



Agenda Item #:

06/0620.16

# Staff Report

## City of Manhattan Beach

**TO:** Honorable Mayor Ward and Members of the City Council

**THROUGH:** Geoff Dolan, City Manager

**FROM:** Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development  
Laurie B. Jester, Senior Planner

**DATE:** June 20, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Planning Commission Approval of an Amendment to the Sign Program for the Metlox Project to Allow 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Tenant Signage, Located at 451 Manhattan Beach Boulevard

### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council **RECEIVE AND FILE** the decision of the Planning Commission to approve the amendment.

### FISCAL IMPLICATION:

There are no direct fiscal implications associated with the recommended action.

### BACKGROUND:

In September 2002 the City Council approved the Master Use Permit and Coastal Development permit for the Metlox Site. A condition was placed on the project that final design elements, including a conceptual sign plan, would come back at a later date through a Design Review process. In December 2002 the Planning Commission made recommendations to the City Council, and in January 2003 the City Council approved the design elements of the project including the conceptual sign plan. The sign plan included limited second floor tenant signage and this Amendment requests an increase due to the change in the tenant mix from office to personal service uses. On May 24, 2006 the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Amendment.

### DISCUSSION:

The original project approval anticipated office tenants on the second floor and therefore the conceptual sign plan did not include any individual tenant identification signage for the second floor. The tenant mix for the second floor changed substantially from this original office tenant concept and now the vast majority of the tenants are personal service type of uses (Trilogy Day Spa, Salon Brit, Space Spinning Studio, Curves, Beach Teeth, and Janelle Holden Dentist) while two spaces are occupied by office uses (Coldwell Banker and Bungalow interiors- which has a ground level retail space).

This approval will allow three new second floor tenant signs on Manhattan Beach Boulevard for Space Spinning Studio, Curves, and Coldwell Banker, each up to 16 square feet in area. Signs for other second floor tenants would also be allowed on building frontages along Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Morningside Drive and portions of Valley Drive (above the windows near Design Within Reach). Second floor tenant signs would also be allowed in the building facades that face the Town Square. Up to 16 square feet in area would be allowed depending on a variety of factors that would be reviewed through the permit process. As an example of similar sign sizes within the project, Jr's Deli boy signs are 16 square feet, O' My Sole is 13 square feet, Design Within Reach is 19 square feet on the Valley side, and Look! is 18 square feet. The temporary banner at Coldwell Banker is 16 square feet in area.

Signage would specifically be prohibited on other second floor frontages including the north building side by each loading dock, the east wall above the Valley ramp, and the east building wall along Valley except directly above the Design within Reach windows as mentioned above. Generally signs with neutral colors would be allowed with some flexibility; again depending on a number of factors. Also blade signs generally 4 to 6 square feet in area with the same neutral tones would be allowed in some areas.

The Planning Commission voted 5:0 to support the Amendment. There was no public opposition to the proposed signage. Metlox LLC representatives are supportive of the Planning Commissions' recommendation and the temporary banners currently on the site would be removed soon after the permanent signs are installed.

Attachment: A. Planning Commission minutes, staff report and attachments dated May 24, 2006 (Sign Plans not available electronically)

c: Jon Tolkin- Tolkin Group  
Glenn Loucks, Tolkin Group  
Noel Aidrich, Integrated Sign Associates

**D R A F T      C I T Y O F M A N H A T T A N B E A C H      D R A F T**  
**EXCERPTS MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MAY 24, 2006**

1 A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach was held on  
2 Wednesday, May 24, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1400 Highland  
3 Avenue.

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5 **ROLL CALL**

6  
7 Chairman Simon called the meeting to order.

- 8
- 9 Members Present:                    Bohner, Lesser, Savikas, Schlager, Chairman Simon
- 10 Members Absent:                    None
- 11 Staff:                                  Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development
- 12    Rosemary Lackow, Senior Planner
- 13    Laurie Jester, Senior Planner
- 14    Sarah Boeschen, Recording Secretary

15  
16 **BUSINESS ITEMS**

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19 **B.      Consideration of an Amendment to the Sign Program for the Metlox Project to**  
20 **Allow Second Floor Tenant Signage at 451 Manhattan Beach Boulevard**

21 Senior Planner Jester summarized the staff report. She stated that the upstairs tenants of the  
22 Metlox Development were originally anticipated to be largely office uses. She indicated that as  
23 the project developed, mostly personal service types of uses have located on the upper level that  
24 have more of a need for signage than general office uses. She stated that Metlox LLC and  
25 tenants have come together and stated that the existing sign program is not adequate and some  
26 signage is necessary on the second level. She said that staff is suggesting that the signs be  
27 permitted on the second level up to 16 square feet staying largely with neutral colors and  
28 generally being setback from the building façade. She indicated that they are also proposing to  
29 limit the signage to particular areas for the individual tenants. She stated that staff's  
30 recommendation is to allow second floor tenant signage on the frontage of the building facing  
31 Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Morningside Drive and portions of Valley and to prohibit signage  
32 on any other frontage; to permit the use of neutral colors while allowing some flexibility; to  
33 allow a maximum size of 16 square feet for the signage; to consider criteria regarding the type,  
34 style, materials, size, colors, illumination, location, scale and relationship to the building and  
35 surrounding signs; and to require the removal of the existing temporary banners.

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38 In response to a question from Commissioner Lesser, Senior Planner Jester said that Metlox LLC  
39 did propose to have a sign for the Metlox project on the bridge of the structure at Morningside.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES- EXCERPTS**

**May 24, 2006**

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1 Commissioner Lesser pointed out that signage for the upper level tenants would be approved in  
2 addition to signage that Metlox LLC would add later.

3  
4 In response to a question from Commissioner Savikas, Senior Planner Jester said that each tenant  
5 would be permitted one sign for each frontage and one blade sign. She commented, however,  
6 that tenants with more space such as Trilogy Spa would most likely be permitted two signs; one  
7 on each building façade. She stated that temporary banners are currently in place on the second  
8 level until the permanent signs are installed. She indicated that after the permanent signs are  
9 installed, there are provisions in the Zoning Code to allow temporary signs up to 90 days per year  
10 to advertise special events or sales. She said that such requests require permits and are reviewed  
11 closely and also require approval from Metlox LLC.

12  
13 **Kurt Bower**, representing Integrated Signs, stated that they are in support of staff's  
14 recommendations.

15  
16 **Viet Ngo** indicated that the City bought the land for the Metlox Development for \$5 million and  
17 granted a gift of \$14 million to Jonathan Tolkin to build the two level parking structure. He  
18 indicated that Jonathan Tolkin is a lawyer and not a licensed contractor, and he formed Metlox  
19 LLC for the purpose of laundering money from the City. He indicated that the residents of the  
20 City are the owner of the property; however, Mr. Tolkin has been granted use of the land and has  
21 paid no rent to the City. He indicated that the Shade Hotel opened before it received a Certificate  
22 of Compliance. He said that there is every evidence that the City has given the Metlox  
23 development every consideration and approval for free while other applicants are required to pay  
24 fees. He stated that the law has to apply equally for all applicants. He recommended that the  
25 application should be denied until Metlox LLC pays rent to the City.

26  
27 In response to a question from Commissioner Savikas, **Mr. Ngo** indicated that he opposes the  
28 proposal because the signs should not be allowed without permits.

29  
30 Director Thompson said that the project is in full compliance with the laws and obtaining the  
31 required permits. He stated that the application filed for the request required a fee similar to  
32 previous application for the Tree Permit Appeal, and the City is being very consistent in ensuring  
33 the Codes are enforced consistently.

34  
35 Commissioner Bohner stated that he feels the proposed amendment for the sign program is in  
36 order. He said that and feels the use of neutral colors, requiring a setback for the façade, and  
37 limiting the areas for the signs are all appropriate.

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39 Commissioner Schlager commented the signs for the project are all tasteful, and he commends  
40 the work that has been done so far. He indicated that based on the existing signs, he support

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES- EXCERPTS**

**May 24, 2006**

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1 approving the amendment and giving staff latitude as to overseeing the signage.

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3 In response to a question from Commissioner Savikas, Senior Planner Jester said that each  
4 individual tenant pays a permit fee and pays for their own sign.

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6 Commissioner Savikas said that she is in favor of the proposal and that feels that every business  
7 should have the opportunity to advertise, and she feels the signs in the development have been  
8 tastefully done.

9  
10 Commissioner Lesser stated that he agrees with the comments of the other Commissioners and  
11 commended staff on their work on the signage program for the development. He said that he has  
12 faith in staff to allocate any additional signage for the development proposed by the landlord as  
13 well as the signs for the individual tenants. He indicated that he would support the amendment.

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15 Chairman Simon said that he agrees with the comments made by the other Commissioners. He  
16 complimented staff with the method they have used the control and input they have on the  
17 project. He commented that he feels the center is nearing the limit in terms of the signage that  
18 should be incorporated on the exterior of the development.

19  
20 A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Savikas/Bohner) to **APPROVE** an Amendment to the  
21 Sign Program for the Metlox Project to allow second floor tenant signage at 451 Manhattan  
22 Boulevard, as presented to the Planning Commission.

- 23  
24 AYES: Bohner, Lesser, Savikas, Schlager, Chairman Simon  
25 NOES: None  
26 ABSENT: None  
27 ABSTAIN: None

28  
29 Director Thompson explained the 15-day appeal period and stated that the item will be placed on  
30 the City Council's Consent Calendar for their review on June 20, 2007.

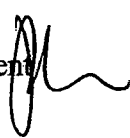

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32 **ADJOURNMENT**

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34 The meeting of the Planning Commission was **ADJOURNED** at 8:45 p.m. in the City Council  
35 Chambers, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue, to Wednesday, June 14, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. in the  
36 same chambers.

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40 RICHARD THOMPSON  
Secretary to the Planning Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
SARAH BOESCHEN  
Recording Secretary

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**TO:** Planning Commission  
**THROUGH:** Richard Thompson, Director of Community Development   
**FROM:** Laurie B. Jester, Senior Planner   
**DATE:** May 24, 2006  
**SUBJECT:** Consideration of an Amendment to the Sign Program for the Metlox project to allow 2<sup>nd</sup> floor tenant signage at 451 Manhattan Beach Boulevard. (Metlox, LLC c/o Tolkin Group)

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission **REVIEW AND APPROVE** the request.

**PROPERTY OWNER**

City of Manhattan Beach  
1400 Highland Avenue  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

**APPLICANT**

Noel Aidrich- Integrated Signs Associates  
c/o Metlox LLC (Tolkin Group)  
51 West Dayton Street, Suite 100  
Pasadena, CA 91105

**BACKGROUND**

In September 2002 the City Council approved the Master Use Permit and Coastal Development permit for the Metlox Site. A condition was placed on the project that final design elements, including a conceptual sign plan, would come back before the Planning Commission and City Council at a later date through a Design Review process. In December 2002 the Planning Commission discussed Design Review and made recommendations to the City Council. In January 2003 the City Council reviewed and approved the design elements of the project including the concept sign plan. Another condition required submittal of a more refined Sign Program to the Director of Community Development that is consistent with the Council approved sign plan.

**DISCUSSION**

**Sign Program Overview**

The Metlox project includes a two-story subterranean public parking structure accommodating 460 cars with a public Town Square, public areas, and a commercial development 63,850 square feet in area including a 38-room hotel. The original conceptual sign plan that the City Council approved indicated that the retail signage would be tenant-specific, and was expected to be bright and colorful. The Plan stated that the architecture of the storefronts had been designed in support of vibrant retail signage, which will include wall signs and pedestrian oriented blade signs.

The original project approval anticipated office tenants on the second floor and therefore the conceptual sign plan did not include any individual tenant identification signage for the second floor. The only signs approved for the second floor tenants were suite identification and directory, directional and information type signs. The tenant mix for the second floor changed substantially from this original office tenant concept and now the vast majority of the tenants are personal service type of uses (Trilogy Day Spa, Salon Brit, Space Spinning Studio, Curves, Beach Teeth, and Janelle Holden Dentist) while two spaces are occupied by office uses (Coldwell Banker and Bungalow interiors- which has a ground level retail space).

Staff has approved limited individual tenant signage for the second floor tenants, balancing the original City Council approval with the need for tenant signage due to the change in the tenant mix. Generally staff has approved wall signs of 6 square feet, up to 12 square feet, illuminated, with neutral tones and colors the same as the building eaves, wood trim and trellis. Also blade signs generally 4 square feet in area, up to 6 square feet in area with the same neutral tones have been approved. While this has been satisfactory for some of the upstairs tenants, those with less visibility due to the building setbacks, trellis locations, and building façade location have a desire for signage that is more visible to the public.

**Proposed Sign Program Amendment**

The plans submitted with the application show three new second floor tenant signs on Manhattan Beach Boulevard as follows:

TENANT NAME	EXISTING SIGNS	PROPOSED SIGNS
<b>Space Studio (Spinning)</b>	2- Wall signs- East and south sides- neutral colors- Non-illuminated -4.5 SF each. 2- Window signs-east side-green vinyl- non-illuminated-5.6 and 1 SF= 15.6 SF total	Wall sign- south side- neutral colors- reverse channel with green or white halo LED illumination- 13 SF
<b>Curves</b>	Blade sign mounted on north wall- Wood trim colors- Aluminum- Non-illuminated- 5.6 SF	Relocate existing Blade sign to trellis support adjacent to MBB- Wood trim colors- Aluminum- Non-illuminated- 5.6 SF
<b>Coldwell Banker</b>	Temporary banner on wall- south side- neutral colors- Non-illuminated -16 SF	Wall sign-south side- neutral colors- Aluminum reverse channel with white LED illumination -16 SF

Staff is supportive of these signs as the size, colors, location, type, style, illumination, materials, and scale are consistent with the intent of the original approval as well as the Sign Program approved by staff for the first floor signage.

In addition to these three new signs staff would like the Planning Commission to review and approve more flexibility for signage for other second floor tenants at Metlox. Due to

the design of the architecture, the orientation of the tenant spaces with the surrounding streets, and the relationship to the Downtown and other surrounding land uses. There are some building facades that staff feels at more conducive to second floor tenant signs than others. Staff believes that individual second floor tenant signage would be appropriate on building frontages along Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Morningside Drive and portions of Valley Drive (above the windows near Design Within Reach). Staff would not suggest that second floor tenant signage be allowed in any other area and would specifically prohibit it (north building side by each loading dock, east wall above the Valley ramp, and east building wall along Valley except directly above the Design within Reach windows as mentioned above.)

Staff would encourage signs with neutral colors but allow some flexibility depending on the type, style, materials, and size of the sign, the colors, the illumination, the location on the building and the relationship and scale of the sign to the building and surrounding signs. Staff believes that up to 16 square feet of signage per second floor tenant would be appropriate, again taking into consideration the factors mentioned previously. As an example of similar sign sizes within the project, Jr's Deli boy signs are 16 square feet, O' My Sole is 13 square feet, Design Within Reach is 19 square feet on the Valley side, and Look! is 18 square feet.

Staff has discussed the proposed standards for second floor tenant signage with Metlox LLC representatives and they are supportive of staffs' recommendation. The temporary banners currently on the site would be removed soon after the permanent signs are installed.

**CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the request and approve an amendment to the Sign Program for the Metlox project to allow 2<sup>nd</sup> floor tenant signage.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Exhibit A: Concept Sign Plan approved by City Council 1-7-02 (Not available electronically)

Exhibit B: Proposed second floor tenant sign plans (Not available electronically)

- c: Jon Tolkin- Tolkin Group
- Glenn Loucks, Tolkin Group
- Noel Aidrich, Integrated Sign Associates