



**Item Number: 1**

**Planning Commission**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Meeting of: March 12, 2025**

**Submitted By:**

Mina Morgan, Associate Planner

**Case:**

PLAN24-00006

**Subject:**

A Site Plan with an Environmental Exemption to allow for the development of an approximately 5,900-square-foot restaurant with a drive-thru, that includes a deviation from municipal code sign standards to allow for a wall sign that extends above the parapet and awning signage on a vacant property zoned C-2.

**Applicant:**

**Steen Design Studio**

**Location:**

Approximately 400' feet west of the intersection of Locust Avenue and Bear Valley Road.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing, receive testimony regarding the proposed project and take the following actions:

- 1. Environmental Assessment** – Find the project categorically exempt under Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) entitled “In-Fill Development Projects”; and
- 2. Site Plan** – Adopt Resolution No. P-25-007, approving Site Plan Case No. PLAN24-00006, subject to the attached conditions of approval.

**Summary:**

The applicant is requesting approval of this project to allow for the development of an approximately 5,900-square-foot Walts Frozen Custard and Burgers restaurant with drive-thru that will include a dual lane design for vehicular service as well as an approximately 2,800 sq. ft. dining room and 2,079 sq. ft. of outdoor dining area. Designed

in a classic roadside diner style, the new restaurant will occupy approximately 1.8-acres of the total 4.6-acre vacant project site, located west of the intersection of Locust Avenue and Bear Valley Road. The proposal meets most requirements outlined in Title 16 of the Victorville Municipal Code (the Development Code), except for signage, given the projects proposed deviation from wall sign standards that will allow signage to extend above the parapet and awning to better reflect a period-appropriate theme. Therefore, considering the site is located within the C-2 (General Commercial) zone, generally complies with Development Code standards, and because no opposition to the project has been received, staff supports the project as proposed.

## **Discussion/Analysis:**

### **1. Environmental Assessment.**

Pursuant to Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) entitled "In-Fill Development Projects", new construction of a building on a site less than five acres in size can be found Categorically Exempt from CEQA if the project meets certain benchmarks. In accordance with the noted CEQA Section 15332, Staff finds that the subject proposal meets said benchmarks and is Categorically Exempt from CEQA because:

- The scope of work area is less than five acres in size and substantially surrounded by urban development including an improved roadway, and abutting commercial uses;
- The proposal is consistent with the underlying General Plan and zoning regulations within the General Commercial zone as a drive-thru restaurant development is permitted by the underlying C-2 Zone District;
- The scope of work area has no value as habitat for rare, endangered, threatened, or special status species based on the results of the biological resources assessment;
- The development can be served by all required utilities and public services as conditioned; and
- Approval of the project will not result in any significant effects to traffic, noise, air or water quality given the development standards required by the Victorville Municipal Code.

### **2. Site Plan**

#### General Information & Location

- The site is located approximately 400' feet west of the intersection of Locust Avenue and Bear Valley Road. The restaurant parcel is surrounded by commercially zoned property on all sides with San Bernardino County Fleet Service to the north, Victor Valley Plaza to the west, Dunkin Donuts to the east and a multi-tenant commercial pad the south.
- The project has been designed to follow the natural contours of the site and its surroundings. The site layout provides enhanced landscaping throughout the

development and along the street frontage while providing a clear vehicular circulation for the proposal as well as the remaining portion of the site.

#### Site Design / Parking

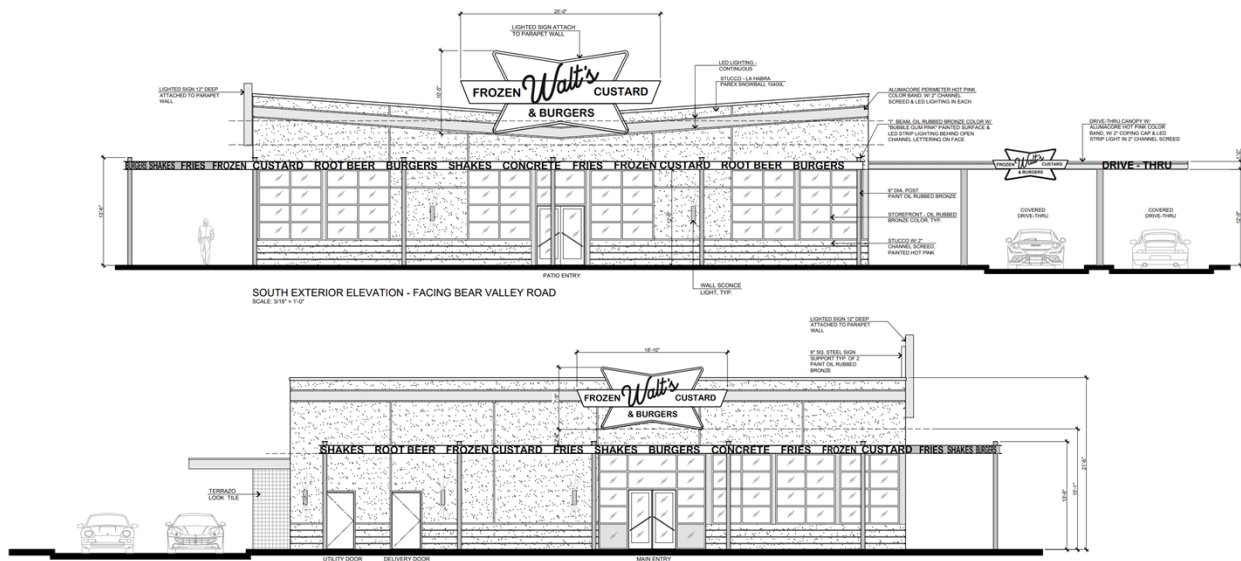
- Access to the restaurant will be provided via three driveways, one primary driveway to the subject site from Bear Valley Road as well as two shared access points from the adjacent properties to the east and west. Additionally, to facilitate the circulation needs of the remainder of the site, two future access points have been included in the proposal to accommodate future development of the property. To ensure the shared access to the remainder of the site is memorialized, Staff has included Condition #23 requiring a reciprocal access agreement to be established should CC&R's or another recorded document not already be in place.
- Title 16 requires 1 space per 100 sq. ft. of floor area for restaurants such as the subject proposal, with a maximum 2 space credit provided for drive-thru stacking areas over 40 linear feet in length. Based upon the standards noted above, the proposal is in accord with off-street parking requirements as 73 spaces are provided, and 59 spaces are required for the proposed 5,896 sq. ft. restaurant (5,896 sq. ft. / 100 sq. ft. = 59 spaces). Therefore, Staff finds that the overall site is in conformance with required parking standards outlined in Title 16.
- The design of the restaurant and drive-thru has been developed to optimize vehicle stacking by allowing vehicles to wrap around the building with the drive-thru pick-up window located on the north side of the building, further increasing stacking capacity reducing the impact on Bear Valley Road.
- Enhanced paving has been provided at the drive entrance to the site, however, the details on the paving treatment have not been provided. Consequently, Staff has included Condition #7, requiring details on the enhanced paving (e.g. stamped color concrete) be provided during plan check.
- The proposed trash enclosure is located away from the site's street frontage in accordance with Title 16 standards and will include a solid roof, solid metal gates, and space for separate refuse/recycling/organic waste collection bins as conditioned.

#### Landscaping

- The landscaping complies with the requirements of Title 16 of the Victorville Municipal Code as it provides landscape area distributed throughout the site as well as the base of the building and the drive-thru lane, while incorporating plant material in accordance with the City's approved plant list. Staff notes that while the plans include shrub and groundcover plant material, the required spacing has not been indicated. Consequently, in accordance with Municipal Code requirements, Site Plan Condition #17 has been included to address the minimum plant spacing requirements.

## Architecture

- Staff finds that the facility is designed in accordance with the City's Commercial Design Guidelines, Section 16-3.10.060. The architectural design of the building is indicative of a 1950's diner with design features and materials consistent with the period, including a butterfly parapet, exaggerated signage, large canopy areas with rounded corners and bright colors, while also in compliance with the Design Guidelines of the Development Code. In addition to these features the design incorporates varying rooflines, changes in wall planes, and a mix of materials, including smooth-finish stucco, aluminum accents, and drive-thru canopies and patio areas. These proposed elements help to reduce the massing of the building to a human scale while creating visual interest and adhering to the vision of the City's Commercial Design Guidelines.



## Signage Deviation

- The proposal complies with all general development standards of the Victorville Municipal Code (V.M.C.) including setbacks, lot coverage and buffers; however,

the signage proposed exceeds the sign placement area permitted by the Development Code as the wall sign protrudes above the roof line of the building. However, due to the architectural character of the building and the 1950's era design, the development is replicating the sign type and placement to better reflect a period-appropriate theme. The applicant has requested the Planning Commission exercise their ability to deviate from the wall sign regulations to allow for the sign to extend above the roofline in the underlying zone district and permit the requested sign placement.

- Section 16-3.01.030(f) of the Municipal Code allows the Planning Commission to authorize deviations from the Development Code (Title 16) when the elimination of the requirement is not injurious to the public health, safety and welfare, and when the elimination of the standard will have no adverse effect on surrounding properties. Staff supports the proposed signage deviation given the architectural design theme proposed and has included the necessary findings in Resolution P-25-007 should the Planning Commission also support the applicant's request.

### **3. Commercial Design Guideline Compliance:**

#### **Site Planning and Design**

- a. Site Grading: The proposal will follow the existing contours of the site and is designed to optimize water retention via an on-site stormwater system.
- b. Buffers: The applicant has provided large landscape planters along the property's street frontage as well as several landscape planters along the base of the building and along the drive-thru lane.
- c. Off-Site Connections: Vehicular connections are provided to adjacent parcels and pedestrians will have direct access to the roadway as conditioned. Additionally, reciprocal access will be provided between the subject site and the adjacent commercial parcels for which Staff has conditioned accordingly.
- d. Plaza, Courtyards, Patios, Arcades: A proposed outdoor patio and seating area will wrap around the western and southern portions of the building, providing additional functional space.
- e. Pedestrian Access: Accessible pedestrian access has been provided from Bear Valley Road to the building entrance.
- f. Cart Return: N/A
- g. Loading and Delivery: The loading and delivery area is not identified but sufficient area exists to accommodate deliveries outside required setbacks and the main field of parking.
- h. Landscaping: All landscape planters are in accordance with the Development Code and are planted with minimum 24" box trees in excess of Title 16 standards.
- i. Parking Lot Area Planting: Landscape fingers and planters are provided as required by code.
- j. Paving Treatment: Stamped concrete is provided at driveway approaches with a condition of approval requiring details of the treatment to be provided during plan check.

- k. Parking and Circulation: The site provides adequate vehicular access and does not include unnecessary driveway entrances or dead-end drive aisles. Additionally, reciprocal access agreements are required by Condition of Approval to provide lasting on-site circulation.
- l. Project Entry Design: Appropriate landscaping and enhanced paving will be provided at the drive entrances as conditioned.
- m. Screening of Utility Equipment: The site has large planter areas to accommodate and screen any utility equipment on-site and is conditioned for screening of all equipment.
- n. Trash and Recycling Enclosures: The proposed trash enclosure is located away from the street frontage with adequate access from the building.
- o. Exterior Light Design: Parking area and wall lighting are required to be architecturally compatible with the main structure and theme of the building, as required by the Conditions of Approval.

### **Building Design**

- a. Continuity: The proposed building is designed with a focus on 1950's architecture while also adhering to the Design Guidelines of the City's developments.
- b. Massing: Entry features with varying designs as well as an outdoor patio and drive-thru canopy features provide variation in the wall planes and building height.
- c. Scale: The proposed "human" scaled building incorporates multiple façade projections, patio areas, material changes, drive-thru canopy and landscape areas to reduce the buildings scale.
- d. Roof Forms and Parapets: The varying wall planes and heights prevent long, unbroken horizontal lines and metal canopies provide roof overhangs. The proposed design will conceal views of rooftop equipment from the street as conditioned.
- e. Roof Drains: Roof drains and/or overflow scuppers are not visible on the elevations and drains or downspouts cannot be visible if added per the Conditions of Approval.
- f. Sides and Backs of Buildings: Material changes and architectural elements are provided on all sides of the building.
- g. Windows and Doors: Doors and windows are designed to complement the building design with coordinated colors and finishes.
- h. Awnings and Umbrellas: A large covered outdoor patio area is proposed that will provide an architectural treatment to the elevations visible from the street and provide covered seating consistent with the protection of awnings and umbrellas.
- i. Arches, Porches and Covered Walkways: N/A
- j. Building Materials and Texture: The proposal has a variety of materials that improve the appearance of the building and add to its architectural theme, including smooth-finish stucco, aluminum accents, a drive-thru canopy, an outdoor patio area, and a parapet band wrapped around the building.
- k. Colors: The proposed color palette features stucco in Parex Snowball, complemented by hot pink and contrasting accent colors, which are designed to reflect and enhance the building's historic era and time period.

- I. Signage: Signage does not comply with Title 16 and a deviation from municipal code sign standards is being proposed as a part of this approval to allow for a wall sign that extends above the parapet and awning signage to maintain consistency with the design and time period.

**Site Characteristics:**

Existing Land Use		General Plan	Zoning	Specific Plan
Site	Vacant	Commercial	C-2	N/A
North	Vacant	Commercial	C-2	N/A
South	City of Hesperia	N/A	N/A	N/A
East	Vacant	Commercial	C-2	N/A
West	Commercial Center	Commercial	C-2	N/A

**Number of Radius Letters Mailed: 16**

**Attachments:**

Attachment A – Site Plan Resolution  
Attachment B – Site Plan Graphics  
Attachment C – Aerial Image