’s Travel Stop and Country Stores requested variance to the sign ordinance. The following are my comments and suggestions:

1. **Avenue B Relocation:** Per my discussions with John Faulkner of the Airport Authority, I understand that as part of the airport master plan, access to Old Airport Road via existing Ave B will be closed off and access to Old Airport Road will be relocated to the street access at sign #2.
 - a. This street relocation is acceptable as the route to the approximately 45 acres of Swanson owned land north of the truck stop.
 - b. This comment is not part of the sign variance application but should be noted by the City as a traffic information requirement at this location. Because of the access relocation, an adequately sized City Street Name sign should be added at this location because it will be needed to direct traffic to properties by and beyond the truck stop. I suggest naming it “Old Airport Road” as an extension to the current roadway.
2. **The #3 “No Truck Access” and #4 “Exit” signs** are needed to inform truck customers that they should not proceed further when exiting the facility.
 - a. Trucks should not enter because it is a dead end beyond that point and does not have adequate publicly available truck turn around space beyond the #3 and #4 signs.
 - b. Signs #3 & #4 should be as visible as reasonable. I encourage the size as proposed to enhance the message.
 - c. To help further clarify the message for unwarranted truck traffic, I suggest adding “Dead End” before “No Truck Access” on sign #3.
 - d. This comment is not part of the sign variance application but should be noted by the City as a traffic information requirement at this location. An adequately sized City Street Name sign should be added at this location because it will be needed to direct traffic to properties by and beyond the truck stop. The street name shall remain as “Old Airport Road” because of the many addresses along it. (Note that roadway is mislabeled as “Airport Lane” on the Chipola Engineering C3 plan)
3. **Proposed Mini Hi-Rise Sign:**
 - a. The proposed 40’ height is 30’ below the height of the Flying J sign and 99’ below the new water tower across the Interstate. I have no objection to increasing the height to 40’.
 - b. The proposed area increase to 396 SF is acceptable because, by comparison, it will only be 60% of the size of the common outdoor advertising allowed by MDT and I do not think it will look out of place at the interchange.
 - c. I encourage the larger size because it would be seen from a greater distance when approaching at highway speeds, thereby enhancing safety with more time to reduce speed and exit.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



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