

## **Project Background**

The City of Hermosa Beach has approved plans for a comprehensive façade renovation and overall site enhancement for the neighborhood shopping center at 1100 Pacific Coast Highway in Hermosa Beach. The proposed plans will improve the aesthetic appeal and revitalize the center, while also enhancing pedestrian access and circulation throughout the property.

In conjunction with this renovation, the proposed signage program establishes a cohesive and coordinated sign package that supports tenant visibility while elevating the overall customer experience on site.

## **Unique Site Conditions, Access and Visibility Constraints**

The shopping center at 1100 Pacific Coast Highway occupies a uniquely large and complex site within the City of Hermosa Beach. The property exceeds 50,000 square feet in area and is located at the intersection of Pacific Coast Highway and Aviation Boulevard. While this intersection would typically provide strong visibility for a commercial center, several site-specific conditions significantly limit tenant identification when compared to other C-3 zoned properties.

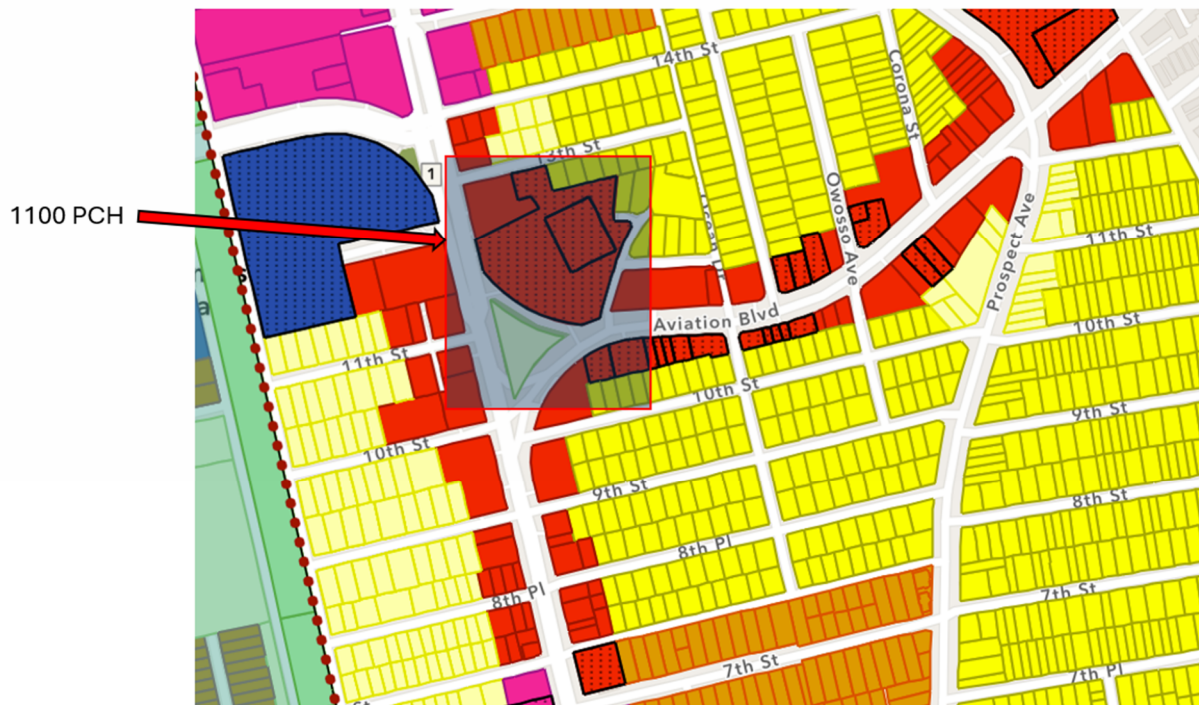
Although the site includes frontage along both Pacific Coast Highway and Aviation Boulevard, direct visibility from these corridors is constrained by multiple physical features. Greenwood Park occupies the prominent corner at the Pacific Coast Highway and Aviation Boulevard intersection, substantially blocking pedestrian and vehicular approach views to the primary tenant façades. In addition, freestanding buildings along the west-facing elevations further obstruct sightlines from Pacific Coast Highway, reducing the visibility of interior tenant spaces as vehicles travel along the corridor.

The site also contains multiple access points and a multi-level tenant configuration that differs from a typical neighborhood commercial center. Ground-floor retail tenants are accessed from several directions, while second-floor office tenants—including medical and dental uses—are accessed from an elevated deck and rear parking area along Aubrey Park Court or an internal staircase from the main parking lot. These second-floor tenants have limited visibility from both Pacific Coast Highway and Aviation Boulevard, relying primarily on internal circulation and wayfinding for customer access.

Collectively, the site's size, fragmented frontage conditions, obstructed sightlines, and multiple tenant access points result in a commercial environment where traditional street-facing visibility is limited and intuitive wayfinding is more challenging than at other C-3 zoned sites within the City.



**View from Pacific Coast Highway Aviation Boulevard Intersection**



**C-3 Zoning Sites Visibility Comparison**

### **Wall Signage Limitations Under the Code**

Per Section 17.15.140 of the Hermosa Beach Municipal Code, only one (1) wall sign is allowed per tenant in the C-3 zoning. This standard is generally appropriate for smaller commercial properties with clear street frontage and unobstructed views from adjacent roadways.

However, due to the unique site conditions described above, the one wall sign per tenant limitation does not adequately serve the visibility needs of this project. The combination of obstructed primary frontage, internalized tenant locations, multiple building elevations, and second-floor uses results in limited opportunities for tenants to identify their presence to customers approaching from different directions.

As a result, strict application of the one wall sign per tenant standard would disproportionately impact tenant visibility at this site when compared to other C-3 properties that benefit from direct and unobstructed street exposure. Additional wall signage, strategically located and carefully integrated into the building architecture, is necessary to provide reasonable tenant identification, improve wayfinding throughout the site, and support the long-term viability of the shopping center without detracting from the overall aesthetic or character of the surrounding area.

### **Requested Signage Variance and Overall Sign Count**

To address these unique conditions, this application requests approval of eighteen (18) tenant wall signs through a variance. We are requesting that each tenant be allowed a maximum of three (3) wall signs per tenant, but the site shall not exceed thirty-five (35) total wall signs. With the anticipated occupancy at the center, this represents an average of just over 1 additional wall sign per tenant. The specific locations of the wall signage and intended uses are described below.

- Parking Lot Kiosk Space (formerly Starbucks) - 2 additional wall signs (3 total, labeled as 3A, 3B and 3D in the signage package). This is actually a reduction of 1 sign as compared to the most recent signage which was approved for the former tenant, Starbucks. As this is an independent triangular shaped building, surrounded by parking lot and drive through and is directly behind Greenfield Park, the additional wall signage is critical to a new tenant's success.
- Parking Lot Kiosk Space (currently State Farm) - Two (2) additional wall signs (labeled as 3D in the signage package) to help patrons who are entering the shopping center from Aviation find the kiosk closer to PCH.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Story Tenants – Parking Directional Sign – Space for 4 tenant wall signs particularly for the 2<sup>nd</sup> story tenants who have parking behind the building on Aubry Court. This signage location also includes a directional sign towards the back parking lot (labeled as 2B in the signage package).
- Additional Visibility on and from Aviation – 8 additional tenant wall signage opportunities, split between a more visible location on the corner of the new architectural feature (labeled signs 3C in the signage package) and a lower standing sign (labeled 2A in the signage package) closer to the existing non-conforming monument sign on Aviation and Aubry Court for the businesses in the Center to try to capture potential customers heading down Aviation before they commit to their travel on PCH.
- End-Cap Tenants – At the corner of the 2 story space closest to Aviation, we are requesting one (1) additional wall signs per tenant on each floor right at their frontage facing Aviation. As these are the only tenants with a true face towards Aviation, it’s important that they have a wall sign on both the PCH and Aviation frontages. These signs are redlined in the below drawing and would meet criteria of Sign 4 shown in the signage package.



### Sign Area Allocation

Additionally, while the number of signs will vary by tenant based on individual frontage conditions, total allowable permanent sign area is calculated by the City at the time of

each sign permit, pursuant to Hermosa Beach Municipal Code Section 17.50.120(D), based on building frontage.

Due to the limited primary frontage of many tenant suites and the lack of qualifying secondary frontage under the Code, the project requests a variance to allow tenant sign area to be 10% above base allowance.

Under this approach, the maximum allowable sign area for each tenant will continue to be evaluated and enforced through the City's standard sign permit review process. In addition, all signage will comply with the maximum sign dimensions, locations, and design parameters shown in the approved Signage Package, which further limits sign size and ensures a cohesive and appropriately scaled signage program.

### **Architectural Integration**

Please see the attached drawings for the proposed signage locations, sizes, and overall composition. As illustrated, the signage program is thoughtfully integrated into the approved architectural renovation and is designed to be visually balanced, orderly, and proportional to the building façades. The request represents a measured and coordinated increase to the code standard that responds to the site's unique size, configuration, and access conditions, resulting in only just over one additional wall signs per tenant on average. The proposed signage improves tenant visibility and wayfinding while maintaining a high-quality aesthetic consistent with the City's standards and the intent of the façade improvements.