



Honorable Chair and Members of the Hermosa Beach Planning Commission

LOCATION: 1100 PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

A SIGN VARIANCE (VAR25-02), TO ALLOW NO MORE THAN THREE WALL SIGNS PER BUSINESS, NOT TO EXCEED 35 WALL SIGNS FOR THE SUBJECT SITE, AND TO ALLOW AN ADDITIONAL 10 PERCENT INCREASE IN MAXIMUM SIGN AREA AS A PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN FOR AN EXISTING SHOPPING CENTER IN THE GENERAL COMMERCIAL (C-3) ZONE

CEQA: Determine the project qualifies for Class 11 Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15311 (Associate Planner Jake Whitney)

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends Planning Commission:

1. Determine the Project qualifies for Class 11 Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15311; and
2. Adopt a Resolution (**Attachment 1**) approving a Sign Variance (VAR25-02) at 1100 Pacific Coast Highway subject to conditions.

Executive Summary:

The following report details the request for a Sign Variance (VAR) by Henry Pyle of Park Pacific Realty Partners LP to allow for a maximum of three wall signs per business entity not to exceed 35 wall signs for the subject site, and to allow an additional 10 percent increase in the allowable maximum sign area at an existing 129,736-square-foot multi-tenant shopping center located at 1100 Pacific Coast Highway. Staff requests the Planning Commission review the application materials, consider the applicant's request, and adopt a resolution approving VAR 25-02 subject to conditions of approval.

Background:

The shopping center at 1100 Pacific Coast Highway is an existing 129,736-square-foot multi-tenant commercial plaza in the C-3 (General Commercial) Zone (**Attachment 2**). The site currently features three buildings. The largest is a two-story multi-tenant structure anchored by Trader Joe's. In addition, there are two smaller freestanding buildings: one houses a State Farm office, while the other is a now vacant coffee house tenant space with a drive-through. The project site is bordered by Pacific Coast Highway to the West,

Aviation Boulevard and Greenwood Park to the South, Aubrey Park Court to the East, and another commercial property to the North. The subject site is located outside of the Coastal Zone. Vehicular access to the project site is availed via Pacific Coast Highway, Aviation Boulevard, and Aubrey Park Court. The commercial property also currently contains multiple non-conforming wall signs that exceed the maximum of one wall sign per business limit on the property. There is also a non-conforming monument sign at the corner of Aviation and Aubrey Court which encroaches slightly into the public right-of-way. If approved, these non-conforming signs would be eliminated, and the applicant would be required to conform to the attached comprehensive sign plan. The Planning Commission also granted the subject property a Precise Development Plan on October 13, 2025, to allow for a commercial remodel consisting of site plan modifications including parking upgrades, accessibility upgrades, landscaping changes, an architectural new clock tower feature, and interior tenant improvements. The meeting link, which discusses these changes in greater detail, is provided in the table below for reference.

Site Information	
General Plan	Recreational Commercial (RC)
Zoning	General Commercial (C-3)
Lot Size	129,736 square feet
Existing Building Square Footage	49,454 square feet
Surrounding Zoning	North: General Commercial (C-3), Two-Family Residential (R-2), and Single Family Residential R-1)
	East: Single Family Residential (R-1), General Commercial (C-3)
	South: General Commercial (C-3), Open Space (OS)
	West: General Commercial (C-3), Public Facilities (PF)
Surrounding Uses	North: Commercial & Residential
	East: Residential & Commercial
	South: Commercial & Greenwood Park
	West: Commercial & Hermosa Beach Community Center

Past Commission Actions

Meeting Date	Description
<u>Hermosa Improvement Commission:</u> September 19, 1978	Hermosa Improvement Commission grants a variance permitting a fourth can on the existing pole sign
<u>Planning Commission:</u> March 1, 1988	Planning Commission approves a parking plan for a 400-square-foot addition
<u>Planning Commission:</u> July 7, 1992	Planning Commission approves a conditional use permit to allow on-sale beer, wine, and live entertainment in conjunction with an existing restaurant
<u>Planning Commission:</u> May 18, 1993	Planning Commission approves a conditional use permit amendment to allow a twenty-four (24) hour operation in conjunction with a grocery market (Ralphs) with off-sale general alcohol
<u>Planning Commission:</u> September 16, 1997	Planning Commission approves a conditional use permit, precise development plan, and parking plan amendment to allow the installation of a drive-through window at an existing coffee house in an existing center with less than the required parking
<u>Planning Commission:</u> April 15, 2003	Planning Commission approves a conditional use permit to allow collocation of wireless telecommunication facility.
<u>Planning Commission:</u> <u>October 13, 2025</u>	Planning Commission approves a Precise Development Plan to allow new landscaping, accessibility upgrades, a parking reconfiguration, new façade treatments, a clock tower feature measuring 35 feet in height, and interior tenant improvements

Project Description

The applicant, Henry Pyle of Park Pacific Realty Partners LP, is requesting a Sign Variance (VAR) from the City to allow for a maximum of three wall signs per business entity not to exceed 35 wall signs for the subject site, and to allow an additional 10 percent in the allowable maximum sign area at an existing 129,736-square-foot shopping center located at 1100 Pacific Coast Highway. If approved, the variance would allow for these alternate signage standards to apply to the subject site in compliance with the attached comprehensive sign plan, rather than the standard one wall sign per business limitation in accordance with Hermosa Beach Municipal Code Section 17.50.140. Currently, the maximum anticipated number of tenants at the shopping center would be 17 tenants. This

would amount to just over two wall signs per business on average if the sign variance were to be approved.

C-3 Sign Code	Request
One (1) wall sign allowed per business	No more than three (3) wall signs allowed per business but not to exceed 35 wall signs for the entire building site.
Allowable sign area based on lineal building frontage	10% additional signage

Discussion:

The goal of the applicant’s plan is to enhance visibility for the customers and businesses of the shopping center. The parcels that form the shopping center collectively make up the second largest shopping center within the city limits (after Plaza Hermosa), and it contains access points on multiple sides of the lot, (Pacific Coast Highway, Aviation Boulevard, and Aubrey Park Cour) which makes adequate visibility a challenge for tenants when signage cannot be spread out to cover the various access points. The line of sight to the tenants is further obstructed by Greenwood Park, which blocks the direct line of sight from onlookers at the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Aviation Boulevard.

For comparison purposes, staff reviewed other similar zoned and sized lots. The next largest commercial parcel in the City after 1100 Pacific Coast Highway which is currently occupied by the Lazy Acres grocery store at 2510 Pacific Coast Highway, is 27 percent smaller (94,000 square feet) than the properties comprising 1100 Pacific Coast Highway (129,736 square feet) yet it has 31 percent more unobstructed frontage (478 linear feet) along Pacific Coast Highway and Artesia Boulevard than 1100 Pacific Coast Highway does along Pacific Coast Highway and Aviation Boulevard (328 linear feet). This is because the site is not encumbered by visual obstructions or has as many access points in need of visibility in the same way as the subject site is. Greenwood Park obstructs approximately 234 linear feet of building frontage and thus reduces the property’s frontage by approximately 41 percent of what the frontage otherwise would be. Meanwhile, the median parcel size for C-3 zoned properties in the City is just over 5,000 square feet, while the subject property is significantly larger, with the buildings located farther from the right-of-way. The applicant feels that allowing for additional signage on the subject property may help mitigate some of these challenges associated with an unusually large, obscured site with various access points. **(Attachment 3).**

Sign Variance Findings

In accordance with HBMC Section 17.50.190 the Planning Commission may grant a variance to the specific requirements of the City’s adopted regulations regarding signage provided a demonstrated hardship exists and the proposed comprehensive sign plan will

not adversely affect public safety or the design and appearance of the surrounding neighborhood when the following conditions are found to exist:

- A. A variance authorized is not a grant of a special privilege inconsistent with the limitations on other properties in the vicinity; and

The subject property is the second largest commercial property within the City limits, consisting of 129,736 square feet and has access points from multiple streets (Pacific Coast Highway, Aviation Blvd, Aubrey Park Ct, 13th St). The southwest portion of the center abuts Greenwood Park, which obstructs the line of sight from the abutting areas of the public right-of-way by approximately 234 linear feet. These circumstances are unique and present a hardship not applicable to other similarly zoned or sized properties. The variance is necessary for the preservation of a substantial property right possessed by other properties in the vicinity, which is the right to effectively advertise the presence of goods and services available within the shopping center. Without the allowance of additional signage at such a large and prominent site, the property would be at a competitive disadvantage relative to other smaller commercial properties (in which the median size is 5,000 square feet where signage visibility is not as much of a challenge due to a smaller scale, fewer access points in need of signage, and fewer visual obstructions).

- B. Special conditions and extraordinary circumstances apply to the property and do not apply to the other properties in the vicinity so that the strict application of this chapter works a demonstrated hardship on the particular property; and

The subject property is the second largest commercial property within the City limits consisting of 129,736 square feet and has access points from multiple streets (Pacific Coast Highway, Aviation Blvd, Aubrey Park Ct, 13th St). The site is also visually obstructed by Greenwood Park, which blocks the line of sight from the abutting areas of the public right-of-way by approximately 41 percent or 234 linear feet. These circumstances are exceptional and present a significant hardship to the property owner and commercial tenants to ensure that the businesses within the plaza are sufficiently visible from the adjoining rights of way and by those who pass by.

- C. The variance will not adversely affect public safety and the design and appearance of the signing and structures of the surrounding area.

The variance would not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity and zoning district. The variance request consists of signage and would have no impact on any physical structures or improvements beyond aesthetics. The aesthetic impacts of increased signage would not be detrimental or overly concentrated due to the sheer size of the subject

property and the number of various access points that the public may utilize to access the subject property. Additionally, all non-conforming signage would be eliminated as a condition of this variance's approval (Condition of Approval #2). This includes the elimination of a non-confirming monument sign that encroaches into the public right-of-way

Environmental Determination:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed project qualifies for a Class 11 categorical exemption, Accessory Structures as defined in section 15311 of the CEQA Guidelines, as it consists of a variance to allow additional signage at the subject property. Moreover, none of the exceptions to the categorical exemption(s) apply, nor would the project result in a significant cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place over time or have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances or damage a scenic highway or scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

Public Notification:

For the March 17, 2025, Planning Commission hearing, a total of 564 public hearing notices were mailed to the applicant, occupants, and property owners of properties within a 500-foot radius on March 5, 2026. A legal ad was published on March 6, 2026, in the Easy Reader, a newspaper of general circulation. Additionally, the applicant received a notice poster to post on-site and provided proof of posting a minimum of ten days in advance of the public hearing, in accordance with HBMC Section 17.68.050. Public notification materials are included as **Attachment 5**. As of the writing of the report, staff has received no public comments.

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Signage Plans
3. Applicant Narrative
4. C-3 Zoned Parcels Map
5. Public Notification Package

Respectfully Submitted by: Jake Whitney, Associate Planner

Concur: Alexis Oropeza, Planning Manager

Legal Review: Sarah Locklin, Interim Assistant City Attorney

Approved: Alison Becker, Community Development Director