

Initial Project Review

Sign Variance: Meridian – Rite Aid Store #6232

Application Number: 952741

Parcel Number: 0419156049

South Hill Advisory Commission Meeting: April 5, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this meeting will be held virtually. To participate, visit www.Zoom.com and click “Join a Meeting” or call 253-215-8782, then enter the Meeting ID: 989 8771 1994 and Passcode: 163474, or click on the following link:

<https://piercecountywa.zoom.us/j/98987711994?pwd=VmlkNHIMWm44V1hHc1dKMnhbjEwQT09>

For additional questions regarding the virtual meeting process, contact Tiffany Aliment at 253-798-3226 or tiffany.aliment@piercecountywa.gov.

Proposal: The applicant requests a Variance from the allowed sign square footage for the main entrance of the building. The applicant has applied for a 30-square foot sign on an additional street facade. This sign is exceeding the 30 square feet allowed by 30 square feet.

Project Location: The site is in the Urban Village (UV) zone classification in the South Hill Community Plan area, located at 12811 Meridian East, Puyallup, WA 98373, within Section 15, T19N, R04W, W.M., in Council District #1.

Staff Recommendation: County Staff is reviewing this proposal for compliance with all applicable policies, codes, and regulations. The County recommends approval of the proposed sign variance subject to regulatory requirements and recommended conditions of approval.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA): SEPA review is not required for this proposal.

County Contact: Kaycee K. Hathaway, Associate Planner, kaycee.hathaway@piercecountywa.gov
253-798-3297

Pierce County Online Permit Information:

<https://pals.piercecountywa.gov/palsonline/#/permitSearch/permit/departementStatus?applPermitId=952741>



Project Data

Complete Application Date: February 22, 2021

Initial Project Review Sent: March 29, 2021

Property Owner: Rite Aid Corp #36232
PO Box 839
Camp Hill, PA 17001

Applicants: Rite Aid
12811 Meridian Street East
Puyallup, WA 98373

Agent: Tracey Diehl
6487 Hillard Drive
Winchester, OH 43110
tracey@expeditethediehl.com

Legal and Public Notice

- *March 1, 2021*: Notice of Application and Public Meeting Notice, was sent to property owners within a radius of 300 feet, but not less than two parcels deep, around the exterior boundaries of the site.
- *March 22, 2021*: Legal notice was published in the official County newspaper (*Tacoma News Tribune*) advertising the South Hill Advisory Commission (SHAC) public meeting.
- *March 15, 2021*: Public Notice sign was posted on the site, confirmed with a Declaration of Posting.

2017 County Aerial

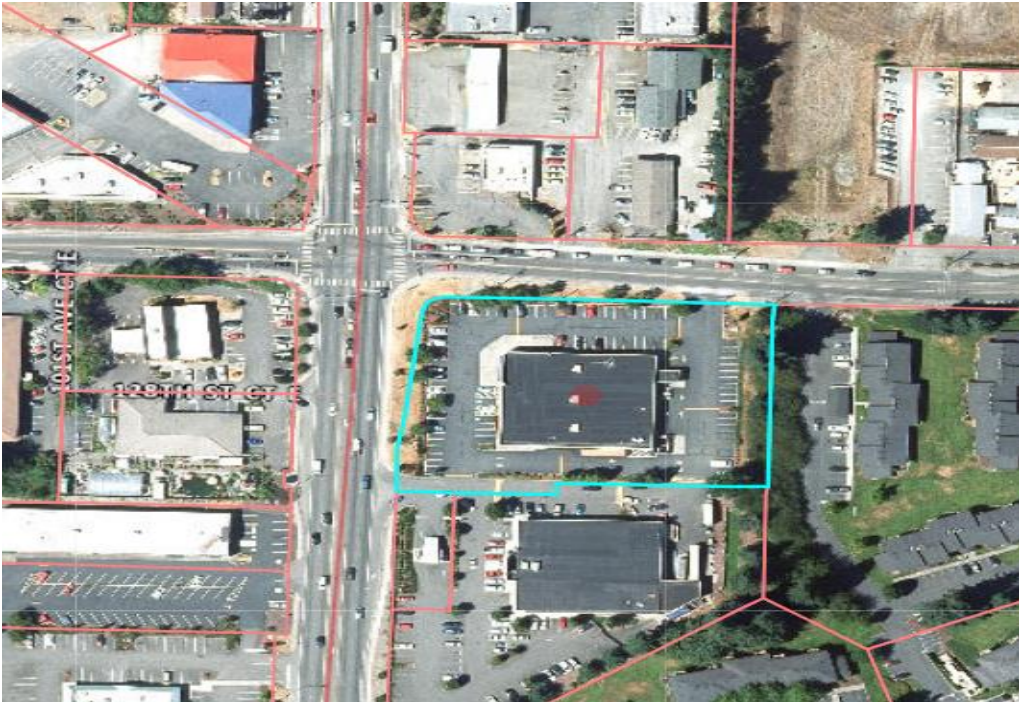


Figure 1: Project will be occurring on the highlighted parcel.

Proposed Site Plan

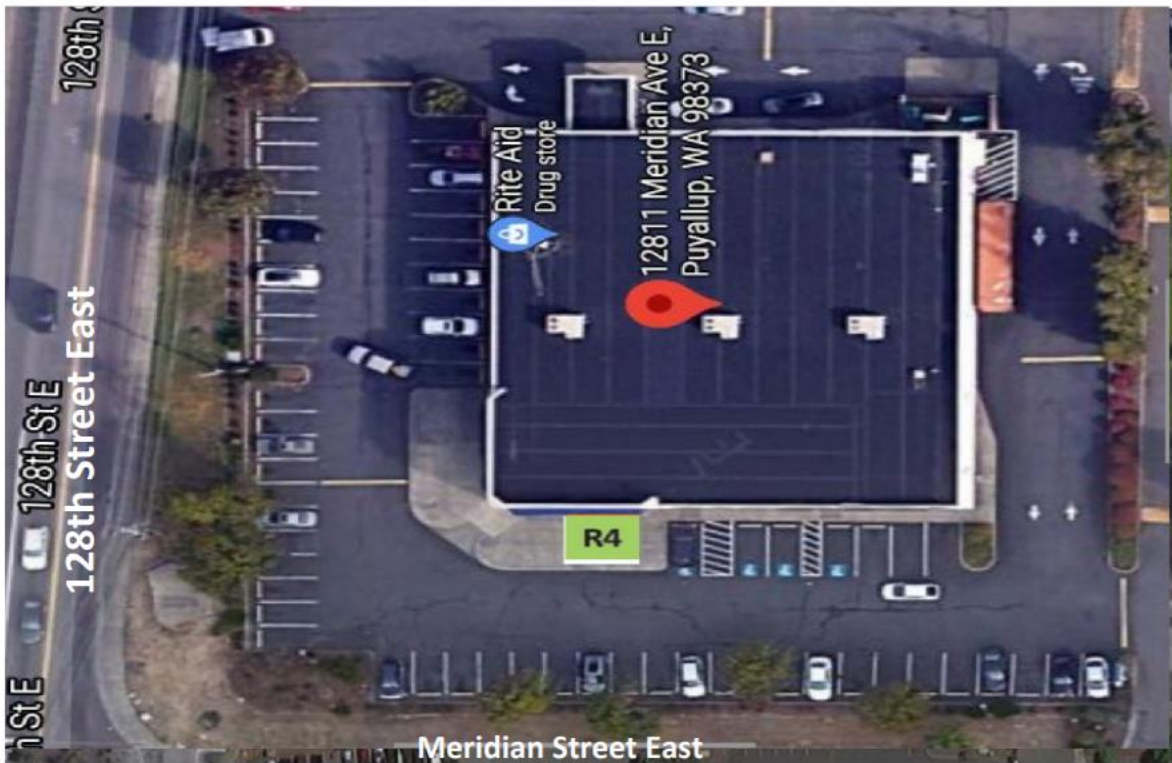


Figure 2: Site Plan

EXISTING



PAINT SCHEDULE RA1:

- PAINT #1
SW 7668 - March Wind
- PAINT #2
SW 7669 - Summit Gray

Existing signs to be removed; wall to be patched and painted as required

PROPOSED



Figure 3: Location of existing sign to be removed and proposed sign.

FACE LIT CHANNEL LETTERS - Linear Logo w/ Shield

RA-LNR-custom

Scale: 3/8" = 1'-0"

30 square feet

R4

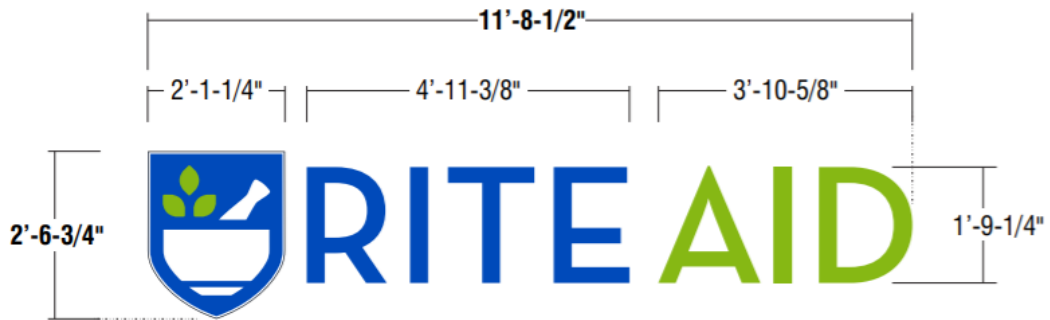


Figure 4: Proposed sign size

Comments from the Public and Agencies

- Comments received on this proposal may be found by accessing the online permit information referenced on page 1.
- No comments have been received from the public.

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning Designation

LAND USE		ZONING
North	128 th Street East	N/A
South	Tacoma Goodwill (General Sales of Merchandise) & Drive Thru Coffee Stand	Urban Village (UV)
West	SR 161 – Meridian Street East	N/A
East	Multi-Family Complex	Urban Village (UV)

Initial Staff Review for Consistency with Applicable Land Use Policies and Regulations

The proposal is subject to review for conformance with Pierce County plans, codes and regulations.

Title 19A Pierce County Comprehensive Plan

The County Comprehensive Plan addresses signs with the goal that they establish a system of sign controls that is uniform, balanced, and minimizes the number and size of signs while ensuring an opportunity for effective advertising.

- D-16.1 Adequately control the size, type, design, and location of signs.
- D-16.3 Promote the clear identification of and direction to businesses.
- D-16.5 Encourage visual consistency at street level and for passing motorists.

Staff Comment: The application meets the policies of the Countywide Comprehensive Plan.

South Hill Community Plan (Pierce County Code, Title 19A)

The Community Plan sets new standards to establish and implement uniform and balanced requirements for new signs and an amortization schedule for the removal of signs made nonconforming by the adoption of regulations implementing this plan.

- SH D-16.1 Ensure that signage complements, rather than dominated or intrudes upon, the character and visual amenity of an area, the buildings on which they are displayed, and general environment.
- SH D-16.2 Ensure that signage is integrated with the overall architectural framework and structural elements of the building, reinforcing the shape and proportion to the façade through such techniques as detailing, use of colors and material and placement.
- SH D16.6 Allow monument and wall signs.
- SH D-16.10 Prohibit canvas canopy signs and canopy signs that are back lit.

Staff Comment: The application meets the policies of the South Hill Community Comprehensive Plan. The applicant is removing a canvas Canopy sign which is now prohibited and replacing with an allowed wall sign. The sign to be removed dominated the street façade and did not compliment the buildings architecture. The Proposed is not dominating or intruding upon the character of the area or building and is complementing the existing structure.

Title 18B Development Regulations – Signs

- **Building and Wall Signs (Title 18B.20.040):**
Temporary and permanent building, window and wall sign area shall not occupy more than 20 percent of the total area of the building facade or the total maximum area allowed in the applicable Sign Table, whichever is less. For purposes of this calculation, signs such as open/closed, store hours, address, and other similar information shall not be included;

Staff Comment: The proposal is not meeting the sign table allowed square footage and a sign variance is being applied for.

- **South Hill Community Plan Area Table 18B.30.110-1 – UV Zoning**
The Urban Village (UV) zone allows for a maximum square footage of the building sign and logo for each tenant, by size of tenant’s interior square footage.

Staff Comment: The building that the wall sign will be located on is about 16,500 square feet in size, meaning that the allowed wall signage is 30 square feet in size. The applicant has applied for a 30-square foot wall sign on each road frontage facade. This sign requiring the variance is exceeding the 30 square feet allowed by 30 square feet. The proposal is not meeting this standard and the applicant has applied for a sign variance.

- **Variances (18B.10.080)**
An applicant who seeks an exception from the provisions of Title 18B PCC may pursue a sign variance.

1. Exceptional or unusual circumstances, not resulting from any act of the applicant, apply to the project location and not generally to other properties in the vicinity;

Applicant Response: This is a corner lot, all other businesses on the corner lots have more signage. This is a reduction of the existing nonconformity – the other businesses on the corner lots also exceed the Ordinance.

Staff Response: Staff believes that this condition is being met, as 30 square feet of signage on a corner lot is not sufficient to advertise, when the corner lot is on two arterial roads. Also, the applicant is reducing the amount of nonconforming signage from 420 square feet to 30 square feet.

2. The sign proposal is outstanding in design;

Applicant response: The façade is being renovated - resulting in the removal of the existing signs and replacing them with channel letters.

Staff Response: Staff believes that this condition is being met. The sign matches all signs proposed on the property. Design requirements outlined within the code are being met for the design of the sign.

3. The variance request is the minimum necessary to serve its intended purpose:

Applicant response: The variance requested is necessary for the signs to be visible at posted speed limits in a busy intersection.

Staff Response: Staff believes that to adequately direct customers a sign is necessary on both arterials. Staff believes that a Wall Sign of 30 square feet on each road frontage façade is large enough to catch the attention of customers prior to each entrance of the Rite Aid.

4. The variance request is consistent with the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the Development Regulations; and

Applicant response: The regulation of signs in Pierce County achieves the following purposes:

- A. To allow businesses, institutions, and individuals to exercise their right to free speech by displaying information on a sign and to allow audiences to receive such information.
 - The proposal will allow the business to have signage that is compatible with the surrounding properties – all of which have signs on multiple elevations when on a corner lot.
- B. To promote and maintain visually attractive residential retail commercial, historic open space, and industrial districts.
 - The signs proposed reduce the existing nonconformity and are in keeping with the intent to maintain attractive aesthetics. Channel letters are appropriate for a commercial space.
- C. To provide for reasonable and appropriate communication and identification for on- premises signs in commercial districts in order to foster successful businesses.
 - The signs proposed are reasonable in size and necessary for clear visibility for motorists that are trying to locate this destination at a busy intersection.
- D. To provide for reasonable and appropriate communication for on-premises signs within industrial districts. The signs proposed are for a commercially zoned property.
- E. To encourage the use of creative and visually attractive signs.
 - This project will provide the façade with a facelift and the removal of the existing awning. The replacement of the awning is a reduction of overall sign area and the new signs will be very attractive and visually pleasing.

- F. To ensure that the type and location of signs are designed to reduce sign distraction and confusion that may be contributing factors in traffic congestion and accidents and maintain a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment.
 - The signs identify the façade of the building; they are small and do not produce clutter on the very large façade. The signs are designed to reduce distraction and confusion.
- G. To protect property values.
 - An upgrade to this location with paint, removal of awnings and new signage will enhance the overall property value.
- H. To promote the public health, safety and welfare by avoiding conflicts between signs and traffic control devices, avoiding traffic hazards, and reducing visual distractions and obstructions.
 - The signs promote the health and safety of residents, as this is a pharmacy and adequate branding is necessary for patrons that are seeking medications and health related [potentially] life saving services.
- I. To protect and preserve the aesthetic quality and physical appearance of the County.
 - The upgrade to the signage will reduce the existing nonconformity and enhance the appearance overall.
- J. To provide a balanced and fair legal framework for design, construction and placement of signs.
 - The signs are for fair competition throughout. This location is on a corner where others also have multiple signs. It's important for them to be able to take their place in the community with their new trademarked logo.
- K. To provide fair and consistent permitting and enforcement.
 - The signs will be permitted properly according to all requirements.

Staff Response: Staff has found that the proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations.

- 5. Applicable community plan and Comprehensive Plan objectives and goals are being met through this design proposal, and no objective of the applicable community plan or Comprehensive Plan is being deviated from.

Applicant response: The goals of design review within the South Hill Community Plan area are to:

- A. Improve the visual and functional quality of new commercial, industrial, and residential developments. This will be accomplished through the implementation of design standards that are intended to restore and enhance the aesthetic character of the plan area and improve the integrity and function of on-site critical areas;
- B. Encourage well designed buildings and sites;
- C. Provide a menu of design standards that allow an applicant to choose from a variety of styles that fit the desired character of the plan area;
- D. Communicate to land use applicants the goals of the plan area and the role that design review takes in implementing the plan; and

- E. Incorporate into permit approvals a clear listing of all conditions and required improvements prior to final permit issuance.

This proposal will provide a cohesive and consistent visual identity for Rite Aid while responding to functional characteristics of the existing retail pharmacy. There will be no architectural alterations here. The proposal is in keeping with the community plan objective. The community plan objective discourages backlit awnings. This project will remove the back lit awnings.

Staff Comment: Staff has found that the proposal is consistent with the Community Plan and Comprehensive Plan objectives and goals.

Regulatory Requirements and Recommended Conditions of Approval

Should the Examiner approve the project the following regulatory requirement should be included in the decision.

1. Completion or substantial progress toward completion of the approved project shall occur within two years of the effective date of the Examiner's approval of the Variance, or all approvals granted herein shall automatically become null and void.

Rite Aid Store #6232-Meridian Variance IPR SHAC-KH.docx