

Memorandum

TO: City Council
FROM: Will Harris , Associate Planner
DATE: August 17, 2026
SUBJECT: 3333 Rice St - Comprehensive Sign Plan - Kris Hernandez/Install This Sign and Awning Co on behalf of Chipotle
ITEM NUMBER: 8.e
SECTION: CONSENT AGENDA

REQUESTED MOTION

To approve the comprehensive sign plan amendment, subject to the following conditions:

1. The signs shall comply with the plans submitted for the comprehensive sign plan application and conditions set forth in this approval. Any significant change will require review by the planning commission and city council.
2. The applicant shall obtain approval of their sign permit prior to the installation of any signs on the property.

This approval is based upon the findings of fact outlined in [sec. 103-97 \(c\) \(2\) \(c\)](#):

1. *The plan proposes signs consistent in color, size, and materials throughout the site* - Each type of sign proposed maintains consistent colors, sizes, and materials associated with Chipotle and their branding.
2. *Approving the deviation is necessary to relieve a practical difficulty existing on the property* - The property is located on three right-of-ways and two arterial roadways, with the smallest frontage along the busiest roadway. Thus, it provides some difficulty in the identification of the business. The proposed sign plan relieves this difficulty by placing consistent wall signage along both arterial roadways to help identify the site to customers.
3. *The proposed deviations from the standards of chapter 113 result in a more unified sign package and greater aesthetic appeal between signs on the site* - Having identical wall signs on both arterial roadways will create a more unified sign package and greater appeal to the site.
4. *Approving the deviation will not confer a special privilege on the applicant that would normally be denied under chapter 113* - The site has already received approval for similar comprehensive sign plans for the previous fast food restaurant in 1998, for a longer sign. Therefore the request is not unusual nor would confer special privileges to Chipotle.
5. *The resulting sign plan is effective, functional, attractive, and compatible with community standards* - The plan proposes signs that improve the appearance of the site and are compatible with community standards applied to similar uses, such as the Burger King previously and the existing Chipotle on Red Fox Rd.

INTRODUCTION

On [October 20, 2025](#), the city council granted approval for the demolition of the existing blighted Burger King building and construction of a new 2,379 square foot Chipotle restaurant and approximately 350 square foot patio with a drive through lane. As a part of that approval, Chipotle proposed the installation of two wall signs, one directional sign, one monument sign, and one pylon sign (reusing the existing Burger King sign pole). [Chapter 113](#) permits two wall signs for a single tenant provided the signs face different arterial roadways. Sites that are located along two or more roadways may have two freestanding signs. Traffic directional signs within a private development are considered exempt provided they meet certain criteria.

The applicants have submitted a sign plan for the site proposing a 13' 1/2" long wall sign along an elevation that is 34' 2.4". Therefore, the sign exceeds the maximum permitted length by 6' 2.5" and requires the approval of a comprehensive sign plan. The applicant is requesting the following:

1. Comprehensive sign plan - Approval of a 13' 1/2" long wall sign along the eastern elevation of the building that fronts Rice St.

DISCUSSION

Site and project description

The site is located along the west side of Rice Street just south of the Building Trades Federal Credit Union building and is zoned C1, retail services. The lot is 0.95 acres with frontage and access on North Owasso Court, North Owasso Boulevard, and Rice Street. The property has been developed as a drive-through restaurant since 1993.

On [October 20, 2025](#), the city council granted approval for the site and building plans for a new Chipotle restaurant at 3333 Rice Street. The site and building plans for the new Chipotle restaurant included the following improvements:

1. The demolition of the existing Burger King restaurant
2. The construction of a new 2,379 square foot Chipotle restaurant and approximately 350 square foot patio with a drive through lane for online order pick-up
3. The installation of two wall signs, one directional sign, one monument sign, and one pylon sign (reusing the existing Burger King sign pole)
4. Retain the three access driveways and, to the extent possible, retain the existing curb and parking lot pavement
5. The removal of three trees within the North Owasso Court right-of-way (city permission has been granted)
6. The removal of dead trees and brush from the Ramsey County property at 3329 Rice Street (county permission has been granted)

The applicant is proposing the following in their sign permit:

1. Two identical wall signs to front the north elevation along Owasso Boulevard and eastern elevation along Rice St. Both signs are 13' and 1/2" long, 2' 2 and 3/4" tall for 29 square feet.
2. One monument sign that is 8 feet in height, 10 feet in length, and 45 square feet will be located near the entrance on Owasso Boulevard.
3. A new 38.54 square foot pylon sign will be placed near the entrance on Rice Street. The applicant intends to reuse the existing 14 foot pole that was used by Burger King for the new signage.
4. Replacement of the existing self-returning clearance bar located in the drive through area on the western side of the site.
5. One 6" wide and 6' 8" tall directional sign that will be located on the western side of the

parking lot to indicate parking spaces designated for digital pickup.

Development code requirements

Comprehensive sign plan

A comprehensive sign plan is a sign plan for a building and its associated grounds, a multibuilding development site, or a multi-tenant building indicating the number, types, locations, dimensions, materials, and colors of signs proposed. An approved plan may vary from the design and dimensional standards set forth in chapter 113 without approval of a formal variance, provided it meets the criteria set forth in [sec 103-97](#).

Prior comprehensive sign plan approval

The city council approved a comprehensive sign plan for the Burger King restaurant on September 14, 1998, to install an additional wall sign on the property and move the existing sign that had been placed on the north elevation to the east elevation. That wall sign was 14.2' in length, and was located on the elevation that faced Rice St.

Staff review

The applicant has submitted a comprehensive sign plan package with respect to proposed signage on the site. The proposed signage and associated development code requirements specified in development code chapter 113 are outlined below:

Proposed amendment

For a single tenant building, the length of the wall sign cannot exceed 20% of the length of the building elevation it is affixed to. Staff reviewed the sign permit application that was submitted on May 28, 2026, and determined that the proposed length of 13' 1/2" for the eastern elevation of the building along Rice St exceeds the 20% maximum stated by code by 6' 2.5" which requires the approval of a comprehensive sign plan. All other signs proposed meet the designated code requirements of [chapter 113](#) and may be approved administratively.

Comprehensive sign plan review

Staff has reviewed the proposal and believes the revised pylon sign is reasonable and in keeping with the spirit and intent of the sign ordinance, comprehensive sign plan criteria, and the signage on the site over time. While the proposed wall sign exceeds the maximum length permitted by chapter 113, it maintains a unified package and greater aesthetic consistency between the signs on the site. Because Rice St is also the main arterial road with access to the site, allowing for increased signage area along that road will help identify the site to direct customers, will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding land uses, and maintains consistency with the intent of the code and the comprehensive sign plan criteria. Staff is in favor of the proposed comprehensive sign plan amendment with conditions.

Public comment

Notice of the proposed application was mailed to affected property owners within 150 feet of the site. At the time of this report, no comments have been received from the public nor staff.

Planning commission

The planning commission reviewed the proposed comprehensive sign plan at their meeting on [July 28, 2026](#). The applicants were in attendance and answered questions regarding the need for the size of the sign that was proposed, whether this signage was standard practice for other developments, and expressed their desire for visibility with the deviation. No members of the public spoke on the item. The planning commission discussed the size of the sign, the impacts

of the proposed deviation, and made comments on the similarities in code language between the comprehensive sign code and a standard variance procedure for the need to find a practical difficulty under current code. After discussion, the commission voted to recommend approving the comprehensive sign plan with a 6-1 vote

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the comprehensive sign plan amendment, subject to the following conditions:

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This approval is based upon the findings of fact outlined in [sec. 103-97 \(c\) \(2\) \(c\)](#):

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5. *The resulting sign plan is effective, functional, attractive, and compatible with community standards* - The plan proposes signs that improve the appearance of the site and are compatible with community standards applied to similar uses, such as the Burger King previously and the existing Chipotle on Red Fox Rd.

ATTACHMENTS

[Comprehensive Sign Plan Application - 694 & Rice](#)
[Location Map](#)