KWIK TRIP | KWIK STAR

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City of Ames, IA
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, IA 50010

RE: Text Amendment Request - Signage - Special Use - Computerized/Digital Scrolling - A portion of 3220 Cameron School Road and George Washington Carver Ave.

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

We respectfully submit this letter requesting revisions and amendments to Special Use Permit Section 29.1503, Subsection 6, and the Convenience General Services (CGS) Zone Development Standards related to signage in Section 12. Specifically, we ask that the City and Council consider modifying the standards to allow for the requested revisions.

Special Use Permit Section 29.1503 (6) Lapse of Approval. All Special Use Permits shall lapse 12 months after the date of issuance unless the use is undertaken, or a building permit has been issued and actual construction started. Where unusual circumstances may prevent compliance with this time requirement, the Zoning Board of Adjustment may, upon written request by the affected permittee, extend the time for required start of construction an additional 60 days. Excavation shall not be considered construction for the purpose of enforcing this Section.

Kwik Trip request that all Special Use Permits shall lapse 24 months after the date of issuance. The anticipated construction and completion of the roundabout at George Washington Carver Avenue and Cameron School Road will extend the project's development timeline, necessitating additional time beyond the standard permit period.

(12) Signage
(d) Number

(i) The number of wall-mounted signs shall not exceed two (2) signs per tenant space, including lettering on awnings.

Kwik Trip requests that this be increased to three wall signs, as its site has frontage on three public streets. In no case shall the three signs comprise a combined total of more than 86 square feet. (CGS would currently allow signage of 86 sq.ft., but only on two signs, one of which must front on an arterial street to gain the additional square footage). A wall sign facing a local road may be no larger than 16 square feet. (On the Kwik Trip site, this would mean the wall sign facing south; such verbiage would prevent another CGS-zoned site in the future from installing a large sign along a local classification street, which is more likely to have residential uses.)

(ii) Only one monument sign is permitted for each principal building on a lot. A monument sign is not permitted on a lot that is not the site of a principal building.

Kwik Trip requests that sites with frontage on two or more arterial or major collector streets be permitted two monument signs per site. Such signs shall only be permitted to front on the arterial/major collector street frontages. Only one monument sign shall be permitted on each arterial/major collector frontage, and the monument signs on site shall be separated by a minimum of 150'.

(iii) The cumulative area of all incidental signs shall not exceed 32 square feet per building for wall signs and shall not exceed eight square feet per site for ground signs, except that incidental signage on the rear façade of a building that does not face a public right-of-way shall not be included in the maximum incidental sign area.

Kwik Trip requests the cumulative area of all incidental signs shall not exceed 30 square feet per site for ground signs, since parking duration/no parking signs are included in this group. The parking signs are critical to prevent the store from becoming a park-and-ride lot and keep people from parking for long periods, such as on football weekends (we've faced the issue of people attempting to camp at stores). For the same reasons, Kwik Trip is installing several parking signs at Stores #1768 (S. 16th and S. Grand) and #1770 (South Dakota and Mortensen).

(e) Height restrictions. The maximum permissible height for a monument sign is eight feet, including the sign base; that is, the top of a monument sign shall be no more than eight feet above the grade of the site on which it is erected. However, the height of a monument sign, including the base, may be up to twelve feet if the sign is erected on a lot that abuts on an arterial street.

Kwik Trip requests that the two monument signs are allowed to be:

- 12' tall/64 square feet
- 8' tall/32 square feet

These dimensions are similar to current CGS code standards in terms of sign height/sign area.

(i) Computerized/digital scrolling signs are only permitted if the lot on which it is located abuts an arterial street, and the computerized/digital scrolling sign faces the arterial street.

Kwik Trip proposes that an Electronic Message Sign/EMC be permitted in CGS, subject to reasonable lighting standards. The EMC Kwik Trip proposes for use is programmed by the manufacturer to operate at 8,000 nits during the day and, when displaying all-white content, measure 320 nits (four percent brightness) at night, meaning most content would measure less than 320 nits. The EMC is equipped with a photosensor to adjust brightness in relation to ambient light.

No changes are requested to Sec. 21.131. ELECTRONIC MESSAGE SIGNS. The EMC Kwik Trip proposes would comply with the current standards of 21.131.

Allowing these amendments would enable Kwik Trip to implement signage that is consistent with our standard sign package implemented at stores across the Upper Midwest. Consistent signage helps customers easily identify a Kwik Trip/Kwik Star store, enhances wayfinding on site, and reinforces the strong brand recognition that Kwik Trip has established within the communities we serve. While often recognized as a convenience store, Kwik Trip also serves as a neighborhood destination for groceries, fresh food, and much more.

Please consider these amendments to better accommodate development and retail signage while preserving the character and appearance of the community. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. We appreciate the City's continued efforts to ensure that local regulations remain practical, forward-looking, and supportive of economic development. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further or provide additional information if helpful.

Sincerely,

Travis Small
Real Estate Development Manager