

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
DECEMBER 2, 2025**

ROLL CALL

The Planning Commission of the City of Prairie Village met in regular session on Tuesday, December 2 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 7700 Mission Road. Chair Greg Wolf called the meeting to order with the following members present: Jonathan Birkel, David Herron (via Zoom), James Kersten, Melissa Brown, Melissa Temple, and Jeffrey Valentino.

The following individuals were present in their advisory capacity to the planning commission: Chris Brewster, Multistudio; Nickie Lee, Deputy City Administrator; Terry O'Toole, Council Liaison; Adam Geffert, City Clerk/Planning Commission Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Valentino made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2025, regular planning commission meeting as presented. Ms. Temple seconded the motion, which passed 6-0, with Mr. Birkel in abstention.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

NON-PUBLIC HEARINGS

PC-25-24	Property-specific sign plan Shops of Prairie Village 6920 Mission Road Zoning: C-2 Applicant: First Washington Realty, GastingerWalker&
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Mr. Brewster said that the application was for a sign plan for property-specific sign standards. In 2019, Prairie Village updated its sign ordinance to accomplish several

things, including streamlining procedures, adding flexibility, and improving standards for larger commercial properties. Historically, nearly all commercial or “multi-tenant” properties were under property-specific sign standards; however, this became very difficult to administer because: (1) over time applicants submitted specifications for particular signs in their applications, rather than general sign standards; (2) changes to property-specific sign plans had to be processed as an ordinance amendment; and (3) as tenants or sign needs changed it triggered a full review process for even routine changes since the property was bound by specifications for particular signs. This process did not meet the city’s or property / business owners’ interests so amendments to the ordinance were made.

Mr. Brewster noted that one of the amendments was to allow property owners to more easily propose and have approved property specific sign plans. Three aspects were key to the improvements:

- The applicant’s sign plans should include design attributes that coordinate signs on larger commercial properties and multi-tenant sites.
- Based on a coordinated plan, the planning commission could approve deviations from the generally applicable sign standards.
- Within the parameters of an approved sign plan (general standards and not specifications for a particular sign), staff could more easily administer sign permits that met the plan as tenants changed out over time.

Mr. Brewster said that the applicant had proposed a sign plan for the Prairie Village Shops. There have been two development-related site plans approved for this property: the south building (“Macy’s Building”) redevelopment in October 2021 and revised October 2024, and the courtyard and façade improvements in November 2025. A special use permit was also approved for a brewery in October 2025. During this period, the Prairie Village Shops have remained under a property-specific sign plan that originated in 1989 and was last amended in 2011. All past site plans only had conceptual details on signs and/or the approvals were contingent on a more specific sign plan being created that updated and coordinated all signs throughout the shops.

The city’s zoning regulations provide the following related to property-specific sign plans:

Shopping centers, office parks, or other multi-tenant projects with three or more buildings or four or more acres may propose a property specific sign plan. the sign package shall be based on the intent, types of signs, and standards of this chapter, but the planning commission may approve deviations to these standards where they find that the plan:

- a) Promotes a unique character for the area and improves the image and identity of the project as it relates to the surrounding community.
- b) Presents uniform designs to coordinate multiple components of the project, and where there are distinctions in the type and design of the signs, they are well-coordinated in light of the overall plan.

- c) The plan has clear and explicit standards for the size, location, design and quality of signs, and it anticipates future tenants or changes in tenants without requiring amendments to the sign plan.
- d) The property owner or landlord has authorized the plan, and any changes to the plan will require the property owner or landlord to submit a new application to be approved by the planning commission.

The plan proposed for the Prairie Village Shops includes the following:

Sign Type	Quantity*	Standards	Comparison to General City Standards
Standard Sign Band	n/a *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to wood signage band and 1" clearance from white frames • 50 square foot general limit • Secondary signs permitted if tenants occupy multiple marquees 	Comparable to wall sign allowance other than quantity exceed due to multiple tenants and storefronts per building
Updated Sign Band	n/a *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to specific locations identified in elevations • 50 square foot general limit • No specific height or scale limit relative to updated sign band. 	<p>Comparable to general wall allowance in size; 50 s.f. may be slightly larger than 5% general limit in some cases due to store front area measurements.</p> <p>Quantity exceeds per building / wall limit due to multi-tenant, storefront configuration.</p>
Standard Wall Sign	n/a *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to specific locations identified in elevations • 50 square foot general limit • 1" clearance on all sites from edge of wall and trim or protrusions. • 2 exceptions for 200 s.f. wall signs 	<p>Could significantly exceed otherwise applicable signs in some locations (see staff analysis)</p> <p>Quantity exceeds per building / wall limit due to multi-tenant, storefront configuration and on freestanding buildings</p>
Raised Sign Area	n/a*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to specific locations identified in elevations • 50 square foot general limit • No specific height or scale limit relative to mounting surface • 1 exception for 200 s.f. raised sign 	<p>Could significantly exceed otherwise applicable signs in some locations (see staff analysis)</p> <p>Quantity exceeds per building / wall limit due to multi-tenant, storefront configuration and on freestanding buildings</p>
Logo Sign Area	5 locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 square foot limit 	Could be out of scale with specific locations if subject only to a 50 s.f. limit
Blade Sign	1 per entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to 2.83 s.f. with 8" clearance. • Acrylic panel with black letters and Gotham Black font 	Comparable to pedestrian sign allowance
Other signs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Window signs • Temporary signs • Leasing information signs 	All defer to generally applicable city standards or permitted exemptions from permit.

* The quantities of these sign types are not specified by the plan includes locations for these signs based on diagrams of all elevations throughout the shops.

In addition to the above basic allowances and parameters, signs are subject to the following design specifications:

- Front-lit channel letters with white translucent acrylic facing.
- All individual channel letters (other than logos).
- LED lighting with uniform brightness on all facades.
- Other general maintenance and mounting specifications detailed in the plan.

Mr. Brewster said that overall, the proposed sign plan reflects an improvement over the current sign plan and standards applicable to the Prairie Village Shops. The plan shows a clear hierarchy of types and is tailored to the unique façade and storefront conditions throughout the shops. The plan reflects consistency among all signs through type (front-lit channel letters) and color (white translucent with 33% allowance for logos; consistent mounting and framing colors, etc.). The general size, scale, quantity, and location of signs are appropriate for a pedestrian-oriented shopping district with a few noted exceptions.

Mr. Brewster stated that staff had the following concerns with the sign plan:

- The “anchor signs” on the large building are out of scale with a pedestrian-oriented center and are significantly larger than generally applicable sign standards and other signs approved in the past, particularly the three 200 square foot signs proposed on building 6 (the former Macy’s building).
- Some elevations exhibit excessive signs in terms of extent and quantity, both significantly more than generally applicable sign standards. This is especially true for building 6 and building 3 (commonly known as “the U.S. Bank building”). The general locations for potential signs is appropriate, but without any locations on the quantity, extent, or cumulative size per elevations, signs throughout all of the proposed locations would be excessive and out-of-proportion with the buildings and uncharacteristic of a pedestrian-oriented center.
- Limitations on principle signs per tenant need to be clarified, and greater distinctions between primary and secondary signs are needed when individual tenants are allowed multiple signs.
- Some sign types may need additional clarification or standards to ensure that the signs standards are in proportion with the illustrations, elevation diagrams, and intended allocations.
- The lighting plan is generally acceptable; however, a performance standard for measurable warm white lighting could clarify the intent and set an enforceable threshold (recommend setting specific level between 2700K - 3000K).
- The 3” depth for channel letters can appear large and blocky at close range and at a pedestrian scale. Staff recommends reducing this to 2” depth for any sign mounted along the first-story marquees. This can be particularly true on the alternative sign band signs where the black mounting background may be 3 inches and the letters may be another 3”, protruding up to 6” off the mounting rails. A 2” thickness of the letters and/or back-mounting panels could result in a better appearance at close range.

Mr. Brewster said staff recommended approval of the sign plan with some clarifications to the principal signs permitted for individual tenants, some additional sign restrictions on quantity and size within specific sign types, and additional limitations, particularly on building 3 and building 6. After discussing the proposed conditions and clarifications with the applicant, staff recommends approval of the plan with the following conditions:

1. General Design Recommendations
 - a. Reserve lighting level measurement to staff and applicant discussions that balance sign visibility / color appearance vs. ambient light conditions.

- b. Change channel depth to 2” for all sign band and updated sign band signs; retain 3” for all logo signs, wall signs, and raised sign areas.
2. Standard Sign Band
 - a. Signs limited to one sign per tenant with an entrance or frontage on the building elevation, plus one secondary sign for each marquee area in the sign band for tenants that occupy multiple marquees.
 - b. Recommend secondary signs have at least 2” clearance from white framing band to ensure that secondary signs are subordinate to principal sign for tenants that span more than one marquee.
3. Updated Sign Band
 - a. Emphasize or clarify that signs are limited to one per tenant entrance / frontage.
 - b. The black backing of the updated sign band shall be limited to 24” high and the channel letter depth shall be 2” (per 1.b above).
4. Standard Wall Sign
 - a. Emphasize or clarify that signs are limited to one per tenant entrance / frontage.
 - b. Recommend at least 4” clearance on all sides from edge of wall face, architectural features, trim, or protrusions.
5. Raised Sign Area
 - a. Emphasize or clarify that signs are limited to one per tenant entrance / frontage; plus, two non-tenant locations.
 - b. Recommend maximum sign height of 24” above mounting surface.
6. Logo Sign Area
 - a. Recommend at least 2” clearance on all sides from any edge of wall face or any architectural features.
7. Building 3 specific recommendations: the following limits are in line with general standards for freestanding buildings and/or multi-tenant buildings.
 - a. Signs shall be limited to one sign per tenant with an entrance or frontage on the building elevation, but no more than four signs for any one elevation.
8. Building 6 specific recommendations
 - a. Reduce the three “anchor” signs to no more than 100 square feet.
 - b. Consider an allowance of up to 30” height above mounting surface for raised sign allowance in excess of the recommended general raised sign allowance of 24” in item 5.b.
 - c. The smaller wall signs on the east and west elevations shall be limited to one per tenant of building 6; no more than 18 square feet per sign; and no more than four signs total.
9. Recommend eliminating the font restrictions on the blade signs and using these more limited pedestrian scale signs to express the unique identity or brands of specific tenants.
10. Four future monument signs are conceptual only and are subject to generally applicable standards until the sign plan is updated with specific designs and standards.

Mr. Brewster noted that the applicant would submit a revised application to staff with the conditions approved by council.

Mr. Wolf asked whether all signs at the shopping center would be replaced at the same time. Mr. Brewster said the plan would only apply to new signs, and that existing signs could remain in place.

Mr. Kersten suggested that setting a maximum brightness for sign lighting could be useful.

Applicants Connor McRae with GastingerWalker&, 911 Main Street, Kansas City, MO, and Andrea Hildago with First Washington Realty, 7200 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, MD, were present to discuss the application.

Mr. Valentino shared concern that the proposed letters making up the Big Grove Brewery sign were too large. Ms. Hildago said she felt that 30" letters totaling 55 square feet was the preferred size. She added that the letters would feature indirect lighting rather than being backlit.

Mr. Wolf asked whether the applicants would consider adding a condition that they work with staff to develop a lighting plan. Ms. Hildago said that she was comfortable adding the condition.

Ms. Brown suggested adding an additional condition eliminating the four multi-tenant signs on the east and west side of building 6. Ms. Hidalgo agreed to the condition.

After further discussion, Mr. Valentino made a motion to approve the application with the conditions listed by staff along with the two additional conditions added by planning commission members. Ms. Temple seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Approval of 2026 meeting dates

Mr. Valentino made a motion to approve the 2026 meeting calendar as presented. Ms. Temple seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Discuss 2026 action plan

Mr. Brewster said that the planning commission was tasked with reviewing the city's comprehensive plan on at least an annual basis. Since the adoption of Village Vision 2.0, the planning commission and city council explored several action items from the "action plan", mostly focusing on housing-related items.

Throughout 2025, several issues came up that the planning commission asked to consider revisiting. Staff recommends reviewing the action items in the "action plan" portion of Village Vision 2.0 and providing direction to staff to begin working on certain

items. Mr. Brewster also shared a presentation describing the development of Village Vision 2.0, and topics that had been considered during previous years.

Mr. Valentino stated that he preferred to focus on walkability issues for pedestrians rather than considering additional criteria for buildings and structures. Mr. Birkel agreed, adding that making roads safer for bicycles would be worth discussing.

Ms. Brown said that safety concerns around schools could also be visited. She added that the city should consider partnering with neighboring cities to improve pedestrian paths and safety.

Ms. Temple suggested finding ways to make it easier for residents to remodel existing homes rather than tear them down.

Mr. Herron stated that he would like to discuss increasing lot coverage limits for new builds as an incentive to reduce their height. He also requested a cursory review of commercial guidelines to improve development outcomes.

Ms. Lee said that she and Mr. Brewster would begin working on the recommendations and bring a plan back at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the commission, Mr. Wolf adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Adam Geffert
City Clerk/Planning Commission Secretary