



**Southern Groves-Shoppes at the Heart
Amore Façade Sign Variance
Project No. P25-159**



SUMMARY

Applicant's Request:	A variance request to allow 315.52 SF more façade signage than allowed by the Tradition Master Sign Program.
Application Type:	Variance, Quasi-Judicial
Applicant:	Steve Garrett, Lucido and Associates
Property Owner:	4Y Plaza LLC
Location:	Southwest corner of SW Village Parkway and Discovery Way
Project Planner:	Marissa Da Breo-Latchman, Environmental Planner II

Project Description

The City of Port St. Lucie has received a request from Steve Garrett, Lucido & Associates, agent for the property owner, 4Y Plaza LLC, to grant a variance of 315.52 SF from the Tradition Master Sign Program (7th amendment) to allow a total of 515.52 SF of façade signage distributed between three signs where 200 SF is allowed for a single-tenant building located in the Shoppes at the Heart development. The Tradition Master Sign Program allows a maximum cumulative sign area of 200SF for buildings less than 10,000 SF and per business facade or section. The signage that is the subject of this variance is located on the building at the northeast corner of the property, adjacent to the Heart in the Park public art feature.

The Shoppes at the Heart property is legally described as SG-3 Commercial Shoppes at the Heart, Parcel A (9.911 AC - 431,709 SF) according to the map or plat thereof as recorded in the Plat Book 133, Page 4, Public Records of St. Lucie County, Florida.

Background

The amended Site Plan was approved on May 28, 2025, and the site is built out. Signage is proposed for three of the building's four facades. All of the signs have the same dimensions, 86" by 288" or 7.16' by 24' for a total of 515.52 SF which is 315.52 SF more than what is allowed by the Tradition Master Sign Program.

Review Criteria

An application for a variance is reviewed for consistency with Article XV of the Zoning Code, Sections 158.295 through 158.299. Final action on the application (approval or denial) is in the form of an Order of the Planning and Zoning Board following a quasi-judicial public hearing. A vote of approval by five (5) members of the Planning and Zoning Board is required to grant a variance.

Public Notice Requirements (Section 158.298 (B))

Public notice was mailed to owners within 750 feet on October 23, 2025, and the file was included in the ad for the Planning & Zoning Board's agenda.

Location and Site Information

Parcel Number:	4315-712-0003-000-6
Property Size:	9.91 acres
Legal Description:	SG-3 Commercial Shoppes at the Heart (PB 133-4) Parcel A (9.911 AC - 431,709 SF)
Address:	10200 SW Discovery Way (affected structure)
Future Land Use:	NCD
Existing Zoning:	MPUD (Master Planned unit Development)
Existing Use:	Commercial Development

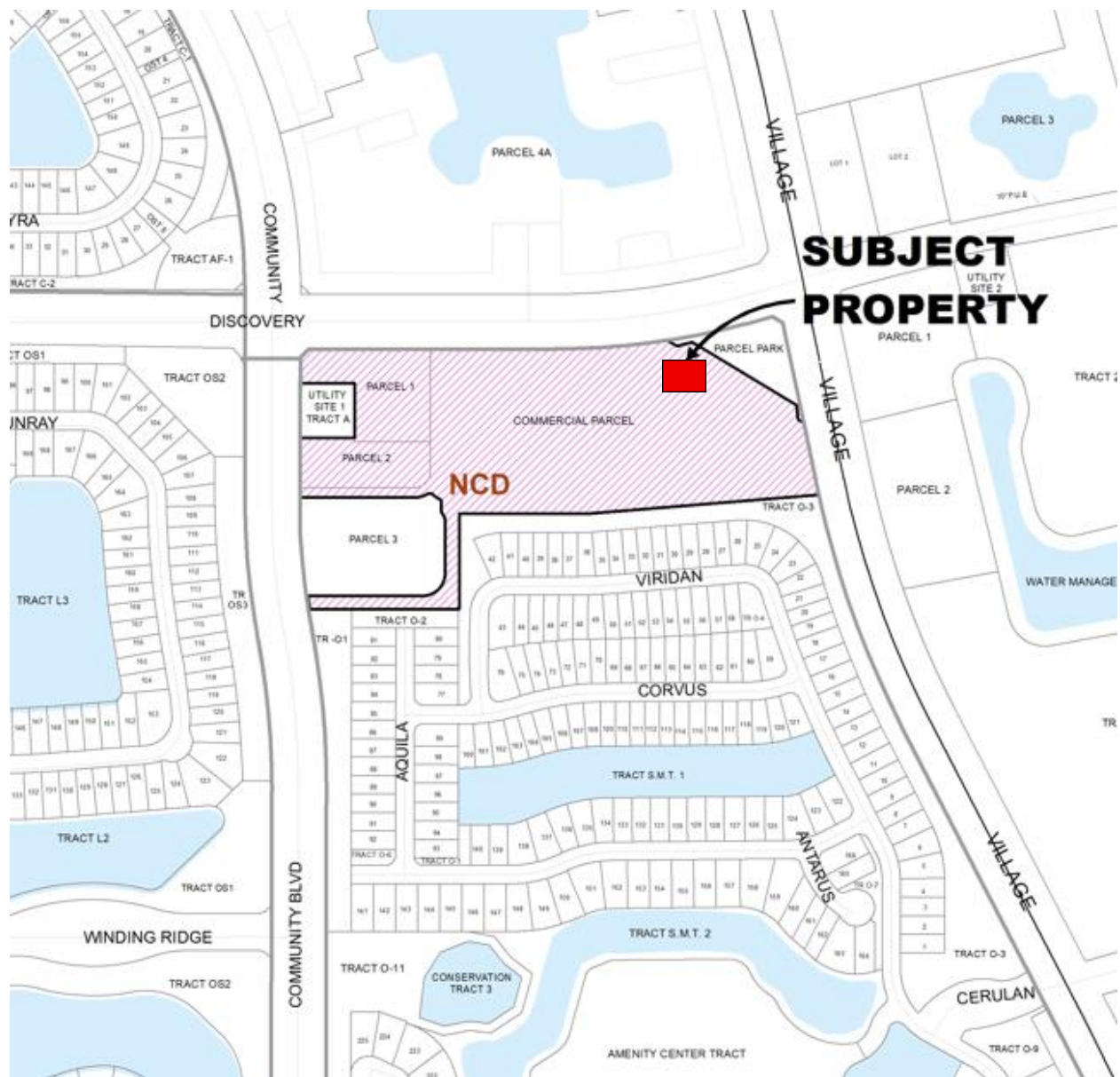
Surrounding Uses

Direction	Future Land Use	Zoning	Existing Use
North	NCD	MPUD	SW Discovery Way, multi-family Residential
South	NCD	MPUD	Shoppes in the Heart
East	NCD	MPUD	Heart in the Park Public Art Feature, SW Village Parkway, Hotel
West	NCD	MPUD	Shoppes at the Heart, SW Community Blvd, single-family Residential

NCD-New Community Development, MPUD-Master Planned Unit Development



Zoning Map



Future Land Use Map

IMPACTS AND FINDINGS

Section 158.295 (B) of the Zoning Code establishes the duties of the Planning and Zoning Board in authorizing a variance. The Planning and Zoning Board may authorize a variance from the provisions of the Zoning Code as will not be contrary to the public interest when, owing to special conditions, a literal enforcement of the provisions will result in unnecessary and undue hardship. Pursuant to Section 158.296, a variance is authorized only for height, area, and size of structure, yard size, building setback, lot size requirements, and other applicable development regulations, excluding use. To authorize a variance, the Planning and Zoning Board should consider the criteria listed under Section 158.295 (B) (1) through (7) of the Zoning Code. The applicant's response to this criterion is attached to the application. Staff's review is provided below:

Compatibility with variance criteria Section 158:295 (B).

- 1) That special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district.

- *Applicant's Response: Special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land and building involved which are not generally applicable to other lands, structures or buildings in the same zoning district. The special conditions/circumstances existing are due to the unique location and adjacency of the Heart in the Park public space and the orientation of the building to this public space. The building was designed to engage and compliment the public space of the Heart and in this had to create a building which aesthetically addresses all facades of the building whereas most buildings within this same district have a front and back only with all aesthetic emphasis including signage needs being focused on the front façade only.*

Specific to signage (and this variance request) – the specific design of the lettering (a larger more exaggerated 'A' in Amore coupled with the need to adequately address signage on three of the four facades and maintain the legibility of the balance of the signage – all given the unique location and circumstances of this building is the basis for the variance request.

These contextual and signage conditions are specific to this site and are not commonly shared by other structures in the area.

- *Staff Findings: Special Conditions and circumstances do exist that are peculiar to the subject property. Due to site layout, the subject building is located adjacent to the Heart in the Park Public Art installation which features a prominent structure exceeding 70' in height that recently opened to the public. Additionally, there are three other commercial structures on the parcel with more in the adjacent parcels that are under review.*

Signage is currently installed on three façades of the affected building—north, east, and south which allows for visibility from adjacent roadways and internally given the large feature in proximity. The scale of the signage is comparable to those installed on the adjacent multi-tenant building.

All signage within the Tradition, Western Grove, and Southern Grove areas is subject to the Tradition Master Sign Program, 7th Amendment. Per the Master Sign Program, signage for a single-tenant building is limited to a cumulative maximum of 200 square feet. Units within a multi-tenant building are also allowed 200 SF of signage.

2) That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from any action of the applicant.

- *Applicant's Response: These conditions and circumstances are not a result from actions by the applicant but in the existing design constraints and limitations of the current master sign program. The current master sign program specifies an extremely simple way to measure the allowable signage – a basic single geometric 'box' surrounding the entirety of the proposed signage. In this specific case – the uniqueness and creativeness of the brand and the exaggerated 'A' in Amore creates a significant amount of blank/white space void of any actual signage and counts against the allowable signage amount. Refer to Exhibit 'A' which graphically depicts the current method of calculating allowable sign area and the method proposed for this variance request.*

In addition to how signage is calculated, a single user building such as Amore has the same maximum allowable square-footage as a single tenant/user bay in the adjacent retail building meaning that with multiple tenants – a building in a similar situation is allowed a significant amount more façade signage.

Please refer to Exhibit 'B' (photo) which shows the currently installed Amore signage and the sign size relationship to the overall building mass, façade size and context and unique location upon which the building is set.

- *Staff Findings: Special conditions and circumstances result from the layout of the property and the proximity of the affected building to a tall public art feature. The Master Sign Program limits signage for a single-tenant building less than 10,000 square feet to a cumulative maximum of 200 square feet. Units within a multi-tenant building are also allowed 200 square feet of signage. Additionally, the Master Sign Program and the City's sign code provide for a rectangle, circle, or triangle around the outer limits of lettering to calculate sign area/square footage.*

3) That granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this chapter to other lands, buildings, or structures, in the same zoning district.

- *Applicant's Response: Granting of the variance will not confer on the applicant special privilege that is denied by this chapter to other lands, buildings or structures, in the same zoning district and in fact, actually allows the signage to be proportionate and consistent with the adjacent retail building. Refer to Exhibit 'C'. There are essentially two buildings located adjacent to the Heart in the Park; Amore Restaurant (a single user in the entire building) and a Retail Building composed of many individual businesses. Each of those individual businesses within the retail building is allowed a maximum of 200sf per user and thus a lot more allowable signage for that single building. The Amore building is severely restricted in allowable signage when compared to the adjacent building simply because it's a single user and not multiple businesses.*

Referring to Exhibit 'A' - the actual calculated sign square-footage for Amore for all three signs combined is 515.52 sf with over 317.52 sf of that being blank/white wall space. As you can see in the photos – the actual appearance and scale of this square-footage is very much in line with any of the single businesses such as Sara's Kitchen on the adjacent building.

- *Staff Findings: The granting of this variance request will confer special privilege that is denied by this chapter to other lands in the same zoning district. The Tradition MSP provides for a maximum of 200 square feet of total signage for businesses in multi-tenant structures as well as single-tenant structures under 10,000 square feet. The subject building is a single-tenant building and as such is allowed 200 square feet of total signage.*
- 4) That literal interpretation of the provisions of the chapter would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the chapter and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant.
- *Applicant's Response: The literal interpretation of the provisions of the chapter would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district and would work unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant by severely reducing either the quantity of the façade signs (three down to one) and impacting business visibility and wayfinding or by greatly reducing the size of each sign and impacting legibility and brand image.*
 - *Staff Findings: The Tradition Master Sign Program provides for a maximum of 200 square feet of total signage for businesses in structures under 10,000 square feet be it a multi-tenant or single-tenant structure.*
- 5) That the variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building, or structure.
- *Applicant's Response: The variance requested is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure. Refer to Exhibit 'A' which demonstrates that the actual amount of sign square-footage (omitting the blank/white wall space in the existing calculation method) is actually 65.27 sf. per sign. When this square-footage is applied to all three signs, the total sign square-footage is 195.81 sf (total all signs combined) and falls under the maximum allowable 200 sf. For clarity, this variance request is to allow a maximum total allowable façade sign square-footage for the Amore building of 515.52 sf with 317.52 sf of that being blank/white wall space in (3) signs.*
 - *Staff Findings: Per the Tradition Master Sign Program, the building is allowed a total of 200 square feet of signage.*
- 6) That the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the chapter and that the variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.
- *Applicant's Response: Granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the chapter and that granting the variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare. Refer to Exhibits 'B', 'C' and 'D' which show the relationship of the Amore signage in the unique context of this location and the relationship of the Amore signs size when compared to adjacent retail tenant signage.*
 - *Staff Findings: The approval of this variance would not be injurious to the surrounding area nor detrimental to public welfare. The signage is consistent in scale and character with that installed on neighboring businesses within the plaza. Additionally, the primary*

entrance to the subject building is oriented internally within the plaza and is not visible from adjacent roadways. As such, the allowance for increased signage would enhance visibility and wayfinding without negatively impacting the visual integrity of the area.

- 7) That there will be full compliance with any additional conditions and safeguards which the Planning and Zoning Board or Zoning Administrator may prescribe, including but not limited to reasonable time limits within which the action for which variance is required shall be begun or completed, or both.

- *Applicant's Response:* *Applicant acknowledges and agrees to full compliance with any additional conditions and safeguards which the Planning and Zoning Board or Zoning Administrator may prescribe.*
- *Staff Findings:* *Acknowledged.*

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD ACTION OPTIONS

The Board may choose to approve, deny or table the proposed variance. If the Board finds that the variance application is consistent with the criteria as listed in Section 158.295 (B) (1) through (7) of the City code (listed above), then the Board may make a:

- Motion to approve
- Motion to approve with conditions

If the Board finds that the variance application is inconsistent with the criteria as listed in Section 158.295 (B) (1) through (7) of the City code, then the Board may make a:

- Motion to deny

Should the Board need further clarification or information from either the applicant and/or staff, the Board may make a:

- Motion to table or continue the hearing or review to a future meeting

(NOTE TO APPLICANTS: Any request for a variance that is denied by the Planning and Zoning Board may be appealed to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Appeal applications are made through the City Clerk's office and must be submitted within 15 days after the Planning and Zoning Board hearing).