



CITY OF CONCORD
New Hampshire's Main Street™
Community Development Department
Planning Division

Staff Report for Planning Board

Meeting on May 20, 2026

Project Summary – Conditional Use Permit

Project: New Hampshire Retirement System Signage (2026-031)
Property Owner: New Hampshire Retirement System
Applicant: Advantage Signs, Inc.
Project Address: 80 Commercial Street
Tax Map Lot: 59Z 7

Determination of Completeness:

To determine completeness of a conditional use permit application without a companion site plan or subdivision application, the Board shall consider the requirements of Sections 14.02 and 36.14(1) of the Site Plan Regulations, the written recommendation of the Planning Division, and any written communications from the applicant, abutters, and parties of interest; **however, no hearing shall be opened nor shall testimony be received on a determination of completeness.** If it is determined that the application is complete, the Board shall then open the public hearing on said application. An application which is determined to be incomplete may be revised and resubmitted to a subsequent meeting of the Board for another determination of completeness.

The Planning Division reviewed the application for completeness based upon the criteria of the Site Plan Regulations and concluded that the application contains sufficient information and detail for a full review and action by the Board.

Based upon the Planning Division's review of the application, the Planning Division recommends that the Board move to:

- **Determine the application complete;**
- **State that the project does not meet the criteria for a development of regional impact per RSA 36:55; and**
- **Open the public hearing.**

Project Description:

Pursuant to Section 28-6-9(b)(2) Permitted Building signs, *"where a building is three (3) or more stories in height, the Planning Board may grant a conditional use permit to allow one wall sign for each building frontage, to be located between rows of windows or above the top row of windows or on the wall at a height in excess of twenty-five (25) feet above grade, provided that no window or exterior window trim is obstructed by the sign, and further provided that the sign identifies a principal use..."*,

Advantage Signs, on behalf of New Hampshire Retirement System, seeks a Conditional Use Permit

to permit wall signage above 25-feet in height above grade at 80 Commercial Street (New Hampshire Retirement System), in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District.

Compliance:

The review of this application against the applicable land use regulations is based on a 1-page narrative, submitted April 1, 2026; and, a 2-sheet signage plan, dated March 13, 2026, with revisions through March 18, 2026, prepared by Advantage Signs, Inc.

1. Project Details and Zoning Ordinance Compliance:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Zoning District: | Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District |
| Existing Use: | Office Building |
| Proposed Use: | Same |
| Wetland: | None |
| Wetland buffers: | None |

- 1.1 The Planning Division conducted a zoning compliance review of the submittal and determined that the conditional use permit application for signs that are placed more than 25 feet above grade is the appropriate method for relief from the standard requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

2. General Comments:

- 2.1 Per Section 34.04 *Independent Application* staff utilized the procedures for a minor site plan application in the processing of the stand-alone conditional use permit application and requirements contained in Section 14.02 *Design Review Phase* in the review for determining completeness.
- 2.2 Section 34.05(4) authorizes the Clerk to determine that certain requirements of Section 14.02 may not be relevant for the particular circumstances of the site or proposed use, for which a conditional use permit is requested. There are a number of items missing from the site plan. However, given that the application is only for a conditional use permit to allow for wall signs placed above the 25 feet in height, most of the required information has been deemed irrelevant.

3. Site Plan Regulations Determination of Completeness:

- 3.1 The required information is present, partially present enough for review, or not relevant to the application as noted in Item 2.1 and 2.2 above, thus allowing for the application to be deemed complete.

Site Plan Regulations Compliance:

The submittal was found to be compliant with all other sections of the Site Plan Regulations except as listed below, noting that the items below are missing as required for full compliance but are **not required for the determination of completeness.**

- 3.2 Provide the Planning Board Approval Block on the 2-sheet, signage plan. Staff can provide a template as a .pdf, .dwg, or .jpg, if requested.



4. Variances:

4.1 No variances had been requested for this application.

5. Waivers:

5.1 No waivers had been requested for this application.

6. Conditional Use Permits:

6.1 The applicant requests approval for a conditional use permit pursuant to Section 28-6-9(b)(2) and Section 28-9-4(b) *Conditional Use Permits* of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for signs above 25' above grade. The applicant's response to the CUP criteria is in the Board's packet materials.

Analysis of the required criteria for Section 28-9-4(b) Conditional Use Permits follows:

A. The use is specifically authorized in this ordinance as a conditional use;

Review: The applicant states the sign has gone through design review process and has been approved as designed. Staff notes that the sign is permitted per ordinance with the granting of the conditional use permit and clarifies that the sign was recommended for approval by the Architectural Design Review Committee. **Staff recommends the Board find that this criterion is satisfied by the applicant's proposal.**

B. If completed as proposed by the applicant, the development in its proposed location will comply with the requirements of this article, and with the specific conditions of standards established in this ordinance for the particular use;

Review: The applicant states Sign will be placed in location per described in permit application and will be built to comply with all ordinances. **Staff recommends the Board find that this criterion is satisfied by the applicant's proposal.**

C. The use will not materially endanger the public health or safety;

Review: The applicant states the sign will be built per industry safety requirements and will pose no danger to public health. **Staff recommends the Board find that this criterion is satisfied by the applicant's proposal.**

D. The use will be compatible with the neighborhood and with adjoining or abutting uses in the area in which it is to be located;

Review: The applicant states the sign successfully went through design review process and was approved as designed. Staff notes that the applicant was recommend for approval by the Architectural Design Review Committee. **Staff recommends the Board find that this criterion is satisfied by the applicant's proposal.**

E. The use will not have an adverse effect on highway or pedestrian safety;

Review: The applicant states the sign will have no adverse effects on highway or pedestrian safety. **Staff recommends the Board find that this criterion is satisfied by the applicant's proposal.**

- F. The use will not have an adverse effect on the natural, environmental, and historic resources of the City;

Review: The applicant states the sign will have no adverse effects on natural, environmental or historic resources and has been reviewed and approved by design review committee. Staff notes that the applicant was recommend for approval by the Architectural Design Review Committee. **Staff recommends the Board find that this criterion is satisfied by the applicant's proposal.**

- G. The use will be adequately serviced by necessary public utilities and by community facilities and services of a sufficient capacity to ensure the proper operation of the proposed use, and will not necessitate excessive public expenditures to provide facilities and services with sufficient additional capacity.

Review: The applicant states the sign will be built to code to meet all safety requirements and will be installed by licensed electricians. **Staff recommends the Board find that this criterion is satisfied by the applicant's proposal.**

7. Architectural Design Review:

- 7.1 On May 5, 2026 the applicant appeared before the Architectural Design Review Committee for a recommendation for a new 37.2-square-foot internally illuminated building wall sign (SP-0746-2026) (PL-ADR-2026-0171)

The Architectural Design Review Committee recommended that the Planning Board grant architectural design review approval for the architectural design review and conditional use permit applications as submitted.

8. Conservation Commission:

- 8.1 Conservation Commission review is not required for this application.

9. Recommendations:

- 9.1 Staff recommends that the Planning Board **adopt the findings of fact**, which include information provided in staff reports; the applicant's submission materials; testimony provided during the public hearing; and/or other documents or materials provided in the public hearing.

Based on the adopted findings of fact, staff recommends that the Planning Board makes the motion outlined below:

- 9.2 **Grant Architectural Design Review approval** for the new 37.2-square-foot internally illuminated building wall sign 80 Commercial Street in the Opportunity Corridor Performance (OCP) District as submitted.
- 9.3 **Grant conditional use permit approval** to allow the proposed signage on a 3-story or more building, above 25 feet from grade at Tax Map Lot 59Z 7, addressed as 80 Commercial Street, based on the evidence provided showing that the criteria of Section 28-9-4(b) have been met, with the following precedent and subsequent conditions:

(a) **Precedent Conditions** – to be fulfilled within two years and prior to signature of the conditional use permit plat by the Chair and Clerk of the Planning Board, unless otherwise specified.

1. Revise the conditional use permit plat as follows:
 - a. Provide the Planning Board Approval Block on the 2-sheet, signage plan.
2. Upon notification from the Planning Division that the project complies with the precedent conditions, Zoning Ordinance, and Site Plan Regulations, deliver to the Planning Division for signature one full-size or 11x17 conditional use permit plan set.

(b) **Subsequent Conditions**

1. The applicant is responsible for compliance with the municipal code, Site Plan Regulations, and Construction Standards and Details, including obtaining necessary variances, waivers, and conditional use permits.