TO: Denver Planning Board  
FROM: Fritz Clauson, Associate City Planner  
DATE: September 6, 2023  
RE: Large Facility Comprehensive Sign Plan CSA-2023-0000005-AMEND

Staff Report and Recommendation
Based on these findings, Community Planning and Development recommends approval of this Comprehensive Sign Plan Amendment CSA-2023-0000005-AMEND located at 3600-3660 Blake Street.

Request for Comprehensive Sign Plan – Large Facility
Addresses: 3600 & 3660 Blake Street  
Zone Lot Area: 87,385 sq. ft. or approximately 2 acres  
Ground Floor Area: 66,567 square feet  
Current Zoning: C-MX-12, UO-2 DO-7  
Property Owner: MCP HUB I PROPERTY LLC & BCSP RINO PHASE II LLC  
Owner Representative: Day Corso, Gensler

Summary of Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) Request
The amended large facility CSP proposes a coordinated system of signage on the zone in exchange for some flexibility in the size, type and location of signs identifying the use and location of large facilities and the tenants within them. The standards set forth in the amended Comprehensive Sign Plan will govern the size, quantity, and location for signage at The Hub at 3600/3660 Blake Street. This amended Large Facility Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) will serve as the basis for approval of permits for an individual building and tenant signs through zoning permits.

This CSP is intended to build upon the regulations set forth in underlying C-MX-12, UO-2 DO-7 zone district. The most recent update to the Sign Plan is Comprehensive Sign Plan CSA-2019-0000007-AMEND that was approved in January of 2020.

The property owner is requesting an amendment to the approved Comprehensive Sign Plan for The Hub, which updates site and elevation plans for allowed sign locations, including additional locations for ground-floor tenant ID signs along Downing and Walnut Streets and for a small expansion of allowed upper-story wall sign locations along Blake and Downing Streets, and specifies a maximum of 3 Upper Story signs. While the Amended CSP provides additional locations for signs, the actual allowances for number and total size for signs is not changing (except for the 3 Upper Story Sign limit above).
**Intent of the Comprehensive Sign Plan**

This project consists of identifying the sizes, types, and potential locations of proposed signage for the development at 3600 & 3660 Blake Street and establishes a rigorous framework of design standards and guidelines for all signage.

The intent of this type of Comprehensive Sign Plan is to allow flexibility in the size, type and location of signs identifying the use and location of large facilities and the tenants within them. Flexibility is generally offered because these facilities often have a need for additional or different types of signage due to the varied physical layout of the facility and a desire for the facility to evolve and remain flexible over time. This flexibility is offered in exchange for a coordinated program of signage ensuring a higher standard of design quality for such signs. This CSP will serve as the basis for approval of permits for an individual building and tenant signs.

**Site and Building Description**

According to the Denver Property Taxation and Assessment System, the primary addresses for the subject site are listed as 3600 Blake Street and 3660 Blake Street. The site is in City Council District 9, represented by Councilmember Darrell Watson.

The subject site is located within the Five Points Statistical Neighborhood. It is located between N Downing Street, Blake Street, Walnut Street, and 36th Street. The property contains a 9-story commercial-office development with ground-floor retail uses, and a lot size is approximately 87,385 sq. ft. and the building ground floor area is 66,567 sq. ft. The subject property is currently zoned C-MX-12, UO-2 DO-7 (Urban Center - Mixed Use – 12, Use Overlay 2, Design Overlay 7).
Neighborhood Map:

Aerial Map:
Legal Notice and Community Response

As required by the Denver Zoning Code provisions, notice of receipt of the complete Comprehensive Sign Plan and notice of the Planning Board meeting were provided to RNOs within 3,000 feet of the Plan area and to the district and at-large City Council representatives. The property was posted as required for at least 30 days prior to the meeting date.

Notified Registered Neighborhood Organizations (RNOs):

- Cole Neighborhood Association
- Elyria and Swansea Neighborhood Association
- Larimer Row Homeowners Association
- Denver North Business Association
- Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
- RiNo Art District
- Opportunity Corridor Coalition of United Residents

- Globeville Civic Partners
- Unite North Metro Denver
- East Denver Residents Council

- United Community Action Network
- Strong Denver
- Council Districts At Large
- Council District 9
- Curtis Park Neighbors
- Whittier Neighborhood Association
- City Park Friends and Neighbors
- Reclaim the Eastside
- The Heart Of Five Points Neighborhood Organization
- Art Park Neighborhood Association
Public Comment:
Up to this point, public comments have been limited to questions about the proposed changes and the scope of the Comprehensive Sign Plan Review. No comment has expressed opposition to the Comprehensive Sign Plan Amendment.

Review Criteria and Findings
The review criteria for CSPs and staff findings are listed below:

1. The sign plan allows flexibility in the size, type and location of signs identifying the use(s) and location of a large facility, structure, or building group.
The intent of this type of Comprehensive Sign Plan Amendment is to allow for a coordinated signage program that allows for flexibility in the size, type and location of signs identifying the use and location of tenants among multiple buildings that will be designed, constructed, and tenanted over time in multiple phases. Flexibility is generally offered because these facilities often have a need for additional or different types of signage due to the varied physical layout of the facility and a desire for the facility to evolve and remain flexible over time. This flexibility is offered in exchange for a coordinated program of signage ensuring a higher standard of design quality for such signs.

Staff Findings: Staff finds that the requests are appropriate and in line with the flexibilities allowed by a Comprehensive Sign Plan. The CSP proposes multiple sign types, sign sizes, and potential locations that will result in a high-quality system of signage and will allow for flexibility if tenants change in the future.
2. The sign plan shall exhibit design excellence, inventiveness, and sensitivity to the context.
   The HUB Comprehensive Sign Plan sets the framework for a variety of high-quality signs that will exhibit
design excellence and inventiveness. Each of the individual sign types proposed provide a high-quality
outcome tailored to individual locations on the multiple building faces and on the site.

   **Staff Finding:** The CSP’s design guidelines address general sign elements, including innovative design,
high end construction elements, placement, and lighting, as well as appropriate sign types. The CSP is
appropriate for a development located in an Urban Center context. Staff finds that this criterion is met.

3. Signs shall not be oriented or illuminated so that they adversely affect the surrounding area,
particularly existing nearby residential uses or structures. Examples of adverse effects are glare from
intense illumination, and large signs or structures which visually dominate an area.
   Most of the proposed signs will be illuminated with static, unobtrusive back lit (halo) lighting, neon, or
external illumination only by point source, cantilevered downward.

   The allowance table in page 14 of the CSP specifies that signs “May be externally illuminated but shall
not flash, blink or fluctuate. All signs shall not be oriented or illuminated so that they adversely affect the
surrounding area, particularly existing nearby residential uses or structures”. Additionally, the CSP
specifies illumination standards for each sign type [refer to pages 24-32 in the CSP] and additional
guidance on sign illumination on page 35 in the “Materials and Methods” section.

   **Staff Finding:** Staff has determined that the proposed signs and illumination levels are appropriate for a
commercial/office site in a Urban Center context.
4. Roof signs shall not be allowed unless such signs are designed to appear as an integral part of the building to which they are attached. Such roof signs shall not extend above any building height limit or zoning bulk plane. Portable roof signs, flashing signs, and animated signs are prohibited. No roof signs are proposed or contemplated.

**Staff Finding:** Staff finds that this criterion is not applicable, as no roof signs are proposed in this CSP.

5. The comprehensive sign plan shall include design guidelines to ensure that all features of the proposed signage, including the illumination, support structure, color, lettering, height, and location, shall be designed so that it will be an attractive and complimentary feature of the building which it serves.

All features of the new signage are thoroughly detailed and described in the plan and will ensure that signs are attractive and complimentary to the building.

Page 12 of the CSP sets guiding design principles that provide the basis for the standards and guidelines. These guiding principles coupled with the project specifics and building sign types provides for a coordinated program of signage ensuring a higher standard of design quality for such signs.

**Staff Finding:** Staff finds that the CSP fits within the site’s intended development goals, as well as the overall architectural composition of the site, and does not compete with the building’s architectural features. All features of the new signage are thoroughly detailed and described in the plan and will ensure that signs are attractive and complimentary to the building.

6. Sign design should reflect the existing or desired character of the area. As an example, in a district in which night-time entertainment is concentrated, the intent of this Section 10.10.3.3 is to encourage exciting, iconographic, and inventively illuminated signage.

Signage opportunities are shown in anticipation of creative solutions and opportunities for signage in a Urban Center mixed-use commercial context. As shown, these signage allowances will highlight retail uses in the development and respond appropriately to all sides of the site.

**Staff Finding:** The proposed CSP is consistent with a design that reflects the desired character of the area. It communicates what is desired and encouraged for the site by specifying high quality signage appropriate for an Urban Center context and Mixed Use zone district. Staff finds that this criterion is met.

7. Signs shall be professionally designed and fabricated from quality, durable materials.

The specifications contained in the CSP require the use of quality materials in creating professionally designed and fabricated signs [Refer to Section 4 “Materials and Methods” starting on page 33 of the CSP]. “Selected materials should reflect their use and the anticipated longevity of the sign. Materials should be urban in character, durable, easily maintained and of the highest quality.”. Additionally, the Applicant has stated they are maintaining a high level of quality and a character appropriate to the project by prohibiting certain the sign types and fabrication methods [Refer to page 37 “Unacceptable Materials”].

**Staff Findings:** The CSP requires and provides standards for signs that are professionally designed and fabricated from quality, durable materials and are prohibiting certain the sign types and fabrication methods that have been found to detract from buildings and spaces. Staff finds that criterion is met.
Board Authority and Role
The Denver Planning Board’s authority is established in Denver Zoning Code section 10.10.3.3. This section allows large facilities to submit a CSP that provides more flexibility in the size, type, and location of signs in exchange for a coordinated program of signage with a higher standard of design quality. Flexibility is not allowed for an increase in the number of signs proposed. This section also establishes the process, content, and approval criteria for a CSP.

Review by the Planning Board is provided for in DZC subsection 10.10.3.3.C.5.b. The Planning Board is required to conduct a meeting for the purposes reviewing:

1. staff’s recommendation,
2. the concerns of the public and the criteria for review, and
3. shall adopt a recommendation for:
   a. denial,
   b. approval, or
   c. approval with conditions.

The Planning Board’s recommendation shall then be forwarded to the Zoning Administrator no later than 15 days following the adoption of the recommendation.

Attachments
1. Application
2. Comprehensive Sign Plan CSA-2023-0000005-AMEND