

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

February 15, 2017

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2017-055  
**ADDRESS:** 909 W HOUSTON ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 263 BLK 76 LOT 15 (VIA WESTSIDE TRANSIT CENTER)  
**ZONING:** D,H,HL  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 5  
**DISTRICT:** Cattleman Square Historic District  
**LANDMARK:** El Fenix Grill  
**APPLICANT:** Christine Vina/VIA Metropolitan Transit  
**OWNER:** VIA Metropolitan Transit  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Install signage  
**REQUEST:**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to install signage including the following:

1. One banner blade sign, 6.7 square feet, with a steel frame and dibond panels
2. One aluminum wall mounted sign, above front entrance, 18 square feet
3. One aluminum hanging sign below awning, 4.7 square feet
4. Four vinyl window decal along corner windows, 3.9 square feet

### APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 6, Guidelines for Signage*

#### 1. General

##### A. GENERAL

- i. *Number and size*—Each building will be allowed one major and two minor signs. Total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet.
- ii. *New signs*—Select the type of sign to be used based on evidence of historic signs or sign attachment parts along the building storefront where possible. Design signs to respect and respond to the character and/or period of the area in which they are being placed. Signs should identify the tenant without creating visual clutter or distracting from building features and historic districts.
- iii. *Scale*—Design signage to be in proportion to the facade, respecting the building's size, scale and mass, height, and rhythms and sizes of window and door openings. Scale signage (in terms of its height and width) to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

##### C. PLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION

- i. *Location*—Place signs where historically located and reuse sign attachment parts where they exist. Do not erect signs above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall, or where they will disfigure or conceal architectural details, window openings, doors, or other significant details.
- ii. *Obstruction of historic features*—Avoid obscuring historic building features such as cornices, gables, porches, balconies, or other decorative elements with new signs.
- iii. *Damage*—Avoid irreversible damage caused by installing a sign. For example, mount a sign to the mortar rather than the historic masonry.
- iv. *Pedestrian orientation*—Orient signs toward the sidewalk to maintain the pedestrian oriented nature of the historic districts.

##### D. DESIGN

- i. *Inappropriate materials*—Do not use plastic, fiberglass, highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read, or other synthetic materials not historically used in the district.
- ii. *Appropriate materials*—Construct signs of durable materials used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, aluminum, and metal grill work.
- iii. *Color*—Limit the number of colors used on a sign to three. Select a dark background with light lettering to make signs more legible.
- iv. *Typefaces*—Select letter styles and sizes that complement the overall character of the building façade. Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate styles.

### 3. Projecting and Wall-Mounted Signs

## A. GENERAL

- i. *Mounting devices*—Construct sign frames and panels that will be used to be attach signs to the wall of a building of wood, metal, or other durable materials appropriate to the building's period of construction.
- ii. *Structural supports*—Utilize sign hooks, expansion bolts, or through bolts with washers on the inside of the wall depending upon the weight and area of the sign, and the condition of the wall to which it is to be attached.
- iii. *Appropriate usage*—Limit the use of projecting and wall-mounted signs to building forms that historically used these types of signs, most typically commercial storefronts. To a lesser degree, these signage types may also be appropriate in areas where residential building forms have been adapted for office or retail uses, if sized accordingly.

## B. PROJECTING SIGNS

- i. *Placement*—Mount projecting signs perpendicularly to a building or column while allowing eight feet of overhead clearance above public walkways.
- ii. *Public right-of-way*—Limit the extension of projecting signs from the building facade into the public right-of-way for a maximum distance of eight feet or a distance equal to two-thirds the width of the abutting sidewalk, whichever distance is greater.
- iii. *Area*—Projecting signs should be scaled appropriately in response to the building façade and number of tenants.

## C. WALL-MOUNTED SIGNS

- i. *Area*—Limit the aggregate area of all wall-mounted signs to twenty-five percent of a building facade.
- ii. *Projection*—Limit the projection of wall-mounted signs to less than twelve inches from the building wall.
- iii. *Placement*—Locate wall signs on existing signboards—the area above the storefront windows and below the second story windows—when available. Mount wall signs to align with others on the block if an existing signboard is not available.
- iv. *Channel letters*—Avoid using internally-illuminated, wall-mounted channel letters for new signs unless historic precedent exists. Reverse channel letters may be permitted.

## 5. Window Signs

### A. GENERAL

- i. *Location*—Limit the use of window signs to first floor windows where they may be readily viewed by pedestrians.
- ii. *Appropriate building types*—Use window signs in high traffic pedestrian areas, such as on commercial storefronts or other buildings that have been adapted for non-residential use.
- iii. *Historic signage*—Retain historic window signage if it reflects a historic building name, owner, or early business.

### B. DESIGN

- i. *Window coverage*—Do not cover more than 30 percent of the window area with signage.
- ii. *Opacity*—Do not use window signs constructed of opaque materials that obscure views into and out of windows, either partially or completely.
- iii. *Prohibited window signs*—Do not use paper signs, banners, or graphic films that adhere to the exterior of window glazing.
- iv. *Symbols and lettering*—Incorporate lettering, symbols, and other design elements that reflect the type of business or institution at the location to increase a sign's impact.
- v. *Temporary signs and banners*—Place temporary signs in a manner that is appropriate for the building scale and style, as allowed by UDC sec. 35-612(i).

## FINDINGS:

- a. The structure is a two story commercial structure with a brick façade and metal awning. It is a contributing structure and individual landmark in the Cattleman Square Historic District, designated in 1988.
- b. There are 4 total proposed signs, totaling 33.3 square feet. According to the Guidelines for Signage 1.A.i, each building will be allowed one major and two minor signs and the total requested signage should not exceed 50 square feet. There is not existing signage.
- c. The proposed blade sign, is 6.7 square feet, with a steel frame and dibond panels. According to the Guidelines for Signage 3.B., projecting signs should be mounted perpendicularly to a building or column while allowing eight feet of overhead clearance above public walkways. Projecting signs should be scaled appropriately in response to the building façade and number of tenants. Staff finds the proposed blade sign is consistent with the Guidelines in terms of material, scale, placement, and design.
- d. The proposed aluminum wall mounted sign is located above front entrance and totals 18 square feet. According to the Guidelines for Signage 3.C., wall-mounted sign area should be limited to twenty-five percent of a building façade and locate where historically appropriate. Staff finds the proposed wall sign consistent with the Guidelines in terms of material and design, but finds the placement and size not consistent with the Guidelines. Staff finds the

sign does not respond to pedestrian traffic and is not consistent with the Guidelines.

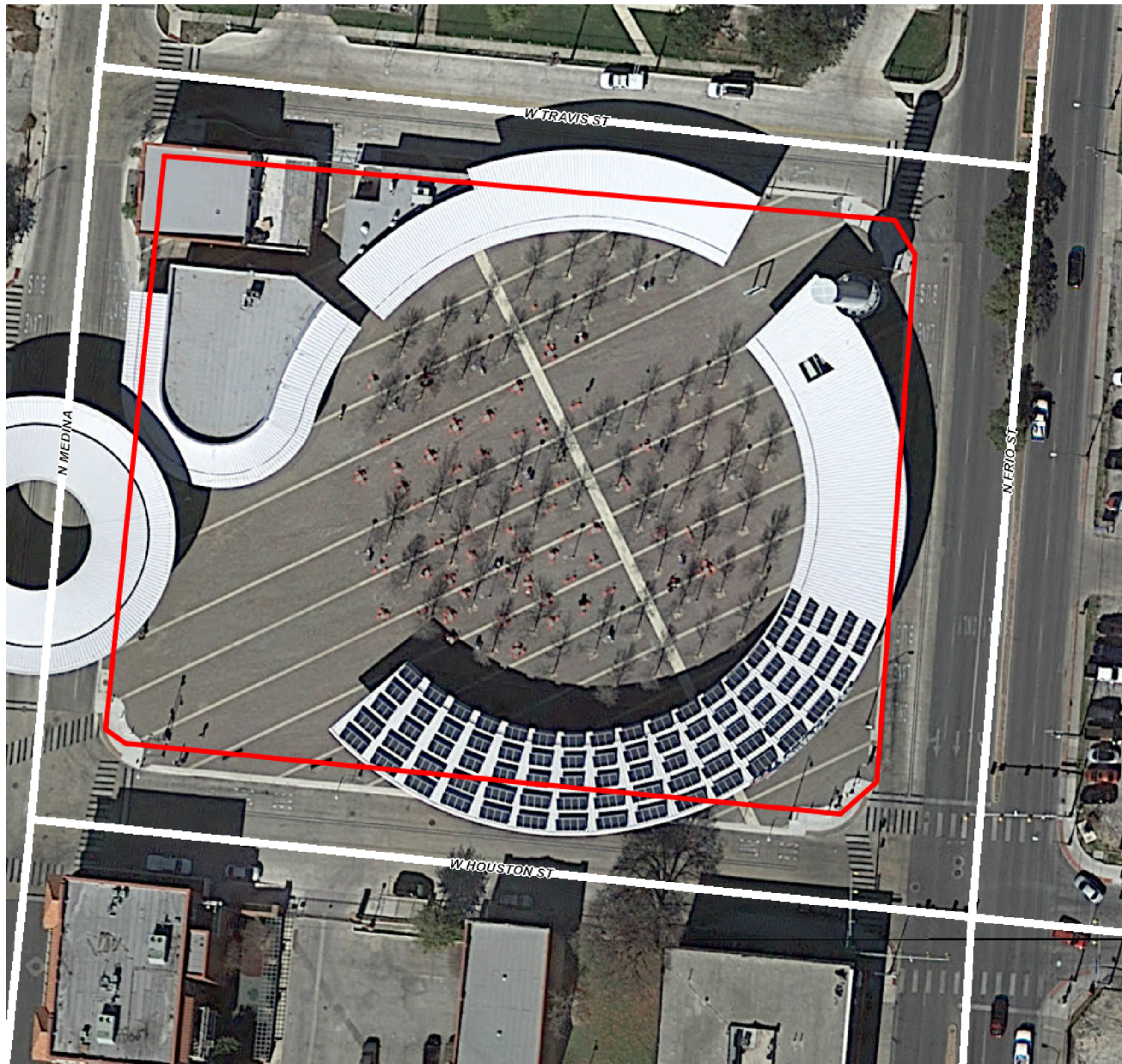
- e. The proposed aluminum hanging sign below the awning is 4.7 square feet. According to the Guidelines for Signage 3.B., projecting hanging signs should allow eight feet of overhead clearance above public walkways and should be scaled appropriately in response to the building façade and number of tenants. Staff finds the proposed hanging sign consistent with the Guidelines in terms of material, location, scale, and design.
- f. The proposed vinyl window decals along the corner windows are 3.9 square feet. According to the Guidelines for Signage 5., letters should be limited to first floor and are recommended on windows in high traffic pedestrian areas. The decals should not cover more than 30 percent of the window area and incorporate lettering and other design elements that reflect the type of business to increase a sign's impact. Staff finds the four proposed window decals are consistent with the Guidelines in terms of location, scale and design.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval based on findings a through f with the stipulation that the wall-mounted sign is not installed.

**CASE MANAGER:**

Lauren Sage



## Flex Viewer

Powered by ArcGIS Server

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# Front Elevation: West





# **VIA Joint Law Enforcement Center (JLEC) Signage Application**

**CENTRO PLAZA  
Washington Hotel  
Landmark 909 W. Houston St.**



## **909 W. Houston – Washington Hotel Landmark**

**New use: Joint Law Enforcement Center (JLEC)**

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:**

This component of the previously approved building rehabilitation describes the Signage Plan for the proposed signage at the JLEC building on Centro Plaza. The historic structure on the Plaza was saved and rehabilitated to support functions for the City, County, VIA and other agency law enforcement officers. These agency officers may utilize this secure, 24/7 environment as temporary office space to conduct strategic command operations in and around the VIA Villa area, and as an administrative space to complete daily reports.

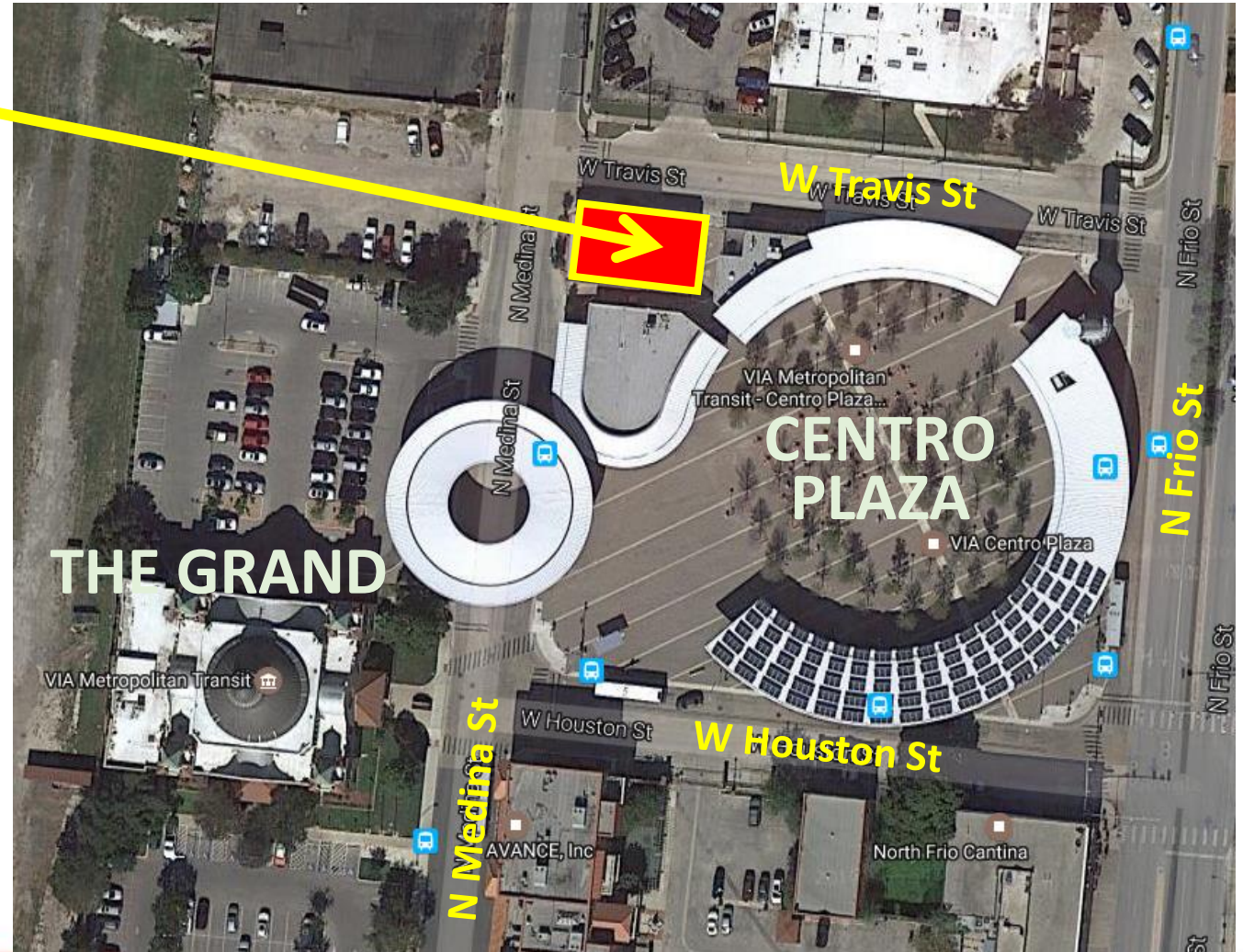
Due to the security demands and usage of the space, it is important the proposed signage offer clear visibility to both the pedestrian and driver. Using the minimal number of signage components to accommodate the visibility requirements of the building from a distance, and the security requirements within the building, the following components are being requested:

- 1) One canopy sign, perpendicular to the building, along Travis Street
- 2) One attached sign, above the front entrance, along Medina Street
- 3) Translucent film material, at the base of the major storefront windows, along Medina and Travis Streets, to provide for some degree of privacy
- 4) Opaque film along the rear windows (not part of the storefront assembly), along Travis, where security is most required.



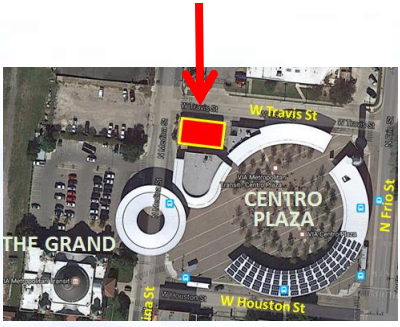
# CENTRO PLAZA Site

## JLEC Landmark Building Location





# Side Elevation: North





# Rear Elevation: East





# Side Elevation: South





# Translucent Film Locations





# Opaque Film Locations





# Signage Locations





# Signage Locations

Due to the security demands and usage of the space, it is important the proposed signage offer clear visibility to both the pedestrian and driver. Using the minimal number of signage components to accommodate the visibility requirements of the building from a distance, and the security requirements within the building, the following components are being requested:

- 1) One canopy sign, perpendicular to the building, along Travis Street
- 2) One attached sign, above the front entrance, along Medina Street
- 3) One awning sign, perpendicular to the building, along Medina Street
- 4) Translucent film material, at the base of the major storefront windows, along Medina and Travis Streets, to provide for some degree of privacy. Opaque film along the rear windows (not part of the storefront assembly), along Travis, where security is most required.



# Signage Specifications

ITEM	SPECS	MATERIALS
① HANGING POLE BANNER	30"(W) X 32"(H) (2)	Steel frame with dibond panels & vinyl graphics
② WALL MOUNTED SIGN	72"(W) X 36"(H)	Composite/Aluminum/Acrylic letters
③ AWNING/CANOPY SIGN	40"(W) X 17"(H)	Composite/Aluminum
④ WINDOW DECAL	35"(W) X 16"(H) (9)	Vinyl
TOTAL SQ. FT	24 SQ. FT.	

