

**HALL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMEMNDATION REPORT**

**Applicant** ..... Steve P. McKibbon

**Request** ..... Amend conditions of a Planned Residential  
Development (PRD, 17.180.060)

**Proposed Use** ..... Master Sign Plan

**Size** ..... 25.58± acres

**Zoning** ..... Planned Residential Development (PRD,  
17.180.060)

**Location** ..... **1000 Treescort View** | Tax Parcel 10100 000158

**Commission District** ..... Two

**Planning Commission Date** ..... March 6, 2023

**Staff Recommendation** ..... **Approval, with Conditions**

**Planning Commission Recommendation**..... **Approval, with conditions**  
**Vote: 5-0**

**Planning Commission Recommendations:**

1. The Master Sign Package for the Treescort Apartment Complex shall be approved.
2. All signs submitted as part of the Master Sign Package are approved. Their quantity, materials, dimensions, and placement shall be as represented on the renderings, summary table, and site plans filed on January 12, 2023.
3. Monument signs shall not be constructed on sanitary sewer, drainage or utility easements.
4. In the case of a conflict between the text of the summary table and the rendering of a sign, the rendering governs.
5. Signs not explicitly requested as part of this Master Sign Package shall comply only with the underlying base Sign Code Requirements listed in Chapter 17.270. Sign Standards.
6. All conditions of approval shall be recorded on any subsequent plats of this property.

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**Public Forum:**

*There were no comments in support or opposition.*

## Summary Analysis

The applicant is requesting approval of a master sign package for the 220-unit Treesort Apartment Complex approved by the Board of Commissioners on January 24, 2013. The 2013 petition changed the zoning classification in effect upon the subject property from Planned Commercial Development to Planned Residential Development (PRD, [17.180.060](#)), but did not include a master sign package for the multi-tenant residential development ([17.420.060.4.-Signs](#)). Now that construction of the Treesort Apartment development is nearing completion, the applicant seeks to install signs upon the property. To obtain the sign permits, they need to retroactively attach a master sign package to the PRD standards in effect upon the property as an addendum to the existing zoning. The applicant proposes a total of 331 signs across the tract, 81% of which are necessary for building or dwelling unit identification. Table 1 below summarizes their request. Staff comments for each sign, including a determination of the applicable classification per Hall County Sign Code, are provided under the column titled, "Staff Review."

TABLE 1.- SUMMARY OF SIGN REQUESTS							
Sign Type ( i.e., what applicant calls the sign)	Staff Review (i.e., what code calls the sign and staff analysis of design)	Total Qty	Page Number	Sign Dimension (length x width x height)	Wall Dimension	Sign Materials	Lighting
<b>Primary Monument (PM)</b>	Monument Sign. Exceeds max height (6 ft) and doesn't use masonry or 100% stucco base. Relief from <a href="#">17.270.030.H.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.040.C.General</a> required.	1	3 to 4, 7 to 8	2.15' x 1.33' x 11.88'	n/a	Aluminum, Steel, Expanded Rigid Foam with Stucco Finish, White LEDs	Internal – backlit and uplit
<b>Secondary Monument (SM)</b>	Monument Sign. Exceeds max sign face area (48 SF) and doesn't use masonry or 100% stucco base. Relief from <a href="#">17.270.030.H.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.040.C.General</a> required.	1	5 to 8	17.84' x 2.56' x 5.89'	n/a	Aluminum, Steel, Expanded Rigid Foam with Stucco Finish	External – upward cast lights
<b>Exterior Wayfinding (EW)</b>	Internal Development Sign. ( <a href="#">17.270.050.E.-Signs</a> for which general permit has been granted) Compliant.	8	9 to 12	2.55' x 0.875' x 4.72'	n/a	Expanded Rigid foam with Stucco Finish, Acrylic	n/a
<b>Building Number ID (BIN)</b>	Address Sign. Exceeds 18 SF aggregate sign area for tract. Relief from <a href="#">17.270.050.H.-signs</a> for which general permit has been granted required.	22	13 to 15	1.42' x 6.40'	5,880 SF	Cut Vinyl, ACM, Acrylic, Matthews Paint	n/a

<b>Breezeway Directory (BWD)</b>	Address Sign. Exceeds 18 SF aggregate sign area for tract. Relief from <a href="#">17.270.050.H.- signs for which general permit has been granted</a> required.	39	16 to 18	4.21' x 0.94'	5,880 SF	ACM, Matthews Paint	n/a
<b>Unit Number Plaque (UNP)</b>	Address Sign. Exceeds 18 SF aggregate sign area for tract. Relief from <a href="#">17.270.050.H.- signs for which general permit has been granted</a> required.	170	19 to 23	0.30' x 0.5'	n/a	Acrylic, UV Printed Graphics	n/a

<b>TABLE 1.- SUMMARY OF SIGN REQUESTS (CONT.)</b>							
<b>Sign Type ( i.e., what applicant calls the sign)</b>	<b>Staff Review (i.e., what code calls the sign and staff analysis of design)</b>	<b>Total Qty</b>	<b>Page Number</b>	<b>Sign Dimension (length x width x height)</b>	<b>Wall Dimension</b>	<b>Sign Materials</b>	<b>Lighting</b>
<b>Amenity ID Plaque (AID)</b>	Directory Sign ( <a href="#">17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A</a> ) Compliant.	2	26	0.65' x 0.49'	n/a	Acrylic, Tactile Material, braille	n/a
<b>Pool Rules (PR.1)</b>	Directory Sign ( <a href="#">17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A</a> ) Compliant.	2	27	3.34' x 3.38'	n/a	ACM, Digitally Printed Graphics	n/a
<b>Amenity Rules Plaque (ARP)</b>	Directory Sign ( <a href="#">17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A</a> ) Compliant.	4	28	1.48' x 1.50'	n/a	AMC, Digitally Printed Graphics	n/a
<b>Amenity ID with Back Plate (AID.BP)</b>	Directory Sign ( <a href="#">17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A</a> ) Compliant.	7	29	0.65' x 0.49'	n/a	Acrylic, Tactile Material, Braille, UV Printed Graphics, Cut Vinyl Graphics	n/a
<b>Restroom Plaque (RP)</b>	Directory Sign ( <a href="#">17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A</a> ) Compliant.	6	30	0.59' x 0.75'	n/a	Acrylic, Tactile Material, Braille, UV Printed Graphics, Cut Vinyl Graphics	n/a
<b>Emergency Phone (PR.2)</b>	Wall Sign prohibited in PRD. Relief from <a href="#">17.270.070.A.- Standards for specific districts</a> required.	2	31	0.84' x 0.67'	n/a	Aluminum, Digitally Printed Graphics	n/a
<b>No Glass (PR.3)</b>	Directory Sign ( <a href="#">17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A</a> ) Compliant.	2	32	1.48' x 1.05'	n/a	ACM, Digitally Printed Graphics	n/a

<b>No Lifeguard (PR.4)</b>	Directory Sign <a href="#">(17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A)</a> Compliant.	2	33	1.48' x 1.10'	n/a	ACM, Digitally Printed Graphics	n/a
<b>No Pets (PR.5)</b>	Directory Sign <a href="#">(17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A)</a> Compliant.	2	34	1.48' x 0.88'	n/a	ACM, Digitally Printed Graphics	n/a
<b>Timer Panel (TP)</b>	Directory Sign <a href="#">(17.270.030.E.Definitions</a> and <a href="#">17.270.050.A)</a> Compliant.	1	35	1.04' x 0.63'	n/a	ACM, Digitally Printed Graphics	n/a
<b>Parking Gate Liability (PGL)</b>	Fence mounted sign prohibited. Relief from <a href="#">17.270.100.C.Prohibited</a> <a href="#">signs</a> required.	2	36	1.84' x 2.00'	n/a	Aluminum, Digitally Printed Graphics	n/a
<b>TABLE 1.- SUMMARY OF SIGN REQUESTS (CONT.)</b>							
<b>Sign Type ( i.e., what applicant calls the sign)</b>	<b>Staff Review (i.e., what code calls the sign and staff analysis of design)</b>	<b>Total Qty</b>	<b>Page Number</b>	<b>Sign Dimension (length x width x height)</b>	<b>Wall Dimension</b>	<b>Sign Materials</b>	<b>Lighting</b>
<b>Exterior Post and Panel (EPP)</b>	Freestanding sign less than 6 SF in area and placed at least 15 feet from property line <a href="#">(17.270.040.C and E.General)</a> . Compliant.	7	38-40	2.00' x 1.5'	n/a	ACM, Digitally Printed Graphics, Aluminum posts	n/a

Per Hall County Ordinance ([17.420.060.4.-Signs](#)), County review and approval of the signage master plan, “shall be based on the compatibility of the proposed signage with the siting and architecture of the subject building(s) and the compatibility of the signage with surrounding land uses.” Review of architectural elevations show the apartment units have a modern aesthetic and are predominantly clad with fiber-cementitious siding in darker, cooler colors. Metal stairs and details are visible from entrances at breezeways. Due to its recurring use of digitally printed graphics, aluminum composite material (“ACM”), clear and painted acrylics, and neutral color palette of charcoal and white, staff finds the master sign package compatible with the modern aesthetic of the apartment buildings on-site.

As regards surrounding uses, the PCD zoned tracts located south of Treesort are subject to a commercial master sign plan filed by Fuqua Acquisitions LLC in 2015. Once built out, these lots will have traditional auto-centric signage consisting of large multi-panel monument signs clad in masonry and wall signs made of front lit channel letters or routed PCV letters, sized as large as 153.21 square feet. Fuqua’s signage is designed to capture the attention of drivers on Price Road and Thompson Bridge Road who may or may not be familiar with the commercial development. Because they support different land uses and styles of development, Treesort’s sign package is naturally not compatible with Fuqua’s. For example, Treesort’s smaller, nonilluminated wall and directory signs target pedestrians traversing the property on foot and its monument signs are designed to

mirror the materials used on residential housing product, not a large commercial anchor store. Staff recommends approval of the amendment request subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Master Sign Package for the Treesort Apartment Complex is approved.
- 2. Signs submitted as part of the Master Sign Package are approved. Their quantity, materials, dimensions, and placement shall be as represented on the renderings, summary table, and site plans filed January 12, 2023.
- 3. Monument signs shall not be constructed on sanitary sewer, drainage or utility easements.
- 4. In the case of a conflict between the text of the summary table and the rendering of a sign, the rendering governs.
- 5. Signs not explicitly requested as part of this Master Sign Package shall need comply only with the underlying base Sign Code Requirements listed in Chapter 17.270.-Sign Standards.
- 6. A legible copy of this letter shall be scanned onto all future recorded plats for this property.

Based on the future land-use plan, staff finds the requested master sign plan consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

**Zoning Analysis**

When considering a zoning amendment to the zoning maps, the following items must be considered:

- 1. Whether the zoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property; **Approval of the master sign package would permit the installation of signs compatible with the apartment buildings on-site, but not compatible with auto-centric commercial signage to be installed to the south.**
- 2. Whether the zoning proposal will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property; **Approval of the zoning proposal is not expected to adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property. Signage installed upon the property is unlikely to be visible from abutting tracts because the subject parcel is a large flag lot sized +/- 25 acres and the preservation of existing stream buffers has resulted in the placement of units at the center of the lot. The majority of signs proposed will be mounted to the building, away from property lines.**
- 3. Whether the property to be affected by the zoning proposal has reasonable economic use as currently zoned. **The subject property has reasonable economic use as zoned.**
- 4. Whether the zoning proposal will result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, or utilities; **Approval of the master sign package will not burden existing streets, transportation facilities or utilities. Installation of the proposed signage is expected to help users more effectively and safely navigate the private roads throughout the apartment complex and to assist emergency responders to more rapidly reach residents in distress.**
- 5. Whether the zoning proposal is in conformity with the policy and intent of the land use plan; **The dominant Future Land Use designation for Tax Parcel 10100 000158 is Activity Center. Activity Centers are characterized by compact, walkable, and higher density developments. These areas provide employment opportunities and support residential uses such as townhomes, condos, and loft**

**apartments that contribute to a live-work environment. Design should support high vehicular and pedestrian connectivity. Approval of the master sign plan supports vehicular and pedestrian mobility across the apartment complex, by identifying unit and amenity locations of interest to residents.**

- 6. The extent to which property values are diminished by the existing zoning restrictions; **It cannot be determined based on information submitted how or if the approval or denial of the master sign package as presented would affect area property values.**
- 7. The extent to which the destruction of the subject property's value under the existing zoning promotes the health, safety, morals or general welfare of the public; **It cannot be determined based on information submitted how or if the approval or denial of the master sign package as presented would affect area property values. However, improvements in public safety are expected because 81% of total signs proposed are address signs (i.e., building identification signs, breezeway signs, and unit numbers). The base sign code sets an aggregate sign area maximum of 18 square feet for addressing signs. This is intended to support installation of one street number placard, as is typically done for a single family detached homes, but is insufficient for a multi-tenant development. Approving the sign package supports public safety by providing adequate building identification information to the public.**
- 8. The relative gain to the public as compared to the hardship imposed upon the individual property owner; **Gains from denial of the petition may include fewer signs to maintain upon the property which may reduce maintenance costs paid by the owner and less visual clutter affecting the public on-site. Losses include the increased risk that prospective tenants or delivery drivers will be unable to confirm they've arrived to the correct locations leading them to leave without signing a lease or with undelivered goods. Both of these circumstances may negatively impact the property owner's business operations.**
- 9. The length of time the property has been vacant as zoned considered in the context of land development in the area in the vicinity of the property; **Treesort was approved for land disturbance on April 1, 2021. This means the land sat vacant for 9 years after the property was formally rezoned PRD. The subject property and surrounding commercial uses are both under development.**
- 10. Whether there are other existing or changing conditions affecting the use or development of the property which give supporting grounds for either approval or disapproval of the zoning proposal; **Apartments are desired uses in Activity Centers, intended to supplement the employment and commercial enterprises surrounding them. As the commercial sites zoned PCD south of Treesort build out, long-term sustained occupancy of the Treesort complex can help support the success of new local or new anchor businesses abutting Price Road and Thompson Bridge Road. If not approved, the applicant can only install one monument sign upon the premises with a face not exceeding 48 square feet and a height of six feet.**
- 11. Whether the change would create an isolated district unrelated to the surrounding districts; **Approval of the sign package would not create an isolated district. Any sense of existing separation from the surrounding properties is a result of the subject tract's flag lot configuration.**
- 12. Whether the present zoning district boundaries are illogically drawn in relation to existing conditions in the area; **The present zoning district is logically drawn. Property lines and applicable zoning conditions are clearly depicted on Plat Book 882, Page 190-193.**
- 13. Whether the change requested is out of scale with the needs of the county as a whole or the immediate neighborhood; **The change requested is not out of scale with the needs of the county or neighborhood.**

**The proposed quantity, materials, and size of signs proposed on the filed summary table and rendering packet filed with this application are compatible with on-site development.**

- 14. Whether it is impossible to find adequate sites for the proposed use in districts permitting such use and already appropriately zoned; County Commission has determined PRD to be an appropriate zoning classification for this property and that the 220 unit apartment complex is an appropriate land use for the property.**
- 15. Whether the need for rezoning could be handled instead by a variance request to the [Planning Commission]; The applicant is providing the required master sign package and bringing the petition for consideration as a condition of amendment to the 2013 rezoning, as required by Hall County Code. Variances are not the pathway supported by the sign code by the current petition.**
- 16. Whether there would be an ecological or pollution impact resulting from major modifications to the land if the request is granted; No ecological or pollution impact is expected from the proposed sign package, if the request is granted. There is a 50 foot tree buffer along the west property line and a stream buffer along the front property line to mitigate any potential light spill over from internal and external illumination requests for monument signs.**
- 17. Whether there is reasonable evidence based upon existing and anticipated land use that would indicate a mistake was made in the original zoning of the property; No evidence was found that would indicate a mistake was made in the rezoning of the property to PRD.**

**The property is zoned Planned Residential Development ([PRD, 17.180.060](#)). Multi-family residential developments are permitted uses under the Planned Residential Development classification and listed as desirable uses under the Activity Center classification of the Comprehensive Plan. The future land use classification for this property is Activity Center.**

#### **[17.380.050](#). - Submission requirements for a rezoning request**

- A. Any person or persons requesting a change in the official zoning map or use subject to approval of the county commission shall file an application with a plat or map of the property attached thereto, together with payment of such fees set forth in [chapter 17.30](#) to cover administrative and advertising costs, in the planning department office. Such person or persons or their authorized agent shall appear in person at the public hearing held to consider the district change. **Proposal meets the requirement. Applicant has paid the appropriate fees and understands that someone must be present at both the Hall County Planning Commission meeting and the voting meeting of the Hall County Board of Commissioners.**
- B. All applications for a change of zoning classification or use subject to approval of the county commission shall include:
  1. A narrative statement identifying the existing and proposed use of the property and addressing each of the criteria set forth in section 17.380.060.C of this section [chapter]. **The applicant has submitted a narrative and site plan but did not specifically address the criteria listed in 17.380.060.C.**
  2. A site plan drawn to scale designating the area covered by the application and identifying existing and proposed buildings and uses, adjacent existing land uses, zoning on contiguous parcels, including those across an abutting public right-of-way, and any other significant site improvements proposed to accommodate the proposed use or buffer adjacent uses, etc., or a

plat of the subject property where no specific land use is proposed. In cases where only a plat or map is provided and no land use is proposed, the planning commission and county commission shall evaluate the application based on the most intense possible land use permitted in the proposed district. **The submitted documents are drawn to scale and include the necessary information as listed above.**

- C. For any application for a slow rate land treatment system (see [chapter 17.20](#)), the following additional requirements apply. **This standard is not applicable as the site will be served by a municipal sewer system.**
- D. For any application proposing the development of 100 or more residential dwelling units, a traffic impact study shall be submitted prior to consideration of the application by the planning commission. At the applicant's expense, the traffic impact study shall be prepared by a professional engineer in accordance with requirements established by the Hall County Engineering Department. The engineering department shall review the traffic impact study and forward any comments to the Hall County Planning Commission. **This standard is not applicable as the underlying residential zoning classification has already been established.**

#### **Development Support and Constraints – Departmental / Agency Comments**

##### **Hall County Environmental Health**

In an email dated February 13, 2023, Emily McGahee states “No comment.”

##### **Hall County Fire Marshal**

An email dated February 16, 2023, John Hornick, NPQ Fire Inspector 1, Plans Review Lieutenant stated “The Hall County Fire Marshal’s Office has no comments as proposed.”

##### **Hall County Public Works and Utilities**

In a memo dated February 14, 2023, Srikanth Yamala, Director of Public Works and Utilities, provided the following comments:

##### **Engineering:**

No comment.

##### **Traffic:**

Proposed signage shall not obstruct or contradict approved traffic control signage.

##### **Utilities**

Monument signs shall not be constructed on sanitary sewer or utility easement

##### **Georgia Department of Transportation**

In email dated February 14, 2023 from Parker Niebauer, D1TO Traffic Operations Supervisor, confirmed this project will require GDOT coordination.

- **Excerpts from the minutes of the March 6, 2023 meeting**

##### **Applicant’s Presentation:**

**Randi Doveton, Planning Director**, presented a summary of the request.



**Jason Acree, 7 Old Roswell Street, Alpharetta**, presented the request. The applicant

**Public Forum:**

*There were no comments in support or opposition.*

**Planning Commission Comments:**

Mr. Braswell questioned if the applicant had any questions regarding the staff recommendations. The applicant stated they are in agreement with staff conditions.

**Motion: A motion to approve, with conditions was made by Ms. Pilcher and seconded by Mr. Sosebee.**

**Vote: 5-0**

*Conditions:*

1. Master Sign Package for the Treesort Apartment Complex is approved.
2. Signs submitted as part of the Master Sign Package are approved. Their quantity, materials, dimensions, and placement shall be as represented on the renderings, summary table, and site plans filed January 12, 2023.
3. Monument signs shall not be constructed on sanitary sewer, drainage or utility easements.
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6. A legible copy of this letter shall be scanned onto all future recorded plats for this property.