



**PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM NO. E.1  
04/01/2025**

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**SUBJECT:** Design review amendment for three new buildings in the central plaza area and master sign program amendment for new monument signs at The Streets of Brentwood

**DEPARTMENT:** Community Development

**STAFF:** Erik Nolthenius, Planning Manager

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### **TITLE/RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt Resolution No. 25-009 approving an amendment to Design Review No. 07-002 and Design Review No. 07-015 for three new buildings in the central plaza area, and an amendment to the master sign program for new monument signs at The Streets of Brentwood.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was previously adopted by the Planning Commission on October 3, 2006 for The Streets of Brentwood, which analyzed impacts for up to 460,000 square feet of building area. The proposed buildings and signs fall within the overall footprint evaluated in the MND and; therefore, no further environmental review is required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

### **OWNER/APPLICANT**

Brentwood Property Owner I, LLC

### **GENERAL PLAN**

RC (Regional Commercial)

### **ZONING/SURROUNDING LAND USES**

PD-6 (Planned Development No. 6)

North – Old Sand Creek Road, with a vacant parcel, Sand Creek, a single-family home, and more vacant land beyond within the PA-1 Specific Plan

East – vacant land within The Streets of Brentwood, with Shady Willow Lane and single-family homes beyond

South – Sand Creek Road, with the Sand Creek Crossings commercial center beyond

West – State Route 4

### **PREVIOUS ACTION(S)**



## PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM NO. E.1 04/01/2025

Previous actions related to this agenda item that were taken by the Planning Commission and City Council are listed as Attachment 1. To view prior actions and materials, and Brentwood Municipal Code references in the staff report, as applicable:

- Visit [www.brentwoodca.gov/meetings](http://www.brentwoodca.gov/meetings), and select the meeting date(s) desired to see the reference materials and videos.
- Visit [www.brentwoodca.gov/municipalcode](http://www.brentwoodca.gov/municipalcode) to research references to the Brentwood Municipal Code and search by the code section(s) cited.

### BACKGROUND

The original design review application and CEQA document for The Streets of Brentwood was approved by the Planning Commission in October 2006. This approval included an overall site plan for the 54-acre site and conceptual designs for 23 buildings totaling approximately 460,000 square feet. Since that time, the Planning Commission has considered a number of subsequent requests. A detailed list of all previous actions is included in Attachment 1.

Construction started in 2007, and over the next several years the theater, core buildings, and several outlots (BJ's, Red Robin, Black Angus, etc.) were completed. To date, approximately 42 of the 54 acres have been developed, with the remaining 12 acres all within the eastern quarter of the site. This area includes two recently approved projects (La Quinta/Hawthorn Suites and Dutch Bros) that have not yet started construction. From the original 54-acre parcel, 10 parcels have been created, the largest of which is 28 acres and includes the theater and core buildings.

CenterCal Properties LLC (CenterCal) is a commercial developer based in Southern California that has a total of 17 properties in the Western U.S., including The Veranda in Concord and Bay Street in Emeryville. Last summer, Brentwood Property Owner I, LLC (a CenterCal affiliate) purchased seven of the 10 parcels. These parcels include the theater and core buildings, Red Robin, BJ's, Black Angus, Dutch Bros, Sprouts, and a 2.41-acre parcel north of Sprouts that is partially developed with off-street parking. The remaining three parcels are owned separately.

After the purchase was complete, CenterCal contacted staff about a plan to make a series of coordinated physical improvements, focused initially on the area near the theater. The improvements include revisions to some of the landscape and hardscape features near the theater and within the central plaza area, as well as closing off the one-way vehicular circulation drive aisle in front of the theater. These improvements were administratively approved by staff in early February, based on substantial conformance with the originally approved plans. CenterCal now desires to make additional coordinated improvements involving the construction of three new buildings near the theater and monument signs at specific locations. The new buildings and signs are the subject of this application, as detailed below.



## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### Three New Buildings

The applicant is proposing to construct three new buildings near the theater, as follows:

- A single-story 5,700 square foot building (identified on the plans as "B-8") would be located directly north of the entrance to the theater, essentially mirroring the existing building located directly south of the entrance (formerly Mel's Diner). This would also include an approximately 1,290 square foot covered patio at the south end of the building for outdoor seating.
- A single-story 846 square foot building (identified on the plans as "Pavilions PV-10 & PV-20") would be located directly east of the entrance to the theater in the central plaza area. This would also include a 1,685 square foot covered patio wrapping around the east, south, and west sides of the building for outdoor seating.
- A single-story 1,608 square foot building (identified on the plans as "Pavilion PV-40") would be located further east of the entrance to the theater but still within the central plaza area. This would also include a 568 square foot covered patio at the west end of the building for outdoor seating.

The applicant's intent with these improvements is to provide enhanced and additional amenities for customers, while also diversifying the type and number of food uses that are available.

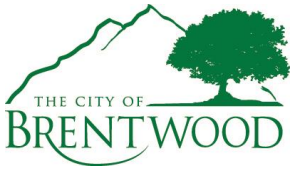
### New Monument Signs

The applicant is proposing to both relocate and increase the amount of monument signs to provide enhanced entry identification along Sand Creek Road, as well as wayfinding interior to the center. The entry monument signs would be increased in height (from approximately 6' to a maximum of 20') for a more prominent identity consistent with the refreshed property image and improved visibility to vehicular traffic. The interior wayfinding signs would measure approximately 6' in height by 3' in width, for an overall area of 18 square feet, and would be strategically placed for both drivers and pedestrians.

## **ANALYSIS**

### General Plan Consistency

The Streets of Brentwood is designated by the General Plan for Regional Commercial development. This designation "includes large-scale retail stores and service uses to serve the general needs of the community and the region, primarily along the State Route 4 corridor on large development sites. This designation is also "intended for businesses that serve the needs of Brentwood residents as well as neighboring communities." The three new buildings and master sign program modifications are consistent with this designation. In addition, they are consistent with the goals, policies, and actions identified in the General Plan's Economic Development Element, including but not limited to:



## **PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM NO. E.1 04/01/2025**

- Goal ED 1: Establish and maintain a healthy, balanced approach to economic development that encourages a diversity of businesses which provide employment, services, and goods
- Policy ED 1-2: Develop a distinct image for Brentwood that sets it apart from the region.
- Policy ED 3-4: Encourage the revitalization of existing shopping centers and business areas that need maintenance or updating.

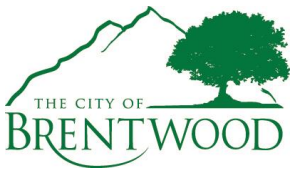
### Zoning Consistency

The project site is located within PD-6, one of the city's many planned development districts. It is a large district that includes a variety of uses and extends generally from Sand Creek to the north, Fairview Avenue to the east, San Jose Avenue to the south, and State Route 4 to the west. This particular district is broken down into different planning areas, and The Streets of Brentwood is within two – "Regional Commercial" and "Office Commercial." Both of these planning areas allow restaurants and signage as permitted uses. Given that the three new buildings are single-story and are located approximately 300 feet from the nearest property lines, they comply with the applicable PD-6 development standards.

### Design Guidelines

The City adopted the "Commercial & Industrial Design Guidelines" in 2001. The Planning Commission evaluated The Streets of Brentwood with respect to the guidelines when it was originally approved in 2006. Staff reviewed the three new proposed buildings and found them to be generally consistent with the guidelines. A few notes from the guidelines are included below for the Commission's consideration:

- "Incorporate pitched roofs, whenever possible" (1a on page 11). While none of the proposed buildings incorporate pitched roofs, there are other examples of buildings at The Streets of Brentwood that do not, such as AMC, BJ's and Barnes & Noble. In addition, the buildings are intentionally designed with low profiles to ensure they blend in with the existing environment as much as possible. This is especially true of the two pavilions, so as to preserve the view of the theater façade, which the flat roofs help to accomplish.
- "Significant overhangs (3 feet minimum) are strongly encouraged to provide shading and visual interest" (1b on page 11). Each building includes a significant canopy for not only shading and visual interest, but to provide all season seating opportunities for customers.
- "Use a related design treatment for all buildings within a multi-structure complex" (2c on page 12). The Streets of Brentwood features a variety of architectural themes throughout the center, approved with the original project design to create an authentic and visually interesting "main street" aesthetic. The three new buildings do not match the core buildings completely. The applicant has indicated that all three are designed in the 20th-century mid-western style, which was noted in the original approval of the project, and incorporate certain elements of the immediately surrounding architecture to



**PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM NO. E.1  
04/01/2025**

create a unique but cohesive theme within the existing architecture of the center. This style is defined as non-derivative, distinctly American architecture, rooted in nature and with a sense of place, but also incorporating modern elements such as flat planes and stylized ornamentation. It includes, but is not limited to: a primary defining characteristic of an emphasis on the horizontal rather than the vertical; strong geometry and massing; connected indoor and outdoor spaces; restrained use of applied ornamentation; and stucco exteriors. The applicant has also indicated that the new buildings are integrated into the existing center, with a warm contemporary style, echoing the theater's modern, 20<sup>th</sup>-century mid-western commercial style. They reinforce the overall variety in the architecture types present at the center – including Italianate, simplified Mediterranean, and modern cubist languages. This variety in palette builds on and reinforces the street and civic character found in modern mid-western city centers, providing interest and novelty to the pedestrian.

- “Use special signage and graphics at entries” (4c on page 13). Each building will incorporate various forms of signage to identify their respective entries, including the canopies.
- “Include vertical tower accents and other features to provide variety” (5a on page 13). As previously referenced, maintaining a low profile for these buildings is important, so there are no vertical tower accents included.
- “Use durable and finished materials such as wood, stucco, brick, or stone” (10a on page 15). Each building will be finished primarily in stucco, and will also include a variety of tile accents.

*Other Design Considerations*

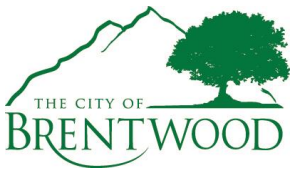
Building B-8 includes metal channel cornice edging, metal posts, smooth stucco, and a horizontal band of windows. It provides indoor/outdoor connections via large patio doors. Accents include the textural mural (motif) and wood louvers.

The pavilions (PV-10/20 and PV-40) are designed with a similar warm contemporary palette, and include additional accents such as breeze blocks and geometric fireplaces. They emphasize a direct connection to the walkable central plaza area where the pavilions are situated.

Each building will be incorporated into the existing landscape and hardscape, providing patio seating. Amenities at the pavilions include an outdoor fireplace and an existing fountain planned to be integrated into the design. Breeze-block or similar screening elements at the public restrooms provide privacy from vehicles parked against the sidewalks directly adjacent to the pavilions.

*New Monument Signs*

The Brentwood Municipal Code provides for master sign programs to be reviewed by the Planning Commission for any multiple occupancy commercial site (Section 17.640.008.B.2). These programs may deviate from the primary provisions of the code when certain findings can be made, as follows:



**PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM NO. E.1  
04/01/2025**

- The program is of integrated and harmonious design and designed to be a part of or blend with the buildings proposed.
- The program has been prepared and endorsed by a licensed architect or building designer.
- The signs within the program are compatible with the surrounding area.
- The program is consistent with the city's Commercial and Industrial Design Guidelines, adopted by the city council, and as they may be amended over time.

As seen in Attachment 1, a master sign program for The Streets of Brentwood was originally approved by the Planning Commission in July 2008. Since that time, the Commission approved six different amendments, with the most recent one in April 2015. The proposed amendment at this time is to modify the design of the existing multi-tenant entry monument sign located at the corner in front of Black Angus and to mirror it with an additional sign on the opposite corner in front of BJ's. The amendment also includes new wayfinding monument signs interior to the site at specific locations.

The Commercial & Industrial Design Guidelines limit monument signs to 8 feet in height, with a maximum area of 75 square feet. While the proposed signs along Sand Creek Road would exceed both of those dimensions, staff understands the applicant's desire to enhance the primary entrance, especially given the relatively modest size of the existing monument sign in front of Black Angus (approximately 6 feet in height with an area of approximately 36 square feet). It should be noted that there are numerous examples of other commercial developments with master sign programs throughout the city that have been approved with monument signs exceeding 8 feet in height, and given the nature and scope of The Streets of Brentwood, staff recommends that the entry monument signs be approved as requested. This recommendation is based on the findings listed above and as reflected in the attached draft resolution. The wayfinding monument signs fall well below the threshold dimensions identified in the guidelines, and staff recommends that they also be approved as requested.

**DATE OF NOTICE**

N/A

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The City previously prepared and adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the overall development of The Streets of Brentwood, in conjunction with the approval of DR 06-008 on October 3, 2006. The MND identified and adequately discussed potential impacts associated with the proposed project in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).





**PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM NO. E.1**  
**04/01/2025**

This Project is consistent with the General Plan and zoning for the site. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 and the court's holding in *McCorkle Eastside Neighbor Group v. City of St. Helena* (2019) 31 Cal.App.5th 80, the City is limited to reviewing the potential site-specific environmental impacts of the project. There is no evidence of site-specific environmental impacts beyond those that were analyzed in and mitigated by the MND or the General Plan EIR. The new buildings and their proposed use are consistent with the General Plan designation, as well as the requirements of PD-6. The Project meets all applicable development standards. The Project would not exceed the height limits or otherwise be out of scale or character with the surrounding buildings or overall center.

Further, the proposed buildings and signs are within the scope of the MND that was approved by the Planning Commission in 2006. When a Mitigated Negative Declaration is adopted for a project, CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 states that no subsequent environmental review is required unless there are: changes to the project requiring major revisions to the MND, changes to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions to the previous MND, or new information of substantial importance that was not known when the previous MND was adopted shows that there are more significant or new effects, or that mitigation measures or alternatives that were infeasible are now found to be feasible, or that mitigation measures or alternatives that are different than those adopted would reduce one or more significant impacts but the project proponents decline to adopt them. The proposed project does not implicate any of the CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 provisions. As a result, no further environmental review is necessary.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Previous Actions
2. Planning Commission Resolution No. 25-009
3. Project Plans, prepared by RMW Architecture & Interiors, received March 25, 2025
4. Monument Sign Plans, prepared by CenterCal Properties, LLC, received March 25, 2025
5. Approved Landscape/Hardscape Improvement Plans (ADR 25-001), February 7, 2025
6. Original Site Plan for The Streets of Brentwood (DR 06-030), December 19, 2006
7. Approved Plans for DR 07-002, March 20, 2007
8. Approved Plans for DR 07-015, December 4, 2007
9. Master Sign Program for The Streets of Brentwood