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**TO:** City Commission

**FROM:** Planning & Development Services Department  
Staff

**DATE:** January 5, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Petition PB-14-106 PDA. Causseaux, Hewett & Walpole, Inc., agent for Butler Enterprises. Adopt a signage master plan for the Butler Plaza Planned Development (PD). Located between SW Archer Road and SW 24th Avenue, and between SW 40th Blvd. and SW 34th Street.

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### Recommendation

Approve Petition PB-14-106 PDA.

### Discussion

This petition is a proposal to adopt a Master Signage Plan for the Butler Plaza PD pursuant to Exhibit C of Ordinance 121108 - *Unified Signage Plan* (Exhibit A-1). The proposed master sign plan will regulate signage for the entire 267-acre Planned Development and is included in Exhibit A-3. The types of proposed signs are divided into five categories. These categories include: 1) Site signage, 2) Exterior building signage, 3) Directional signage, 4) Pedestrian signage, and 5) Temporary signage. A comparative analysis of the City's adopted sign code, the previously approved Butler Plaza PD sign provisions, the proposed Master Signage Plan, and Alachua County's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) sign regulations adopted in coordination with the Celebration Pointe development is included in Exhibit A-2.)

The Butler Plaza Planned development is a singular 267-acre unified mixed-use development under common ownership and management. The adopted Butler Plaza Planned Development ordinance included signage entitlements that exceed the current parameters of the City's adopted sign code (see Exhibit A-1). In lieu of exercising the signage provisions adopted with the ordinance, the Unified Signage Plan section of the PD Report provided the option of submitting a Master Signage Plan for the overall development, subject to the review and approval of the City Commission.

### Findings

The Master Signage Plan is consistent with the purpose and objectives of the Planned Development district, which are intended to provide a method for landowners or developers to submit unique proposals which are not provided for or allowed in the zoning districts otherwise established in the Land Development Code. The Butler Plaza PD is a regional-scale, 267-acre mixed-use development permitted for approximately 2.5 million square feet of commercial uses, 250,000 square feet of office space, 500 hotel rooms, and 1,000 multi-family units. The

development has frontage on I-75 and multiple arterial and collector roadways. The PD will include significant new road infrastructure to better connect the development into the City's roadway network and provide improvements to transit operations in this area. Additionally, the PD will include a system of pedestrian paths, sidewalks, and multi-use paths connecting the different areas of the development. Due to the unique size, location, and complexity of the overall development the adopted PD Ordinance permits the developer to create a unified signage plan to regulate signage within the PD. The Master Signage Plan will connect the entire 267-acre development with a consistent signage package.

The entitlements within the approved PD are spread across four distinct sub-areas. The Butler Plaza development contains PD design standards which establish development regulations for each of the four sub-areas within the overall project. These sub-areas contain regulations intended to reflect the character, size, and type of developments planned for each of the sub-areas. The Master Signage Plan is consistent with the adopted PD framework by assigning signage standards to the different sub-areas. Sub-area 1 contains the majority of the large-scale retail uses within the PD and there is a greater emphasis on automobile and transit within this sub-area. Consequently, the Master Signage Plan includes more flexibility within this sub-area to provide larger signs intended to be viewed by motorists rather than pedestrians. While the overall height of monument signs within the development will be greater than what the sign code allows, this additional height will primarily serve to accommodate the increased architectural detailing within the sign cap area. The actual sign copy area will be located lower on the sign face and will be comparable to the City's sign code maximum height allowances.

Within sub-area 3, there is a focus on smaller retail uses and pedestrian amenities. Signage regulations within this area also reflect the scale and character of this sub-area by limiting sign size and providing greater architectural detail than would normally be required by the City's sign code. The Master Signage Plan will tie the four distinct sub-areas together with distinct signage using a combination of enhanced architectural detailing and consistent materials not contemplated by the City's sign code.

The proposed Landmark Sign is consistent with the parameters of the I-75 corridor sign permitted by the City's sign code. The code allows for the provision of I-75 corridor signs within a quarter-mile of an I-75 interchange and through the variance process, may be as tall as 90' in height and 300 square feet in size. The Master Signage Plan also includes enhanced directional and wayfinding signage beyond what the City's sign code contemplates. Due to the size, scale, and complexity of the overall development as well as the distinct design of the four sub-areas, there is a greater need for additional flexibility for these types of directional signage. The Landmark, Project Entry, monument, wall signs, and vehicular and pedestrian signage are intended to quickly and efficiently direct traffic off the interstate and the adjacent arterial roadways and into the PD at the appropriate locations.

The Master Signage Plan also supports more economical development patterns and shared facilities. Many of the existing non-conforming signs along the PD frontage on Archer Road will be eliminated and/or consolidated into fewer signs. These signs were permitted under Alachua County jurisdiction and were subsequently annexed into the City. Almost all of the existing signs along Archer Road do not conform to the size and height requirements of the City's sign code.

Through the application of the amortization condition within the Master Signage Plan, many of these non-conforming signs will be removed and incorporated into the new signs permitted within the proposed PD signage. Consistent with the removal of these signs, the Project Entry signs are proposed to be larger and taller than what is currently permitted by the sign code. In exchange for this added size flexibility, each of these signs are intended to eventually replace several existing non-conforming ground signs along Archer Road. Additionally, the proposed new 8-foot tall outparcel signs do not exceed the City's current sign code standards and in most instances will be replacing existing signs which exceed the sign code for sign height and size.

### **Key Issues:**

- The proposed Master Sign Plan deviates from the City's adopted sign code and the sign provisions adopted with the PD ordinance as listed below. Exhibit A-2 contains a more thorough analysis of the master sign plan proposal.
  - The City's sign code has a maximum height of 10' for all freestanding signs
  - The Butler PD ordinance included four 24' tall landmark signs to denote the name of the overall development or the four sub-areas approved in the development. Freestanding signs and building mounted signs deferred to the City's sign code.
  - The master sign plan is proposing one 60' tall sign at I-75 with 740 square feet of sign area.
  - In addition to the landmark sign, eight 24' tall multi-tenant project signs are also proposed at the major development entrances and the entrance to the Town Center.
  - The maximum size of free-standing signs under the City's sign code is based on the linear road frontage for a given development site. The Butler proposal does not tie the size of free standing site signage to the size of the development parcel.
  - The City's sign code calculates building mounted signage based on the length of the building face multiplied by 1.5 up to a maximum size of 200 ft<sup>2</sup>. The Butler proposal uses the same calculation formula but has no maximum building mounted sign size within sub-areas 1 and 4 of the PD.

### **Existing signage and amortization**

Exhibit A-3 includes an existing sign comparison provided by the applicant which details the number, approximate size, and height of the existing free standing signs along Archer Road. According to this analysis, there are 34 existing signs along Archer Road ranging in height between 12' to 22' with the majority of signs between 17'-19' in height. Sizes range from 18 ft<sup>2</sup> to 425 ft<sup>2</sup> with the average sign size around 95 ft<sup>2</sup>. All of the existing signs along Archer Road are considered non-conforming signs pursuant to the City's sign code. This is due to the development being built over time and under Alachua County jurisdiction and then subsequently annexed into the City of Gainesville.

The master sign plan proposes a one-for-one sign replacement within sub-areas 3 and 4. Construction of one of the 5 proposed project entry signs located within sub-areas 3 and 4 or construction of one of the 18 proposed outparcel signs will effectuate the removal of one of the existing free standing signs listed in Exhibit A-3. The multi-tenant rotating flip sign located in front of the Esplanade shopping center will remain in place. If approved and the existing signs

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are removed in accordance with the amortization provision, the master sign plan proposal will remove a minimum of 10 free standing signs and reduce the combined height and amount of sign area along development's frontage on Archer Road. The square footage analysis included in Exhibit A-3 is limited to the existing free standing signs on Archer Road and does not include new monument signs or other signage included in the master sign plan proposal.

Respectfully submitted,



Ralph Hilliard  
Planning Manager

Prepared by:



Andrew Persons, LEED GA  
Senior Planner

#### **List of Exhibits**

Exhibit A-1: Unified Signage Plan provisions from Exhibit C of Ordinance 121108

Exhibit A-2: Butler Plaza Master Sign Plan Analysis

Exhibit A-3: Application and Butler Plaza PD Environmental Graphics Master Plan